DIVINING THE STRUCTURE:
the use of graphic representation
in the analysis and performance
of dramatic material

A project submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

David Wicks

3 May 2010
SUPERVISORS
Professor Leon van Schaik, Dr. Andrew Keen.
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The PhD concentrates on the use of a simple, hand-drawn graph to represent the structure of conflict in theatrical Drama. I had previously used a graph that worked well, though I didn't understand why or how. That ‘gap’ in understanding provoked a series of projects trialng new graphs. They didn’t work. The cumulative failure of the new graphs was the cause of much anxiety and self-doubt throughout the PhD journey. The written style of this document reflects hesitation and prevarication, which are elements not only of writing style, but of the PhD story itself, especially in the middle of the journey, when the shape of the research ‘arc’ appears to be steadily disintegrating. Through the transformation of thinking prompted by the PhD process, I was compelled to interrogate the meaning of theatrical drama itself. In the process I became a philosopher-practitioner.

What do I mean by ‘philosopher-practitioner’? If philosophy is about thinking, writing and talking, then the philosopher-practitioner does all that, and then does it or embodies it.

Typically, as a performance practitioner I would have an idea or hunch, and then try to put it into practice: practice as the outcome of thinking. The practice in this PhD process caused deep re-thinking: thinking as the outcome of practice. Then the thinking folded back upon the practice and so on. The thinking pre PhD was often so pragmatic and so linked to the imperative of an outcome that it was almost automatic. In November 2007 I had a conversation with a friend about Yoga. She was quite an advanced practitioner, having done it regularly for many years without really thinking about it, apart from ‘thinking’ that it was good for her physical health. She had a teacher who was very forceful – perhaps even cruel. He pushed his students well beyond their comfort thresholds. She observed that it would take a certain amount of time to get through what she called ‘stuff’ – pain, discomfort, or distracted thoughts – in order to get to the real ‘matter’ of the asana or session. Sometimes she would burst into tears upon crossing a threshold into something she found it hard to put into words – we both agreed that ‘transcendence’ was about right. This is a good analogy to
my journey towards being a philosopher-practitioner. Pre PhD I ‘just did’ performing and
directing, using as much thought as required to research character, style, language etc. In the
context of the PhD I pushed, project by project, well beyond my comfort threshold, asking
difficult questions such as ‘What is dramatic?’ ‘What is a climax?’ ‘Why does the graph go
up?’

An excerpt from my Journal, Saturday 10 May 2008 is revealing:

Up to this point everything leads me to focus on the Vertical Coordinate in the
graph. The question that arises is ‘What does this journey mean?’ The meaning
of this coordinate is twinned with the meaning of the play overall, and the
meaning of ALL plays overall.

I suffered the pain of failure, but also achieved a sort of transcendence, which I attempt to
put into words in this document.

Note: The PhD had a radical change of direction, or false start. APPENDIX 1: The
gesture is everything documents the PhD from the beginning, when it was about
heightened physical gesture in performance, up to the point where it changed to the
present topic. After one project (ALEA), I realised that I was merely continuing
what I had done already, rather than contributing new knowledge in the field of
theatrical practice.
FIRST MOVEMENT:
DRAMATIC STRUCTURE
INTRODUCTION

After evaluating the first project in the ‘old’ PhD (see APPENDIX 1: *The gesture is everything*) and thinking about what it meant and how it might contribute to knowledge, I decided that I had ‘done’ gesture, and more projects would represent more of the same – extensions of work I’d been doing since 1991, or at best ‘variations on a theme’.

During one of our regular conversations, my Secondary Supervisor Andrew Keen mentioned a friend of his who is a lecturer in interior design. She was teaching how to draw a Grid Perspective. Andrew explained that often in interior design training the student is encouraged to think of an interior in bits – perhaps working on floors one day and light fittings the next. This idea of Grid Perspective renders an idea or conception of an interior as a whole, giving the designer the capacity to take a cross-section from any part of the interior and ‘try it out’. The graphic representation of dramatic structure in rehearsal can be of great assistance to actors and director in viewing and experiencing the play as a whole, rather than just the ‘bits’, though the ‘bits’, as in interior design, are terribly important.

Figure 2. The grid perspective drawn for me by Val Austin in 2007.
When Andrew described this method of rendering an interior, I had an idea that it would be exciting to visualize the ‘interior’ or ‘soul’ of a play in three dimensions. An image occurred to me immediately of a play as a church or cathedral of the imagination – an imaginative rather than physical space, through which the actors/characters would move, from west to east, from Entrance to Choir, experiencing the narrative, changes in dimension, significance and atmosphere of the journey. I should point out now that the sort of church or cathedral I visualized was the sort described in the Palladio chapter, below.

In this moment I decided to change the PhD topic to the graphic representation of dramatic structure. Up to that point in my professional practice I had been using a simple graph to represent or visualize the structure of a play. Now it seemed a ‘gap’ had opened in my practice – the need to find new ways of representing dramatic structure, suggested by the particular need of each production.

**WHAT DO I MEAN BY ‘DRAMATIC STRUCTURE’?**

William Wordsworth puts it very well:

there is a dark
Invisible workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, and makes them move
In one society.\(^1\)

Actors and directors, quite rightly, get very ‘involved’ in the role and the play. This is essential. It is commonly referred to, in theatre parlance, as being ‘in the moment’, rather than viewing it from the outside like an author. However, there are many things that the actor and director do need to observe as if with an ‘outside eye’. For the actor, it’s such things as not bumping into the furniture or other actors, finding the light or the ‘mark’,\(^2\) repeating the ‘blocking’,\(^3\) and so on. Another thing that should be attended to, but so often isn’t, is the *structure* of the role and play, both of which have beginnings, middles and ends. In a tragedy, the state of things is usually much worse for everyone by the time we get to the end. In a comedy, things get bad, but improve considerably by the end. It wouldn’t do to play the beginning as in the same way as the end, or vice versa. So we need to have some *perspective* on where we all are the journey or trajectory of the story – so we get the mood and energy right. This seems to be so self-evident that I’m always surprised that my conversations with actors and directors about this topic so often draw blank looks, followed by the glow of the discovery of something new and exciting.

This ‘perspective’ or view required the same sort of ‘double vision’ as described above. The actor, having become very familiar with the structure ‘has’ it as a sort of inner confidence, but also a feeling of inner movement, spiritual movement.

The word ‘spiritual’ will be used often throughout this document. It might need some explaining. The word has become awkwardly and, for me, annoyingly tainted by the current idiocies of clashing Fundamentalisms: Creationism, Dawkins-ism, and Oprah-Winfrey-ism to

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\(^2\) In film and TV, the precise spot the actor has to stand on or get to in order to be photographed in focus.

\(^3\) The set patterns of where and when to move.
name just a few. Therefore I will define the word for my purposes here as relating to or affecting the human ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ as opposed to material or physical things. Obviously the word ‘soul’ is also fraught and in need of definition. Speaking of Freud, Bruno Bettelheim said:

His greatest concern was with man’s innermost being, to which he most frequently referred through the use of a metaphor—man’s soul—because the word ‘soul’ evokes so many emotional connotations.\(^4\)

Freytag in his *Technique of the Drama* talks about the soul all the time – from the first line of Chapter 1:

In the soul of the poet, the drama gradually takes shape out of the crude material furnished by the account of some striking event. Through the relations of the [. . .] sections to each other, an inner dynamic is built, and this dynamic moves in two directions. One is outward toward the activities of the world. The other is inward. Both are integral to the process as a whole, but it is by the progressive and cumulative deepening of the inward movement that the new energy is built.\(^5\)

This business of how to start, proceed and finish has lots of ‘ups and downs’ – to use the same metaphor we use in life. I have found it very useful in rehearsal to jot down these ‘ups and downs’ in the form of a simple graph, a bit like this one:

![Figure 3. A basic template for graphically representing dramatic structure.](image)

The point of doing this is to gain perspective or to *grasp* the whole, like studying a map before going on a trip, then having it ‘in one’s head’ while on the trip. The analogy ends here, because the ‘trip’ I’m referring to is not a spatial one, but a spiritual one. Going from ‘here’ to ‘here’ in this case is not about going to this physical place or that physical place, but to climax, away from climax, to another bigger climax, away from that climax, to an even bigger


climax, and so on. All the important moments in the journey of the character and the play are included in this comprehensive framework.

What is the purpose of this analysis?

Like the general analysis of the play and the role, the purpose is:

- to search out creative stimuli to attract the actor, without which there can be no identification with a part;

and:

- the emotional deepening of the soul of a part in order to comprehend the component elements of this soul, its external and internal nature, and indeed its whole life as a human spirit. Analysis studies the external circumstances and events in the life of a human spirit in the part; [. . . ] and it seeks out any spiritual or other material germane to creativeness.

  Analysis dissects, discovers, examines, studies, weighs recognizes, rejects, confirms; it uncovers the basic direction and thought of a play and part, the superobjective and the through line of action. This is the material it feeds to imagination, feelings, thought, and will.\(^6\)

If the aim of the actor’s work with physical gesture is to ‘train’ the body so that new expressive possibilities can ‘arise’ spontaneously in performance, then the purpose of analyzing, discussing and graphing dramatic structure is to ‘train’ the imagination so that so that expressivity and spontaneity have purpose and direction.

Stanislavsky is talking about analysis of the actor’s part, but it applies equally to analysis of the play. I would add to his explanation that analysis of the play, helps the director and actors direct the audience’s attention in a way that will heighten the coherence of the effect of the story. Analysis of dramatic structure is concerned with the play as a whole. Sometimes the structure of the play is the same as the structure of the protagonist’s journey, but sometimes the structure of the play is about the ‘plot’, or what happens to everyone.

Here’s another ‘he said it better than I could’ quote to help me explain to the reader what I mean by ‘dramatic structure’ and its purpose:

It’s interesting to note that Shakespeare’s *Othello* and the Doris Day/Rock Hudson movie *Pillow Talk* have the same structure. At least, that’s what I will argue.

I can usually tell how long a movie is going to be by ‘feeling’ the Complication. If a moment in the movie feels like the Complication, I’ll presume that’s a quarter the way through, therefore the movie will be four times the length of the movie up to that point.

This approach relies on analysis, but just as much on intuition and a sense of the theatre and what works in the theatre. It’s about applying a rule, but the ultimate aim is to create work that is alive and exciting in the theatre.

What is their purpose? The conversation that takes place between the Great Ones and myself changes and/or influences my thinking, reveals to me new ideas but also reveals to me what I already knew. They articulate my unspoken thoughts in beautiful, penetrating language.

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‘Dramatic Structure’ does not refer to the built environment, but the *structure of the drama* in the context of theatrical productions, film and/or television, and the broad category of ‘performance art’. A writer arranges the events of a story in a specific sequence in order – we hope – to create the best impression or the most impact. For example, only the very worst joke-teller would *start* a joke with the punch line, or put it in the middle. Likewise, a play or screenplay depends on judicious placement of events. There are many books written about writing for the stage and screen that enunciate rules for the structure of the plot or story and the placement of climaxes. I will refer here to one that is simple, popular and representative. Later I will describe some structures I have observed – especially the symmetrical structure used by Shakespeare and Hollywood in the Golden Age.

The sequencing of events in a joke or drama could be described as the structure of the ‘plot’. The plot has an inciting incident exposition, complication or ‘point of attack’.

Whether referencing Aristotle’s *Poetics* knowingly or otherwise, playwrights, screen writers and teachers of writing have been following Aristotle’s basic recommendation, that a plot should have the following, in the following order. Students of play- and screen-writing will be very familiar with these ‘rules’:

**INCITING INCIDENT:** in *Hamlet*, for example, this is the combined death of Hamlet’s father and the re-marrying of Hamlet’s mother to Claudius) that precipitates the action of the drama – that gets it started

**EXPOSITION:** the characters are introduced in an atmosphere of ‘something important is going on’ – caused by the inciting incident

**COMPLICATION:** (‘point of attack’ in Catron) this is the event that precipitates the main action of the drama. In *Othello*, for example, it is usually the moment when Iago reveals to the audience his intention to ruin Othello by implicating Desdemona in an adulterous relationship with Cassio,

> I have’t. It is engendered. Hell and night  
> Must bring this monstrous birth to the world’s light.  

As I have said, ‘dramatic structure’ or ‘structure of the drama’ usually refers to plot, or even more simply, to the placement of scenes and acts. In the Reviewing the Field chapter below I will briefly review some of the many references to ‘structure’ that do not describe what I am getting at. For the purpose of definition I need to distinguish between structure of *plot* and structure of *the drama*.

What is ‘the drama’?

---


9 Catron, p. 104.

Dramatic action is the clash of forces in a play – the continuous conflict between characters . . . The word plot is used here in its common meaning to describe the sequential arrangement of the conflict-incidents that comprise the action.\textsuperscript{11}

This is quite a good starting point. To ‘the continuous conflict between characters’ I would add ‘and the forces that impinge upon them’.

Let’s imagine different types of conversation.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
lived duration: \\
the graphic representation of \\
dramatic structure in the theatre \\
\hline
lived durations: \\
the graphic representation of \\
dramatic action in the theatre \\
\hline
dramatic structure: \\
being in time \\
\hline
unfolding time: \\
how to graph the structure of \\
the action in a Drama \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

WHAT IS THE Y-AXIS?

Thomas Price, in his book \textit{Dramatic Structure and Meaning in Theatrical Productions} suggests that the \textit{y-axis} is ‘argument’:

Aristotle’s laconic statement that plays must have a beginning, a middle, and an end\textsuperscript{12} has perplexed many readers of the \textit{Poetics}, partly because the point seems too obvious for comment, and also, paradoxically, because much drama since Chekhov appears to have neither beginning nor end but only a sort of middle, during the course of which nothing is truly concluded. In an era that could regard as emblematic of its temper such apparently plotless dramas as \textit{Waiting for Godot}, the ancient insistence on some kind of dramatic resolution, or even a clearly defined argument, seemed somewhat irrelevant. But the irrelevance, like the plotlessness, was only seeming. For almost any drama, no matter how apparently obscure or devoid of obvious conflict, will yield under attentive scrutiny a concrete and definable opposition of forces; in short, an argument.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{12} See Aristotle, \textit{Poetics}, Book VII.
\end{footnotesize}
A COORDINATE GRAPH

A coordinate graph is a visual method for showing relationships between numbers. The relationships are shown on a coordinate grid. A coordinate grid has two perpendicular lines, or axes, labeled like number lines. The horizontal axis is called the \( x \)-axis. The vertical axis is called the \( y \)-axis. The point where the \( x \)-axis and \( y \)-axis intersect is called the origin.

In my practice, the \( x \)-axis is ‘time’, or the duration of the show, whether that be two hours or two minutes; the \( y \)-axis has variously been called ‘drama’, ‘tension’, ‘interest’ and many other things. The true nature of the \( y \)-axis will be the subject of much discussion in this PhD.

I suspect that most novels begin in their writers’ minds as confusions of images, impulses, scattered meanings, devotions, grudges, fixations, and some vague sort of plot, to name just a few. [A novel in its earliest form] is a cloud of sorts that hovers over the writer’s head, a mystery born with clues to its own meanings but also, at its heart, insoluble. One hopes that the finished book will contain not only characters and scenes but a certain larger truth, though that truth, whatever it may be, is impossible to express fully in words . . . beneath the level of active consciousness, something about being alive and being mortal, and that ‘something’, when we try to express it, inevitably eludes us.\(^{14}\)

I suspect that most plays appear at first to the director and actors as confusions of images, impulses, scattered meanings, devotions, grudges, fixations, and some vague sort of plot, to name just a few. A play when first encountered is indeed a cloud of sorts that hovers over the heads of the director and actors, a mystery born with clues to its own meanings but also, at its heart, insoluble. One hopes that the finished production will contain not only characters and scenes but a certain larger truth, though that truth, whatever it may be, is impossible to express fully in words . . . beneath the level of active consciousness, something about being alive and being mortal, and that ‘something’, when we try to express it, inevitably eludes us.

Substitute ‘novels’ and ‘novel’ for ‘play’, ‘plays’ and ‘screenplays’. Cunningham is referring to the writing of a novel, but this description applies equally to the ‘unearthing’ or ‘revealing’ of the structure of a play or screenplay.

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The reader will note that throughout this exegesis I use quotes from writers who say what I’m trying to say infinitely better than I could hope to say it. This quote from Michael Cunningham could well be the ‘inscription’ on this exegesis and this PhD. He describes so vividly the process of acting, directing and analysis.

It is important to start with a brief discussion of what dramatic structure is not.

Most writers on theatre when they talk about ‘structure’ merely mean how many acts there are in a play – the ‘five act structure’ of Shakespeare and Corneille, for example. This isn’t what I mean. It doesn’t matter how many acts there are, as you will see below.

It doesn’t refer to physical movement on the stage. Looking at the graph one might think that the ‘field’ of the graph is the stage. No, the ‘field’ of the graph is the play itself. What is the play itself? That means the play as text and the play as performance. But there is something beyond that as well, which I will try and describe over the course of this exegesis, especially in the chapter ‘What is this really’?

It doesn’t refer only to plot development, though that is part of it, and the dramatic structure is often linked to plot. However, the technique of using dramatic structure can equally apply to works without plot. ALEA for example, has a dramatic structure though it is a performed concrete poem with no plot or story.

**MAPPING EXPERIENCE**

Another ‘experiential metaphor’ for the ‘journey’ through the structure of the play is that used by Leon van Schaik in his book *Design City Melbourne*. 15 In the chapter ‘Civil Mission of the City & Interiors’ van Schaik describes walking down the ‘civic spine’ from the Exhibition Buildings in Carlton to St Kilda Junction, describing the architectural and design ‘dramas’ that occur on the journey. Sections 5 and 6 of the book are called ‘Passeggiata Down the Civic Spine’ and ‘Passeggiata Down the Financial Spine’ respectively. ‘Passeggiata’ is an Italian word that means ‘a stroll’ or ‘a ramble’. It also shares its Latin root with the English ‘pass’ (as in ‘pass by’) and ‘passage’. It’s interesting that he walks ‘down’. Why not ‘up’ or ‘along’? I think he’s responding to an imaginary gravitational force, which might help provide a clue as to why the Freytag Triangle goes ‘down’ after the Climax in the middle: the first half of the play works ‘against’ gravity, then after the ‘tipping point’ of the Climax (or Turning Point, as I call it) the play hurtles toward its inevitable conclusion, pulled by a cosmic ‘gravitational’ force.

This is interesting:

There is a sense in which the hidden structure of the spine, the laterals and the periphery is, – as Churchill said of the House of Commons – a physical form that gives rise to a certain way of debating.16

‘Hidden’ structure of the spine is important. In dramatic structure, if the audience can ‘see’ it, it’s not working. Of course, dramatic structure is not a physical form, but an imaginary force, and its presence does give rise to a certain way of not debating, but pursuing the argument of

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16 Schaik, p. 63.
the play. That certain way is coherent and unified – with a view of the whole, not just the parts.

We have probably all had the experience of ‘drawing a map’ for someone who’s coming to dinner or a party, especially if that person is from out of town.

![Figure 5. Map of the Kent Kwik/DFYIT Half Marathon.](http://www.pdap.org)

This is the map of a charity run that took place in Midland, Texas in 2007. ‘Up’ and ‘down’ in this map have no significance in terms of relevance, quality or intensity. There is no ‘up’ or ‘down’ in space. If I were to mark the map with symbols representing significant events that happened or will happen at those points, we start to have an idea of what the graph of dramatic structure is about. But then we have to change the shape of the map to highlight these events.

Working on the structure will help clarify the ‘confusions’, and clarifying the ‘confusions’ will help clarify the structure.

What is the aim of art if not to show us, in nature and in the mind, outside of us and within us, things which did not explicitly strike our senses and our consciousness?

... we shall find that, if we accept them and admire them, it is because we had already perceived something of what they show us. But we had perceived without seeing. It was, for us, a brilliant and vanishing vision, lost in the crowd of those visions, equally brilliant and equally vanishing, which become overcast in our ordinary experience ... The painter has isolated it; he has fixed it so well

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on the canvas that henceforth we shall not be able to help seeing in reality what he himself saw.\textsuperscript{18}

Bergson claims that the artist ‘reveals’ what is already present in our deep or instinctive perception, but invisible to our ‘everyday’ perception until revealed by the artist.

But is that true? Bergson says we can’t perceive it if it wasn’t there in the first place. Well, light and shape were there, but what about structure? What is being ‘revealed’ in symmetry? Nature, it seems to me, is very asymmetrical. Why is symmetry so exciting?

Is it something imposed, or something revealed? The answer is, ‘both’. To pervert Wordsworth,

\[
\ldots \text{our puny boundaries are things Which we perceive, and also we have made}^{19}
\]

What about the idea of the play being ‘revealed’, layer by layer? The visual representation of that would be layers of paper laid one over the other – but as I don’t know what is written on the next one, how would I arrange them at the start of rehearsals? Or would be just put a pile of paper in the middle of the floor, reveal a new one as we go – but there are ‘bits’ of revelation. Is it like the drafts of a play? Save each draft – but the ‘picture’ is of ever increasing refinement.

In the case of Shakespeare, the technique of counting the number of lines in the play and dividing them up accordingly will ‘reveal’ the structure. Still, the idea of using structure at all is ‘imposed’, because it’s a rule, and a rule that most directors and actors choose to ignore.

Musical analysis is a useful comparison, especially Sonata form, with its ‘beginning’, ‘middle’ and ‘end’.

What is the purpose of imposing or excavating the dramatic structure? Does Freytag talk about the purpose? Does Barry talk about the purpose? Does Aristotle talk about the purpose? Acting books and manuals talk about the actor and what the actor needs and how he will feel – they rarely talk about the audience and what effect the actor might have on the audience or what impression the actor might want to make on the audience, or what the actor and company might want the audience to experience. It seems to be presumed that if the actor is ‘getting it’, the audience will too. I think this is true to a large degree, but there are certain elements of stage craft that are now considered old-fashioned that are specifically about ‘letting the audience in’, or ‘sharing’ with the audience.

Even the television program \textit{Mythbusters}, which by design looks so random and ‘feral’ and unstructured, where the outcome is apparently not known, the hosts are not experts and they appear to not be ‘guiding’ the audience.

However, the material is edited in post-production with a view to structuring or \textit{guiding} the audience’s attention and feelings.

\textsuperscript{18} Bergson, \textit{Creative Mind}, p. 160.

\textsuperscript{19} The correct quote is ‘our puny boundaries are things/Which we perceive, and not which we have made.’ Wordsworth, William, and Jonathan Wordsworth. \textit{The Prelude : The Four Texts} (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850). London: Penguin, 1995. p. 86.
Vitruvius asserts in his book *De architectura*\(^\text{20}\) that a designed structure must exhibit the three qualities of *firmitas, utilitas, venustas* — that is, it must be strong or durable, useful, and beautiful. According to Vitruvius, architecture is an imitation of nature. As birds and bees built their nests, so humans constructed housing from natural materials, that gave them shelter against the elements.

*Firmitas* — once we have deliberated on the structure and notated it, it must remain constant, and the actors must follow it rigorously, ‘to the letter’, otherwise the performance becomes ‘general’ again. Notating the structure using a graph firms it in the actors’ and director’s sense. The structure, with its ‘dramatic force’ is immutable, though it is invisible. The play appears to the observer to have all the randomness and improvisatory qualities of life. The actors are rooted to the structure, traversing this ‘geodetic line’. Is it like the water diviner, whose divining rod trembles and points in a tentative way toward a line of force that is ancient and immutable? Perhaps, except the actor’s response or devotion to the ‘dramatic line’ is not even as visible as that.

*Utilitas* — Using a simple graph is certainly useful to the actor and director in ‘divining’ and following the structure in rehearsal and performance. I have tested this time and time again. After all, so much theatre that I would judge as pitifully unstructured and boring passes and indeed is promoted. It is useful *if* you value the following principle:

*Venustas* — how can I prove that this is beautiful, and what do I mean anyway? Well, Vitruvius himself claims that following certain principles will result in greater beauty, but can’t prove it.

Structure makes a piece of drama more beautiful and interesting, though I can’t prove it. I’m in good company. Aristotle doesn’t and can’t prove that his dicta about poetry and drama actually make it better. Vitruvius can’t *prove* that following his advice will result in a more beautiful piece of architecture.

**WHAT IS A CLIMAX?**

Anyone who has seen *Gone With the Wind* will surely remember the sequence, just before Interval, when Scarlett O’Hara, fist clenched, silhouetted against a violet and orange sky intones:

\[
\text{As God is my witness, as God is my witness they’re not going to lick me. I’m going to live through this and when it’s all over, I’ll never be hungry again. No, nor any of my folk. If I have to lie, steal, cheat or kill. As God is my witness, I’ll never be hungry again.}\]

\(^{21}\)

Few people would fail to recognize that as a *climax*. In case there was any doubt, the Max Steiner score swells to near-deafening volume.

But what about the moment in Shakespeare’s *Othello* when Iago almost whispers to Othello, ‘Look to your wife’? This moment will be analyzed at length later on, but for now, what do


\[^{21}\text{Fleming, Victor. “Gone with the Wind.” 238 min. USA: Selznick International Pictures, 1939.}\]
these two moments have in common? They are points of intensity, depicting an ‘excess of life’.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

The underlying structure represented by the graph is like the subliminal undercurrent of the iambic pentameter in Shakespeare. It has an inexorable forward-movement.

... the Iambic Code becomes a subliminal stethoscope directly to the heartbeat of the emotional life of the language... Learn to use this sensitive and actor-tuned listening device and you will begin to sense the intimate, visceral connection between yourself [the actor] and your experiences and those of the characters of the plays.

Substitute ‘Dramatic Structure’ and O’Dell has helped me greatly define how Dramatic Structure works. He should add what I think is obvious: the actor, through his mastery, gives the audience access to this ‘stethoscope’. They too will begin to sense the intimate, visceral connection between themselves and their experiences and those of the characters of the plays.

On the one hand, there is the varied length of sentences. Stretching between lines, starting and ending mid-line, or matching verse lines. On the other hand, the constancy of the five-foot verse line serves as a more ritualised ebb and flow of emotional energy.

This is the same as the structure of the play. It is not apparent to the audience at all, though I believe that the audience can feel it at a very deep subliminal level, in the same way as they can sense inaudible, very low frequency musical sounds. The audience ‘hear’ the structure subliminally.

**THE CROSS SECTION AND THEATRICAL STRUCTURE**

The Hunch is that these images provoke the possibility that perhaps Dramatic Structure can be graphed in new ways, with new ways of visual thinking.

An early encounter with Edward Tufte urged this hunch:

The world is complex, dynamic, multidimensional; the appearance is static, flat. How are we to represent the rich visual world of experience and measurement on mere flatland?

This book celebrates escapes from flatland, rendering several hundred superb displays of complex data. Revealed here are design strategies for enhancing the dimensionality and density of portrayals of information—techniques exemplified in maps, the manuscripts of Galileo. Timetables, notation describing dance movements, aerial photographs, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, electrocardiograms, drawings of Calder and Klee, computer visualizations, and a textbook of Euclid’s geometry.

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22 Suggested by Suzi Attiwill at the June, 2007 Graduate Research Conference, RMIT.
24 O’Dell, p. 37.
Is any of this actually going to help me? Needless to say, Tufte’s is a two-dimensional book!
Yet, at the start of the First Movement, especially the Hunch, this is exactly what I want –
liberation from this lame little graph!

Regarding Beautiful Evidence, my graph isn’t really about evidence – it’s about analysis or
detection – in the way an ECG is about those two aims.

In The Visual Display of Quantitative Information Tufte gives this bit of advice:

**Proportion and Scale: The Shape of Graphics**

Graphics should tend toward the horizontal, greater in length than height:

[simple graphic] Several lines of reasoning favor horizontal over vertical
displays.

First, analogy to the horizon. Our eye is naturally practiced in detecting
deviations from the horizon, and graphic design should take advantage of this
fact. Horizontally stretched time-series are more accessible to the eye:
[another simple graphic][26]

Well, I certainly got that right! By the time the cast and I have finished drawing our graph on
a long roll of newsprint, it’s usually about eight metres long!

The idea of the cross-section is provocative, and I might start to develop graphic
representations of dramatic structure in 3D. There are other possibilities. Given that the y-
axis of the graph is somewhat of a mystery, could it be that I will spend some time
developing different graphs for different ideas of what the graph is somewhat of a mystery,
could it be that I will spend some time developing different graphs for different ideas of
what the y-axis might be. For example, a separate graph for each of these:

- Feeling
- Tension
- Understanding

I could do each of these graphs on tracing paper and lay them over each other.

Other possible experiments might include actual 3D models of the structure – done on
computer or done by the cast with papier-mâché. I don’t know what new models these might
be, but I have a hunch that the next phase of the research is to do with ‘trying out’ new ways
of graphically representing the dramatic structure.

**THE CROSS SECTION AND THEATRICAL STRUCTURE**

I am going to briefly borrow two words from Saussure:[27] the analysis of dramatic structure is
diachronic and synchronic. The structure is observed as something that develops and evolves in
time; it is also observed to be an assemblage of states or conditions:

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[27] Saussure, Ferdinand de. Course in General Linguistics. Translated by Wade Baskin. New York:
I must qualify this reference immediately. In no way am I about to do a Saussurian or structural/linguistic analysis of dramatic structure. I hope the mention of Saussure isn’t a red herring. The concepts of horizontality and verticality of structure implicit in the terms ‘diachronic’ and ‘synchronic’ helped me in this nascent phase of thinking about dramatic structure.

I have attempted the term ‘quality’, ‘pressure’, ‘development’, ‘significance’, but have found them all inadequate.

Diachronic structure is easy – this happens, then that happens, in this time, at this time. The synchronic analysis is harder – and it is here that the real emotional, psychological, dramatic material of the play or drama exists and develops – this is what is really happening.

It is not impossible to use this simple graph – indeed it is very useful. If gesture is a movement, then there is a gesture of inevitability, of directing, of motivity, of motion, significance. There is a direction, as the story or drama moves from one development point to another, as an architectural structure moves from one support to another. The problem for the actor is in translating this from a two-dimensional model into the three or more dimensions of the stage or movie/television set. It is possible to encourage the actors to move to their feet and into the space as soon as possible, but there is a constant tension between the analysis and the performance – in rehearsal it is possible to make the rehearsal a part of the analysis by moving bodies around.

But what is really happening in the play at any one moment? The two dimensional map feels inadequate, and the free-to-move actors feel too free and not clear or specific enough.

How to develop an analytical tool which takes into consideration – and really indicates the things that are important in any moment? Like atmosphere, texture, effort, yielding, fighting, release, bound, colour, strength etc. The two dimensional graph becomes loaded with words that then have to be translated into the multi-dimensional world of the space. The words in a way inhabit a two dimensional space, but actors inhabit a space of at least three dimensions.
It is traumatic – but common – for actors to make the transition from ‘page to stage’. Many directors sit for at least a week with the actors around a table analysing the text as text. Structure will be discussed and perhaps noted. Units of action, individual actions, given circumstances, objectives etc will be discussed and often set down.

Then at some point the actors have to stand up and inhabit the space. It might not sound traumatic, but most actors describe the experience as traumatic.

Meyerhold recommended beginning to ‘compose’ as soon as possible.

The idea of a cross section has emerged as a possible graphic tool. Imagine the play is a cathedral. The $x$-axis, or ‘duration’ is dramatized by an imagined walk from one end of the church to the other. The $y$-axis, or ‘quality’, of the journey is affected by the volume and content of the interior and has the benefit of being expressed in three dimensions. The play is ‘inside’ the cathedral, or the play is the inside of the cathedral. The walker – who is the audience, the actor and the play itself – walks from one end to the other – usually entering from the western door and proceeding in an easterly direction toward the sanctuary. Along the way dramatic ‘events’ or ‘gestures’ may occur, ‘performed’ by architectural details such as pillars, bays, clerestory windows, side-chapels, altarpieces, the baptistery and font, confessional doors, memorial plaques and sculptures, or stations of the cross. If the walker detours into a private chapel or confessional, or examines a plaque or ‘honour-roll’, a ‘sub-plot’ is enacted. The atmosphere changes, the texture of the experience changes, the light changes, the acoustic or resonance changes. When he gets to the transverse, a ‘climax’ occurs, especially if there is a cupola – everything changes – an expansive world opens up above him. Then, if he is able to walk further, there is the transformative power of the altar, sanctuary and choir.

The walker has ‘walked through’ the structure of the drama, represented by the interior of a church. I don’t think that we need necessarily use known churches as models of dramatic structure, but perhaps imagined ‘generic’ churches or cathedrals, such as this drawing:
The ‘graph’ is depicted by the highs and lows of the ceiling, and the ‘quality’ or synchronic structure of each moment is depicted by the interior ‘events’.

How do we create this three dimensional structure? We need to start with the diachronic – the ‘time-line’ – we could draw this on the floor of the rehearsal space. Then I would ask the actors to move along the line as we analyze the play – making chalk marks to distinguish the major sections. We could be working simultaneously on paper, to get the first bit of the structure right. We would mark the three sections of the play, the Complication, Turning Point and Denouement. Then we would work through these major sections bit by bit. I would ask the actors to allow their imaginations to work, and their bodies and voices to express their imaginative flights. I would also ask the actors to bring to rehearsal objects that they thought were appropriate for certain bits of the play. ‘This section feels like the surface of a hollow egg to me’. Great – then we line these objects up and perhaps use them in the construction of the three dimensional model.

I should point out now that this is not like a stage designer’s or architect’s model, though the stage designer would be welcome to participate in this process and used material in the stage design. The set model is a model of the stage – this is a model of the psyche of the play or the soul of the play or the mind of the play.

As we continue to build and explore gestures, textures, strong bits, weak bits, we might physically build a model – or create this on a CAD tool.
MY PRACTICE

I will outline the process of analyzing and graphing dramatic structure that I have used pre PhD, then I will often refer back to this when describing the case study projects, as much of the process is the same in each.

FINDING THE STRUCTURE

Here I will describe my usual process, focusing on structure, leaving out the other aspects of preparation and rehearsal such as ‘character’, ‘blocking’, ‘business’, prosody and other aspects of language, and so on.

Creative preparatory exercises designed to awaken the body and the imagination, such as Feldenkrais, Authentic Movement, Journey Work, Laban work, meditation, body/voice warm-up linked to the text at hand, etc.

Read through Impressions Sections Units/events Structure

When working on the structure, it is good to have a blackboard or whiteboard to sketch on. I introduce the cast to the idea of the structure. The idea is to work from the broad to the narrow, or the general to the specific. Just as an architect might sketch an idea for a museum on the back of an envelope, then refine and refine and refine that idea until it becomes plans, elevations and detailed renderings, so do we start with a sketch. First we read the play out loud and discuss, draw, write and, if everyone feels comfortable enough, ‘move’ our impressions. I encourage the actors to bring research material to these early rehearsals, including pictures, bits of writing (other than the play), stories, but especially visual material, which we put up on a wall.

Divide the play/scene/screenplay/teleplay into three sections.

Michael Chekhov calls them ‘psychological divisions’. The finding of the structure is a process of ever-narrowing hunches. First we just guess where the divisions of the play might be, then we go back to the text, test it, have another go, and so on, until we have three sections that we’re pretty happy with. We try and give them names – if nothing fun or profound comes up, simply Section One, Section Two and Section Three will be fine. Even so, it is good to be able to identify the differences between the sections. Section One might be ‘Blue’, Section Two ‘The Forest’, Section Three ‘Marriage’ or whatever makes sense to us – there must be a majority consensus, otherwise it’s just a directorial imposition. Most directors I’ve worked with, read about and heard about aren’t troubled by the idea of ‘directorial

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28 For the sake of brevity, I will refer to ‘the play’.
imposition’ – indeed, it is precisely what most of them do. I however believe that the director is there to serve and inspire the actors. I do have set ideas about certain things like never bringing a foregone ‘interpretation’ to the process, but they are intended to bring out the best in the actor, and to allow the actor to have agency over the whole show, not just their own individual performances. Once we have settled on where the sections are and what they’re called, we start building the Graph. At this stage it’s very rudimentary, but helpful in terms of getting a grasp of the whole. It might look something like this:

![Figure 8. A first draft graph showing the sections of a play.](image)

It is usually drawn in a temporary way on a white board or in pencil, as it is subject to many changes. This allows and encourages continual adjustment, debate, questioning, imagining, and engagement with the process.

Units or events. This is a jump forward in terms of detail. If we were working strictly from the ‘broad’ to the ‘narrow’, we would probably try and draw the structure of the play now, including the three main dramatic moments – Complication, Turning Point and Catastrophe (or Dénouement), then refine this further with minor climaxes, or ‘auxiliary climaxes’ as Michael Chekhov calls them. The reason I skip at this point to Units or Events is because it’s the process that helps us all get to know the play in such intimate detail that the underlying structure starts to emerge. I could just impose the Graph on the play and tell the actors, ‘This is the structure, now let’s do the Units’, but if we work on the Units first, we come to the underlying structure with a deep familiarity of the play and what’s really going on in it – as the reader will see, this familiarity will be crucial to the working out of the structure.

I lay things out on the floor – pages of text, a roll of butcher’s paper or newsprint.

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Figure 9. Starting to organize the structure of The Weather and Your Health.

Once we have ‘nailed down’ the structure, I then like to work out of sequence – certainly not in chronological order. This has to do with mapping. If we work out of order, the actor must work hard to ‘map’ in his/her mind where we are on the graph, whereas if we merely go from the start of the play to the finish, the actors get lazy – the play starts well and gets worse – working out of sequence the actor must find the unique energy of each bit – then we put it together and there’s energy in each transition from bit to bit.

In graphing the structure, we draft & re-draft, but once it’s set, it’s set and must be followed. The actors really like the security of this.

Every character also has his/her structure. I urge actors to do this – we usually don’t have time in rehearsal to do it for every character. If you take out all your character’s bits and type them up into one long speech, you can work out the structure of the role quite easily – and with Shakespeare it works beautifully. I won’t do an analysis of a role here, as I’m concerned with the structure of the whole – for another time.

When working on the structure with actors in rehearsal, I ask them, ‘What is the meaning of the vertical coordinate?’

Answers have included:

- tension
- development
- drama
- atmosphere

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31 John Bell does this for all his roles, and can be seen before each performance on stage, going through the character’s ‘long breath’.
‘dramacy’ – coined by my next-door neighbour in Wagga Wagga who suggested I ‘patent’ the neologism – apart from its awkward sound, it’s a pretty good pointer to what is going on.

Some ideas from me have included:

- the Journey
- revelation
- descent into the Dionysian Abyss

This is the only way I can approach a play. Adding up the number of lines, looking for vestigial clues, forming a ‘grid’ of the play.

Can the ‘drama’ or ‘dramacy’ of the y coordinate be calculated with the accuracy of a graph representing Gross Domestic Product? Maybe it’s closer to Consumer Sentiment, but the answer is, roughly, no. We all have to agree and we take a number of stabs at it, but the general rule is, the more ‘dramatic’ the climax, the more vertical the incline of the line.

Duration is measured by units of action, not time. Units of action roughly equate to page numbers.

There are two results of working on the dramatic structure. Not only is the structure revealed, but the ‘meaning’ of the play is also revealed. In 2005 I worked on two productions of Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* at the same time with two different student casts. As the play is not as clearly defined as a Shakespeare play, with line numbers supplied, the ‘counting’ work of graphing the structure is a little bit less precise. With one cast we came up with a structure that looked more or less the same as the other one, but the Turning Point was in a different place, by a few pages. One Turning Point made the story ‘about’ Natasha and her triumph; the other made the play ‘about’ Masha. Complications and Catastrophes could be supplied to support either thesis, and were. I’m not going to give a full analysis of *Three Sisters* here, but this is a vivid example of how analyzing the structure imposes and reveals.

I was rather surprised to ‘discover’ the Turning Point of *Othello*. I would have thought that Othello’s raving over the handkerchief was the Turning Point, but the ‘discovery’ of ‘Look to your wife’ (ACT 3, Scene 3, line 199) felt and has always since felt completely right.

How do we perform this act of revealing and imposing?

It was Shakespeare who first taught me about symmetrical or ‘neoclassical’ structure.

With Shakespeare, it’s easy. Just count the number of lines, divide them in half, then those halves in half again, and you’ve got it – almost. Of course you have to have read the play and have a good impression of what the story is, though you might not necessarily know what it’s ‘about’. Indeed, this might be a mystery to you right to the end of rehearsals, or never revealed at all. The Complication, Turning Point and Catastrophe, as I’ve said, all occur at points that can be predicted to within a few lines if you count and divide – but those few lines can make all the difference. If you don’t know what the story is, and have a hunch about what the themes are, what the conflicts are, what the dangers are and the possible resolutions, then you might get it terribly, irrelevantly, wrong.
We can ‘discover’, as I have indicated, the structure of Shakespeare’s *Othello*, for example, very easily: count the number of lines in the play, divide by half, and you have the Turning Point: from Turning Point back to the start of the play divide in half again, and you have the Complication: from the Turning Point to the end of the play, divide in half and you have the Catastrophe. The way to test if you’ve hit the right spot, and if the formula is relevant, is to briefly interrogate the discovered moment and ask what it has to do with the overall plot, themes and conflict. We know that *Othello*, in a nutshell, is about the Moor Othello, whose ‘ensign’ Iago leads him to believe that his wife Desdemona has been unfaithful with his lieutenant Michael Cassio. The result is, predictably, catastrophic. Using So, using the lineation of the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition, and applying the mathematical formula, the number of lines in the play is 3140. Therefore the Turning Point should happen at ‘line 1570’. Of course there is no ‘line 1570’ – some extra maths are required to add up the lines of each scene and calculate where the 1570th line of the play will occur – as it happens, it should occur at ACT 3, Scene 3, line 210. That line in this edition is:

**IAGO**

> Why, go to then!

which isn’t very inspiring or illuminating. Just a little looking around, though, will reveal at Line 199:

**IAGO**

> Look to your wife.

At first glance this doesn’t seem terribly interesting either, considering that the whole thrust of ACT 3, Scene 3 is the ‘temptation’ of Othello.

With a play like *Othello* I could come to the first rehearsal with the actors and simply show them my graph, ready-made. I find it’s always best, though, to do this work before meeting the actors, then conduct a guided but precariously open discussion with the actors regarding the structure.

It’s dangerous, but I prefer to leave myself open to being completely wrong about all of this. If an actor can convince me that the structure of *Othello* isn’t symmetrical at all, but based on say, the Golden Section, then I’ll be corrected. This has never happened. Not because I’m necessarily right, but because most actors haven’t thought about this before. They are usually delighted and interested in the idea of symmetrical structure.

Take a play like Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*. I once worked on four productions at the same time, with different groups of student actors. Each cast and I discussed the structure exhaustively and the discussion was guided by the principle that we would impose the idea of structure on our production, but that the structure of our production would be revealed by our analysis and passionate discussion.

In general we look for a new law by the following process. First we guess it. Then we compute the consequences of the guess to see what would be implied if this law that we guessed is right. Then we compare the result of the computation to nature, with experiment or experience, compare it directly with observation, to see if it works. If it disagrees with experiment it is wrong. In that simple statement is the key to science. It does not make any difference how

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beautiful your guess is. It does not make any difference how smart you are, who
made the guess, or what his name is – if it disagrees with experiment it is
wrong.\textsuperscript{33}

If we substitute the word ‘structure’ for ‘law’ this is an apt description of my experience of
the practical process of ‘discovering’ the structure of a play.

I will take an initial stab at the structure, especially if I have limited time, by finding roughly
the middle of the play (again, I am presuming a symmetrical or ‘neoclassical’ structure). This
might be done as crudely as opening the book or pile of pages in what appears visually to be
the middle. If that doesn’t yield anything, I might count the number of pages and divide by
half. I will always look for the Turning Point first. The rest follows. If that doesn’t work I
might count the number of lines per page and then do a quick sum, attempting to find the
middle of the play. Unless it’s Shakespeare, the ‘middle’ of the play isn’t always obvious, nor
is the Turning Point necessarily in the absolute ‘middle’ anyway, but I use a symmetrical
model to start my investigation.

I remember very well using this rough process when preparing \textit{The Feigned Inconstancy}. I had
very little time to ponder, as my employer chose the play and sent it to me not long before
rehearsals began. I got it at the same time as the actors – so in fact I ended up doing most of
this structural work with the actors. I would normally prefer to go into rehearsals with a solid
idea of the structure.

Using the quotation above, I will apply Feynman’s ‘script’ to the analysis of \textit{The Feigned
Inconstancy}.

\textit{First we guess it.}

The Play is 71 pages long, starting on page 321 of the volume of plays from which it was
copied.

Turning point \hspace{1em} = \hspace{1em} p. 321 + 35 \hspace{1em} = \hspace{1em} p. 356?

Complication \hspace{1em} = \hspace{1em} p. 321 + 17 \hspace{1em} = \hspace{1em} p. 338?

Catastrophe \hspace{1em} = \hspace{1em} p. 321 + 52 \hspace{1em} = \hspace{1em} p. 373?

Remember, the Turning Point is in the dead centre of the play, the Complication one quarter
the way through, and the Catastrophe three quarters the way through.

Then we compute the consequences of the guess to see what would be implied if this law that we guessed is
right.

What are the consequences of the guess? Does it ‘work’? What would be implied if this guess
were right?

Take the Turning Point first:

I read over page 356. There’s certainly a ‘big’ moment when the Captain begs the Countess
not to delay their marriage,

\textsuperscript{33} From a lecture by Richard Feynman, quoted in Gribbin, John. \textit{Almost Everyone’s Guide to Science}.
CAPTAIN

Dearest madam, I have told you I cannot live in this prospect of postponement. My devotion to your person is so entire, delay must kill me.

That’s big, but is this what the play is ‘about’?

This doesn’t ‘feel’ right. The play is called The Feigned Inconstancy, not The Postponed Marriage. Putting the Turning Point here would lead the actors and audience to believe that this moment is somehow the crux of the play, revealing its deepest dramatic current or force. The play is not really ‘about’ the Countess and the Captain, but as yet, I’m not sure exactly what it is about.

If this guess were right then the play would appear to be about the courtship between the Captain and the Countess, and the delay of their marriage is so important that it is placed in the dead centre of the play. No, this is not what the play is about. I need to find out why the Countess has delayed her marriage to the Captain.

Note that I am still maintaining the idea of a symmetrical model in all of this. That is my overriding assumption. It will take a lot of disproving to dissuade me from this belief that the play will have been constructed by the playwright symmetrically.

Then we compare the result of the computation to nature, with experiment or experience, compare it directly with observation, to see if it works. If it disagrees with experiment it is wrong.

The ‘experiment’ was very simple; based on a guess, but guided by a model or principle, I tested the guess. I found the numerical middle of the play and compared the result with my instinct and understanding of what this play might be about. The experiment didn’t work. It disagreed with experiment, so it was wrong.

It does not make any difference how smart you are, who made the guess, or what his name is – if it disagrees with experiment it is wrong.

Still believing that the play will be more or less symmetrical, I look around, within a few pages of the first attempt.

What is the value of a graphic representation of structure? Shouldn’t it be felt and experienced? Why ‘scientize’ feelings and experiences like this? Isn’t it alien to the practice of an actor and the lived experience of an audience present at a performance?

I like to read the Great Ones on many subjects, not only the ones that are in ‘my field’. For example, today I have learned a great deal that is relevant to the PhD from listening to an interview on ABC Radio National, The Philosopher’s Zone. An interview with a philosopher of the history of science, Stephen Gaukroger. As often happens, there were many moments that felt like the flick of an electrical switch. The ‘light’ that went on was the light of recognition. It’s not necessarily that the Great Ones speak an Eternal Truth (though they might – I wouldn’t know), but they put into words things that I had previously ‘felt’ to be true, but didn’t know or wasn’t able to express. Or to put it another way, they can identify in words the things that I didn’t know I knew. Or another way still, they use words to illuminate the darkness. Or to put it in a Nietzshean way, they use ‘story’ to give form to the Dionysian
chao. So, to use another visual metaphor, the process is like raising a shipwreck, hitherto buried in the deep – we knew it was there, but didn’t know in what condition or what stories the retrieval would tell of the shipwreck.

The process of imposing a visual representation of structure on a performance is the opposite. We go through the contents of the wreck then bury it – we’ll know it’s there, but it won’t be exactly in our conscious mind.

The structure of a drama can be ‘excavated’ quite easily, especially if the playwright has followed the rules of symmetry, but the ‘feel’ of the structure is a mysterious art. The efficacy of using and enacting the structure as indicated by the playwright ‘feels’ right for actors and audience, but its efficacy can’t be proven. Its effect on an audience is certainly invisible to the audience themselves. They will know they are ‘gripped’ by the story, the action and the drama, and they will know when they are not. It is my personal belief that the embodying of the dramatic structure, apart from the plain story and the spectacle of having it enacted in public, is the thing that keeps the audience on their toes and saves them from nodding off.

THE WELL-MADE PLAY

At the June 2007 Graduate Research Conference Peter Corrigan made a comment regarding the Well-made Play. ‘Well-made Play’ is a translation from the French pièce bien faite. It refers to a type of popular, formulaic drama or comedy exemplified by Eugène Scribe (1791-1861). The term is usually meant to be derogatory. George Bernard Shaw wrote a witty and scathing article on the Well-made Play called ‘How to Write a Popular Play’. 34 Peter Corrigan said that my work was affectionately remembering and honouring the Well-made Play, though the idea is outmoded. He was right, but I would go further. Not only do I honour the Well-made Play, but I believe that it is still relevant if not necessarily in every detail. I have from time to time, when talking casually about my PhD heard my interlocutor express a hint of a sneer as they ask, ‘Oh, you mean it’s like the Well-made Play?’ Yes it is. In fact I have a desperate need for well made plays, as most of what I see is so not well made. Even if the play isn’t well made, I need it to be well executed. ‘Made’ to me means coherently structured. The absence of structure for me is a catastrophe in the theatre – the equivalent of a marvelously beautiful building design not having any foundations. The mistake in that analogy is that such a building would never be built – but plays and performances are put on all the time that lack the foundation of structure.

I hear this all the time – that we live in a world of the five-second grab – of Twitter and instant messaging. Underground bombings can be flashed instantaneously across the world via the mobile phone camera. Therefore . . . what does this mean for the theatre practitioner? In an age when I am bombarded with information and images hurling themselves at me in their own time, I need more than ever to take control of time, duration and intensity. I need a ‘noise-canceling’ antidote to the randomness and arrhythmia of so called ‘modern’ life. Structure – I want structure. I would like to invoke Blanche DuBois, from Tennessee Williams’ A Streetcar Named Desire:

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BLANCHE

I don’t want realism.

[ . . . ]

I’ll tell you what I want. Magic! Yes, yes, magic. I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don’t tell the truth, I tell what ought to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it."³⁵

I agree with her.

When I did my first ever solo show, many years ago, I feared that no audience would be able to concentrate on one person talking for over an hour, with no revolving set, no helicopter, no animal masks. I jumped in anyway and was heartened and comforted by the fact that people could – even – even young people! Every night I sensed a similar pattern in the audience’s attention – during the first ten minutes there would be some shuffling and silent asking, ‘Is it all going to be like this?’, then at about the ten minute mark, a kind of velvet cloak would drop, encircling me and the audience – and, on a good night, I had their attention right to the end.

HOW AND WHY IT WORKS

When working with you I have noticed how specifically you make us look at the text, how we break down a scene into units, how we graph the play on a sheet of butcher’s paper. It’s almost scientific.

Watching the documentary of Blanchett and Nevin remounting Ibsen’s Hedda Gabler with the Sydney Theatre Company for a season in New York it struck me that they were trying to recreate the work by ‘feel’ – ‘I think I was here . . . and was I angry at you at this point?’ – rather than by following a structure. Your method provides a blueprint for the actor that is useful from the rehearsal stage, through the performance, and into the remounting stage if needed. The Weather and Your Health was mapped out using the old beginning middle and end graph.

As the performer it is so useful to firstly be aware of the audience and their experience, and then to know the specific moments in the play that mark changes or climaxes. I know every night I am onstage that as I start the red dress story I am starting to build towards telling the audience that ‘I married him’. The structure, or picture of the structure (the actual physical pieces of paper laid out on the floor of drama studio 2 when we created the shape of the play) are somewhere in the back of my mind as I perform. I am still present . . . it’s not that clinical. But it’s not a bad thing to be aware of the science of what you are doing . . . not if it helps the performance, and in turn the audience. It’s all about the audience. That’s why we do this. Some people seem to forget that.

I think theatre would be a much more enjoyable experience for people if the actors and directors were to employ the techniques you use! "³⁶

³⁵ From Scene 9 of Tennessee Williams’ A Streetcar Named Desire.
³⁶ Email from Bethany Simons 7 April 2009.
REVIEWING THE FIELD
literature & practice of significant others

The purpose of this section is to situate my work regarding dramatic structure within a context or sphere of influence. The reader will note the absence of chapters on Structuralism or Critical Theory. This omission is deliberate, in order to focus on the graphic representation of dramatic structure and its practical use by actors and directors. Not all the Significant Others have left behind actual graphs, and where that is the case, I will demonstrate how they have provoked or suggested graphic representation.

ARISTOTLE

ARISTOTLE ON DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

Rather than launch into an analysis of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, I will discuss the graphs drawn by O. B. Hardison in his commentary to the Leon Golden translation of the *Poetics*.37

![Figure 10. Aristotle’s ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ plots as drawn by O. B. Hardison.](image-url)

![Figure 11. Aristotle’s ‘Fortunate Plot’ as drawn by O. B. Hardison.](image-url)

Hardison says, ‘A visual outline of a ‘fortunate’ plot will clarify what Aristotle seems to be getting at:’40 This is a delightfully insouciant statement, tossed off as if to shame me into embarrassment over my laborious and tortured examination of ‘graphic representation of dramatic structure’! But of course, I’m grateful, and agree with him – a sketch certainly helps clarify what – in my case – the playwright – is getting at.

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38 Aristotle, p. 166.


40 Aristotle, p. 154.
Figure 12. Aristotle’s ‘Fortunate’ and ‘Fatal’ plots as drawn by O. B. Hardison.¹¹

Figure 13. Aristotle’s ‘Transposed’ (‘mucked up’) plots as drawn by O. B. Hardison.¹²

Figure 14. Aristotle’s ‘flat’ structure as drawn by O. B. Hardison.¹³

Figure 10, above, shows confusing ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ where they shouldn’t be, according to Aristotle’s rules of good structure. It might be useful (though perhaps disheartening) to ‘graph’ a bad play or movie according to this principle. Even without doing so, I am certain that the problem of ‘transposition’ described here is a key to the failure of the majority of writing. In practice though, the play might be evenly and symmetrically plotted or structured – let’s take any Shakespeare play as an example – but the direction and performance betray the structure by ‘overdoing’ and ‘underdoing’ the wrong bits, thereby giving the play the appearance of a sloppy structure.

This is another common structural fault, elegantly described with a simple graph. This structure is common to the ‘Biopic’, and can be described verbally thus: ‘this happened, then this happened next’ – even though the life might be full of interest and ‘drama’, the structure as written into a screenplay seems all the same. If ‘truth is stranger than fiction’, and the so-oft-repeated aphorism ‘if it was in a movie you wouldn’t believe it!’ is true, then why must truth be ‘flatter’ than fiction? A recent example is the movie Der Baader Meinhof Komplex (2009, directed by Uli Edel). What an exciting time in history and what a fascinating group of people . . . and what a flat movie! A classic case of ‘this happened, then this happened next’. In an attempt to be ‘faithful’ to the real story, each event is given about the same dramatic intensity as the next, with the effect that none of them matters more or less than the last. My first comment on leaving the cinema when I saw it was, ‘Bring back the Studio System!’ H. B. Warner would have insisted on a romance between Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader. I agree, and would have them played by Bette Davis and Paul Henreid!

Playwrights seem to be much more imaginative than screenplay writers in depicting real stories and the lives of real people on stage – Brecht’s Galileo, Stoppard’s Travesties, Hare’s Fanshen, Brenton’s Christie in Love, Terry Johnson’s Insignificance, and hundreds, possibly

¹¹ Aristotle, p. 142.
¹² Aristotle, p. 147.
¹³ Aristotle, p. 148.
thousands of others are as far as imaginable from ‘this happened, then this happened next’ dramas).

Figure 15. An ‘extrapolation’ of Aristotle’s ‘flat’ structure based on my observation.

This is how I would draw the effect of the Aristotelian ‘flat line’, and certainly the graph of how I feel when I see one of these dramas, both in the cinema and in the theatre. This droopy structure is also endemic in young actors’ audition pieces, of which I have seen too many. They often start off well, but because they have rehearsed them from start to finish, in the same order, over and over again, the thing generally loses puff by about half way through, as does the poor viewer.

To return to Aristotle’s, ‘flat’ structure for a moment, the graph suggests stable, low energy, especially if we are familiar with the ‘triangle’ and its representation of building dramatic force. The flat structure looks like it starts with low energy and stays there. In my observation this flat graph represents a much more common, but opposite problem: the ‘every scene a climax’ problem. This was part of the problem in Bader Meinhof and is often seen in new theatre work by auteur directors. When every scene is ‘outrageous’, the structure is ‘flat’.

This is mainly a problem in production or performance. Even if a script is flat, the director and actors can impose a structure on it and make it work dramatically – because ‘dramatically’ does not refer only to plot – and here I wander off from the Aristotelian path – ‘dramatically’ refers to drama, and how to draw drama is really the subject of this PhD.

For the reader’s interest, one movie I can think of that uses ‘flat’ structure and makes it work triumphantly is Billy Wilder’s 1961 Cold War farce; One, Two, Three, based on a play by Ferenc Molnár. The movie starts at fever-pitch and stays there throughout its 115 minute duration. The hysterical, repetitious rhythm of the movie induces a sort of sensitive fatigue in the viewer akin to sleep-deprivation, which might not be pleasant exactly, but it’s exciting!

SHAKESPEARE

The structure of Shakespeare’s Othello is discussed in some detail throughout this document. In this section I will filter my own observations of how Shakespeare uses dramatic structure
through the opinions of two highly influential Shakespeare critics, A. C. Bradley, and Harley Granville-Barker.

A. C. BRADLEY ON SHAKESPEARE

Bradley’s *Construction in Shakespeare’s Tragedies* chapter is a very good introduction to dramatic structure generally, and a good guide for students approaching the idea for the first time. Bradley mentions Freytag’s *Teknik des Dramas* in a footnote and says it is ‘a book which deserves to be much better known than it appears to be to Englishmen interested in the drama.’ I agree with him.

STRUCTURE

He makes a very interesting statement that I think I understand and agree with:

[. . . ] it must be remembered that our point of view in examining the construction of a play will not always coincide with that which we occupy in thinking of its whole dramatic effect.

This seems at first glance to be contradictory – doesn’t the playwright ‘construct’ the play solely to heighten ‘dramatic effect’? I think there is a crux here regarding what dramatic structure is all about. In *Othello*, for example, the audience’s *impression* of what’s going on doesn’t necessarily coincide with the intention of the playwright, actors and director, both in terms of the development of the plot and the vicissitudes of the protagonist. The audience is focused on the outward conflict between Iago’s intentions toward Othello and Othello’s intentions toward Desdemona. Othello striking Desdemona in public, in ACT 4, Scene 1 is a terrible sight, and a low point in terms of the relationship between Othello and Desdemona, but it registers on the structure or ‘construction’ merely as a minor climax. Iago’s quiet warning/curse ‘Look to your wife’ in ACT 3, Scene 3 is devastating, for Othello, his stability, his fate, and therefore for the structure. Bradley’s ‘zenith’, the reunion of Othello and Desdemona, is structurally no more than a very beautiful part of the Exposition.

In the chapter *Construction in Shakespeare’s Tragedies* Bradley give a very clear exposition of the tripartite structure, the meaning and matter of Exposition, Development and Conclusion, with examples of how Shakespeare does it.

As a Shakespearean tragedy represents a conflict which culminates in a catastrophe, any such tragedy may roughly be divided into three parts.

He discusses the role of *tension* in the drama. Then, when discussing the matter in the main conflict or development, he discusses the alternation of ‘hope’ and ‘fear’ in terms of the audience’s concerns for the protagonist:

. . . or rather of a mixed state predominantly hopeful and a mixed state predominantly apprehensive.

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46 Bradley, p. 29 (footnote 2).
47 Bradley, p. 35.
48 Bradley, p. 30.
49 Bradley, p. 37.
I suspect that as the conflict proceeds, these feelings alternate with increasing rapidity.

He describes succinctly and usefully the transition from Exposition to Development:

Its completion is generally marked in the mind of the reader by a feeling that the action it contains is for the moment complete but has left a problem.\textsuperscript{51}

We come now to the conflict itself.\textsuperscript{52}

**TURNING POINT**

In all the tragedies, though more clearly in some than in others, one side is distinctly felt to be on the whole advancing up to a certain point in the conflict, and then to be on the whole declining before the reaction of the other. There is therefore felt to be a critical point in the action, which proves also to be a turning point. It is critical sometimes in the sense that, until it is reached, the conflict is not, so to speak, clenched; one of the two sets of forces might subside, or a reconciliation might somehow be effected; while, as soon as it is reached, we feel this can no longer be. [...] This Crisis, as a rule, comes somewhere near the middle of the play; and where it is well marked it has the effect, as to construction, of dividing the play into five parts instead of three; these parts showing (1) a situation not yet one of conflict, (2) the rise and development of the conflict, in which A or B advances on the whole till it reaches (3) the Crisis, on which follows (4) the decline of A or B towards (5) the Catastrophe.\textsuperscript{53}

But then Bradley seems to confuse the Crisis with the rise in the protagonist’s fortunes. Though he says that the Crisis usually occurs ‘near the middle of the play’, he then says that Macbeth’s Crisis occurs early in the play when he achieves the crown, having committed regicide to achieve it.\textsuperscript{54} Therefore, I’m not sure if Bradley’s ‘Crisis’ is the same as my ‘Turning Point’, which does occur in the middle of the play, when Banquo’s son Fleance escapes Macbeth’s murderous exploits, thus fulfilling the Witches’ prophecy that Banquo would father kings and thus destabilising Macbeth’s world. This is Macbeth’s first ‘failure’ in the play, which is important, as up to then he believes he is invincible (as does Lady Macbeth). This is the beginning of Macbeth’s headlong fall from his ‘zenith’.

Bradley and I agree that Hamlet’s ‘zenith’ is also the Crisis or Turning Point of the play. This is the moment in ACT 3, Scene 2, during the ‘play’, *The Mousetrap* where the Player King is poisoned in his sleep, followed closely by Claudius’ hurried exit. Hamlet has publicly revealed to Claudius that he knows how Claudius killed Hamlet’s father. Claudius leaves, probably in a rage, and Hamlet’s fate is sealed.

Bradley announces on page 41 that ‘The case of Othello is more peculiar’ though I think his analysis is peculiar. *Othello* conforms perfectly to Bradley’s own exposition of Shakespeare’s dramatic technique – the conflict between ‘A’ and ‘B’ (Othello and Iago) progresses until the Crisis or Turning Point at ACT 3, Scene 3, line 199. But Bradley claims that Othello reaches his zenith early in the play when he is reunited with Desdemona. Certainly that is the

\textsuperscript{50} Bradley, pp. 37-38.
\textsuperscript{51} Bradley, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{52} Bradley, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{53} Bradley, p. 38-39.
\textsuperscript{54} Bradley, p. 39.
happiest the Othello can be, but he doesn’t start to go ‘downhill’ until after that moment in ACT 3.

CATASTROPHE

Bradley’s ‘catastrophe’ is different from mine. For him it is the actual death or deaths that are precipitated by my ‘catastrophe’. In Othello his catastrophe is the death of Desdemona, the exposing of Iago’s plot and Othello’s suicide. In my structure the Catastrophe is the moment Othello, convinced of Desdemona’s guilt forces her to swear she is honest. She swears by Heaven (sort of), thereby damning herself and deciding her fate in Othello’s mind. From this Catastrophe flow the physical embodiments of that ‘seed’.

TENSION

I think for Bradley, the ‘dramatic force’ of the y-axis is ‘tension’:

There are, of course, in the action certain places where the tension in the minds of the audience becomes extreme. [. . .] But, in addition, there is, all through the tragedy, a constant alternation rises and falls in this tension or in the emotional pitch of the work, a regular sequence of more exciting and less exciting sections. Some kind of variation of pitch is to be found, of course, in all drama, for it rests on the elementary facts that relief must be given after emotional strain, and that contrast in required to bring out the full force of an effect. But a good drama of our own time shows nothing approaching to the regularity with which in the plays of Shakespeare and of his contemporaries the principle is applied.55

HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER
ON SHAKESPEARE

STRUCTURE

A sampling of Granville-Barker’s chapter headings reveals the following hints at analysis of dramatic structure:

Hamlet
A first movement
A second movement
A third movement

King Lear
The main lines of construction

The Merchant of Venice
The construction of the play

Antony and Cleopatra
The plays’ construction
The play’s construction, continued

Cymbeline

55 Bradley, p. 37.
The play’s construction

Othello

The shaping of the play

Examination of the play’s shaping, continued

Julius Caesar

The play’s structure

He talks about the ‘three movements’ of Hamlet, even though there are five acts and twenty-or-so scenes, depending on the editor. This accords with Aristotle’s ‘beginning, middle and end’ and the ‘three movement structure’ of Hollywood movies. ‘The play’s construction’ and ‘the shaping of the play’ are very promising, and help describe what I would call ‘dramatic structure’ but he disappointingly doesn’t really do what he announces.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Granville-Barker’s analysis of Antony and Cleopatra has a chapter headed ‘The Play’s Construction’, which is encouraging, but he starts the chapter thus:

We should never, probably, think of Shakespeare as sitting down to construct a play as an architect must design a house, in the three dimensions of its building. His theatre did not call for this, as the more rigorous economics of modern staging may be said to do. He was liker to a musician, master of an instrument, who takes a theme and, by generally recognized rules, improvises on it; or even to an orator, so accomplished that he can carry a complex subject through a two-hour speech, split it up, run it by divers channels, digress, but never for too long, and at last bring the streams abreast again to blend them in his peroration. Clarity of statement, a sense of proportion, of the value of contrast, justness of emphasis—in these lie the technique involved; and these, it will be found, are the dominant qualities of Shakespeare’s stagecraft—of the craft merely, be it understood.56

I disagree completely. Surely Shakespeare was the master of the craft of the organisational ‘architecture’ in his plays. Architecture certainly comes to my mind when looking at their perfectly symmetrical construction – as symmetrical as a Classical pediment.

Granville-Barker’s simile comparing Shakespeare with a musician is a good one, but surely we can also say that music has an ‘architecture’. Music critics talk about the architecture of music all the time.

Later in the same chapter Granville-Barker suggests, when describing ACT 3, Scene 6:

[ . . . ] the play’s crisis is to come [shortly, in the next scene]. These scenes are preparation for it, no more; they must be dept tense, but low in tone.57

This is a wonderfully apt direction to the director and actors as to how to ‘play’ the dramatic structure.

Then he talks about the next scene, ACT 3, Scene 7, lines 1-15:

For from this it is that disaster springs; this is the beginning of the end.

Yet we are but half way through the play;58

‘The beginning of the end’ is an excellent way of describing the Turning Point, though he doesn’t call it that. ‘The beginning of the end’ could be a way of saying, as I frequently do, when describing what a Turning Point is, to students and actors, ‘It’s the point after which nothing can ever be the same again’ and ‘the point at which the play start hurtling toward its inevitable conclusion’. If we go along with Aristotle’s (and Freytag’s) ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ action, with the centre point being the fulcrum upon which the action ‘tips over’, the this point is the beginning of the ‘falling’ action. The moment he describes happens to be in the ‘architectural’ centre of the play. According to my calculations, I would make the centre about 50 lines earlier, but this play in particular has many irregularities in terms of line and scene length, which probably allows us both some leeway. But in a play of over 3,000 lines, this is pretty accurate! Granville-Barker has revealed the Turning Point to be in the absolute centre of the play.

Is there a secret understanding here? Just like Muir in his Arden Shakespeare edition of Macbeth, there is a hint of some unspoken knowledge. Was this knowledge of neoclassical structure just taken for granted? Was it so familiar to everyone that it needn’t be mentioned?

Granville-Barker notes and describes the scenes containing what I would call the Complication and Catastrophe, but without paying the particular attention that he paid to the Turning Point.

All of the above might just be accidental, as Granville-Barker doesn’t make much of the major points in his analytical chapters on other plays.

Freytag claims that Antony and Cleopatra ‘lacks climax’.59

**FREYTAG**

**GUSTAV FREYTAG ON STRUCTURE**

Of the many treatises written in the 19th century on ‘The Drama’ I have chosen just a couple for specific reasons. Freytag is included because even though I didn’t know his name at the time, it was his ‘triangle’ that first guided me in the direction of the ‘rule’ of symmetrical dramatic structure. Having been perfectly happy to use this triangle for many years, I only discovered its source because of this PhD. His book *Technique of the Drama*60 is a beautiful, humane, wise and exacting compendium of observations and dicta on what drama is and what it should be in order to be effective and beautiful. A man after my own heart. Like me he believes:

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...the best source of technical rules is the plays of great poets, which still today, exercise their charm alike on reader and spectator, especially the Greek tragedies.\textsuperscript{61}

Freytag is as unafraid to write of ‘rules’ and ‘laws’ of drama as we are in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century afraid of the same. From the first words of the Introduction:

Since Aristotle established a few of the highest laws of dramatic effect, the culture of the human race has grown more than two thousand years older.\textsuperscript{62}

and:

The poet of the present is inclined to look with amazement upon a method of work in which the structure of scenes, the treatment of characters, and the sequence of effects were governed by a transmitted code of fixed technical rules.\textsuperscript{63}

This is, gloriously, ‘Old Criticism’, fearlessly advocated by critic George Steiner in his book \textit{Tolstoy or Dostoevsky}:

There is no conceivable way of demonstrating that someone who places \textit{Madame Bovary} above \textit{Anna Karenina} or considers \textit{The Ambassadors} comparable in authority and magnitude to \textit{The Possessed} is mistaken—that he has no ‘ear’ for certain essential tonalities. But such ‘tone-deafness’ can never be overcome by consequent argument... There is, moreover, no use lamenting the ‘non-demonstrability’ of critical judgments.\textsuperscript{64}

These I take to be the tenets of what one might call ‘the old criticism’... The old criticism is engendered by admiration, It sometimes steps back from the text to look upon moral purpose. It thinks of literature as existing not in isolation but as central to the play of historical and political energies. Above all, the old criticism in philosophic in range and temper.\textsuperscript{65}

By the way, Australian architect and writer Robin Boyd would qualify as an exponent of ‘Old Criticism’:

The Australian ugliness begins with fear of reality, denial of the need of the everyday environment to reflect the heart of the human problem, satisfaction with veneer and cosmetic effects, it ends in betrayal of the element of love, and a chill near the root of national self respect.\textsuperscript{66}

Gustav Freytag (1816–95) was a German playwright, novelist and theorist. He was very widely read in his day. His book \textit{The Technique of the Drama} (1863)\textsuperscript{67} was very influential up to the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, now largely forgotten, except by academics. I certainly doubt he is referred to by practitioners. He represented graphically with a drawing of a simple triangle what he thought Aristotle meant by ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ action. In my reading, I’ve hardly found more than a few graphs by other theoreticians for the next hundred years.

\begin{flushleft}  
\textsuperscript{61} Freytag, p. 7.  
\textsuperscript{62} Freytag, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{63} Freytag, p. 2.  
\textsuperscript{64} Steiner, \textit{Tolstoy or Dostoevsky}, p. 8.  
\end{flushleft}
There have been others beside Freytag – for example, he was preceded by Gotthold Lessing (1729-81) who, in his *Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1768) engaged in a deep interpretation of Aristotle, focusing on pity and fear, rather than structure. And there have surely been thousands of books written about ‘what theatre is and should be’. Some recent examples are Stanislaw Witkiewicz (1885-1939 and his *Pure Form in the Theatre* (1920); Elisabeth Woodbridge’s *The Drama: Its Law and Its Technique* (1989). Woodbridge refers to Freytag. She is as thorough and interesting. Her book is worth an in-depth examination at another time; the journalistic works \(^{68}\) and Prefaces to the plays \(^{69}\) of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) are an encyclopedia of ‘what theatre is and should be’. Stanislavsky’s books on acting are a reaction against ‘what theatre is’ and a plea for ‘what theatre should be’, as are Michael Chekhov’s books *On the Technique of Acting* and *To the Director and Playwright*. They are dealt with in greater detail below. Edward Gordon Craig’s *On the Art of the Theater* was very influential in its day. Martin Esslin, Antonin Artaud, Eric Bentley, Robert Brustein – all humanist critics of theatre and enunciators of ‘what theatre is’ and ‘what theatre should be’. But the type of book represented by Freytag and Woodbridge do seem to be confined to the 19th century. Must they be?

The twentieth century books are either ‘manuals’ directed at practitioners, such as like Stanislavsky’s, imaginative polemics such as Craig’s or books of critical observation where the critic keeps a respectful distance from the practice, such as Bentley and Brustein.

> [The] very first thing to be realized is that little or no result can come from the reforming of a single craft of the theatre without at the same time, in the same theatre, reforming all the other crafts. *The whole renaissance of the Art of the Theatre depends upon the extent that this is realized*. The Art of the Theatre . . . is divided up into so many crafts: acting, scene, costume, lighting, carpentering, singing, dancing, etc., that it must be realized at the commencement that ENTIRE, not PART reform is needed; and it must be realized that one part, one craft, has a direct bearing upon each of the other crafts in the theatre, and that no result can come from fitful, uneven reform, but only from a systematic progression. Therefore, the reform of the Art of the Theatre is possible to those men alone who have studied and practised all the crafts of the theatre.\(^ {70}\)

. . . except structure. The only reference I can find in his exhilarating book is here:

> What the Art of the Theatre (or rather we must call it the *Work* of the Theatre at present) lacks is *form*. It spreads, it wanders, it has no form. It is this which makes the difference between the work of the Theater and the fine arts. To say that it lacks form is to say that it lacks beauty. In art, where there is no form there can be no beauty.

> How then can it obtain this form? Only by developing slowly under the laws. And these laws? I have searched for them, and I believe I am finding some of them . . . . \(^ {71}\)

And there he tantalizingly breaks off his diatribe!

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\(^{70}\) Craig, p. 177.

But back to Freytag. The particularly appealing quality of these 19th century writers and/or theoreticians, including Freytag, Woodbridge and Delsarte is their comprehensiveness. By observing ‘how it is done’ by the Great Ones, they suggest ‘how it might be done’ by their own contemporaries. The subtitle of Freytag’s book is *An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. This is a 19th century *Poetics* intended as an observation and a guide, not just an exposition. I think all these books have a dual role of exposition and corrective or guide, with an accompanying faith in technique or ‘rules’:

It is true, and elaborate technique which determines not only the form, but also many aesthetic effects, marks out for the dramatic poetry of a period a limit and boundary within which the greatest success is attained, and to transgress which is not allowed even to the greatest genius.\(^72\)

How wonderful! What an invigorating antidote to the ‘anything goes’ fashion of today (and the near-yesterday, as complained by Craig, above!)

Freytag’s book is similar to Woodbridge’s and both are similar to the *Nātyaśāstra* insofar as their view is broad. Freytag describes the process and progress of the Drama from ‘THE IDEA.—How the drama originates in the mind of the poet.’\(^73\) through the construction of the drama, scenes, characters, and verse.

Of most interest here is the section on THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DRAMA. The chapter THE DRAMATIC ACTION is about how to put together a tragedy – the ordering of scenes – for example, where to put the ‘recognition scene’ for best effect\(^74\), the withholding of certain information to heighten dramatic effect. It also asks the questions ‘What is dramatic?’\(^75\), ‘What is probable?’\(^76\) and ‘What is tragic?’\(^77\). The next section THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DRAMA deals specifically with structure, and it is here that the famous triangle appears:

\(^72\) Freytag, p. 4.
\(^73\) Freytag, p. iii (Table of Contents).
\(^74\) Freytag, p. 102.
\(^75\) Freytag, pp. 19-277.
\(^76\) Freytag, pp. 49-51.
\(^77\) Freytag, p. 84.
Figure 16. The first appearance of the Freytag Triangle.78

FIVE PARTS AND THREE CRISSES OF THE DRAMA

Through the two halves of the action which come closely together at one point, the drama possesses — if one may symbolize its arrangement by lines — a pyramidal structure.79

Aristotle suggests that a ‘complex plot’ will be divided into two sections, divided by the ‘recognition’ or ‘reversal’ (*Poetics*, Chapter X), and he doesn’t say that the reversal or recognition will happen in the middle of the play. We presume this is what he means because that structure is so recognizable in so many plays (and in the case of this argument, movies and television shows as well).

Freytag goes on:

It [the pyramidal structure] rises from the *introduction* with the entrance of the exciting forces to the *climax*, and falls from here to the *catastrophe*. Between these three parts lie the *rise* and the *fall*. Each of these five parts may consist of a single scene, or a succession of connected scenes, but the climax is usually composed of one chief scene.

These parts of the drama, (a) introduction, (b) rise, (c) climax, (d) return or fall, (e) catastrophe, have each what is peculiar in purpose and in construction. Between them stand three important scenic effects, through which the parts are separated as well as bound together. Of these three dramatic moments, or crises, one, which indicates the beginning of the stirring action, stands between the introduction and the rise; the second, the beginning of the counteraction, between the climax and the return; the third, which must rise once more before the catastrophe, between the return and the catastrophe. They are called here the exciting moment or force, the tragic moment or force, and the moment or force of the last suspense. The operation of the first is necessary to every play; the second and third are good but not indispensable circumstances. In the following sections, therefore, the eight component parts of the drama will be discussed in their natural order.

The *Introduction* — It was the custom of the ancients to communicate in a prologue what was presupposed for the action. The prelude of Sophocles

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78 Freytag, p. 115.
79 Freytag, p. 114.
80 Freytag, pp. 114-115.
To simplify, there are five parts: (a) introduction, (b) rise, (c) climax, (d) return or fall and (e) catastrophe. The positions of these points on Freytag’s graph don’t necessarily correspond to the position they appear in a play. In fact Freytag says that the ‘rise’ or ‘complication’ might appear in different places in different plays (I don’t agree). He doesn’t insist that the ‘climax’ (or Turning Point) must appear in the middle of the play (I disagree again) and so on.

There are some interesting differences in our approaches. As a manual or guide-book, Freytag is excellent in his explanations of each of these ‘dramatic moments’ or ‘crises’ as he calls them. Rather than spend many pages doing a full analysis of Freytag, I will briefly compare our two approaches. It is interesting to do so, as my ‘approach’, though different, was at first unknowingly based on his.

The Introduction. In modern drama, a ‘situation scene’ or ‘setting-of-the-scene’. He gives the example of Greek plays where the Introduction is actually a Prologue, with its own internal structure.81

The Exciting Force.

The beginning of the excited action (complication) occurs at a point where, in the soul of the hero, there arises a feeling or volition which becomes the occasion of what follows; or where the counter-play resolves to use its lever to set the hero in motion.82

On page 121 Freytag uses the example of Othello and Richard III. He says the exciting force in Richard happens at the very start of the play.

I think in the case of the ‘feeling or volition’ he is talking about, for example, the ‘ambition’ of Macbeth, and in the ‘counter-play’ he is referring to, for example, the plot undertaken by Iago to destroy Othello.

So there is the sense of the hero’s ‘feeling or volition’ rising to its uppermost peak (at the climax) then falling or toppling under the influence of the Tragic Force (see below), and the sense of the ‘counter-play’ reaching its own uppermost peak, measured by success – for example, the moment of Iago’s triumph in the third Act of Othello.83

Bradley seems to follow Freytag to a degree.84 He too sees the rising action as being a metaphor for the hero’s ‘rise’ to his ‘zenith’.

Freytag’s ‘exciting force’ should be distinguished from Stanislavsky’s ‘Inciting Incident’, which is the event that happens before the start of the play that gets the play started. For example, Othello and Desdemona marry just before the play starts, and the first scene of the play places us in the middle of the commotion caused by that event.

Freytag takes a psychological approach, rooting the movement of the ‘graph’ in the psychology and motives of the hero rather than external forces or ‘plot’.

81 Freytag, pp. 115-121.
82 Freytag, p. 121.
83 Either Scene 3, lines 330-334, ‘Look where he comes . . . ’ or line 480, ‘I am your own for ever.’
84 See chapter on Bradley, below.
The beginning of the excited action (complication) occurs at a point where, in the soul of the hero, there arises a feeling or volition which becomes the occasion of what follows.⁸⁵

There are times when Freytag and I disagree about details, but basically the Freytag Triangle is my model. It's symmetrical, even though Freytag doesn't specify that these apparently symmetrical-looking ‘dramatic moments’ occur symmetrically in a play. There are the same number of important points, even though we give them slightly different names. I think Freytag's 'exciting force' is better than my (and his) 'complication'. His account of what should happen during “The Rising Movement”⁸⁶ is thorough and enlightening. Freytag's 'Climax' happens roughly in the middle of the play – I agree – and it is 'the place in the piece where the results of the rising movement come out strong and decisively’⁸⁷, but I disagree with him as to how it should be handled by the playwright:

[The climax] is almost always the crowning point of a great, amplified scene, enclosed by the smaller connecting scenes of the rising, and of the falling action. The poet needs to use all the splendor of poetry, all the dramatic skill of his art, in order to make vividly conspicuous this middle point of his artistic creation.⁸⁸

As repeated throughout this document, I believe it often happens in a small, un-amplified scene such as ACT 3, scene 3 of Othello. Freytag and I happen to agree roughly on where the climax happens in Othello:

In Othello . . . the climax lies in the great scene in which Iago arouses Othello’s jealousy.⁸⁹

But we disagree on the exact spot. I presume he means Act 3, Scene 3 – though, judging by his definition, he probably means specifically lines 454-480, at the end of the scene:

OTHELLO

Never, Iago: Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne’er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne’er look back, ne’er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heav
Kneels
In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words.

IAGO

Do not rise yet.
Kneels
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
You elements that clip us round about,
Witness that here Iago doth give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong’d Othello’s service! Let him command,

⁸⁵ Freytag, p. 121.
⁸⁶ Freytag, pp. 125-128.
⁸⁷ Freytag, p. 128.
⁸⁸ Freytag, pp. 128-129.
⁸⁹ Freytag, p. 130.
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody business ever.

They rise

OTHELLO
I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to’t:
Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio’s not alive.

IAGO
My friend is dead; ’tis done at your request:
But let her live.

OTHELLO
Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

IAGO
I am your own for ever.

Exeunt

This is a perfect example of a Freytag-can ‘Wow!’ climax. By the way, in Verdi’s opera Otello this sequence is set spectacularly and happens right in the middle of the opera, just before interval.

I would be perfectly happy to go with this, if Freytag were directing, though my own location of the climax is in the same scene, but at lines 195-207:

IAGO
I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to’t:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave’t undone, but keep’t unknown.

OTHELLO
Dost thou say so?

Though we (more or less) agree on Othello Freytag and I disagree on where the climax happens in Macbeth. Freytag has it in the Banquet Scene (Act 3, Scene 4) where the ghost of Banquo appears:

[In this scene] the murderer’s struggle with the ghost, and the fearful struggles with his conscience, in the restless scene to which the social festivity and royal splendor give the most effective contrasts, are pictured with a truth, and in a wild kind of poetic frenzy, which make the hearer’s hear throb and shudder.91

90 The exact spot – about in the middle of the scene, and right in the middle of the play. The antithesis of ‘a great, amplified scene’ – no ‘splendid poetry’ here – it’s all a bit ordinary.

91 Freytag, p. 130.
Freytag isn’t too bad himself – a wonderfully expressive advocate!

‘My’ climax also happens in the Banquet Scene, but at the start (line 19):

MACBETH  
There’s blood upon thy face.

First Murderer  
”Tis Banquo’s then.

MACBETH  
’Tis better thee without than he within.  
Is he dispatch’d?

First Murderer  
My lord, his throat is cut;  
That I did for him.

MACBETH  
Thou art the best o’th’cut-throats:  
Yet he’s good that did the like for Fleance:  
If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.

First Murderer  
Most royal Sir . . . Fleance is ‘scape’d.

MACBETH  
Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,  
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,  
As broad and general as the casing air:  
But now I am cabin’d, cribb’d, confin’d, bound in  
To saucy doubts and fears.

The exact spot is the line ‘Fleance is ‘scape’d.’ Again, no ‘poetic frenzy’ here. But it is this moment that causes ‘all hell to break loose’ and allows the vision of hell to appear a little later in the scene, in the form of Banquo’s bloodied ghost. (Notice that both Othello and Macbeth have ‘fits’ after their Turning Points – the ECT analogy is rather apt!)

It has to be said that I concede that there are some choices to be made as to where exactly to locate these dramatic moments – let’s take the Climax as an example. Offered a choice, Freytag goes for spectacle. Offered a choice, I go for the moment where a psychological switch is flicked. To me, those words are like the flicking the ‘on’ switch of the ECT machine – the patient has been diligently prepped by Nurse Iago. My analogy should be clarified – it’s the modern form of ECT where the patient is given a short-acting sedative and muscle-relaxant before applying the electric shock. The only patient reaction visible at the time of administering the shock is perhaps some slight twitching of the fingers. Freytag’s preference is for the ‘old-school’ electro-shock, delivered without anesthetic where the patient goes into a grand mal seizure, complete with wild convulsions, sometimes resulting in broken bones. Othello certainly comes out of his Iago-applied ECT with the classic symptoms of drowsiness, temporary confusion and disorientation!

After the Climax, Freytag describes ‘the return’ or ‘fall’, or ‘falling action’. This is helpful in attempting to answer the question ‘Why does the graph go up?’ We might also ask, ‘Why does it then go down?’ Freytag doesn’t give us a definitive mathematical-like answer, but using his characteristic humanist-spiritual language, seeks to write his way to some clarity. It’s very alluring:
The climax naturally forms the middle point of a group of forces, which, darting in either direction, course upward and downward. [ . . . ] The climax is connected with the downward movement by a tragic force . . . Freytag often uses the word ‘force’ to describe the movement of the dramatic structure. This would prove interesting to Underwood (see Underwood chapter). I think Peter Cook would be pleased with this as well (see COOK chapter in DRAWING)

The Force of the Final Suspense

It is well understood that the catastrophe must not come entirely as a surprise to the audience. The more powerful the climax, the more violent the downfall of the hero, so much the more vividly must the end be felt in advance.

This mini-section isn’t mentioned in Freytag’s overall plan. In my overall plan, this would probably be called, borrowing Michael Chekhov’s terminology, an auxiliary climax.

STANISLAVSKY

STANISLAVSKY ON DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

Stanislavsky’s name is variously transliterated as ‘Stanislavsky’ and ‘Stanislavsky’. I choose ‘Stanislavsky’, as my first encounters with him were with that spelling. Note however, that some authors cited spell it ‘Stanislavski’. I refer to two different translations of Stanislavsky; the first by Elizabeth Hapgood Reynolds and the later one by Robert Benedetti. I will refer to the Hapgood translation as ‘Stanislavski and Hapgood’ and the Benedetti as ‘Stanislavski and Benedetti’.

THE RHYTHM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Part of the job of working with and ‘to’ a structure is to give the performance the appropriate rhythm – appropriate to the audience’s ability to attend and absorb the matter of the action – appropriate to the significance of the material during the different parts of the performance – appropriate to the building of the ‘score’ of the whole. I imagine an orchestral conductor and the musicians of the orchestra expect their audience to become attuned to the rhythms of sections and even individual bars of the music they are playing, but also to the rhythm of the whole.

THROUGH-LINE OF ACTION

[The through-line of action] totally unifies all the elements. It goes right through them like a thread through separate beads, and it directs them towards the general super-objective. If the actor does not thread together all his actions into the unified core of the through-line of action, which is leading him towards the super-objective, then the role will never be played in such a way that people talk

92 Freytag, p. 130.
93 Freytag, p. 135.
about it as a serious artistic victory. More often than not the actor is confronted by artistic defeat when he replaces the through-line of action with more trivial inessential actions.96

Stanislavsky is not so prescriptive as Michael Chekhov, who says that a play will always be in three parts, but does hint at this when the play The Inspector General happens, upon analysis, to be divided into three ‘main organic episodes—its largest units’.97

Stanislavsky uses the excellent image of a maritime pilot navigating a channel to describe pursuing of the through-line of action:

‘A certain pilot was asked how he could ever remember, over a long stretch, all the minute details of a coast with its turns, shallows and reefs. He replied: ‘I am not concerned with them; I stick to the channel.’

‘So an actor must proceed, not by a multitude of details, but by those important units which, like signals, mark his channel and keep him in the right creative line. If you had to stage your departure from the Shustovs’ [the house where the narrator dined that evening] you would have to say to yourself: first of all, what am I doing? Your answer—going home—gives you the key to your main objective.

‘Along the way, however, there were stops. You stood still at one point and did something else. Therefore looking in the shop window is an independent unit. Then as you proceeded you returned to your first unit.

‘Finally you reached your room and undressed. This was another bit. When you lay down and began to think you began still another unit.

‘We have cut your total of units from over two hundred down to four. These mark your channel.

‘Together they create one large objective—going home.98

While navigating the ‘channel’ the play can be broken down further, into small ‘units’ or ‘bits’. The point, in An Actor Prepares, of ‘carving up’ a script into its component units is twofold: to mark out that channel of energy and content in order to guide the actor and audience through the play, and to reveal the structure of the ‘creative tasks’ or ‘creative objectives’.99 Stanislavsky calls this navigation studying the ‘structure’100

Bella Merlin explains:

What exactly is a BIT of action? (Note here that ‘action’ is used to refer to the dramatist’s structuring of dramatic action – i.e., Which event follows or precedes another . . . )101

This is not dramatic structure, but which bits come when, and which bits come next – without any ‘rising’ or ‘falling’.

97 Stanislavski and Hapgood, p. 116.
98 Stanislavski and Hapgood, p. 114.
99 ‘objectives’ in Hapgood and ‘tasks’ in Benedetti.
100 Stanislavski and Hapgood, p. 116.
SUPER-OBJECTIVE

The Director began today by telling us that the main inner current of a play produces a state of inner grasp and power in which actors can develop all the intricacies and then come to a clear conclusion as to its underlying, fundamental purpose.

‘That inner line of effort that guides the actors from the beginning to the end of the play we call the continuity or the through-going action. This through line galvanizes all the small units and objectives of the play and directs them toward the super-objective. From then on they all serve the common purpose.\(^{102}\)

There are two ‘super-objectives’ in Stanislavsky. One belongs to each character and need only be played by the actor playing that character. The super-objective or ‘overall task’ is really about the actor’s connection with the character. Different characters will have different super-objectives. The actor playing Iago might decide that his overall task is ‘I want to destroy Othello’, whereas the actor playing Othello definitely does not share that overall task or aim! The conflict in a play depends on there being aims and counter-aims, objectives and counter-objectives, tasks and counter-tasks.

The other belongs to the whole play and is the super-objective of the writer. He notes that Dostoevsky’s life-long compulsion was the search for God. Tolstoy’s was the struggle for self-perfection.

Much of the first paragraph of the quote above describes the aim and ‘feel’ of what I call Dramatic Structure. Stanislavsky would recommend round-table discussion in order to draw this out, and I would add drawing or sketching the structure in order to help the actors attain ‘a state of inner grasp’ of the ‘main inner current’ or underlying structural energy of a play.

In his book Method—or Madness Robert Lewis identifies the word ‘spine’, which is found on the chart that Stella Adler brought back from her study with Stanislavsky.\(^{103}\) He identifies the ‘spine’ as the ‘super-objective’ of the play and likens it to what is often called the ‘theme’ of the play. He then gives an example. Harold Clurman, the director of the first production of Clifford Odets’ Golden Boy said that the whole ‘problem’ of the play or ‘spine’ was, ‘how to deal with the problems of life in a world where success is the criterion’. Every character in the play had his or her own ‘spine’ that related to the main one in some way, and this ‘spine’ led the character to pursue his or her own ‘through-line of action’, such as ‘I will fight my way to the top’ or ‘I will buy up everything and everybody’.

That’s good, but when dealing with Shakespeare, I think any attempt to come up with a ‘super-objective’ or ‘spine’ for the play can only be dismally trivial.

Stanislavsky then has his fictional teacher/director draw a series of graphs, to better explain the super-objective\(^{104}\) (pp. 276 & 278) and how a good actor will always be ‘moved’ towards the super-objective and a bad actor will veer all over the place.

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\(^{102}\) Stanislavski and Hapgood, pp. 273-274.
\(^{104}\) Stanislavski and Hapgood, pp. 276-278.
I’m excited by Stanislavsky’s graphs. I’m also excited by the idea of the *through-line of action* and the *super-objective* or *super-task*.

The similarities are:

a) they are a *thread* that connects and unifies a performance from start to finish.

b) in spite of their powerful unifying effect, they are largely hidden from the audience, though apparent to the very astute viewer

c) though they are both arrived at by intellectual analysis, they are both experienced subjectively and spontaneously by the actor

The differences are:

a) they are psychological – dramatic structure is a force or energy

b) they are best expressed and described verbally – attempts to describe or represent dramatic structure verbally are pitifully inadequate. It is best described in the form of a graph. Dramatic structure is pre- or sub-verbal.

c) they are an ‘idea’ – dramatic structure is a ‘force’.

d) they are intellectual – dramatic structure

e) the super-objective is ‘in’ the character and the character ‘expresses’ or ‘pursues’ it – like an action, though or feeling, it is something that the character ‘has’ or ‘does’. Whereas the super-objective is ‘in’ the character, the character is ‘in’ the structure.

This last point reminds me of Michael Chekhov’s ‘atmospheres’ described in Chapter 3 of *On the Technique of Acting*. He calls them ‘objective’ insofar as they are outside of the actor. The actor allows himself to be affected by these objective atmospheres (which will change according to the scene). Dramatic structure is, in a way, ‘outside’ of the character, and the character is influenced by it, as of a force, but the actor must ‘ride’ the force and direction of the structure. To refer to Underwood, there is an objective (non-spatial) force, and the character and actor follow the line of the force. Chekhov’s Atmospheres are also rather like forces – they have a force-like power over the actor and character, but they surround the actor. Dramatic structure is a force with an implied metaphorical direction, such as ‘rising action’, ‘falling action’, and so on.

In dramatic structure, the word ‘directional’ is a metaphor, as the ‘direction’ is not in space, but energy or consciousness.

In my work as a director, I have found that when actors are unable to express the ‘overall task’ or, as I call it ‘What do you want overall?’ it can be useful for them to express it in the form of a gesture – what Michael Chekhov calls ‘psychological gesture’. Therefore, super-objectives are not always verbal, but they are at least psycho-physical.
MICHAEL CHEKHOV ON DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

Michael Chekhov has a lot to say about dramatic structure. He directs his utterances to directors and playwrights, and actors. In fact the instructions regarding structure are more comprehensive in To the Actor than in To the Director and Playwright. In the latter he suggests a graphic representation for the structure of The Government Inspector, and in the former he analyzes Shakespeare’s King Lear. In both he draws a graph.

This is the graph for The Government Inspector:

![The Government Inspector graph](image1)

Figure 17. The structure of The Government Inspector as drawn by Michael Chekhov.

The structural analysis of King Lear is magisterial. His graph is very different in appearance from any of mine:

![King Lear graph](image2)

Figure 18. The structure of King Lear as drawn by Michael Chekhov.

I would not presume to claim that ‘I am right and he is wrong’, and I’m not going to set about to ‘prove’ my case here, though it would be an enriching exercise to compare my analysis with Chekhov’s, point by point. It is possible to make a play work with different structures, just so long as it has a structure that is coherent. Chekhov’s model for King Lear is extremely coherent and brilliantly argued. He places his climaxes according to his own

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108 Chekhov, p. 102.
opinion of the play. My method is stranger and more humble. With no opinion, I apply the rule of a pre-determined structure onto the play to discover what the play is about. This might seem foolhardy, but I don’t think it is, for two reasons. Firstly, I am prepared to jettison the pre-determined structure if it absolutely doesn’t work – I would then invoke my ‘own opinion’. Secondly, I find that it nearly always does work! ‘My’ climaxes in King Lear reveal a different play – or at least a play that’s about different things from ‘Chekhov’s’ climaxes. Chekhov draws the structure according to how he already sees the play. I draw the structure in order to see the play, or reveal the play. This is a crucial difference. Chekhov’s graphs are representative whereas mine are exploratory then representative once the approach is settled on.

I will do a ‘quick’ comparison between ‘my’ structure for King Lear and ‘Chekhov’s’ structure.

First, I counted the number of lines in the play:109

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3219 lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then did some simple calculations to start to locate the three main climaxes:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>‘line 805’ (one quarter of the whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Point</td>
<td>‘line 1609’ (one half of the whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophe</td>
<td>‘line 2414’ (three quarters of the whole)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course there is no ‘line 805’ or 1609 or 2414: the play is divided into acts and scenes. I’m going to have to do more maths:

---

Figure 20. Calculating the structure of *King Lear* by counting the lines.

So, converting the 'simple' line numbers into 'real' line numbers gives us:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Scene/Act</th>
<th>Line Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>ACT 1, scene 4</td>
<td>line 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Point</td>
<td>ACT 3, scene 2</td>
<td>line 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophe</td>
<td>ACT 4, scene 5</td>
<td>line 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now I go to those places and test to see if this is going to work – are the predicted positions climaxes or not?

First the Complication. We're looking for ACT 1, scene 4, line 290:

25 lines before that exact spot we find:

**LEAR**

O most small fault,

How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!

Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature

From the fix'd place, drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [Striking his head
And thy dear judgment out!  

(ACT 1, scene 4, lines 264-70)

That’s looking pretty good! Is this a drama of self-awareness? Let’s test this by seeing if it bears any relation to the predicted Turning Point.

First we have to locate the Turning Point. We’re looking for ACT 3, scene 2, line 18:

Right at the exact spot we find:

LEAR

then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.  

(ACT 3, scene 2, lines 18-20)

This is the middle of the great storm scene on the heath. Lear, who has been evicted from his home by his two evil daughters, is addressing the Elements.

That’s exciting! If this is about self-awareness or mortification or Lear’s ‘Road of Trials’, then this would seem to be the nadir as far as Lear is concerned. He bares himself to the elements – a slave. I’m thinking:

Figure 21. An inverted triangle for King Lear?

If this emerging scheme is right, then the Turning Point is Lear’s nadir. However there are other places that would serve equally. For example, could it be the moment when Lear is, for the first time, clearly mad:

KING LEAR

What, has his daughters brought him to this pass?
Couldst thou save nothing? Would’st thou give ’em all?  

(ACT 3, scene 4, lines 62-3)

Lear is addressing Edgar, who is disguised as a madman.

Or is it the moment in ACT 3, scene 4, line 107 when Lear – still on the heath, in front of a hovel – tears off his clothes?

Now I’m wondering what the Catastrophe will tell me. We’re looking for ACT 4, scene 5, line 20:
Twenty lines before that we find:

**CORDELIA**

O dear father!
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father’s right:
Soon may I hear and see him!

(Act 4, scene 4, lines 23-9)

Well, that made me cry, so that’s good. Cordelia is with the French forces at Dover, about to come to the aid of Lear. Her husband, the King of France has been detained at home, so she is there like Boadicea leading her forces against the Romans.

Now I haven’t settled on any of these, and this negotiation would be pursued by me and the cast over a couple of days of discussion.

But how can I contemplate ‘main climaxes’ for *King Lear* that are not:

1. the banishing of Cordelia (Act 1, scene 1, line 281).
2. Lear entering, ‘fantastically dressed with wild flowers’ (Act 4, scene 4, line 80).
3. the death of Lear (Act 5, scene 3, line 310), or at least Lear entering ‘with CORDELIA dead in his arms’ (Act 5, scene 3, line 255)?

Forget about symmetry – surely these are the climaxes? Let’s look at Chekhov’s climaxes.

His three main climaxes are:

1. Act 1, scene 1, lines 107–86. This is the scene ‘in which Lear condemns Cordelia, throws the crown into the hands of his enemies and banishes his faithful and devoted servant, Kent.'
2. Act 4, scene 6, lines 80–200. ‘This climax starts with the entrance of the mad Lear in the field near Dover and ends with his departure.’
3. Act 5, scene 3, line 310. The death of Lear.

There are two major differences between Chekhov and me. The first is summed up in a statement by Chekhov:

> The three main climaxes (if they are found correctly, by artistic intuition rather than by reasoning) give you the key to the main idea and to the basic dynamic of the play.112

This is the most formidable challenge to my faith in my own method. It makes absolute artistic sense to follow Chekhov. By using ‘artistic intuition’ he is able to extrapolate an

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111 Chekhov, p. 103.
112 Chekhov, p. 104.
extremely convincing analysis of the whole play, summing up the ‘meaning’ of the tragedy in three words, consistent with the three sections of the play: ‘sin, judgment and enlightenment.’

My method doesn’t find the climaxes ‘correctly’, but by applying a rule. Even in the face of Chekhov’s irresistible argument, I am still drawn to the idea of applying a rule and testing it. I could be quite easily satisfied by using ‘intuition’, but I find that using my method can uncover depths that are not obvious.

This brings me to the other major difference. It is in the nature of the word ‘climax’. Chekhov defines climax as ‘moments of maximum tension’. As I will submit many times over the course of this document, I’m not sure about the word ‘tension’. In the language of the Coordinate Graph, ‘tension’ refers to the $y$-axis. Chekhov is saying that the graphic peaks on his own clearly conceived and executed graphs represent ‘tension’:

![Diagram of Chekhov's Lear graph superimposed onto a coordinate graph.](image)

In this scheme, it makes perfect sense that Tension decreases in the middle of the play. It starts with a bang and ends with a bigger bang and the middle is all development.

But in my scheme, the $y$-axis doesn’t necessarily equal Tension. The nature or meaning of the $y$-axis will become the central question of this PhD.

Therefore, as this part is only concerned with demonstrating ‘what I do’ as compared with the Master, I will leave the analysis of King Lear up in the air and move on.

**JACKSON G. BARRY**

**JACKSON G. BARRY ON DRAMATIC STRUCTURE**

His book is called *Dramatic Structure: the shaping of experience*. How perfect! Would have been a perfect name for the ‘new’ PhD, but I thought I’d pay homage instead, with a similar name.

Dramatic structure has not been extensively covered in a systematic way . . .

For practicing artists of the theatre, critics, and writers of texts on drama, the term and the concept ‘structure’ are central in their handling of dramatic materials, but existing definitions, either explicit, in drama textbooks, or implicit,

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113 Chekhov, p. 104.
114 Chekhov, p. 101.
in the assumptions which guide a playwright’s, a director’s, or a critic’s choices, are vague or contradictory or both.

. . . my attempt to bring together in one analysis two qualities which have generally remained apart: philosophical sophistication and practical theatre experience.\(^{115}\)

Over the course of this book a theory of dramatic structure has been described and tested against other theories. It was held that structure—that is, relationship—orders the essentially structure-less materials of our daily experience so that we may understand them.\(^{116}\)

Perhaps it will be best to start by stating some of the things dramatic structure is not. Drama structure is not a visual shape or line, but graphic representation of nonvisual phenomena, such as the graph of rising and falling action in a play emphasized by Freytag and his followers, has long been a popular and useful visual aid.

[. . . ]

The visual analogy is a convenient one, but it is an \textit{analogy} to dramatic structure; it does not describe that structure.\(^{117}\)

Well, yes it does. I find the word \textit{metaphor} more useful than \textit{analogy}.

No play can have the form of a circle. The problem is similar to the one which prompted Bergson to insist, in words which might well apply to dramatic theory, that the nature of time does not accurately fit the spatial analogies by which it is commonly described. ‘Intensity, duration, voluntary determination, these are the three ideas which had to be clarified by ridding them of all they owe to the intrusion of the sensible world and, in a word, to the obsession of the idea of space.’\(^{118}\)

Barry quotes Bergson’s \textit{Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness}, which I will refer to below. The comment that no play can have the form of a circle needs unpacking. I have heard people talk about ‘circular’ structure in plays, films and books – even in our lives. The idea is that someone arrives ‘back where they started’. Joseph Campbell describes ‘The Return’ in his mythic plan:

\begin{quote}
A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on this fellow man\(^{119}\)
\end{quote}


\(^{116}\) Barry, p. 204.

\(^{117}\) Barry, pp. 25-26.


Gestalt theory also describes a circular structure. The reason why ‘dramatic structure’ cannot be circular is that we can’t go ‘back in time’. The $x$ coordinate of the graph represents duration, and it always goes forward. Outside of a discussion of time travel, we have to agree that in the theatre time always goes forward and can’t actually go backward – if the show starts at 8.00, it can never be 8.00 on that evening again – except in our memory. When people talk about ‘circular’ structure they are referring to a process of an imaginative or imaginary ‘return’ to a place of memory. It feels like I’m back where I started – things feel the same – but the actual time can’t be the same.

That was written in 1970. Since then things have changed. So-called ‘philosophical sophistication’ in the theatre is rife – especially among the purveyors of new work. I sometimes feel that directors are ‘doing’ their PhD on stage, just as every art exhibition has its accompanying, often difficult to read catalogue essay, every dancer is ‘exploring notions of space and the body’, and everyone seems to be quoting Saussure, Deleuze, Bachelard, etc in explaining and planning their work. How does this differ from David Wicks, ‘philosopher-practitioner’? I’ll have a go at answering that valid question. I suppose it comes down to what’s possible to represent on stage and what’s not. Let’s take Heidegger, for example.

It’s amazing how Barry dispenses with Woodbridge with a mere endnote:

1. Interesting examples [of useful visual aids] may be found in Elisabeth Woodbridge, *The Drama: Its Law and its Technique* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1898).\textsuperscript{121}

Hers is a book that has covered everything in his book. Maybe he was in the same position as me – having found that someone else has done it before, relegate them to a footnote. So as not to be accused of the same, in terms of Woodbridge and Barry and Freytag, I can say that they all lack something. Barry lacks graphs, Freytag lacks all but the simplest of graphs. Woodbridge comes the closest to having done what I am doing before me and better, except she lacks the suggestion of how to apply the graph to performance; she lacks how to analyze the text; she lacks my discussion on what the $x$ and $y$ coordinates are.

His chapter ‘The Basic Pattern of Events’ doesn’t actually refer to what I would call a pattern. Rather, he discusses plot:

The idea that a summary of the plot of a play—which would be traditionally considered ‘content’—represents the structure or form of the play, may seem galling, even when the problem is approached with modern mistrust of the form-content dichotomy. Plot summary lacks the visual suggestion of ‘form’ and the architectural suggestion of ‘structure,’ yet it seems likely that the locus of the

\textsuperscript{120} Campbell, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{121} Barry, p. 25, n.
relating and ordering principle of drama would be found in a pattern of the major developments of a series of events—a pattern which recurs in that order often enough to impress itself on our memory.122

PATTERN OF EVENTS

Thus, by using the Chorus as sensitive observers, we come up with the following statement of the Basic Pattern of Events for Oedipus the King: The haughty man who seeks too much knowledge may destroy himself with that which he seeks.123

Firstly, his ‘pattern of events’ is a statement, whereas mine is a visual pattern. I would call his ‘pattern’ the ‘moral’ of the story, but I suspect what he’s actually getting at is an idea from Stanislavsky that has been variously translated as, among other things:

‘Super-Objective’,

‘The SUPER-OBJECTIVE is the ruling idea of the script. It forges a link between writer, director, actor and eventually audience.’124

‘Spine’,

‘something very much akin to what is called the ‘theme’—the underlying motivating idea that pervades the entire play.’125

and ‘Supertask’,

‘... the centre, ... the capital, ... the heart of the play, ... the basic goal which caused the writer to write and the actor to act in it.’126

So, though a marvelous book, it lacks what I’m looking at – the graphic or visual representation of dramatic structure and its use as a rehearsal and performance tool.

HOLLYWOOD

STEVEN SPIELBERG ON DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

I had an artist paint an entire map, as if a helicopter camera had photographed the entire road where the chase was taking place. ... And I was able to wrap this map around the motel room, and just crossed things off. ... The overview gave me a geographical sense, a lot of help in knowing where to spend the time, where to do the most coverage, where to make a scene really sing out.127

From an interview with Mitch Tuchmann in 1978:

(from Film Comment, January-February 1978. Reprinted here by permission of the author)

TUCHMANN. I understand at the time Duel was made, the production board was quite extraordinary.

122 Barry, pp. 28-29.
123 Barry, p. 32.
SPIELBERG. It was really neat. It was huge. It was forty yards long, and it was five feet tall. It was a mural of the movie.

... I did it first as a kind of visual overview for myself, because the script was so verbose — well-written — verbose in terms of description. I finally had to break the script down and visualize the entire movie on a road stretched all around the production office. I divided up each key moment and gave it a nickname and was able to walk the network people through the entire story, so they could more easily see what *Duel* was about... They had never seen a map of a movie.\(^{128}\)

This is wonderful! This isn’t exactly dramatic structure — it’s a storyboard — but it has some enticing similarities to what I do — especially the part where Spielberg ‘walks’ the studio executives through the storyboard — I too walk the actors along or through the structure — again and again, until they feel like they have ‘internalized’ the journey.

**DRAMATIC STRUCTURE IN THE MOVIE *PSYCHO* \(^{129}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total duration</td>
<td>104 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Point</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophe</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A straight rendering of the structure would be:

Complication: 27:35 Norman decides on Room 1

The second before he chooses Room 1, we see the newspaper. It’s almost as if Hitchcock is using this as a flag.


It appears again at the Turning Point.

If he didn’t decide on the special peeping tom room for Marion, no sexual arousal, no rousing of ‘Mother’, no murder of Marion, Marion goes back to Phoenix with the money and the movie is over.

Turning Point: 47:30 Norman, back in the house, screams ‘Mother, blood!’ then runs down to the motel and sees Marion’s body in the shower.

Just a second before this moment, the camera notices the $40,000 wrapped in the newspaper, on the bedside table.

The Catastrophe is more problematic. For a start, the rolled up newspaper is no longer available, though when Sam Loomis goes to look for Arbogast at the Bates Motel, we see Norman looking at the swamp where the car/newspaper/money is buried, indicating that Arbogast is buried there too.

It’s also odd that when Arbogast goes to look at the Bates Motel, Norman is doing the laundry, which causes him to carry around a ‘rolled up’ sheet, which looks remarkably like the rolled up newspaper.

The final 6:30 is a coda. The movie finishes @ 97:30 or @ 97:57 ‘Norman Bates no longer exists’

So,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total duration</td>
<td>97:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complication</td>
<td>24.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning point</td>
<td>48.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 45:23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophe</td>
<td>72.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>= 73:55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 47:49 when Norman sees Marion’s body?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 70:25 when he says ‘I think I’ll go back to the motel first.’ (Arbogast’s catastrophe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total duration</td>
<td>97:57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Point</td>
<td>48:78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

@ 26:09 we see ‘Mother’ in the window. Norman is still Norman and Mother is still Mother?

@ 27:00 Norman meets Marion. He doesn’t seem changed, until he hesitates over the key. That’s when he decides to act. It’s amazing that the first murder is almost 20 minutes away, preceded only by talking. This is structuring at work – the skilful manipulation of duration at work. We can really do without most of the chat – it doesn’t propel the plot very essentially, except for gaining a portrait of Norman and Marion deciding to return to Phoenix. The movie had to be about 100 minutes long, like all Hollywood movies up to the 70s – so we have to pad – here, extremely skillfully. The time seems to go really quickly – and notice that the time it takes Norman to go back to the house, get changed into Mother and come back and murder Marion all happens in a couple of minutes of screen time, but seems to go really slowly! Miraculous! Lived duration!
Dramatic Structure in the Movie *Pillow Talk* \(^{130}\)

- Total duration: 98 min
- Complication: 24.5
- Turning Point: 49
- Catastrophe: 73.5

Exposition. A single professional woman Jan Morrow, played by Doris Day, shares a telephone ‘party line’ with womanizing single song-writer Brad Allen, played by Rock Hudson. Other characters are introduced.

I take a stab at the structure above. I’ll fast-forward to 24 minutes and see what’s happening.

22:30. Yes, the Complication is a complication. ‘Rock targets Doris’. Brad’s friend Jonathan Forbes, played by Tony Randall, is in love with Jan, and while sharing his feelings with Brad, inadvertently reveals Jan’s identity to Brad. Brad now knows that Jan is not just a meddling party-pooper with whom he shares a party-line, but a beautiful single woman. He plans to make his move. In this moment, the plot really ‘kicks off’ and Rock plans his strategy to get to know Doris. The movie makes this point clearly. Brad, who is looking away from the camera, turns, the music makes a ‘ping’ sound, and the plot has clearly now begun to develop. If it weren’t for this moment, the plot wouldn’t be able to develop. Yes, this is the psychological Complication, but the plot Complication happens a little time afterward. Brad’s first attempt to approach Jan is unsuccessful. Brad has a new fascination for Jan—a need to ‘conquer’ her or possess her or ‘take’ her. But until he comes up with the stratagem of the disguise, the plot can’t continue.

32:25. Brad comes up with the idea of the disguise.

52:57. Jan reveals she’s in love with ‘Rex’. Is this the Turning Point, though? Don’t all women fall in love with him? If the movie is about Jan’s transformation—hate—love—hate—love, then I guess it is the Turning Point. The movie seems to be telling us that she’s never been in love before.

Is the Turning Point when Brad discovers Jan loves him?

56:17. Brad’s friend Jonathan enlists the help of a private detective. Assuming the detective is even reasonably competent, this is going to cause the unraveling of the plot. Surely this is the ‘plot’ turning point, but the previous ‘turning point’ is a psychological turning point.

71:51. Jan and Brad kiss. Just previously they have achieved a sort of union in the car. Jan/Doris sings ‘Possess Me’. She has decided to ‘give’ herself to him.

74:56. Again, the psychological Catastrophe precedes the plot catastrophe, which is here—Jan finds some music manuscript paper left lying around by ‘Rex’, only to find that it is the song that she has overheard Brad singing, on the party line, to his many girlfriends.

Is the Catastrophe when Brad has fallen for Jan?

Therefore, is it all about Brad?

But minutes away from each of these moments is another structure – about the plot, rather than the psychological journey of Brad’s character.

75:21. Jan/Doris looks up as she finally twigs, and the music underlines this moment, rather in the same style as the Complication, but more intensely.

The music manuscript paper serves rather the same function as the Letter in the Well-made Play.

Complication: Brad discovers that his party line and Jonathan’s new girlfriend (at least he assumes she is his girlfriend) are the same person & he decides to conquer her. That impulse complicates the story & without it the story wouldn’t develop. It is the Freytag-ean ‘exciting force’. This is the start of the development and the real ‘rise’ in the action.

Turning Point: Jan admits she loves ‘Rex Stetson’.

What about Jonathan booking a detective? That’s good, but it’s not the detective who causes the denouement, but the music manuscript, à la Well-made Play.

52’ = Jan’s reversal.

56’ = plot turning point – this is the most ‘ravelled’ the plot gets (to use Benedetti’s term).131

57’ Brad discovers Jan has fallen for him.

Catastrophe. Brad’s real identity is revealed, via the music, and one minute later Jonathan turns up

Brad’s catastrophe happens at 80’ when he admits to being in love. Characters have a structure too.

Complication = 23’

Turning Point = 56’

Catastrophe = 75’

While doing these analyses I’m learning what the movie is about and trying to make it fit my rule – enforcing a rule and revealing a truth or ‘form’.

MY FELLOW THEATRE PRACTITIONERS

I have looked for hints and found few hints that there is an awareness of dramatic structure among my fellow theatre practitioners. One hint was an audition I did for a director some years ago. I worked hard to give my audition monologue a strong structure. The director commented at the audition, ‘It’s got a lovely structure to it’. I was very pleased with this, though I didn’t get the job! I have never worked on a play or television show as an actor where the structure of the whole or of a scene or speech was discussed. The qualities, meanings and sometimes atmosphere are usually discussed, but not the structure. In many

informal discussions with actors and directors they have often said that they think my ‘idea’ is great, yet they’ve not used it themselves. It is possible to enjoy watching plays, producing, directing and acting in plays, movies and television without ever asking the question, ‘What is dramatic?’ Indeed it is also possible to direct or act in a play or screen drama without even asking ‘what is the dramatic structure of this play?’ As an actor I have never worked with a director who asked this question.
GAPS – WHAT IS MISSING?

Based on the observations of the previous chapter, what is missing, and how can I contribute to knowledge?

Though there is much literature on dramatic structure, there appears to be little in the way of the practical use of graphic representation of dramatic structure. Michael Chekhov’s treatment is the most thorough, but I infer from him that even though the play be different, the appearance of the graph will be roughly the same from play to play. He instructs us to fit the play into the graph. What is missing here is the possibility that the graph or even the idea of the graph could change radically from play to play. For example, one play might demand a 3D model, while another might suggest a simple graph. One play’s graph might be the ‘traditional’ triangle, whereas another might be best represented by an inverted or even double triangle.

I can contribute to knowledge at this point in two ways: first, by generally expanding the conversation about the practical use of graphic representation of dramatic structure; second, by inventing radically useful new shapes and ideas for graphic representation of dramatic structure, on a project-by-project basis. That is what I will proceed to do.

The questions I will be asking will include:

- Will this actually create more vivid theatre, or is it just an indulgence?
- Will this enable an actor to better embody a text?
- How much should I collaborate with a cast, and how much should I present to them pre-prepared?
- Will it save time in rehearsal or waste valuable time?
PROJECTS
tranche of projects devised to address gaps, including evaluation of projects and reflection on progress of PhD
INTRODUCTION

My production notes from the time of the projects are extensive, confessional, messy, indulgent and necessary diarizing documents. They are also stylistically inconsistent. As a courtesy to the reader, I have re-written them here in a clear and concise style, using a ‘log-book’ method similar to that found in commercial laboratories. I include a small selection of images.

With the wisdom of hindsight, I am writing this note while looking back on all the projects linked to this PhD. Though this is a PhD by project, the projects themselves are the least interesting element. If the reader has scanned the Table of Contents, she will have noticed the word ‘failure’. Without wanting to give too much away, failure is a feature of this PhD journey, and it is in the projects that the nutty kernels of the failure lie. There is also a degree of repetition in the nature of the failure. Therefore, to save the reader the tedium of that repetition, I have limited the documentation of the following projects. I will deal with one representative in some detail and dispense with the others briefly. I hope the reader will agree that there are enough broadly common elements to the projects to enable them to be described in a descriptive ‘sweep’. I also hope that the reader shares my sense of consolation that failure has provoked deep thinking.

All the projects in the PhD were completed or started at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga when I was there running the Acting course from 2004 to 2007. The Weather and Your Health had a life after Wagga, and we tried unsuccessfully to keep Lear going in Melbourne.

I have extensive notes from the CSU period, including the ‘writing up’ of the projects, but the notes are littered with personal comments that don’t belong here. Revisiting them while ‘tidying’ them up for this exegesis has been a painful exercise.

The case-study projects will be described here in hindsight, with some excerpts from notebooks included as ‘quotes’ from myself.
PROJECT: LITTLE WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

When: June-November 2007 (performed 8-24 November 2007).
Where: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.
Company: Third-year student actors with student designers and crew.
Description: Extant script – recent ‘straight’ stage adaptation of the novel by Louisa May Alcott.
My role: Director/teacher.

AIM/S

Below is a record of my thoughts regarding how this ‘case-study’ project would fit in to the PhD journey. I had already decided that moving from a 2D to a 3D representation of the structure was the PhD challenge. I envisaged that the cast and I would build a 3D ‘cathedral’ representation of the structure of the play – that it would be visible in cross-section, and perhaps two separable parts, so as to be able to pull the thing apart and view the structure from the ‘inside’, and put the parts together and view it from the ‘outside’.

Journal, 19 June 2007 (excerpts):

Why am I doing this – moving from 2D to 3D?
When do I start this process? Before meeting the actors? While working with the actors? Both? Will it take too long with the actors? Should I present it to them on the first day of rehearsals?
Try both – certainly prepare the concept and a draft of how we will go about it before meeting the actors, then work with the actors on building it.

Something to test in this production for the PhD – speed and depth of preparation for the actor.
How far should we go? Actually build a papier mâché cathedral?
Arrive on day one of rehearsals with the complete object?
Arrive on day one of rehearsals with drawings for the ‘cathedral’.
Arrive with nothing and build it together in rehearsal.

Another excerpt from my Journal, 15 September 2007:

... get the cast to contribute & build a cross-section – build the MERZBAU of Little Women! 132

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132 The Merzbau was a fantastically abstract interior, of almost mythical status, whose construction was begun three times by the artist Kurt Schwitters between 1923 and 1947 – in Germany, Norway and England. The walls and ceiling were covered with a diversity of three-dimensional shapes, and the room itself was crowded with collected and made materials and objects. Schwitters died before he could complete it.
METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT

This was my final major production at Charles Sturt. I was typically working a 70 hour week just to keep slightly behind. This sometimes went up to 90 when directing
a production. There was no way that I had time to build a papier mâché cathedral before rehearsals started. I barely had time to read the play before rehearsals.

From the first reading on, it was clear to me that given the inexperience of the cast and crew, my main challenge would be just to get the production on, with reasonably OK performances from the cast and a reasonably good design from the designers. Every day of rehearsal I despaired of ever achieving even these modest goals. It was necessary to keep the whole process simple, clear and ‘old fashioned’. Experimenting with a new 3D model of the dramatic structure wasn’t going to be possible.

The adaptation had a couple of very unsuitable elements that would have to go – for example, the voice over narration – as this filled in much of the off-stage action, the scenes that were kept would have to be extremely clear and straightforward – no room for ‘experimental’ structure here. From the first reading I decided that a very clear, coherent, symmetrical structure would be most appropriate for this project.

Journal, 22 June 2007:

First reading. 40 short scenes. Two hours, 20 minutes. It’s unbearable. I chose this because it’s good for students and has five good female roles, and I’m going to have to put up with it, but I can’t bear its mawkish, ‘Home Sweet Home’ sentimentality. The appalling voice-over [used in the adaptation to fill in all the missing bits] will have to be jettisoned, and we’ll have to try and make sense of the story without it.

These short scenes must be rehearsed out of sequence – each one must be different from the one preceding – if there is even a hint of ‘next!’ the thing will die.133

the scene before Interval is completely anticlimactic – we’ll have to do some editing. The end of the play is also anticlimactic! Jo and Bhaer getting married – who cares?

I’m going to have to pull every trick in the book to make this work. First of all, completely go with the sentimentality. This is going to have to be an old fashioned production – the sort that was the bread and butter of the theater . . . a long time ago. This is not the time to be experimenting with new structures or even new graphic representations of structure. By ‘every trick in the book’ I mean everything that I believe works and will work to save this from being the World’s Most Boring Evening in the Theatre. That means forcing a symmetrical structure on it. Only craft will save it.

So, in view of all of the above, ‘what we did’ was for me a standard production. We followed the steps described in ‘My Practice’, above: read-through, impressions, sections, etc. The rehearsal photo below shows the graph in the background, still in draft form, later to be transferred to a very long roll of newsprint.

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133 See ‘droopy’ structure, Figure 12.
OUTCOME
A successful ‘mainstream’ production of Little Women. The audience cried, I cried, the cast cried (the measure of success for Sentimental Theatre), but the ‘cathedral’ never appeared, except in my imagination.

CONCLUSION/NEXT
Though the ‘cathedral’ never appeared in rehearsals, did it have any effect on the production? I don’t think so. What effect did it have on my thinking?

In terms of the ‘hunch’, is this outcome anything like what I envisaged? No – not that I was sure what I envisaged when I felt the hunch. I think I just envisaged a beautiful model of a cathedral – that’s fine, but not the point. What might have been different if I had used the ‘cathedral’? I don’t know.

Journal, 26 November 2007:
I’m working with student actors for whom just getting on stage is a challenge – I have to go back to basics – most of my time is spent trying to teach them to act – I don’t have the luxury of experimenting with a new structure just for the sake of experimenting – ‘because I’m doing a PhD’ – it must serve a practical purpose and be easy to use. The production was a success, but the ‘experiment’ with new structure/s was a failure. I failed to implement a ‘new way’. However, I continue to dream up or find images of other possible ‘new’ structures. I also think that I am starting to meditate on structure and what it really is.

Next: be brave and try again.

PROJECT: SHOWCASE

INTRODUCTION
When: September-October 2007 (performed 4-5 October 2007).
Where: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.
Company: Third-year student actors.

Description: Performance of short scenes chosen to showcase graduating Acting students to Industry.

My role: Director, facilitator and dramaturg.

AIM/S

The inclusion of this project is rather playful. The aim was not to audition a new visual representation of dramatic structure, but to demonstrate in the context of the PhD how the ‘standard’ structure can be used in a surprising way.

METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT

The ‘standard’ structure referred to above is my adaptation of the Freytag Triangle – a simple coordinate graph with extra peaks added for ‘auxiliary’ climaxes. The method of putting together the Showcase was to first suggest scenes to students that might be suitable for them and to encourage them to find scenes themselves. Then I would negotiate with the student to try and get them into the best scene for them. This sometimes resulted in a lot of one sort of scene and not much of another. I encouraged them to choose comic scenes, because I know that students prefer to choose very ‘dramatic’ scenes with lots of swearing and angry posturing. Students believe that this shows them off in a good light – not so – agents and casting people have to sit through hours and hours of this stuff and hate it. Therefore, in order to create an atmosphere of good will, and showcase the students in that atmosphere, I strongly encouraged them to choose comic scenes. They mostly did, and we had a few dramatic scenes to ‘break up’ the comedy. This is a good balance. But the order of presentation of the scenes is a huge issue. The students all want to be seen to their best advantage, or rather for no other student to be seen to better advantage. I on the other hand secretly want the best students to be seen to their best advantage, and the worst students not to spoil it for everyone. There was a time at the Victorian College of the Arts when graduating students were selected for Showcase. This was also the case, for a time, in the Music Theatre course at the National Theatre Drama School. Not a bad idea. Bad performances can make everyone look bad.

After all the students had settled on their pieces, I then started to put the show together. Even if they were under-rehearsed, I watched all the scenes, taking careful and specific note of mood, feeling, and the atmosphere created by the piece, focusing especially on the start and finish. My notes would look something like this (student names have been changed):

Julie. Uncle Vanya.
Start: low key sexual yearning.

Cody & Taylor. Seinfeld.
Start: wacky/angry.
Finish wacky/very high energy. Funny. Good.
There were 12 scenes of between 3 and 6 minutes duration plus a finale with all the actors on stage. Each person was allowed one scene that showcased them well. The ‘star’ of the scene was blocked (positioned) advantageously, for maximum visibility and impact. Their partner/s in the scene would be blocked so as to support the featured actor. Then these roles would be reversed as they supported each other’s work. Each actor was allocated one ‘feature’ and one ‘support’ scene each. There were a couple of actors who appeared in more than two – that was just the way it worked out.

I sketched a small structure for each scene, eventually transferring these drawings to one sheet of paper per scene. In the same manner described below in *The Weather and Your Health* I laid these out on the floor and moved them around, experimenting with the order, and keeping in mind my descriptions. It’s important to not have too many scenes in a row that are too similar. A bit of contrast helps maintain the audience’s interest and consequently as per the stated aim, showcase the students better.

This is the interesting part. As the reader will know, the line of the ‘standard’ graph goes up to the middle point of the show, then goes down to the end. In this show the graph is turned upside down:

![Draft graph of the structure for Showcase.](Figure 28)

Each of the bits on the graph is a piece of paper with the details of each scene. I moved these around on the floor, but always in this shape.

The idea is that the best pieces should be at the start and finish of the whole show, with the very best at the end. The show should start with energy and engagement, and if it has to drift off, let it drift off in the middle: in effect, I buried the worst...
scenes in the middle so as not to spoil the all important ‘first impression’ of the show, and the even more important ‘lasting impression’ of the show.

Why does this work with this sort of show and not with, say, Othello? A showcase is more like a job interview than a play. First impressions and last impressions are vital. During a showcase, our audience spend half the time looking down at their programs, noting names, putting names to faces, matching the photo in the program with the person they see on stage, writing notes to themselves, simply crossing out or putting asterisks. Only half their attention is on the show. Therefore, we can’t expect them to follow a narrative ‘thread’ – it’s a ‘bits-and-pieces’ experience for them. What we want is for them to hire the good actors and at least think not-unkindly of the bad ones. As it’s hard to keep track of everyone, we put the good actors in the most prominent positions – the beginning and end, and the not-good actors in the slightly blurry, program-fiddling middle. Hard, but effective.

OUTCOME
An effective, entertaining and mercifully brief Showcase. The good ones got agents, and a couple of the not-so-good ones as well. The rest were able to leave with their dignity intact.

CONCLUSION/NEXT
This is the first time I have actually graphically represented the structure like this – as an inverted pyramid, though I have done something like it instinctively when I’ve directed showcases in the past. As I said in the conclusion to Little Women, above, I am starting to wonder what structure is.

PROJECT: THE WEATHER AND YOUR HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

When: September, October 2007 – ongoing.

Where: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga; Melbourne; NSW regional tour

Company: Fourth year (Honours) student actors. The Weather and Your Health was the Honours project of the writer, Bethany Simons, who wrote and performed in the piece.

Description: New scripted performance based on collected first-person narratives.

My role: Director, facilitator and dramaturg. Bethany asked me if I would help/supervise her project.

AIM/S
- to bring order, at the dramaturgical stage, to an inchoate collection of stories
- to use structure in a holistic sense, to ease the anxieties of the writer/performer
- to use structure to help facilitate the creation of a new work in a short time
As I suggested in the *What Do I Mean By Dramatic Structure* chapter above, a structure is imposed, but it is also revealed. In the same way, the company of actors and director will ‘interpret’ a text, but also ‘reveal’ the quiddity of *this* production *at this* time with *this* cast of actors. The stories Bethany collected had a common thread – they were told by Bethany’s grandmother from her own experience of life in a country town. There was a beautiful simplicity and clarity in the stories, which I felt had to be honoured. Therefore, another aim:

- to use a structure appropriate to the material – to remove rather than add complexity

In view of the above, I made the decision to use the simplest, or most ‘simplifying’ structure possible.

Journal, 15 September 2007 (excerpt):

Is this a cop-out? Am I not being brave? Would it be better to experiment and ‘go with’ the chaos? I don’t think so.

METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT

Two weeks of intensive dramaturgy, and working out of the structure, broadly following the principles of performance making described in APPENDIX 2:

Figure 29. First draft structure for *The Weather and Your Health* as dramaturgical aid.

Figure 30. Both the dramaturgy and the graph start to become clearer.
In a manner similar to *Showcase*, above, I asked Bethany to put each separate story or fragment onto a separate sheet of paper. She would then perform these as separate little dramas, so I could get a good feeling for each of them. We then moved these pieces of paper around on the floor, in different structural configurations until we came up with the final structure:

![Figure 31. The Weather pages on the rehearsal room floor during dramaturgy.](image)

We both agreed that when the ‘right’ structure was found, it felt like the piece ‘clicked into gear’.

**OUTCOME**

My fear of ‘copping-out’ notwithstanding, the decision to serve the best interest of the production and the writer proved to be correct. This show has been a huge success. Much praised for its simplicity and charm, it has had many return seasons, and is currently scheduled for more. It was nominated for a Green Room Award in 2010 (the Melbourne theatre awards). But more importantly, like *Little Women*, it is successful in inducing tearfulness.

**CONCLUSION/NEXT**

I am starting to get the feeling that these ‘functional’ or ‘commissioned’ pieces might not be the forum for experimentation. However, even though no ‘new’ graph has appeared as yet, this process of ‘micro-scoping’ what until now I have done rather perfunctorily, is leading . . . where? to a re-thinking, or deep-thinking.

**PROJECT: CASSIUS**

**INTRODUCTION**


*Where:* Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.

*Company:* Ex-student actor (CSU graduate, ‘Tim’).

*Description:* Audition monologue: Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, ACT 1, scene 2, lines 133-59.\(^{134}\)

*My role:* Coach. The student asked for my assistance in preparing his audition for Bell Shakespeare later that month.

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AIM/S

Tim’s aim was to get a job with Bell Shakespeare. I wanted that too, but in order to do so, he would have to stand out from the rest. Having seen hundreds of audition pieces I counseled Tim that the way to stand out would be to give the monologue a shape – an effective shape, not the usual droopy shape mentioned in the Aristotle chapter, above.

METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT

The speech is from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, ACT 1, Scene 2, lines 133-59. The line numbers on the right are those of the whole scene.

**STEP 1. READ THROUGH**

First we read through the piece, noting impressions and asking such questions as ‘What does Cassio want overall and now?’ ‘What is stopping him?’ ‘Therefore, what must he do about it?’ ‘What is he doing now?’

**STEP 2. STRUCTURE**

Then we started to structure the piece. We imposed the rule of three sections & sought to find them. We imposed the rule of three major climaxes & sought to find them.

The speech is 26 or 27 lines long, or perhaps 26½ lines long. Let’s say for now it’s 27 lines long. Therefore we predicted that the main structural points should happen around about:
Complication @ line 6.75 of the speech, or line 139.75 of the scene
Turning Point @ line 13.5 of the speech, or line 146.5 of the scene
Catastrophe @ line 20.25 of the speech, or line 153.25 of the scene

Figure 33. First attempts at graphing the structure for Cassius.

By imposing the rule of structure, then adjusting the exact representation when necessary, we started to find out what the speech is about and how it might be played. Putting the Turning Point at line 148 or 149, Section 2 becomes very clear. It’s the real ‘meat’ of Cassius’ argument.

Note that in both graphs I drew a slightly asymmetrical triangle, even though Line 148 is only 1.5 lines off centre. Looking back on this, I think I did it because that is how it felt in performance. The first half felt longer. Does that mean that it should be graphed as longer? Isn’t the duration fixed, regardless of feeling? John Constable said ‘painting is but another word for feeling’? John Constable said ‘painting is but another word for feeling.’ Could I say ‘graphic representation is but another word for “feeling”’? Is the y-axis ‘feeling’? It is certainly ‘about’ feeling, driven by feeling, but do we label the y-axis ‘feeling’? I don’t know.

Tim then did something surprising and exciting – quite different from what we’d graphed. In keeping with the principle of finding the structure by playing and playing with the suggested structure, this was embraced and tested again. He played the

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135 This question will be addressed below in the Third Movement: Reverie.
Turning Point as a moment of *depth* of significance rather than *height* of significance, *depth* of intimacy rather than *height* of apostrophizing rhetoric. Still an apostrophe, but intimate rather than public. So I re-drew the graph:

![Graph](image)

Figure 34. The final graph for the structure of Cassius.

This is still rough, but inverting the triangle helped represent this ‘depth’ of significance – though there’s no reason why the triangle couldn’t point up. After all, ‘intimacy’ isn’t really ‘up’ or ‘down’, it’s more ‘in’ or ‘out’.  

STEP 3. TESTING

We continued to read through again and test the structure by *playing* it. We kept experimenting with the structure until we were satisfied that the ‘real’ structure – of *this* performance, with *this* actor and director had been revealed. If we had to change or even abandon the applied model, we would have; but the structure as ‘revealed’ was more of less triangular...

Sometimes it’s possible to come up with names and descriptions of the three sections first up, but usually it takes a bit of work to find out what they are about. By now we were starting to see that the sections are:

1. Start with a joke
2. The real work and substance to ‘get’ Brutus
3. Deliver the answer with ease.

STEP 4. INSCRIBING DETAIL INTO THE SPEECH

Cassius uses the rhetorical device of repetition:

‘Write them’ line 143
‘Sound them’ line 144
‘Weigh them’ line 145

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137 This is a core aspect of what becomes the ‘PhD Moment’, pondered in the Third Movement, below.
‘conjure with ’em’ line 145

And repetitive questioning:
‘When . . . one man?’ lines 150-151
‘When . . . one man?’ lines 152-153
‘Now . . . but one only man.’ lines 154-155

We are starting to see how skillfully Cassius plays upon Brutus’ sense of ‘right-ness’ and history – even drawing upon Brutus’ own ancestry.

We added more detail with regard to character. For example, we looked at Caesar’s description of Cassius at ACT 1, scene 2, lines 191-211. Time, place, recent events and other ‘layers’ started to be inscribed into the feeling of the scene.

The actor can feed this detail in first or last – I don’t think it matters, because working on the structure helps excavate the character, and excavating the character helps reveal the structure. After all, to paraphrase Michael Cunningham’s observation quoted above, we are trying to make sense of ‘confusions of images, impulses, scattered meanings, devotions, grudges, fixations, and some vague sort of plot’.

OUTCOME

Well, Tim didn’t get the gig. He reported to me later that he did the audition quite under-prepared, and didn’t feel confident. He came to me very under-prepare as well. I did more work than him – which was good for me, but not good form for him – as he’d asked me to help him as a favour! This structural work does require more work. Once the structure is set, the actor needs to rehearse and rehearse so it becomes second nature. Sometimes, if one doesn’t quite know one’s lines, one can still fake a sort of spontaneous ‘reaching’ for the word, which can look quite natural, but it can also slow the thing right down, but if the actor is thinking about the structure it can take him right out of the scene and look stilted. So there’s a danger here – by taking this on, the actor has to work a bit harder to look natural.

CONCLUSION/NEXT

Though I started this project using the ‘traditional’ structure, it was eventually turned upside-down. That seemed fairly minor at the time, but it’s actually major, especially in the light of the question ‘What is This Really About’ pondered in the Third Movement. However, there is still the danger that I might never move past the Triangle. It’s good that the structure was modified in this project, but I fear that I’m never going to try anything really new! As experimentation was the motivating principle at the ‘hunch’ stage of this part of the PhD, that wouldn’t be good! I’m at a Turning Point.

MAJOR EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

gaps identified between the current practice and where I want to be (based on the transformation in thinking from PhD process)

How is this going? I haven’t been able to use new structures in the projects up to now, but the potential for new structures has opened up in my imagination. There has been a growing desire and need to create and experiment. I need projects that will support that.

I need two types of projects: ‘mainstream’ and ‘experimental’. What’s the difference? In the latter, the outcome is unknown and the ‘experiment’ is allowed to fail – in the former, the outcome is sort-of-known and is expected to not fail. The need for haste in ‘mainstream’ projects has always propelled me back to the easiest and quickest, standard ‘triangle’.

The next tranche of projects will be ‘experimental’, then.

Why use quote marks for ‘experimental’. Aren’t all the projects experimental? According to Leon’s first drawing, all the projects are experimental, insofar as they should be specially devised to ‘address gaps’ in practice. Each of the ‘experimental’ projects in this section will use a new graph. What follows is a series of brief documentations of the projects and their graphs.

\footnote{See Figure 1, p. 7.}
SECOND MOVEMENT:

Failure
‘EXPERIMENTAL’ PROJECTS
tranche of projects devised to address gaps, including experimentation with new structures, evaluation of projects and reflection on PhD progress
INTRODUCTION

Where: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.
Company: Dr Ashley Wain (my colleague at CSU).
Description: New devised solo piece based on a passage from the book *Dark Night, Early Dawn* by Christopher Bache. The author feels that after some time in transpersonal states of consciousness, the theme of spiritual rebirth consistently arises. Almost apologetically, he writes that this makes discussion of the spiritual rebirth of mankind an aspect which, because of its importance, is hard to ignore. Indeed, other voyagers into these realms have drawn these same conclusions. Bache includes seven pages from his various sessions relating to this topic. He combines chaos theory, near-death episode research, and the study of non-linear systems to suggest that the impending crisis of ecological sustainability may actually trigger a ‘dark night of the species,’ analogous to the mystic's dark night of the soul, that will be followed by a spiritual rebirth of our species. He calls this new brand of human which will arise from this dialectic, the *Homo spiritualis*. Bache believes that a problem of future economic and raw material sustainability might be the trigger to the dark night of the species-soul catastrophe. He supports his thesis by presenting graphs showing that the present level of industrial production, expanding population, and depletion of natural resources cannot continue indefinitely. A crisis level might be reached early in this century. This thesis had been developed by a team of scientists at M.I.T. in a book, *The Limits of Growth*. Other equally traumatic scenarios are discussed. The author admits that these conclusions may not be empirically verifiable. He places much confidence in the philosophical work of Richard Tarnas who feels that the history of western civilization has shown an unacceptable separation between itself and the cosmic mind.

My role: Director, facilitator.

AIM/S

Given that, as yet, I haven’t ‘experimented’ with new graphic representations of dramatic structure, this is the first in the tranche of productions ‘tailor made’ to support complexity and the unknown. The aim is to ‘throw out’ the Triangle and test a range of new graphs.

METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT

In this project we followed the principles of performance making described in APPENDIX 2. I will fill in some detail of what we did/found:

PART ONE. CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

1. Hunch/Decision

To collect material and also to ‘see’ what material might emerge from the following passage from Dark Night, Early Dawn:

I believe that for there to be a genuine spiritual rebirth of our species, there must first take place a death of the species-ego, a complete collapse of our customary way of experiencing ourselves in the world, and the pain of such a massive collapse is extremely difficult to hold in one’s heart. If the dark night of the soul is the painful price the mystic must pay to awaken the divine within, the dark night of the species-soul will be a particularly dark and potentially dangerous time in human history.\(^{141}\)

We decided to start working in two ways concurrently – collecting material and ideas, while doing and filming regular Neutral Mask sessions. Ashley Wain is a master of Neutral Mask, both as a practitioner and teacher – it’s not one of my areas of expertise.

2. Proposed schedule

Stage one: Collection, gathering, brainstorming

August 13 – September 3 2007

Stage two: First dress rehearsal

October 1 2007

Stage three: Dress rehearsal

October 2 2007

Stage four: Rehearsal dates

September 10 – 30 2007

Stage five: Performance dates

October 3, 6, 13, 20, 27 October 2007

3. Collection, including ‘brainstorming’

I will simply list here the materials we collected during this phase, in order to give the reader a ‘taste’ of the project:

Bache texts, including:

... careful, careful ... it feels much stronger now than it did then ... the movement ... the music is fading ... clouds dissolving ... the curls are gone ... nothing now, nothing but a spiralling mass of energy moving outward ... moving inward bit by bit ... like swimming upstream ... etc.\(^{142}\)

Bache graphs:

\(^{141}\) Bache, p. 213.

\(^{142}\) Bache, p. 139. Quotes from Robert Monroe's narration while undergoing psychedelic therapy.
Bache says that the point of the image is ‘to represent the dialogical relationship between our present awareness and our extended temporal existence, however we conceive it.’ The original graph is vertical, but I have rotated it 90 degrees, as I apparently still depend on ‘time’ being horizontal! That would be something worth examining at a later date.

Of the second graph, Bache says:

‘Now the vertical line of time is intersected by the horizontal line of space. The dots of our past and future lives are now complemented by dots representing other members of our species sharing the present moment.’

These two graphs are rather enticing. The point of working with them would be to use one at a time as the ‘imposed’ structure, in place of the usual Triangle. We would have to spend some time analysing the dramatic significance and potential of each graph. For example, do the diverging and merging lines represent the Audience and Protagonist and their awareness moving away and towards each other? How might we ‘perform’ the arrows that seem to move ‘backwards’? We would also have to spend time inventing a new language to describe the main dramatic points on these graphs – Complication, Turning Point and Catastrophe might not work.

Neutral Mask work, focusing on the archetypes of Neptune, Saturn, Pluto and Prometheus. These archetypes are part of the narrative of *Dark Night, Early Dawn*.

Michael Chekhov atmospheres work.

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143 Bache, p. 162.
144 Bache, p. 166.
145 Bache, p. 165.
Music, including Scriabin Preparation for the Final Mystery; Messiaen Quartet for the End of Time and Book of the Holy Sacrament.

Text from St John of the Cross.

4. Shaping/redaction

Early on we threw out the bits of text. The physical work was proceeding with intensity, and we both felt that the introduction of spoken word into the atmosphere would ruin it.

5. Draft

Unfortunately the project fell apart before we got to this stage. Ashley felt that his physical condition wasn’t sufficiently up to scratch to maintain the fierce demands of the Neutral Mask work.

Therefore, ‘PART 2. PRODUCTION’ was abandoned.

OUTCOME

We have about five hours of video of Ashley doing Neutral Mask sessions, working first in the mask, then experimenting with recreating the work out of the mask:

Figure 37. From the video documentation of the Great Awakening rehearsals.

Here are some examples of graphs I sketched as we worked.
Figure 38. An early drawing of the structure of The Great Awakening.

Figure 39. The four ‘events’ (from left): Neptune, Saturn, Pluto and Prometheus.

CONCLUSION/NEXT
The project flopped, but overlapped with the following one, which overlapped with the one following that. Did I come up with new graphic representations of dramatic
structure? Well, no. The drawings above are just doodles – conjectures. We didn’t get to the stage of trialing and re-triaing, as described in *Cassius*, above. The actual structure of the work Ashley and I were doing and going to do in the studio hadn’t yet been revealed or imposed. In terms of the forward momentum of the PhD this project had to be written off. In terms of the future though, there is much material here to be tried out – especially the idea of starting with somebody else’s graph and using it as the template structure.

**PROJECT: AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

When: October 2007 – ongoing.

Where: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga then Melbourne.

Company: Undergraduate students (CSU, VCA & Uni Ballarat), myself, fellow cast *Lear* cast members.

Description: A teaching, rehearsal, and personal/professional development resource.

My role: Teacher, participant, actor.

**AIM/S**

This was an ‘accidental’ project – not planned, and not really a project at all. As it says above, Authentic Movement is a teaching, rehearsal and personal/professional development tool. The work was introduced to me by my CSU colleague Ashley Wain in 2007. The reason I have included it here is because it came to me in the midst of my PhD work, and provoked much new thinking and a new graph. So, the ‘project’ didn’t have a pre-determined aim, but I will construe an aim by working backwards from the Outcome. It happened in this order:

- practice
- conundrum (no structure)
- hunch (could be onto something)
- it’s like . . . (see below)
- new thinking/possibly new graph

**METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT**

First, what is Authentic Movement?

It was ‘invented’ by Jungian dance/movement/therapy practitioner Mary Starks Whitehouse and further developed by her and two colleagues.¹⁴⁶ As the name suggests, it’s about moving the body, usually in silence (in *Lear*, we started experimenting with voice). The person doing the Authentic Movement (the ‘mover’) starts by closing their eyes and responding to deep and often very subtle impulses

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that may or may not lead to movement – any sort of movement. None of if is planned. You could say it is like ‘free improvisation’ but really it doesn’t even have that much structure – free improvisation in Jazz, for instance, at least uses known scales, harmonies and patterns of sound. In Authentic Movement, if the mover’s deepest impulse is to do nothing, or lie down on the floor, that’s what they do.

At CSU we would all start by sitting around the perimeter of a large basketball court. We would move into the space if we felt the impulse to do so. Actually, when teaching and directing I try to avoid the word ‘impulse’ – there’s a bit of a mystique around the word which can be distracting. I prefer to say ‘if you feel like it’ and ‘when you feel like it’ and ‘if you don’t feel like it’.

So you move into the space if you feel like it, close your eyes (we experimented later with opening the eyes, with spectacular results) and start to ‘listen’ for the impulse or urge to move – then you move. There is no judgment, no ‘editing’ and especially no ‘rehearsing’ – you just get up, close your eyes, and move if and when you feel like it and do what you are ‘moved’ to do.\textsuperscript{147}

In spite of my shyness about the word ‘impulse’, it is necessary to use it sometimes, especially if students appear to think that ‘if you feel like it’ means just mucking around. The idea is to find an ever deepening quietude wherein one can ‘listen’ for and ‘sense’ the most delicate impulses.

Those people who don’t get up remain seated around the perimeter, playing an extremely important role – that of ‘witness’. The role of witness is similar to that of mover, insofar as there is no judging in terms of performance values. The witness/es must be very sensitive to this – even after the work – being careful not to give ‘performance’ feedback to their co-participants. The witness helps to create a powerful atmosphere wherein the work can take place. Being seen is not the same as performing. This is very liberating, and very different from doing the work alone. Working with deepest impulse while being transparent and ‘seen’ is powerful for mover and witness alike. In time, all present allow themselves to ‘let go’ into the experience. This can take time, especially with younger students who are very fixed on the idea of performing – and using performance to hide or worse – attract attention by posturing.

There is no ‘direction’ from the teacher, except to monitor the integrity of the exercise, and to reiterate the aims, especially when they are corrupted by ‘performing’ or ‘presenting’. The movers develop the ability to listen closely for their own movement impulses. This awareness will lead the practitioner to entirely unexpected and unique dimensions of expressiveness. This has certainly been the case for me:

\textbf{Journal, 16 October 2007:}

The structure, for the first time, is spatial – this is new! The space is part of the impulse and is part of the ‘mind’ of the impulse – part of my ‘mind’.

\textsuperscript{147}This has long been a stated rule of mine – especially for young actors: ‘Move only when you are \textit{moved} to move, otherwise stay still.’
While I am doing it, there is no sense of duration. There is when I watch, but even then the sense of time and duration is very indefinite.

The structure is like tuning a radio. There is a period of ‘static’ or ‘interference’. During this period there is one sense of time, then at some point – which is not rehearsed or decided (and might not happen) the performer ‘tunes in’ to impulse, and there is a different sense of time. I can’t say what this is. They are two types of timelessness.

There is an attempt at graphing this structure, below.

OUTCOME

There was no ‘outcome’ like a performance or product. The only outcome is thought. Here is what I learned and what I wondered.

Getting through ‘stuff’ to get to transcendence. In November 2007 I had a conversation with a friend about Yoga. She was quite an advanced practitioner, having done it regularly for many years. She also had a teacher who was pretty hard – who pushed his students well beyond their comfort thresholds. She observed that it would take a certain amount of time to get through what she called ‘stuff’ – be that pain, discomfort, or distracted thoughts in order to get to the real matter of the asana or session. Sometimes she would burst into tears upon crossing this threshold into something she found it hard to put into words – we both agreed that ‘transcendence’ was right.

This is exactly what it is like to do Authentic Movement. There is a period at the start of the session where it feels like tuning a radio. Impulses arise, and if one is attuned and ready, it is fairly easy to follow them and move. But it feels like the sloughing off of superficial impulses – they are not refined – they are rather like scratching an itch. There would always come a time of ‘sinking’ into another creative state, where the impulses are ‘deep’. Another way to describe this is ‘dropping in to impulse’. For this to happen a session of at least 50 minutes would be required. Here again is the issue of using metaphorical speech to search for a description of experience.

Journal, 20 October 2007:

The structure is in the basketball court – in the whole space – in my mind. For the audience there must be duration – a sense of the thing starting and finishing, but not for me – but that’s the same for any performance – if it’s going well – feeling lost in time. We hope the audience feel lost in time as well – ‘Where did the time go?’ So maybe it’s no different from performance that is really cracking. The structure is like tuning a radio + timelessness + journey.

Then I drew a graph to represent this. The original didn’t scan well into the computer, being a bit too faint. This is a reproduction/approximation in stronger lines:
In the past I have been rather scornful of ‘unstructured’ forms of theatre, even though I’ve been happy to make them myself. Aristotle’s ‘flat line’ or my ‘droopy line’, or worse, performances that resemble a screwed up bit of waste paper – these have been my worst-favoured forms.

It was a revelation to practice and participate as a witness, in Authentic Movement – which ostensibly has no structure at all – depending on the impulse of the moment, even if that is to do nothing.

The nature of love is as the nature of water in the depth of the earth. If we do not dig deep enough, we find mud, not water; but when we dig deep, we find pure water.

Hazrat Inayat Khan, *Complete Sayings*, 1728.148

Substitute ‘love’ for ‘impulse’, and that’s exactly right for Authentic Movement. The first attempts are like digging through mud – then, with time – the water!

Journal, 11 December 2007:

Can structure disappear? Structure is the opposite of what I’ve been experiencing in Authentic Movement. With its rigorous ‘classical’ structure, what WAS/IS *Little Women*? Feelings of the heart. Meditation is structured,

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but the rule leads to nothingness/feeling. Structure is a rule, but it leads to what? Deep structure?

There is a popular maxim that we should be able to ‘sit with’ ourselves. Sometimes movement is seen as ‘compulsive’. This is certainly the case with acting. I find that young actors find it very difficult to be still. They move compulsively. They feel ‘exposed’ when they, for example, just stand in a space facing the audience. They feel compelled to ‘decorate’ their presence – to be ‘interesting’. I tell them that movement is ‘masking’ what is going on. A Noh master who visited VCA when I was a student there said the same thing. He added that everything that happens on stage should come from ‘stillness’. This seems paradoxical, as actors are required to move a lot. Movement can mask inner events, if the movement and the inner events are not ‘consanguineous’ - but if movement emerges from inner events, then this can be extremely exciting.

While watching students and peers doing Authentic Movement, this disjunction and conjunction became extremely, vividly clear. It was also extremely clear when I was doing it myself. The difference between movement that masked inner events and movement born of inner events was dazzling and revolutionary.

Journal, 18 December 2007:

How does this relate to dramatic structure? The visual representation of dramatic structure is, like an ECG (electrocardiogram), the outer representation of the inner events. The movement, colour and externality of a play or movie decorate or mask the inner events, but they are there. What do I mean by ‘mask’? The structure is a bit like the Neutral Mask; you put it on, then become it in order to reveal a deep inner union with a truth. There is a magic in it. Is the graph ‘neutral’? Yes, Becoming, Union, Being, I am, I do – it’s all there in the structure. Is it like an archetype: Is it like a spiritual practice, like a prayer? Is it like Neutral Mask?

[The neutral mask] opens up the actor to the space around him. It puts him in a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive. It allows him to watch, to hear, to feel, to touch elementary things with the freshness of beginnings. [ . . . ] [Here] there is no character, only a neutral generic being. [ . . . ] [The] neutral mask puts the actor in a state of perfect balance and economy of movement. Its moves have a truthfulness, its gestures and actions are economical. Movement work based on neutrality provides a series of fulcrum points that will be essential for acting, which comes later.\textsuperscript{149}

To go with deep impulses, that are created and revealed at the same time – simultaneous volition and surrender in the moment of performance. How is that possible?

CONCLUSION/NEXT

Dramatic structure is built on impulses that become actions. What is the structure of an impulse itself? What is the structure of the moment before the impulse? What is the structure of the Big Bang? Authentic Movement was the most significant

challenge to The Triangle. It overlapped with the next project, Lear, which was born during an Authentic Movement session.

PROJECT: LEAR

INTRODUCTION


Where: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga then Melbourne.

Company: Myself, Ashley Wain, Bethany Simons, Andrew Dodds and a small rotating group of student volunteers.

Description: A research project that emerged passionately and spontaneously out of Authentic Movement. My colleague Ashley Wain watched me doing Authentic Movement with the students one day and ‘saw’ the character of King Lear. At first it was to be a solo piece, then it grew. It was to be entirely improvised, but it changed into a dramaturged/scripted piece, using excerpts from Shakespeare’s play.

My role: Actor, co-devisor.

AIM/S

To continue with Authentic Movement, while reading and re-reading Shakespeare’s King Lear and seeing what happens.

METHOD, or HOW WE TRIED TO DO THAT

This Method section is divided into two stages. The first stage overlaps with Authentic Movement; the second stage overlaps with the Catastrophe of the PhD. In the first stage, the freedom and ‘aimlessness’ of Authentic Movement guides the project. In the second stage, the encumbrance of text work and the imposition of structure drag the project in a destructive direction. I will describe what we did in both stages, and include journal entries from those times that reveal not only the method but the feelings evoked. I include these rather indulgent journal entries to illustrate what happened when structure was imposed on the project.

STAGE ONE

Though Lear was a new devised piece, it did not follow the principles of performance making used in ALEA, The Weather and Your Health and The Great Awakening.150 As it ‘emerged’ from the Authentic Movement work, we embraced the idea of no structure, or more accurately, the idea of allowing the structure to form itself, or not, in the spirit of Authentic Movement. Interestingly, later on, when we

150 See APPENDIX 2: Principles of performance making.
started imposing a structure, the project started falling apart (or perhaps the project started falling apart and we tried to save it by applying a structure – I don’t know).

In the spirit of ‘letting it happen’ we didn’t plot the structure of the play in the manner of Antony and Cleopatra, Cassius and Othello examples.

In the First Stage, a typical session would comprise, not necessarily in this order:

- Physical warm-up
- Reading scenes from King Lear
- Heart Rhythm Meditation
- Authentic Movement

Heart Rhythm Meditation is a type of Sufic meditation that uses awareness of the beating of the heart as the object of concentration. Ashley Wain, in his PhD thesis Acting and Essence argues that Stanislavsky used this type of meditation in rehearsals and classes. Heart Rhythm Meditation, like most meditation traditions, offers practices from the simple to the highly esoteric.

Journal, Saturday 27 October 2007:

**LEAR**

I got to a point in Authentic Movement yesterday where I not only made sound, but sang. The experience was in two parts, no sound in the first. I will need to draw the structure of what I did. The first part went quite quickly into running and clapping – a lot of running, getting faster and faster, then falling and rolling. Up into a sort of palms facing forward greeting gesture, and I could feel my palms vibrating red (they were just sore and excited from the falling. The episode then dipped – I can’t really remember much about it. Sat down. Then I stood up again and went somewhere very exciting. A lot of vigorous but very light movements, quite fiery, but dancing and extremely light. More like dancing light than fire (but light is fire, isn’t it?). This dancing continued until a laughing ‘ha’ sound emerged. I felt something rising from within – deep within – it was sound, but it was melody. I started humming, still with this feeling of absolute delight, and it developed into a melody – ‘This is my song’, words and music by Charlie Chaplin, recorded by Petula Clark, 1967 – first heard when I was 12. I felt something still rising up and needing to burst forth – and it was the song. I sang

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Love this is my song
Here is a song, a serenade to you
The world cannot be wrong
If in this world there is you
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That was it, I sank to the floor (not in a trance, but quite ecstatic) and it was finished.

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152 The text we used was: Bair, Puran. Living from the Heart. New York: Three Rivers Press.
153 I didn’t, but later drew a graph approximating Authentic Movement (Figure 46, above).
This was the most glorious feeling. I filled the space and I felt the space fill me. Again, the only word for it is glory. The room was full of the sound of singing. And it was about love. I was so surprised by this experience. I don’t think I’ve ever sung that song before, I don’t think it has any significance for me – not a childhood favourite. But the ‘rising’ sound had to be about love, because that is where I’m at.

What joy! What highs and lows I’m experiencing. And it’s all about love, beauty and harmony.

STAGE TWO

At the start of 2008 I moved to Melbourne, as did Bethany and Andrew, but Ashley stayed in Wagga Wagga for the next six months. We continued rehearsing in both cities, but less frequently.

Journal, Monday 3 February 2008:

Ashley and I finished reading the play today, intending to start using more text.

First impressions?

The shattering, the obliteration of not only the ego but of the whole being. The cataclysmic destruction of a soul.

[ . . . ]

The other impression from today is of a journey away from structure – the structure of society, of maps and property – towards no structure, no law, no propriety, no shape, no form, no emptiness – sounds like the Heart Sutra.154 Is it a journey into Emptiness? Is the Buddhist journey into Emptiness so full of grief and agony?

Though the reading urged moving away from structure, we did, from this point on start applying structure. We started editing a ‘script’ comprising excerpts from the play. This was based on ‘Lear’s long breath’ (all of Lear’s lines extracted from the play and formed into one long speech)155 with other ‘favourite bits’ inserted.

A typical rehearsal would comprise:

1. Heart Rhythm Meditation
2. Authentic Movement, starting with eyes closed, but moving into eyes open and the possibility of sound/words and interaction with others
3. Etude rehearsals
4. Constellation work

Etude rehearsals are a rehearsal technique taken from Stanislavsky’s Active Analysis (also known as Action Analysis):156

1. you read a scene;
2. you discuss the scene;

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154 Probably the most famous Buddhist scripture, which declares the perfection of wisdom and the nature of emptiness – the ‘heart’ of Buddhist philosophy.
156 Both are used in Mike Pushkin’s unpublished translation of Maria Knebel’s On the Active Analysis of Plays and Roles, 2002/3.
3. you improvise the scene without further reference to the script;
4. you discuss the improvisation, before returning to the script;
5. you compare whatever happened in your improvisation with the words and incidents of the actual text.\(^{157}\)

This is a wonderful way of working on an extant script, but a far cry from the enthralling liberation of Authentic Movement. It was as if Authentic Movement had become a mere enhancement to rehearsal rather than the \textit{materia prima}.

‘Constellation work’ is based on an intense therapeutic group process called Family Constellations, developed by the German psychologist-philosopher Bert Hellinger.\(^{158}\)

The purpose of the work is to release and resolve profound tensions within and between people, especially families. It is practiced by psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and family therapists. People are arranged spatially by a facilitator according to what feels right in the moment. The participants do not act or role play as they might in psychodrama, but describe how it feels to be placed in relation to the others, often experiencing strong feelings or physical sensations.

Ashley has used this technique as a director to explore the troubled relationships between characters in a play, as he did with us in \textit{Lear}.

Typical rehearsal documentation:

Journal, 13 February 2008:

The experiment:
To read over a section of the play a couple of times, without discussing it, then do Authentic Movement, and see what happens. To the standard Authentic Movement instructions we added ‘possibility of interaction’. We read over (sitting) the exchange between Lear and Fool in ACT 1, scene 4, just before Goneril’s entrance. We read it out loud twice, put the text down with the intention of allowing it to stay quietly in our minds. Then we did Authentic Movement. We decided to break the ‘always at least one witness’ rule, and both moved in the space.

The results:
We both felt there was a jumble of things going on – some fruitful, some not so fruitful. It’s hard not to do a sort of peculiar ‘impulse acting’, or worse, acting out ‘scenes’. Right towards the end of our time we felt something ‘real’ happen. Then the ‘finish now’ alarm went off. Also it felt odd not having a witness. It seems that the witnessing is really part of it, not just a convenience.

Conclusions:
This often appears to happen with Authentic Movement – it takes a while to get going – there’s a period of ‘getting through stuff’ that might last for most of the session before the ‘real’ stuff happens.

Reading the scene twice over and then doing Authentic Movement didn’t work. It wasn’t quite Authentic Movement, and it wasn’t quite scene-work either.

Journal, 16 March to 31 May 2008 (excerpts):

(the piece is becoming more and more 'choreographed' and 'directed')

Authentic Movement/feeling lines/impulse work. How much of what we did, though 'authentic', was real? or necessary? or useful?

Jotting down 'what we found'. All I can think of is 'I don’t want to do this.' Is that Lear? Is that me? What am I fighting? Everything we’re doing just makes me annoyed.

Did I really get anything out of that? I don’t know. I just want to stop.

He’s directing a 'production' of Lear - as Robyn Nevin said, he’s ‘telling me how to do it’.159

Should I just learn the lines and do it? I am completely out of touch with this.

I don’t know how it went – now I depend on the opinion of the director. Have I become infantilized, or am I imagining it?

Now we’re all resisting!

We should welcome the destruction of the piece. The birth of the piece was Authentic Movement – me with long hair and arms out in the Basketball Court – Lear – that’s all – everything else is imposed.

OUTCOME

I think our director slid sideways into the idea of directing a production of King Lear. From my point of view as an actor, this changed everything. I’m not capable of playing Lear in King Lear!

By April of 2008 I didn’t want to do it any more. Ashley became preoccupied with other things and asked us if we could continue on our own. Well, no. By May 2008 it fell apart.

CONCLUSION/NEXT

The result of incorporating bits of text into the Authentic Movement work destroyed the ‘authenticity’ of the Authentic Movement, as did the cobbled together of a script with a performance outcome in mind.

Many years ago a friend of mine joked that when she was doing her BA at Sydney University, she studied, among other things, Existentialism. She was genuinely perplexed: ‘If life is meaningless, then why do I have to do this essay?’ The subject encroached upon her life. I think the Lear company had a comparable experience: ‘If this is all about ego-death, then it’s not surprising that the project is dying as well.’ Not just the project, but the PhD has fallen apart:

159 During a rehearsal of The Marriage of Figaro directed by Neil Armfield – broadcast on the ABC Sunday Arts program. (date unknown).
It's a strange structure. As ‘unfamiliarity’ rises, so does the process of falling apart. As ‘unfamiliarity’ and ‘falling apart’ rise, so too does thinking.

The theme that emerges from the previous three projects – *The Great Awakening*, *Authentic Movement* and *Lear* is ego-death. They emerge as a trilogy.

**PROJECT: THE FEIGNED INCONSTANCY**

**INTRODUCTION**

When: April, May, 2008 (performed 20-27 May).

Where: Victorian College of the Arts.

Company: Third Year Acting students, designers and crew.

Description: Extant play by Pierre Marivaux (1688-1763).

My role: Director.

**AIM/S**

This project is quite different from the other ‘experimental’ projects: a baroque play that I chose to direct in what is annoyingly referred to as ‘traditional style’, which means that the costumes, sets and style of the production reflect the period when the play was written – also known as doing the play ‘in period’. The text and cast had been selected for me in advance. In the context of this ‘mainstream’ production I
aimed to introduce and experiment with two new graphic representations – the ‘Mind-Heart-Union’ structure that I had recently encountered in Sufism, and the ‘Necklace’ structure suggested to me at one of the Graduate Research Conferences. A ‘mainstream’ project then, with ‘experimental’ aspirations.

MIND-HEART-UNION EXPLAINED

In this paradigm the structure of the journey is not an ascent or descent, but depicts ‘where we are’. Duration is represented on the graph from left to right, the ‘line’ of the graph goes up and down, but there is not a value placed on more or less drama. Each of the sections has its threshold, just like the sections of the standard graph. There is no ‘rising action’ or ‘falling action’. There is no ‘descent into the Underworld’ or journey from the Apollonian to the Dionysian (discussed later in the Nietzsche chapter).

I will illustrate by using the example of Othello, as I have so often in this document. Othello at the start of the play lives in the world of the rational mind. Even Desemona says, ‘I saw Othello’s visage in his mind’.162 He is a respected an admired member of his society, a part of the ‘establishment’. But unlike the ‘native’ Venetians, there is a seed of ‘difference’ in him which, if given the right conditions and ‘watered’ appropriately, will germinate into something ‘other’. His journey takes him into the vulnerable and dangerous territory of the Heart, where he undergoes an unreliable initiation, often under the guidance of a malign, coercive guide. rather like the effect of a a case of ‘False Memory’ induced under hypnosis or the otherwise the otherwise strong influence of therapists in the 80s and early 90s). Iago’s process of ‘guiding’ Othello through this initiation is a process of narrowing Othello’s view until all he can see is himself and his wife (‘Look to your wife’). He suffers the ‘pain of individuation’ having been cast out alone:

Initiation marks manhood on the body, but the mind is equally marked, though periods of withdrawal, deprivation, leaning, submission to authority, support, exposure to secret events and objects, language, song, and oratory.

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161 Institute for Applied Meditation web course 204W, April 2008.
162 Othello, ACT 1, Scene 3, line 248.
A person who is biologically masculine but has not undergone these rites is, in traditional Aboriginal thought, not a man at all.\textsuperscript{163}

THE NECKLACE STRUCTURE EXPLAINED

This was an idea suggested to me at the October 2007 Graduate Research Conference – structure as necklace. It could be easily constructed in 3D – a piece of string could be laid on the floor and objects added to it at the climaxes – objects that best represent that moment – including shape, texture, significance. This method seemed very suitable for rehearsals, as it would be easy to construct, easy to change as we changed our minds about the structure, and easy for students to engage with.

METHOD, or HOW I TRIED TO DO THAT

In the first week of rehearsal I introduced the actors to the general idea of dramatic structure, first using the basic triangle, then added the Mind-Heart-Union structure, then experimented with the Necklace structure.

I imposed the standard graph over the top of the Mind-Heart-Union graph in \textit{The Feigned Inconstancy}:

This structure of three circles is not an ascent or descent—the protagonist is where he/she is, right now. Still, it is directional and linear. The protagonist must experience the thresholds.

Within a minute of my beginning the speech explaining the Necklace model I felt like I was setting a school assignment—‘This is for my PhD’. The students surely picked up on this and responded with cocked heads and polite but blank looks. I retreated immediately and never brought it up again. Even though the ‘necklace’ idea was shelved in those first moments of rehearsal, and the Mind Heart Union structure wasn’t completely followed through, *The Feigned Inconstancy* did receive the most thorough structural treatment, with a cast who were enthusiastic and intelligent. The photos attest to this.

Figure 46. Using the pages of the play, the structure is ‘graphed’ on the wall.
I used Authentic Movement every day in rehearsal, and my own version of *étude rehearsals*, focusing on physical improvisation, often without words.

This is from my *Feigned Inconstancy* notebook. It’s a snapshot of my trying to work out who the Mind Heart Union model will work in the context of dramatic structure:

MIND – exposition – ego in control – solidity

*COMPLICATION* – climax of MIND

HEART – development/transformation/fragility/the Unconscious

Enter the world of the Heart. This is not the heart of modern-day romantic comedy – a bit sentimental, a bit dangerous, a bit anything – but a dangerous place constantly teetering on the brink of oblivion or the Dionysian abyss.

*TURNING POINT* – climax of HEART – the heart’s depth – most dangerous and out of worldly ‘control’ – the ‘tipping point’

UNION – having been through an initiation of ‘unlearning’ the protagonist attempts self-completion and the execution of his/her destiny or sacred task.

Enter the world of Union. The protagonist attempts union with something Greater. In tragedy and comedy the protagonist receives help from an unreliable guide. In comedy the protagonist/s manage to re-enter society as initiates, but in tragedy the scars received from the experience of the other world are too great. Union isn’t necessarily good. Othello has been initiated into a cult of death and executes what he believes is his sacred task.

*CATASTROPHE* – the climax of UNION – the protagonist becomes convinced of his/her role in the new order and determines to take action – to achieve transcendence through action.

OUTCOME

The ‘experimental’ component fell away. The practicalities of getting the play *on* drove the graphic representation experiment further into the background. However, the actors had a strong sense of the play’s structure, and the play as performed benefited from that. What saved it from being ‘an experiment?’ Instinct and experience. By this time the standard method of the triangular graph was so ingrained in me that I could fall back on it with ease, and incorporate it into rehearsals with ease.
The actors responded very enthusiastically to Authentic Movement, the physical etudes and the structural rigour. One of the actors commented after the close of the production that ‘there was such freedom, even within such clear boundaries.’

CONCLUSION/NEXT
A note from my rehearsal notebook (Friday 11 April 08):

Today’s rehearsal revealed that even across 300 years, place, culture, language, class, the human heart is the same fragile, courageous buoyant, easily deflated/shattered, burning heart. The culture depicted in The Feigned Inconstancy is sophisticated, ritualised cynicism, but underneath it all beat the same human hearts that beat now. I think our time is confused with regards the heart – divided between ‘smart modernity’ and cheap sentimentality – and even superstition. All of this conceals the same human heart as that found in this play, Chekhov, Shakespeare, Dickens, etc. I do feel it is possible to go on now, confident that we are exploring something meaningful or worthwhile, rather than just another play.

Even though the ‘failure’ theme is a good one, it was rather invigorating to enjoy a success – even if it wasn’t such a great success in terms of the PhD, it was a ‘really good show’!

Figure 48. An ‘optimistic’ graph of the PhD journey at that time.
THE PhD MOMENT: WHAT IS THIS REALLY ABOUT?

Figure 49. An updated graphic representation of my PhD journey.

Rehearsal notebook, Friday 6 June 08 (excerpt):

I’ve tried to connect visual representation with rehearsal repeatedly – it doesn’t take! Is it that actors are not especially visual creatures? The divide between the ‘graph’ and the world of the play is too great! Actors move so quickly from the visual to the kinaesthetic that the graph disappears. Or is it just the training of the actors I’m working with. Would this be the case if they were trained in the Michael Chekhov method with all its visualisations?

Given the failure of the new structures to ‘take’, what now? Maybe I don’t have a PhD? I need to ‘retreat’ and think. I am comforted by the fact that this is presaged in the PhD structure outlined by Leon van Schaik in his original talk that inspired me to undertake this research, and in subsequent discussions.

The challenge is to design and implement a graphic method that actually reflects the way actors work:

- the divide between the script/text/rehearsal table and the ‘floor’
- the ‘graph’ shouldn’t root the actor to the ‘table’
- to include the graph in action analysis, which involves actors moving constantly between table and floor, not a one-way traffic of table analysis, finish that off then move to the floor

164 ‘Floor’ is synechdochic. The part, ‘floor’ stands in for the whole, which is the rehearsal that takes place in the rehearsal studio. ‘Floor’ is distinct from ‘table’, which is where, typically, the analysis of the text takes place. In his later career, Stanislavsky introduces the idea of ‘action analysis’ whereby the thinking about the text moves fluidly between the ‘table’ and the ‘floor’. 
Are my ‘new’ graphic representations just so much decoration for its own sake?

When a graphic is taken over by decorative forms or computer debris, when the data measures and structures become Design Elements, when the overall design purveys Graphical Style rather than quantitative information, then that graphic may be called a duck in honor of the duck-form store, ‘Big Duck.’ For this building the whole structure is itself decoration, just as in the duck data graphic. In Learning from Las Vegas, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour write about the ducks of modern architecture—and their thoughts are relevant to the design of data graphics as well:

When Modern architects righteously abandoned ornament on buildings, they unconsciously designed buildings that were ornament. In promoting Space and Articulation over symbolism and ornament, they distorted the whole building into a duck. They substituted for the innocent and inexpensive practice of applied decoration on a conventional shed the rather cynical and expensive distortion of program and structure to promote a duck . . . It is now time to reevaluate the once-horrifying statement of John Ruskin that architecture is the decoration of construction, but we should append the warning of Pugin: It is all right to decorate construction but never construct decoration.

[Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, Learning from Las Vegas (Cambridge, revised edition, 1977), p. 163. The initial statement of the duck concept is found on pp. 87-103.]165

There is no shame in the fact that my alternative experimental structures haven’t worked. I remain convinced that the general principal of graphic representation of dramatic structure always enhances rehearsal and performance – always ‘works’. I am still trying to discover the meaning of the y-axis – to name the un-nameable.

Journal, Saturday 10 May 2008:

Up to this point everything leads me to focus on the Vertical Coordinate in the graph. The question that arises is ‘What does this journey mean?’ The meaning of this coordinate is twinned with the meaning of the play overall, and the meaning of ALL plays overall.

This is the appropriate time in the PhD ‘journey’ to stop doing projects, take a step back and think deeply. The next section of this document will be devoted to reverie.

THIRD MOVEMENT:
Reverie
The chapters in this ‘Reverie’ section take the form of marginalia in response to meaningful encounters with wise guides:

Marginalia are the immediate indices of the reader’s response to the text, of the dialogue between the book and himself. They are the active tracers of the inner speech-current . . . which accompanies the process of reading.166

Steiner goes on to assert that marginalia can become a form of authorship. By engaging in a ‘dialogue’ with the Great Ones I find my thinking changes. The process reveals to me new ideas but also reveals to me what I already knew but didn’t have the words to say it. These wise guides are able to articulate my unspoken thoughts in beautiful, penetrating language.

Because, as I think I have demonstrated, there is not much writing and discussion of Dramatic Structure in the ‘Dramatic Community’, I have taken great pleasure in borrowing, adapting and appropriating the sayings of masters of other disciplines. I have found that substituting a word or two in the original serves my purpose of articulating my inchoate thoughts.

METAPHOR

GEORGE LAKOFF AND MARK JOHNSON ON METAPHOR

I was once asked by a panelist at a Graduate Research Conference, ‘Why does the graph go up?’ At the time I dispensed a rather curt answer, ‘Well, nothing actually goes up – it’s a visual metaphor.’ I thought this was sufficient. But later the question nagged at me. Yes, it’s a visual metaphor, but what sort of metaphor? Why is it so hard to imagine the graph doing anything but ‘going up’? Why not ‘in’ or ‘through’? If the graph is standing in for something else – metaphorically – what is the ‘something else’? Are different shaped graphs different types of metaphor, or metaphors with different meanings? That simple question provoked deeper questioning . . .

The book Metaphors We Live By by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson is useful here.167

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.168

Metaphors We Live By was originally published in 1980. The authors explain how verbal metaphors, by virtue of their abundant and accepted use in everyday speech, influence the way we think and behave. The authors examine how metaphors work in speech and literature, and attempt to unpack what is going on when we say, for example, ‘I ‘fell’ asleep’.

From the experientialist perspective, metaphor is a matter of imaginative rationality. It permits an understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another, creating coherences by virtue of imposing gestalts that are structured by natural dimensions of experience. New metaphors are capable of creating new understandings and, therefore, new realities.169

168 Lakoff, p. 5.
169 Lakoff, p. 235.
It seems to me that the moment Freytag drew his graph, a new reality was created, beyond Aristotle’s ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ action.

The ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ part of the graph I’m calling the $y$-axis. Freytag doesn’t picture his graph as a coordinate graph, but to do so is a useful refinement or expansion of the visual concept. So I’ll refer to the $y$-axis.

Until I read this book, I had thought that Aristotle didn’t use metaphor. In the two translations I compared, it seemed that the language was intentionally free of anything ‘poetic’. But on very close examination, alert now to my own unquestioning acceptance of certain metaphors in everyday speech, I discovered the merest trace of metaphor and saw how a Kulturkritik like Freytag would seize upon them. Of course I don’t know anything about the German translation’s of Aristotle he was familiar with.

Here are a couple of keys in the Poetics. I will quote two different translations of the same fragment:

[There] are three forms of plot to be avoided. A good man must not be seen passing from good fortune to bad, or a bad man from bad fortune to good. [. . . ] Nor, on the other hand, should an extremely bad man be seen falling from good fortune into bad. (trans. I. Bywater) 170

[It] is clear, first of all, that unqualifiedly good human beings must not appear to fall from good fortune to bad; for that is neither pitiable nor fearful; (trans. Leon Golden) 171

Tufte has looked at this – how a graph or pie chart represents something else.

Why didn’t I simply answer the Big Question with an example from Tufte? His books are full of one thing standing for another thing – for example, a graph or picture standing in for a statistic or measurement. See EndNote, Tufte Visual Explanations, Research Notes.

That’s it. Freytag and Bradley take ‘rise’ to mean rise in fortune, followed by the ‘fall’ in fortune. The $y$-axis is ‘fortune’. I have never believed this to be the case. I have always believed that in tragedy and comedy the protagonist/s are OK at the start or before the start of the play, then something happens to precipitate the drama/conflict, things get worse and worse, until the Turning Point, when they start to return to . . . a new place/condition/fate, be it death or marriage. That’s why I have found it so challenging to explain to a cast ‘why the graph goes up’ then down. We sort of get it, but in rehearsal we usually pass a threshold of understanding that moves into the intuitive rather than rational. By this time we have all studied the play together in such detail that we can ‘feel’ the journey of the play and protagonist. We usually agree that the journey goes ‘somewhere’, reaches a point of ‘something’, then hurtles toward its inevitable conclusion.

Lakoff and Johnson say, in their opening chapter:

[Our] conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of. In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less

automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious.\textsuperscript{172}

It’s delightful to muse that it’s impossible to explain metaphor without using a metaphor. ‘Along certain lines’ in this context I think they would call an ‘orientational metaphor’. And it’s orientational metaphors that I think concern me most. From the very first attempts to describe the ‘journey’ of the play and protagonist, we are using a metaphor of travel. For example, the word ‘journey’ in this context doesn’t refer to Othello’s trip from Venice to Cyprus – it refers to the journey of his soul. I am so comforted that Freytag uses the word soul so often. We modern Anglo types are very coy about this word, probably out of fear of the specter of Religion. The journey of the person-as-soul is routinely depicted in Myth.\textsuperscript{173}

I’m sure we’re all familiar with the complaint, ‘My life lacks direction’, or ‘She’s turned her life around’. This directionality or spatial orientation of living is a part of everyday speech. Therefore, I suppose it is natural that we (‘we’ performance practitioners) would try to use orientational language when analyzing and describing the life of the protagonist in a play or screenplay. Lakoff and Johnson give numerous examples of this sort of metaphor, then attempt to explain its use in terms of physical and cultural experience:

\textbf{HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN}
\begin{itemize}
  \item I’m feeling up. That boosted my spirits. My spirits rose. You’re in high spirits. Thinking about her always gives me a lift. I’m feeling down. I’m depressed. He’s really low these days. I fell into a depression. My spirits sank.
\end{itemize}

Physical basis: Drooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state.\textsuperscript{174}

OK, that’s simple enough, I understand the concept – but none of this is relevant so far. The \textit{y}-axis certainly isn’t ‘happiness’.

I’ll test some other examples:

\textbf{HAVING CONTROL or FORCE IS UP; BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL or FORCE IS DOWN}
\begin{itemize}
  \item I have control over her. I am on top of the situation. He’s in a superior position. He’s at the height of his power. He’s in the high command. He’s in the upper echelon. His power rose. He ranks above me in strength. He is under my control. He fell from power. His power is on the decline. He is my social inferior. He is low man on the totem pole.
\end{itemize}

Physical basis: Physical size typically correlates with physical strength, and the victor in a fight is typically on top.\textsuperscript{175}

This is perhaps getting closer. The protagonist usually \textit{thinks} she is gaining control, as she pushes ‘up’ toward the Turning Point. While she is pushing ‘up’, she is also pushing in opposition to the ‘dramatic force’ that is pulling in the opposite direction – in tragedy, in the

\textsuperscript{172} Lakoff, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{174} Lakoff, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{175} Lakoff, p. 15.
direction of destruction. But trying to explain to a cast of actors that the ‘graph goes up in proportion to the protagonist’s false conception of control’ won’t work.

Another attempt:

MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN
The number of books printed each year keeps going up. His draft number is high. My income rose last year. The amount of artistic activity in this state has gone down in the past year. The number of errors he made is incredibly low. His income fell last year. He is underage. If you’re too hot, turn the heat down.

Physical basis: If you add more of a substance or of physical objects to a container or pile, the level goes up.

I’ll come back to this one, but first mention briefly some more examples from this chapter, with my own responses and suggestions:

GOOD IS UP; BAD IS DOWN. To translate this into ‘dramatic’ language, we say the protagonist’s fortunes rise and fall. Even Aristotle, who appears to carefully avoid metaphorical language, uses the word ‘fall’ (according to my two translations). Freytag and Bradley seem to think that the protagonist’s fortunes rise to the Climax, but I don’t. I think the protagonist’s fortunes descend to the Climax – but do they rise again? I prefer descend and return in the same way as Campbell, for different directions of the journey.

The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation–initiation–return: which might be names the nuclear unit of the monomyth. A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. Prometheus ascended to the heavens, stole fire from the gods, and descended. Jason sailed through the Clashing Rocks into a sea of marvels, circumvented the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece, and returned with the fleece and the power to wrest his rightful throne from a usurper. Aeneas went down into the underworld, crossed the dreadful river of the dead, threw a sop to the three-headed watchdog Cerberus, and conversed at last, with the shade of his dead father. All things were unfolded to him: the destiny of souls, the destiny of Rome, which he was about to found . . . He returned through the ivory gate to his work in the world.

So it doesn’t really matter whether the metaphor is ‘up’ or ‘down’ – the important thing is that there is separation–initiation–return.

By the way, why do we fall in love?

One need not fall in love; one must rise through love.
Hazrat Inayat Khan, Sufi Message 6:23

Good isn’t always up. What about ‘pushing shit uphill’ or ‘it was an uphill battle’ (a mixed metaphor – orientational and ‘warlike’). Are these ‘geographical’ metaphors? There’s

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176 Lakoff, pp. 15-16.
177 Lakoff, p. 16.
something in the image of ‘hills’ – ‘making a mountain out of a molehill’, ‘a Sisyphean
endeavour’? Is the Freytag Triangle ‘pushing shit uphill’ followed by ‘it’s all downhill from
here’? It sounds flippant, but it’s not bad.

In this vein, I’d like to test a couple of my own examples:

HOT IS UP; COLD IS DOWN. Temperature doesn’t actually go ‘up’ or ‘down’, but the
mercury or whatever they use in thermometers these days, does. There’s something to be
said for the idea of dramatic ‘temperature’ being represented in the graph. The idea of ‘hot’
or ‘cold’ is quite a good metaphor for the increase or decrease of dramatic tension. Given
this increasing tension, a good production or movie probably does raise the temperature of
the audience – hence, mercury. So, inspired by the question, ‘Why does the graph go up?’ I
have to ask myself ‘then why does it go down again?’ If the dramatic ‘temperature’ goes up in
the first half, it certainly doesn’t go down in the second half.

What causes heat energy? The fast moving electrons collide with the conductor’s atoms
which start to vibrate. The more energy that goes into a system, the more active its molecules
are. The faster molecules move, the more heat or thermal energy they create. So, the amount
of heat a substance has is determined by how fast its molecules are moving, which in turn
depends on how much energy is put into it.

As temperature depends on how much energy is put into a system or substance, causing
molecules to vibrate faster or slower, a more appropriate description of temperature would
be ‘faster’ or ‘slower’ – ‘The patient has a very fast temperature.’

‘Feel the heat’ used to be a popular tag-line for a certain sort of movie in the eighties.

All of these questions about the direction of the graph and the meaning of that urge me to
consider the terrifying question, ‘Why does it go down again?’ Well, maybe it doesn’t.
Aristotle cautions against ‘simple plots’ that depict a simple trajectory from good to bad or
bad to good, with no reversal or recognition. But . . . why does a reversal or recognition
mean ‘down’? It might well mean ‘more up’ like this:
Indeed some actors and I have mooted this during rehearsal, but still we decided that the pyramid was clearer.

TENSION IS UP; RELAXATION IS DOWN. 'In the meeting tensions rose to a peak when the offending memo was read out.' 'I'm starting to calm down now.' 'Don't get so worked up over it!' This is one of the most suggested identifiers for the $y$-axis – ‘dramatic tension’. Yes, tension does build to the Turning Point, but again, why does it fall? Tension certainly doesn’t decrease – in fact it gets ‘higher’!

I’ve always answered that question in rehearsals by saying that the pyramid is the map of the play, not just the protagonist, as Freytag and perhaps Aristotle and Bradley believe. So, the play ‘builds’ in tension, dramatic force, or however we choose to describe it, then after the Turning Point, it ‘hurts toward its inevitable conclusion’, like a ball being pushed up an incline, then allowed to roll down the other side of the peak.
In actuality we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis.\(^{180}\)

Which is why we always tend to come back to the pyramid – somehow, though I still can’t explain it, it feels right.

Even the idea of life’s ‘journey’ is a metaphor. ‘How are you traveling?’ ‘I’m at a crossroads.’ ‘I’m at a turning point.’

So, yes, the journey metaphor is suitable, but a pyramid?

I’ve only half answered the question, ‘Why does the graph go up?’ I’m going to finish this section by asking Wallace Stevens to answer for me:

> Things that have their origin in the imagination or in the emotions (poems) very often have meanings that differ in nature from the meanings of things that have their origin in reason. They have imaginative or emotional meanings, not rational meanings, and they communicate these meanings to people who are susceptible to imaginative or emotional meanings. They may communicate nothing at all to people who are open only to rational meanings. In short, things that have their origin in the imagination or in the emotions very often take on a form that is ambiguous or uncertain.\(^{181}\)

And this is how to do it:

> Take the moral law and make a nave of it
> And from the nave build haunted heaven.

> But take
> The opposing law and make a peristyle,
> And from the peristyle project a masque
> Beyond the planets.\(^{182}\)

I went to Freytag for an answer to this question. He has a chapter called ‘MOVEMENT AND RISE OF THE ACTION’ whose subheading says:

> The dramatic action must represent all that is important to the understanding of the play, in the strong excitement of the characters, and in a continuously progressive increase of effects.\(^{183}\)

‘Increase of effects’ causes the visual metaphor of ‘rising’, but increase could just as well be represented by ‘broadening’ or ‘spreading out’, or deepening. An increase in the contents of my shoulder-bag causes a ‘weighing-down’. An increase in the amount of paint applied to a canvas causes ‘thickening’. An increase in the amount of food I eat, in inverse proportion to the amount of exercise I do causes a ‘ballooning’ of my body weight or a ‘packing-on’ of the weight. These are all perfectly reasonable visual metaphors for ‘increase’, but we happen to find the ‘rising’ metaphor to be the most convenient:

\(^{180}\) Lakoff, p. 19.


For example, today we normally symbolize the structure of tragedy by using the Freytag pyramid. The hero’s fortunes ‘rise’ to a certain point (the climax) and then ‘fall’ rapidly toward the final catastrophe.\textsuperscript{184}

There is no drawing in Aristotle, and in fact all he says to suggest a ‘line’ is:

\begin{quote}
Plots are divided into the simple and the complex, for the actions of which the plots are imitations are naturally of this character. An action that is, as has been defined, continuous and unified I call simple when its change of fortune arises without reversal and recognition, and complex when its change of fortune arises through recognition or reversal or both.\textsuperscript{185}
\end{quote}

‘We’ find that a bit hard, so ‘we’ find that the easiest way to comprehend what he is saying is by drawing a line. The ‘simple’ plot will have a straight line, from one ‘fortune’ to another; the ‘complex’ plot will have a ‘bent’ line that changes at the recognition or reversal or both.

The author of the notes to the edition of Aristotle that I am using in this PhD, O. B. Hardison, Jr. has an opinion on this matter:

\begin{quote}
Some plots are simple. The plot line moves uniformly upward toward success or uniformly downward toward failure. Other plots are what Aristotle call ‘complex.’ A complex plot is symbolized schematically by a line that abruptly changes direction. For example, today we normally symbolize the structure of tragedy using the Freytag pyramid. The hero’s fortunes ‘rise’ to a certain point (the climax) and then ‘fall’ rapidly toward the final catastrophe. In a modern comic plot line, the reverse is true. The hero’s fortunes decline toward a low point, there is a sudden change, and his fortunes then rise toward the conventional happy ending.\textsuperscript{186}
\end{quote}

Again, I am delighted how everyone takes for granted the metaphor of a ‘line’. Aristotle (according to the two translations I have consulted)\textsuperscript{187} doesn’t use the word ‘line’, doesn’t use ‘up’ or ‘down’, nor are there any drawings or graphs in the Poetics.

It’s not my business here to critique Hardison’s commentary, but it is relevant to disagree with him regarding the ‘modern comic plot line’. I think it’s true of both the tragic and the comic plot line that the ‘hero’s fortunes decline toward a low point’. Don’t things get worse and worse for the tragic hero as well, in spite of the fact that his pride, ambition, delusion and bloodthirstiness might ‘rise’ during the first half of the play, and ‘topple’ and ‘fall’ in the second half.

Maybe this is a key. The hero ‘rises’ on the wrong path. The ‘tragic force’ is always there, attached to him like elastic, always pulling him in the other direction, toward his demise, and it is only at that precarious fulcrum of the Turning Point or Climax, that the see-saw of his journey tips in the direction of inevitable destruction.

\textsuperscript{186} Aristotle, Leon Golden, and O. B. Hardison, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{187} Golden and Bywater (in the ‘Oxford Translation’).
But the same can be said of comic characters. They ‘rise’ in their delusion/mistaken identity/supernatural confusion to the point at which they ‘tip over’ into the reverse trajectory, toward their (in this case happy) end.

Freytag also has a chapter called ‘The Rising Movement’ in the section ‘The Construction of the Drama’\(^\text{188}\) that gives a full account of ‘general rules’ of what should happen in the drama.

Baudelaire, in his second preface to *Flowers of Evil* said:

... the poetic phrase can imitate (and in this, poetry is like the art of music and the science of mathematics) a horizontal line, an ascending or descending vertical line; that it can rise straight up to heaven without losing its breath, or fall straight down to hell with the velocity of any weight; that it can follow a spiral, describe a parabola, or can zigzag, making a series of superimposed angles;\(^\text{189}\)

The graph is not a picture or a map of where the actor ‘goes’ in space. Thanks to Henri Bergson for making it clear that:

Intensity, duration, voluntary determination, these are the three ideas which had to be clarified by ridding them of all they owe to the intrusion of the sensible world and, in a word, to the obsession of the idea of space.\(^\text{190}\)

The graph is a visual metaphor. What is a metaphor? According to the Oxford English Dictionary:

The figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object to which it is not properly applicable: an instance of this.\(^\text{191}\)

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\(^{188}\) Freytag, pp. 125-128.


DRAWING: the shape of the graph

Why a chapter on drawing? Peter Corrigan argued that my PhD is really about drawing. This took me a long time to understand.

Who do I look to in the life and literature of theatre, for examples of drawing? Anthony Sher, in his book *Year of the King* includes drawings that track the evolution of his creation of the character of Richard in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. There are also sketch-impressions of himself in other roles. This is a marvelous insight into the actor’s process, but of no help in terms of drawing the dramatic structure of the play. Benedetti, Chekhov and the others discussed in the First Movement above, show graphs but don’t really *draw*. It is necessary to think deeply about the relevance of drawing via conversations with selected masters of *drawing*.

KLEE

PAUL KLEE ON DRAWING

In this ‘conversation’ with Paul Klee I will refer to his *Pedagogical Sketchbook* and the Introduction by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (the English translator). I am indebted to Peter Corrigan for introducing me to this book, as indeed I am to him for alerting me to the obvious – that this PhD is about drawing!

In this chapter I will highlight and discuss the bits of the book that are relevant and exciting, and simply leave out the bits that are not.

First from the Introduction:

In Paul Klee’s pictures [external features] are used as beacons, pointing away from the surface into a *spiritual* reality. Just as a magician performs the miraculous with objects of utter familiarity, such as card, handkerchiefs, coins, rabbits, so Paul Klee uses the familiar object in unfamiliar relationships to materialize the unknown.

‘Materialize the unknown’ is exactly right, and ‘spiritual reality’ is also exactly right. A plain, familiar coordinate graph is used to ‘materialize’ the spiritual journey of the play. It is used in an unfamiliar way – my perennial attempts to explain what the graph ‘means’ demonstrate vividly that unfamiliarity. Actors eventually come to ‘feel’ what the graph means and how it is to be used, but at first there is a definite disjunction between the appearance of a quasi-mathematical graph and the felt journey of the play.

An *active* line on a walk, moving freely, without goal. A walk for a walk’s sake. The mobility agent is a point, shifting its position forward (Fig. 1):
This beautiful utterance, itself seemingly untroubled by a ‘goal’, is very useful to me, though I have to reject most of it. The first three words are the most useful: ‘An active line’. My own ‘line’, being the graphic line of the Dramatic Structure, is definitely active, but it is not ‘walking’ alone. Like the lines in Underwood [see chapter below] my line describes a line or path of force, and follows it to a substantial and profound goal. It is not a walk for a walk’s sake, but a walk for the sake of . . . what? A greater purpose, certainly, and that purpose will be described differently depending on the play or script.

**Exactitude winged by intuition** was the goal he held out for his students.197

How beautiful! Not only a description, but an aspiration. That is exactly how I work on the structure and the graph of the structure, in collaboration with the cast. There is an exactitude to the method, involving the counting of lines and measuring lengths of scenes and drawing graphs, but this exact process demands that the participants be guided by their hunches, inklings and gut feelings.

Music is an excellent example of this. First consider musical notation; hieroglyphs that make little or no sense to the uninitiated, written down with extreme precision in the expectation that they will be equally precisely interpreted and translated into sound. That a scattering of dots and lines on a page might be the graphic representation of what was going on in Schubert’s soul when he wrote the *Andantino* movement from his *Piano Sonata in A major, D.959* (referred to in the ‘PhD Moment: what is this really about?’ chapter) is, to my mind, a miracle.

Speaking of Beethoven, the great German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler said:

> His creative mind proceeded from chaos to form, towards a conscious simplification, and not, like those of the moderns, into deliberate complexities. It is this characteristic above all that distinguishes Beethoven so clearly from all others . . . There is another factor that operates in the development, the destiny of these themes, . . . the logic of spiritual evolution. The laws of development, of transition from one mood to another, the feeling for what themes, what moods, will blend together to make a new whole, the feeling for the proper sequence of the movements of a work—all represent a kind of spiritual logic that is the essence of the impression Beethoven’s music has made on the world.198

Music, like Dramatic Structure, is essentially non-verbal. When I said, above, that there was something going on in Schubert’s soul I didn’t mean that he was thinking or verbalizing anything – perhaps not even feeling anything but an inner movement.

This happens after the structure has been graphed, but the process in reverse occurs while making the graph – the ego, making intuitive conclusions about the inner substance describes the optical-physical appearance of the structure. Would Klee find this interesting, or a perversion of his ideas?

The four divisions of the *Sketchbook* are:

196 See ‘Underwood’ chapter, below.
197 Klee, p. 8.
Proportionate Line and Structure  
Dimension and Balance  
Gravitational Curve  
Kinetic and Chromatic Energy

These could easily be describing the ‘four divisions of Dramatic Structure’.

Line rhythm is measured like a musical score or an arithmetical problem. Gradually, line emerges as the measure of all structural proportion, from Euclid’s Golden Section (1.7) to the energetic power lines of ligaments and tendons, of water currents and plant fibers.

Moholy-Nagy defines Aristotle’s use of the term ‘entelechy’ thus:

Aristotle uses the term ENTELECHY when he defines the form-giving cause that manifests an idea in a material configuration.

entelechy (Greek, to have perfection) In Aristotle, the realization of the potential of a thing, or the mode of being of a thing whose essence is fully realized, as opposed to being merely potential. In later usages the entelechy became treated as the informing spirit that gives life to something; sometimes as well the active power generating motion in material things.

In later usages the entelechy became treated as the informing spirit that gives life to something; sometimes as well the active power generating motion in material things.

Actuality. Aristotle, who coined both terms, treats entelecheia as a near synonym of energeia when it is used in this sense. Entelecheia figures in Aristotle’s definition of the soul as the first actuality of the natural body (On the Soul II.1). This is explained by analogy with knowledge: first actuality is to knowledge as second actuality is to the active use of knowledge.

Aristotle also uses the word in Physics III.1 but translated in this edition as ‘fulfillment’ rather than ‘actuality’.

‘Entelechy’ is also a technical term in Leibniz for the primitive active force in every monad, which is combined with primary matter, and from which the active force, vis viva, is somehow derived.

The vitalist philosopher Hans Driesch used the Aristotelian term in his account of biology. Life, he held, is an entelechy; and an entelechy is a substantial entity, rather like a mind, that controls organic processes.

entelechēia: state of completion or perfection, actuality.

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199 Klee, p. 9.  
200 Klee, p. 9.  
201 Klee, p. 9.  
204 Aristotle, pp. 342-343.  
One of the many reasons to engage in these conversations and disputations with Wise Guides is to give words to the difficult-to-explain concept of the graphic representation of Dramatic Structure. How useful to be able to explain that the graph of the Dramatic Structure is a material configuration of an idea, manifested from the form-giving cause of the dramatic journey. No, that can be said better. To explain that the dramatic force is a form-giving cause dictates that it MUST be represented or revealed to be a form. The dramatic journey in a play or script both has a form and gives a form. This is another way of saying what I have said here before, that the graphic representation of the Dramatic Structure is simultaneously imposing and revealing of its ‘true’ form. The structure implicit in a drama is a ‘form-giving cause’. That the graph ‘manifests an idea in a material configuration’ is fairly obvious.

On its way through the Sketchbook [the dot] has been transformed by the counter forces . . . of mechanical law and imaginative vision.  

The counter forces of mechanical law and imaginative vision. Again, here is a phrase that I have copied into my florilegium and my Book of Dramatic Structure. That is exactly right. The graph is the visual representation of the fusion of a mechanical law and the imaginative vision of the underlying dramatic force:

which supersede[s] didactic principles with a new naturalness, the naturalness of the work.

That is exactly what I’ve tried to say when explaining why imposing/revealing structure on the drama and following it in performance should not be suspected of being ‘unnatural’ or ‘mechanical’.

![Figure 51](image)

Figure 51. An **active** line, limited in its movement by fixed points (Fig. 6).

I’m starting to develop a Klee-description of what my graph is.

In Figure 14 Klee has almost started a coordinate graph:

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206 Klee, p. 12.
207 Klee, p. 12.
208 Klee, p. 18.
‘Structural rhythm in double motion’ is very apt. If the units of drama are equal to the units of time, the graph will be very simple. As Klee suggests, this is a ‘very primitive’ rhythm, and I suspect if a play were structured so very symmetrically as this, it would be pretty boring. In fact, in a ‘neoclassical’ graph, the units of measurement on the $x$ axis do progress simply. I usually call the $x$-axis ‘duration’, but never mark it in units of time, but in ‘events’ or ‘bits’ (see ‘Stanislavsky’ chapter in First Movement, above).

Though I confess I don’t really understand Klee’s maths here, the statement ‘purely repetitive and therefore structural’ is very stimulating. Yes, there must be repetition in dramatic structure. To take Othello again as the standard, once the ‘figure’ of Desdemona’s adultery is introduced by Iago, he repeats it with variations, slowly at first, but with accelerando and crescendo until the Turning Point where he says it out loud; ‘Look to your wife’. This demands the experiment of re-graphing Othello in terms of this repetition. Perhaps this ‘formula’ of repetition goes beyond the Turning Point and accelerates or ‘repeats’ even faster after the introduction of the handkerchief in Act 3, Scene 3, line 289. In two short scenes: ACT 3, scene 4, lines 48–92 and ACT 4, scene 1, lines 1–41, Othello repeats the word ‘handkerchief’ 12 times, before collapsing.

KRIER

LÉON KRIER ON DRAWING

Architect, architectural theorist and urban planner Léon Krier wrote a beautiful little book about drawing. I believe many architects do what I do in terms of starting with a two-dimensional drawing and eventually building it into a three-dimensional thing – in their case a building of some sort, in mine a play (even a film or television show is three dimensional while it is being filmed). I have worked with Peter Corrigan in the theatre (in collaboration with Peter King) and watched him constructing sets and costumes in situ like a medieval artisan.

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209 Klee, p. 22.
In addition to my architectural and urban projects, I produce a great number of doodles, ideograms [. . .] They often sum up in one or two images what I had been previously trying to articulate in projects, writings, or speech.212

Raw and without circumlocution, these ideograms . . . outline conceptual tools for re founding traditional urbanism and architecture.213

These doodles may help to point our thinking in [a chosen] direction.214

The point of my dramatic ‘doodles’ is also to sum up in one or two images what, in rehearsal, we try and articulate in writing and speech. They are raw tools for re founding the principle of ‘architecture’ in dramatic structure. They help point my thinking and the thinking of a cast of actors in a chosen direction.

‘Distance & detail’ in the picture on page 17 prompts the idea of ‘distance and detail’ in the dramatic graph. The simple triangle gives the ‘distance’ view, but as we work on huge rolls of butcher’s paper, we can also move to ‘close-up’ to show the ‘detail’.215

‘2 FORMS of GROWTH’ = by ‘duplication’ (organic) or by ‘hypertrophy’ (mechanic).216 In what way does the ‘drama’ ‘grow’? Dramatic tension or significance ‘grows’ by simply getting bigger! (hypertrophy – mechanic). Clearly, according to Krier, this method of imposing, discovering and representing dramatic structure is ‘mechanic’. Yes, it is. There is nothing ‘organic’ about it – except that in the theatre or on the movie or television screen, it appears to be organic! This is the beauty of it. If a play is too ‘well-made’, then the ‘mechanics’ will be visible and will spoil the effect.

The drawings ‘The City of the Pedestrian’ and ‘the (Anti-)City of the Motorcar’ also prompt ideas regarding the dramatic graph.217 My graph is a graph of the pedestrian, not a ‘mind-map’. My graph is similar to Krier’s ‘pedestrian’ city, insofar as the destinations must be clear, accessible, not overlaid (no ‘flyovers’) with other paths. Even though different characters have slightly different structures in the context of the play as a whole, they run ‘parallel’, like ‘parallel universes’, rather that on top of each other. One character does not have the sense that another character’s journey, path or structure in any way interferes, intersects or crosses over his own. In fact there might be ‘overpasses’ in a structure, but again, this must be rejected, as the metaphor is a spatial one, and as I have said, dramatic structure is non-spatial.

Kier seems to treat symmetry with contempt, which is provocative for me, as my graph depends on symmetry. Krier might call this triangular symmetry, with its complication, turning point and catastrophe ‘mechanical’, ‘mechanistic’, or ‘academical, mechanical, capricious’.218

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212 Krier, p. xiii.
213 Krier, p. xiii.
214 Krier, p. xiv.
215 See graph in Little Women chapter, above.
216 Krier, p. 35.
217 Krier, pp. 50-51.
218 See Krier, pp. 68-73.
This little house with the two axes running through it is a useful image. The word ‘Ego’ is especially interesting. Is the ‘rising’ part of the ‘rising action’ about ego? The character of Othello moves from the social to the most limited view of himself, of his ‘I’. At ‘Look to your wife’ Othello’s view of the world has been radically narrowed to include only himself and (he thinks) his ‘other self’. His ‘other self’ is now the Queen of Hell, an adulteress and ‘that cunning whore of Venice’. It’s all present in germinal form. The seed is planted. ‘Seed is a good visual metaphor, as the ‘plant’ germinates’ in this moment and grows to Triffid-like proportions within 20 minutes.

The drawing on page 105, with its piles of money and buildings might not be a useful metaphor for my graph, but the word ‘accumulation’ is useful, as that is what happens with dramatic force or tension – it accumulates. But the problem is, and this is one of the problems with the triangle, the ‘falling action’ metaphor of the triangle is hard to explain to actors. Why does it go down, when the tension is increasing? How can I explain that the tension or force continues to accumulate, even though there is a sense of ‘rushing downhill’? Well, let’s think about that. I remember riding a billy-cart as a child. The out-of-control rushing downhill was a very exhilarating and frightening experience! This is the feeling of the ‘falling action’. Unlike a skier, who can stop the downward journey by moving the skis.

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219 The original, more complex drawing appears in Krier, p. 73.
220 ACT 4, Scene 2, line 88.
sideways, the billy-cart driver doesn’t have brakes. Any attempt to stop it, such as turning suddenly, will flip it into the air and cause terrible injury.

There is something magical about this ‘hurting’ towards the conclusion. One has to accept one’s fate. There is no choice.

SIZA

ALVARO SIZA ON DRAWING

Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza has also written a ‘beautiful little book’ on the importance of drawing.221

Speaking in general terms, someone who chooses to do architecture does not have to know ‘how to draw’ let alone ‘how to draw well.’ Drawing, seen as an autonomous language, is not indispensable for the design. A great deal of good architecture is produced and made ‘a bengala.’ [footnote: A Portuguese term which refers to the common method of building without drawings but following lines drawn on a ground with a stick (bengala).]222

Definitely true of actors and directors! Actors certainly don’t need to know ‘how to draw’ or ‘draw well’, but drawing can be a hugely effective tool. Film directors, and sometimes TV directors do quite a lot of drawing, but it’s very unusual in the theatre. In the theatre, the ‘drawing’ is usually left to the designers.

Is our ‘graph’, especially when drawn on a long piece of butcher’s paper, an example of a ‘building’ (the play) described by drawing on the ground with a stick?

Drawing is a form of communication with oneself or with others. For the architect it is also, amongst many other things, a working tool, a way or learning, understanding, communicating, transforming; a way of designing.223

COOK

PETER COOK ON DRAWING

In his book *Drawing: The Motive Force of Architecture* Peter Cook frequently refers to ‘jotting’ or ‘jotting down’.224 Drawing as a way of thinking or recording ‘first thoughts’:

. . . a spontaneous means of summarizing immediate intention . . . 225

[Architecture] depends upon a combination of describable moves based on generally recognized values, but it can also be the result of much less describable move that stem from notions of balance, sequence, elegance, the confrontation of parts and the harnessing of forces, all of which add up to the art of composition.

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222 Siza, p. 17.
223 Siza, p. 17.
225 Cook, p. 9.
Stepping outside architecture to the areas of music, literature and drama – but also to psychology and military strategy – we can sense a general system at work, whereby the forces of the work are sequence, weighed up against each other, released into the sequences at various moments and, inevitably, edited in such a way that the result is either charming, coercive, dramatic, intentionally surprising or made up of contrasted sequences.

There are particular stages in the process of design when the parts are beginning to be understood, but still lie in a series of uncomfortable juxtapositions demanding a distanced view of them to be taken. Rarely a single step, the process of composition has on the one hand the frustration that there may not be a ‘correct’ assemblage of elements, but on the other hand it introduces the delight of creating conditions that are more than just the sum of their parts. It could be that the long, slow return to the valuations of composition required the distance of time that we now have between ourselves the late 19th century.

... [Drawing] can summon up forces that have been kept on the sidelines.226

COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY

This question of whether the motive of a vision, a project or a building needs to be recognizable is another ground for debate and possible confusion.227

UNDERWOOD

DRAWING AS DIVINING

Guy Underwood, a retired solicitor, taught himself the age-old art of water divining or dowsing. In his book *The Pattern of the Past*, he identified naturally occurring patterns and ‘lines of influence’ in the landscape which may be discovered by dowsing – especially at ancient tracks and holy sites.228 Some of these lines and patterns are associated with underground water-courses and others are not. According to Underwood, ancient sites and track-ways were deliberately positioned to coincide with these phenomena. Contemplation on applying these ideas to dramatic structure gave me the title of this PhD.

I beg the reader’s indulgence to allow the following rather long quote from Underwood:

A water diviner locates an underground stream by perceiving a line of influence above it. This has caused his rod to move. It is known as the ‘water line’.

Two further types of line emerged. I named these two newly discovered lines ‘aquastats’ and ‘track lines’ and, because I found that the principal use made of them by early man was for marking out and dividing the surface of the Earth, I included all three in the generic term ‘geodetic lines.’ . . . I noticed that all [ancient] roads and tracks were aligned on track lines—hence the name I gave to them—and that aquastats were most involved in the layout of religious monuments.

When I progressed to a discovery that aquastats and track lines produced secondary linear effects which sometimes affected the layout of temples, I found

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226 Cook, pp. 92-93.
227 Cook, p. 22.
myself involved not so much in archaeology as in some strange, complex, and incomprehensible branch of physics.

When man comes into contact with geodetic lines they produce a slight alteration in the tones of such muscles as happen to be in tension at that time. In consequence a normally imperceptible reflex movement results. It follows that the lines have to be located and traced by the use of an instrument, the purpose of which is to exaggerate and render perceptible such small reflex movements in the muscles of the operator's arms and hands. This instrument, of course, is the divining rod.

Observations of the influence which affects the water diviner suggests that a principle of Nature exists which is unknown to, or unidentified by science. [. . . ] Until it can be otherwise identified, I shall refer to it as the Earth Force. 229

Just as the plan of a medieval cathedral is placed over the pre-existing pattern of Earth Force, the ‘plan’ of the structure of the play is placed over the pre-existing pattern of important events in the play. The equivalent of the ‘underground water’ referred to by Smith above, is the ‘power points’ in a play—the climaxes.

A water diviner locates an underground stream by perceiving a line of influence above it. 230

The director and actors are the ‘water diviners’ who must locate the ‘underground stream’ of the play. The structure of the play is the ‘line of influence’ guiding the actor through the energy of the play. The words of the text are the ‘landscape’ or visible terrain of the play, but the ‘geodetic line’ of the play must be divined by objective analysis and sensitive ‘feeling out’ of the play.

What should I call this line in dramatic structure? Dramadetic? Psychodetic?

As sure as Underwood is that there are these invisible but powerful lines covering the surface of the Earth, I am certain that the Dramatic Structure of a play can be described thus, rewriting Underwood:

Its main characteristics are that it appears to be present within and generated from within the play, not from external ideas; and to exhibit wave-like motion of ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ feelings; that it affects the nerve cells of actors; that it has great power to penetrate the concentration and thoughts of actors, thereby galvanizing performances that are ‘plugged in’ to this source of interpretative power; that it can reveal deep meanings in the play that might be otherwise invisible or unspoken; and is controlled by patterns involving principally the number three. Until it can be otherwise identified, I shall refer to it as the Dramatic Force. It remains a difficult principle to name, identify and describe, but it is as fundamental and mysterious a force in theatrical performance as the forces of magnetism or gravity. In wave-like motion it becomes stronger over the ‘power spots’ of the play—especially the Complication, Turning Point and Catastrophe, but also to a lesser degree over the minor climaxes.

These power lines are present in the play, and the ‘line of influence’ is drawn over them in the form of a graphic representation of dramatic structure. This graphic representation is an attempt to map these underground track lines in the play. The analysis is done ‘at the table’ at

229 Underwood, pp. 16-21.
230 Underwood, p. 16.
first, but their discovery usually causes palpable excitement in the actors and director, and that excitement or sensitivity remains throughout rehearsals and performances, as if the actor is really entering a powerful space.

The structure is the ‘geodetic line’ – that is, the actual structure, which is invisible but present. The drawing of the structure is the map of the structure. The analysis of the structure is process of ‘divining’. While the structure is being ‘divined’, the graph is used as a ‘divining rod’.

In the Underwood scenario, the ‘actor’ passes over the track lines or geodetic lines. In the theatre the actor travels inside them, almost as if they were psychic tunnels. In Underwood he shows us the maps or plans of cathedrals that were built on top of these lines of force that traverse the landscape. Imagine that the cathedral was a ‘giving form to’ or materializing of this force, rather than just being laid over the top. Imagine that the power of the Earth Force built the cathedral itself, without human intervention, like the geographical forms of Australia and other ‘traditional’ cultures are the traveling energy of the Ancestors made manifest. Imagine walking through Uluru or Katajuta in the same way we can walk through a cathedral or a hospital (hospitals often have the added graphic novelty of coloured lines on the floor). This is what it is like to travel through the structure of the play. It’s a structure that is palpable to feeling, not to sight (with apologies to Shakespeare). Unlike the geodetic lines of Underwood and their corresponding cathedrals, unlike the sacred geography of the Australian landscape, these Dramatic structures are portable. Wherever the play is performed, the structure is invisibly but powerfully erected. It can be erected in a rehearsal room, a theatre, film or TV set, on radio, or anywhere an actor can work.

KLEINERT & NEALE

SINGING THE STRUCTURE IN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ART AND CULTURE

An extensive examination of non-western dramatic structure is outside the scope of this PhD, and is a suitable subject of post-doctoral research. However, as a natural follow-on from Underwood, a conclusion to the section on drawing, and pointer to the future, it seemed impossible to ignore the Australian aboriginal idea of ‘singing’. The following quotes are from the Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture, which consists of essays by different authors, whose names are given here in the footnotes, with the titles of their essays.231

Totemic beings . . . called or ‘sang’ the universe into being so as to make it consubstantial with themselves.232

When people sing the Dreamings through the country today, they sing the sites and the events that brought the sites into being.

Dreaming maps are sung and danced into the terrain of the ceremonial ground. Thus the regenerative work of the world is performed and experienced in site and ritual, body and mind, Dreaming and the life of the country. 233

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Journal, Sunday 7 June 2009:

If the world was ‘sung’ into existence (what a wonderful idea), dramatic structure ‘sings’ the deep structure of the play into existence. The ‘song’ is inaudible, but it is there, like a subterranean stream or ‘aquastat’. With reference to Underwood, I coined the term ‘Dramatic Force’, referring to a force like gravity, the Atomic Forces, or electromagnetism.

What is the process of ‘singing’ the Structure of a play into existence? The ‘singing’ is the performing of the play, but there must be a sense of performing the structure—of performing it into life. The performing simultaneously brings the structure to life and enacts the structure. The performing of the structure simultaneously creates and imitates the structure. The actor brings it to life in the place and time of performance, but it is also ‘there’ already, in the play.

Just as the Songlines or Dreaming Tracks of indigenous Australians are fixed and available for repeated traversal, the Line of Dramatic Force in a play is fixed and available for repeated traversal as well—but not in space. The Line is fixed in Duration insofar as the play or screenplay scene will take about the same amount of time each time; fixed in Direction, if we agree to use the spatial metaphor of moving ‘forward’ and agree that a play can’t actually go backwards any more than time can go backwards; fixed in Significance insofar as the dramatic meaning, intensity and feeling will be more or less the same every time, notwithstanding variations in audience reaction. This last point might seem puzzling. Isn’t drama supposed to be fresh and coined anew every time? Otherwise doesn’t live theatre become stale? Well, here is where magic enters the explanation.

Let’s compare acting to meditation. Let’s say a person does a particular form of meditation every day for six weeks, which is a not uncommon length of a theatrical season. Let’s say it’s a simple form of meditation like breathing meditation, where the meditator simply is aware of breathing in and out and counts the breaths without trying to change the rhythm or extent of the breath. The aim of the meditation is to stay ‘present’ to the simple state of concentration. This will be harder on some days than others, but once the meditator gets better at it, it’s never boring. Every day is a new experience of meditation, even though every day it’s the same meditation and very simple at that. It’s the same with acting in repeated performances. Of course sometimes it’s hard to stay ‘fresh’, but it is possible to gently bring the concentration back to the task, in the same way as the mind focuses on the breath in meditation. Every performance is ‘new’ even though it is the ‘same’. The ‘new’ part is, it’s literally a new performance —tonight as opposed to last night—it’s a new audience—your fellow actors are also experiencing slight changes and challenges. But the things that remain constant—the equivalent ‘objects of concentration’ are the play—the text doesn’t change—the ‘blocking’ (where the actors move on stage)—the mise en scène (the sets, costumes, lighting etc)—and the Structure of Dramatic Force.

Imagine our cathedral again. Imagine walking from the East door to the West door every day. You will walk up the nave, under the Dome or Spire, past the Altar, into the Holy of Holies, depending on the design of the particular cathedral. You do this every day, and magic

occurs every day. A transformative feeling—a religious experience—occurs every time you pass the tombs, side chapels or Stations of the Cross that punctuate the Nave. A major transformative experience happens to you every time you approach the grandeur of the dome or central spire. In most cathedrals the public aren’t allowed to go near the Altar or Sanctuary, but you are allowed to walk straight through.

Imagine a walk through a hospital—especially if it has coloured lines on the floor. Let’s say you are going to Radiography. Follow the line, but notice that on either side of you there are dramas happening in the branching rooms and corridors.

The structure is the drawing of the ‘geodetic line’, but in Underwood’s world the geodetic line is in space, whereas the graph of the structure is not. The graph is both the ‘divining rod’ that ‘detects’ the structure, and the ‘line’ that represents the structure.

In music and drama, the energy in a pause must silently carry or maintain the energy of the ‘dramatic force’. Here is an observation of the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler’s performance of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*.

Yet under the great, spanning umbrella of Furtwängler’s performance there are rich and plentiful details. The music sings and flows through pauses, and sonorities are voiced so that there is unity yet layers of color.234

I like the idea of structure being a ‘great, spanning umbrella’. There is another metaphorical use of ‘umbrella’ below in the Nietzsche chapter, where D. H. Lawrence imagines a giant umbrella temporarily shielding us from chaos.

This visual metaphor, once drawn and identified and absorbed by the actor, intensifies the experience of the world of the play and the character’s journey through the time of the play. The graph identifies ‘power-places’ in the duration of the play. Rather than being a prompt to the actor to attempt to create this impression for the sake of the audience, an awareness and ‘taking in’ of the dramatic structure can actually give the actor a feeling of special-ness when that ‘place’ is reached and traversed.

Most interestingly, these ‘power places’ in the text are places in time and feeling, but not space. This is very difficult to communicate to a group of actors. A useful tool is the very large drawing of the structure, usually on a long (up to 25 metres) roll of paper, usually sourced from newspaper publishers. This gives the actor the opportunity to ‘walk’ the structure, rather in the manner of walking West to East along the ‘spine’ of a medieval or gothic cathedral and ‘feeling’ the power-places along that journey. Another example would be walking a church labyrinth, such as the one in Chartres cathedral.

Another way of interpreting the practice of ‘walking the structure’ in rehearsal might be to compare it with ritual dance:

Visual evidence of Dreaming geography, of the tracks and sites, and actions and interactions, is created on the ground through ritual action. For example, in Victoria River country the non-secret portions of the young men’s initiation ceremonies take place within a carefully prepared ceremony ground called a ‘ring

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‘place’, formed by marking concentric circles in the earth. As the dancers bring their bodies into the ring place, their feet make a track into the circle.

When people sing the Dreamings through the country today, they sing the sites and the events that brought the sites into being. In ceremonies people celebrate, articulate and regenerate the travels of the extensive Dreamings, bringing together in a defined context the tracks and the localised Dreamings, local groups, and local countries.235

Even though dramatic structure, like time, is non-spatial, 236 it is very useful to ‘walk the structure’ spatially – along the ‘ritual’ line drawn on the long piece of paper. Doing so articulates the imaginative content of the play.237 Having done this as many times as necessary to commit it to memory, the actor will recreate the journey – again, not the spatial journey, but the psychic or ‘dramatic’ journey in the ‘dramatic’ space or the space of the mind. I repeat, this is not a spatial journey, and more than the journey through one’s life is spatial, though we visit lots of places, the journey itself is a lived journey. This knowledge or wisdom is carried by the actor into the rehearsal and performance of the play.

236 See Bergson chapter, below.
237 The idea of ‘play-as-dreaming’ is also a rich one for post-doctoral research.
TIME: the x-axis

What is Duration? How is it that each performance has its own sense of time? This is something I know clearly but can’t demonstrate. Each performance has its own ‘gear position’—each play slips into its own sense of ‘drive’. The example of when Bethany rushes, the show seems incomplete, even though the difference is only two or three minutes. There is an invisible ‘ideal’ duration and pace for each production or play. Filmmakers used to understand this. Most movies were about 106 minutes. Now most of them are 126 minutes, and they feel 20 minutes too long!

From the start I thought this was the easiest and most straightforward aspect of dramatic structure to understand and explain. It was simply ‘duration’. Whether the performance or play was five hours long or five minutes, this coordinate simply represented that length of time. I have come to understand it more deeply.

Journal, 4 July 2009:

Tonight The Weather and Your Health went for about the same time as last night. Last night felt rushed and too short, tonight felt much longer, and just the right length. Last night felt incomplete, as if I’d seen an introduction to the main body of the show, tonight felt complete and self-contained. That’s the difference between ‘length’ and ‘duration’. The length was about the same (give or take a minute here) but the duration was different. Last night’s duration was not fully ‘lived’—it was ‘skimmed’. Tonight’s duration was fully ‘lived’.

What does all this mean? The x coordinate is not just length. What is this about feeling of length? How can a show be too short? Surely it is as long as it is long. But no, the impression was that the performance given was shorter than it should have been—shorter than its own real length. This is not about checking the time against the clock, nor is it about my familiarity with the play. It seemed shorter than itself.

Wherever there is life there is action; wherever action, movement; where movement, tempo; and where there is tempo there is rhythm . . .

Part of the job of working with and ‘to’ a structure is to give the performance the appropriate rhythm—appropriate to the audience’s ability to attend and absorb the matter of the action—appropriate to the significance of the material during the different parts of the performance—appropriate to the building of the ‘score’ of the whole. I imagine an orchestral conductor and the musicians of the orchestra expect their audience to become attuned to the rhythms of sections and even individual bars of the music they are playing, but also to the rhythm of the whole.

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BERGSON

HENRI BERGSON ON TIME

CONTIGUITY

... those movements are easy which prepare the way for others, we are led to find a superior ease in the movements which can be foreseen, in the present attitudes in which future attitudes are pointed out and, as it were, prefigured. If jerky movements are wanting in grace, the reason is that each of them is self-sufficient and does not announce those which are to follow.239

The Michael Chekhov model is dangerous, insofar as it suggests climaxes are ‘self-sufficient’. Good writing depends on this sense of contiguity, whereby ‘future attitudes are pointed out and, as it were, prefigured [in present attitudes].’ Bergson uses the word ‘attitudes’ to refer to positions of the body rather than the mind. The representation of dramatic structure as an arc or coordinate graph gives this impression of a continuum – every moment grows out of the previous one. I often see plays where it appears that little thought has been given to this. An example is the play Love! Valour! Compassion! by Terence McNally. I think the writer might have had some idea of structure, as it was about the middle of the play that the lead character, having become annoyed with one of the other characters, hurled the following at him – ‘I hope you get what I’ve got!’ (AIDS). In my opinion, this wasn’t ‘earned’, as it came almost out of nowhere, and there was no ‘build’ to this violent outburst, and therefore no dramatic logic. This performance was on Broadway, New York, and on cue, the whole audience gasped at the character’s outburst. The play was a hit, and won a Tony award. I often ask myself ‘why do I bother?’

Though I can’t prove it, I believe that Iago’s quiet ‘Look to your wife’ is terrible and catastrophic, and all the more effective for having been preceded by a preparatory ‘build’ of geometric precision. Upon examination, Othello’s subsequent dissolution seems inevitable. If the performance is skilfully prepared and executed, the audience registers this at a deep level of dread, without even necessarily reacting to it in the same way as our McNally audience above.

The ‘necklace’ model trialed unsuccessfully in The Feigned Inconstancy is also dangerous, because, though the climaxes are joined by a string, there might not be the sense of inexorable ‘building’, which is an essential element of dramatic structure. The arc of a dancer’s movements is a good visual metaphor for dramatic structure, especially in the sense of the inevitability of the next bit ‘coming out of’ the last bit.

If curves are more graceful than broken lines, the reason is that, while a curved line changes its direction at every moment, every new direction is indicated in the preceding one. Thus the perception of ease in motion passes over into the pleasure of mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present.240

239 Bergson, p. 12.
240 Bergson, p. 12.
Again, this is wonderful – ‘mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present’.

A third element comes in when the graceful movements submit to a rhythm and are accompanied by music. For the rhythm and measure, by allowing us to foresee to a still greater extent the movements of the dancer, make us believe that we now control them. As we guess almost the exact attitude which the dancer is going to take, he seems to obey us when he really takes it: the regularity of the rhythm establishes a kind of communication between him and us, and the periodic returns of the measure are like so many invisible threads by means of which we set in motion this imaginary puppet.\footnote{Bergson, p. 12.}

This is important, and tantalizing! I don’t believe the audience are aware of the underlying structure – all they know, we hope, is that they are gripped or not by the drama – in fact, we don’t want them to believe that they now control the movements of the dancer or the outcome of the drama. What he is talking about is \textit{momentum}. Being ‘swept up’ by the momentum of something gives us the impression or feeling of participation. I think the element of ‘control’ is like the element of ‘predictability’ or ‘inevitability’. When experiencing momentum, we feel we know what is coming next. Accompanying that feeling is a feeling of delight. How delicious it is to ‘know’ what is coming, fear it, resist it, then it happens. This is most often the case with crime drama and fiction. I think it’s the same with \textit{Othello}. So much of the play is spent thinking ‘No! Don’t!’ but knowing that it is going to happen anyway. We feel satisfied when it does, though perhaps emotionally drained at the same time.

The audience continue the forward momentum, even in the midst of a ‘pause’. The play and audience are so in harmony that they feel a ‘part’ of the drama. This is feedback that actors often receive when someone has really enjoyed a show – ‘I really felt I was in it’. I think it goes beyond merely feeling ‘in’ it as a participant, but I know when I’m really ‘in’ a drama, I feel like I am directing it. It’s rather like driving a fast car – there’s a precipitousness about the experience – part control and part abandon, but I’m still driving.

Bergson is referring to an almost conscious delight when talking about viewing a dance, but the same feeling I think can be applied to watching a play. The only difference is that it is unconscious, not conscious. If the audience is aware of the structure, then it’s not working. If they are aware of ‘inevitability’, tension, pity, terror and all that, but also a strange feeling of being ‘in control’ of the drama, then I think it’s working magnificently.

Sometimes audiences do actually move in their seats during exciting bits, but more often I believe there is an \textit{inner} movement or impulse in the audience that keeps the drama going for them.

\textbf{UNDERLYING FORWARD MOMENTUM}

I have always believed with all my heart that if the actor gets the rhythm and the breathing right, especially in Shakespeare, the audience \textit{breathes with him and shares his rhythm}. I have experienced this and audience members have described their sensation to me of taking ten minutes or so to become ‘accustomed’ or habituated to the sound, syntax and rhythms of the material, after which they comfortably ‘settle in’. One audience member told me, after seeing
my solo performance *Venus and Adonis*, ‘I thought at first ‘Oh no! Is this going to be it for the next hour? Then after ten minutes (he makes a gesture of ‘settling’) I was just there, in the world, and stayed there till the end.’

I know – equally in my heart of hearts – that the same is true of the structure; if the actors and director get it right, and play it effectively, the audience goes on the journey with the actors and feels the ineluctability or inevitability of the structure with the actors and production.

There is a quality in musical performance that I can hear as surely as I can hear melody and harmony, but it’s a rare sense. Judging by what I read in music performance criticism, this is not often mentioned. I call it ‘underlying forward momentum’, and to me it is either vividly, obviously there or it isn’t. A marvelous example of it being there is in Murray Perahia’s performance of Schubert’s A major piano sonata, D. 959. Listen also to the Bach solo violin sonatas and partitas – there are some very slow bits – how does the performer maintain the feeling of a dance?

Listen to the second movement, *Andantino*. *Andantino* is what’s known as a tempo and mood designation, as are *Allegro*, *Adagio*, *Presto*, and so on. It is a diminutive of *Andante*, which means (in Italian) ‘easy-going’, ‘fluent’, or ‘at a walking pace’. *Andantino* is usually a designation indicating a slightly more lighthearted *Andante*, though historically the designation of both has been rather unclear. The impression in Perahia’s performance is hard to put into words, but he plays it slow. The notes on the page of the score look as plain as can be: a simple tune in the right hand accompanied by a repetitive ‘one, two three’ figure in the left hand. There are very few markings in the score to indicate changes in dynamics or tempo. The initial impression of Perahia’s performance is that he respects this repetitive nature of the music and plays it ‘straight’. However, close listening reveals (to me at least) extremely subtle changes in all of the above, such as little hesitations, accelerations, moments of repose, accents, crescendos and decrescendos. The piece is ‘micro-performed’ with sensitive and painstaking attention to detail. I won’t talk too much about musical ‘phrasing’, as that’s slightly off the point, but that’s what we’re talking about – the ‘rounding-off’ of thoughts, the subtle emphasizing of musical moments – in the same way as a talented radio or talking book actor will entrance the listener with the rising and falling cadence of the voice.

So there is a surface filigree to the performance that draws the listener in this uniquely delicate created sound world. But – there is more. Underneath this surface (note the commonplace visual/spatial metaphor) is something that can’t really be heard, but only felt. How is that possible? I don’t know. What it is that feeling of ‘underlying forward momentum’, which I also call ‘inexorability’. That word suggests ‘unalterable’ or ‘unceasing’. No matter what happens on the ‘surface’ there is always this feeling of slow, steady forward movement. But isn’t this obvious and merely to be taken for granted? Doesn’t a piece of music start, progress then finish? Well, no. Before I give the example of the alternative

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performance of the Schubert, let me mention a very vivid example of the structure of a piece of music completely falling apart in performance.

**J.S. BACH, SOLO VIOLIN SONATA NO. 2**

The music at first encounter sounds improvised, without a discernable ‘beat’ – it’s certainly not ‘toe-tapping’ music. But in Arthur Grumiaux’s hands, as in Perahia’s, there is a feeling of inexorability and that ‘underlying forward momentum’. I expect Grumiaux is the master of the structure of the piece, and has a ‘vision’ of the overall plan or architecture.

Note also two performances of Mozart *Cosi fan Tutte*, recorded by René Jacobs and Herbert von Karajan, the Act One trio *O soave sia il vento*. According to my stopwatch the Karajan goes for three minutes, twenty seconds; the Jacobs goes for three minutes, twenty-two seconds. The Karajan ‘feels’ slower, but ‘hangs together’ better than the Jacobs. Again, it is this mysterious feeling of ‘inner pulse’ or underlying momentum.

An example of the underlying forward momentum falling apart is a recorded performance of the Mahler 9th Symphony given by Leonard Bernstein and the Concertgebouw Orchestra (1985). There is a point in the Fourth Movement where the printed score calls for a pause, just 28 bars from the end. Bernstein indulges in a pause so long that the energy completely disappears. It’s a live recording, so the atmosphere in the concert hall might have been electric, but listening at home it feels like the work lights have been turned on and everyone’s gone home.

When an actor enacts or embodies the dramatic structure, what is going on? The actor must juggle many balls at the same time, concentrating on pursuing the psychological and physical action of the scene, making sure he is in the right place at the right time, entrances and exits, not bumping into the furniture. Where in the actor’s imagination is the dramatic structure? Is it a sort of ‘multi-tonality’? Charles Ives wrote ‘I’ve never written anything I couldn’t hear’ which means he was apparently able to hear at least twenty different rhythmic structures simultaneously. There are many examples of such complexity in Ives’ music, most vividly in his Fourth Symphony, which is so complex it requires at least three conductors for a live performance. Actors too must be able to ‘hear’ many different rhythmic structures, not to mention the spontaneous ‘juggling’ of many simultaneous activities such as; actively pursuing psychological and physical action; moving to the right place at the right time; sharing with the audience; registering and responding to the audience’s unpredictable reactions and responses; dealing with the vicissitudes of other actors’ juggling activities. To this we add pursuing or embodying the dramatic structure. Is the enacting of dramatic structure like this ‘poly-rhythm’ and ‘poly-tonality’? Yes and no.

I think that everything described above is similar to Charles Ives’ multi- and poly-rhythm and tonality, except dramatic structure. Certainly it is ‘another thing to remember’ for the actor, but I believe that the other elements above can be adjusted ‘on the trot’, depending on the

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243 Bach, J. S. Sonata No. 2 in a Minor, BWV 1003: Philips, 1961. Audio CD.

vagaries of the live performance; but the dramatic structure must be internalised to a degree that the actor can almost forget about it. Certainly, it is possible to lose any sense of structure and perhaps pull it back again, but the ‘pulling back’ will only be superficial.

What a betrayal it is when this momentum is impeded or ‘thrown off’ by an inappropriately long or short bit, or something that doesn’t fit in the structure at all. For example, in the Coen Brothers’ film *Burn After Reading* (2008) the Brad Pitt character is killed in the ‘wrong place’. The killing is accidental and meaningless, but I felt that this was ‘outside’ of my understanding of what the movie was about – and it was largely about the characters played by Brad Pitt and Frances McDormand. To knock one off without ‘building’ to it or giving it a place in an ‘order of things’ felt like a betrayal to this viewer, and caused me to refuse to have any subsequent moral interest in the outcome of the story.

Indeed, if it stops for an instant, our hand in its impatience cannot refrain from making a movement, as though to push it, as though to replace it in the midst of this movement, the rhythm of which has taken complete possession of our thought and will.

Important again. Shakespeare does this often – right when the audience is most involved, most ‘tense’ and most in dread of what might happen, he inserts a scene that is not ‘about’ anything, but has the most tremendous undercurrent of dread or expectation. By the time this happens, the play – the momentum of the play – dependant on the rhythm of the structure being effectively employed – has ‘taken complete possession of our thought and will.’ The Bergson example is a good one, because I believe the audience continues to feel the forward momentum of the structure as a physical sensation. ‘On the edge of my seat’ refers to this forward momentum – it might mean that the viewer is preparing to leap out of their seat, but it’s still a physical sensation. I think the viewer is on the edge of their seat because they feel an impulse to run up onto the stage and push the victim out of harm’s way, or beat off the villain, or participate in some other way.

There are many wonderful examples in music of this sort of interruption, especially in Wagner, Bruckner and Mahler. I can think of one performance of Mahler however, where I feel the whole thing has actually stopped – where my sense of ‘driving’ is completely thwarted, where my ‘movement, as thought to push’ the music along fails. Leonard Bernstein’s last recorded performance of the Mahler 9th Symphony is such a case. The impression might have been different had I been seeing the performance ‘live’, as well as hearing it. Bernstein’s baton would have been poised for that long pause, thus suggesting to me that it was still ‘going’. There would have been an atmosphere in the hall of ‘precipitousness’ that would have helped also.

Thus a kind of physical sympathy enters into the feeling of grace. Now, in analysing the charm of this sympathy, you will find that it pleases you through its affinity with moral sympathy, the idea of which it subtly suggests.

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245 An example of a ‘Transposed’ plot, as demonstrated in Figure 10, above.
247 With the Concertgebouw Orchestra, recorded 1985.
248 Bergson, p. 13.
Again, yes! The idea of physical and moral sympathy being invoked simultaneously is very potent indeed. In the example of *Burn After Reading*, my feeling of moral sympathy was arrested by the killing of the Pitt character – the movie never ‘won’ me back after that. In the example of *Love! Valour! Compassion!* I felt nothing when the character hurled the abovementioned abuse at the other character – though I might have felt something if the dramatists had directed me to do so.

This last element, in which the others are merged after having in a measure ushered it in, explains the irresistible attractiveness of grace. We could hardly make out why it affords us such pleasure if it were nothing but a saving of effort, as Spencer maintains. [*Essays*, (Library Edition, 1891), Vol. ii, p. 381] But the truth is that in anything which we call very graceful we imagine ourselves able to detect, besides the lightness which is a sign of mobility some suggestion of a possible movement towards ourselves, of a virtual and even nascent sympathy. It is this mobile sympathy, always ready to offer itself, which is just the essence of higher grace. Thus the increasing intensities of aesthetic feeling are here resolved into as many different feelings, each one of which, already heralded by its predecessor, becomes perceptible in it and then completely eclipses it. It is this qualitative progress which we interpret as a change of magnitude, because we like simple thoughts and because our language is ill-suited to render the subtleties of psychological analysis.\(^{249}\)

I think here Bergson has taken ‘Grace’ to mean not only ‘gracefulness’ and ‘elegance’ but also Holy Grace, with its suggestion of Union and Salvation. In the context of dramatic structure it is useful when thinking about the effectiveness of a structure. Is it elegant?

Thus, in music, the rhythm and measure suspend the normal flow of our sensations and ideas by causing our attention to swing to and fro between fixed points and they take hold of us with such a force that even the faintest imitation of a groan will suffice to fill us with the utmost sadness. If musical sounds affect us more powerfully than the sounds of nature, the reason is that nature confines itself to *expressing* feelings, whereas music *suggests* them to us.\(^{250}\)

This is the same in the Drama, and dramatic structure. Bergson's suggestion that nature ‘expresses’ and music ‘suggests’ is important in drama. It is the purpose of the structure to ‘suggest’ to the audience where to look, who to trust, what to feel. The ‘expresses vs. suggests’ dichotomy is also present in actor training, which focuses on what the actor is doing and ‘expressing’ and not so much on the effect upon the audience, or what we might be ‘suggesting’. This is the same for directors, who are very focused on what they might be expressing, and often with not enough regard for what they are ‘suggesting’.

I have long thought that art – especially dramatic art, as that’s my field, has only a bit to do with mimesis. How Dickens could be called a ‘realist’ is beyond me. I think dramatic art takes life-experience as its starting point, then makes it art. Giving a story a symmetrical structure is one way.

Nature, like art, proceeds by suggestion, but does not command the resources of rhythm. It supplies the deficiency by the long comradeship, based on influences received in common by nature and by ourselves, of which the effect is that the slightest indication by nature of a feeling arouses sympathy in our minds, just as

\(^{249}\) Bergson, p. 13.

\(^{250}\) Bergson, p. 15.
a mere gesture on the part of the hypnotist is enough to force the intended suggestion upon a subject accustomed to his control.251

We are the hypnotists, in this case – we the dramatists. I do believe that one of our aims is to induce a sort of trance state. We want our audience to be comfortable, to put aside for a time the day’s vicissitudes, to breathe rhythmically and to focus their attention on this hypnotic object, which is full of suggestions like ‘You will empathize with this character’, ‘You will follow this story’ and so on.

[The] merit of a work of art is not measured so much by the power with which the suggested feeling takes hold of us as by the richness of this feeling itself: in other words besides degrees of intensity we instinctively distinguish degrees of depth or elevation.252

I could ‘draw’ this last paragraph. ‘Degrees of intensity’ and ‘degrees of elevation’. The word ‘richness’ is also important. Is the $y$-axis about ‘richness of experience’?

But, once this exclusion is made, we believe that we are still conscious of a growing tension of soul . . . 253

‘a growing tension of soul’ is a rather wonderful way of describing the $y$-axis.

Now, we do not see any essential difference between the effort of attention and what may be called the effort of psychic tension . . . 254

‘psychic tension’ is also a good way to describe the $y$-axis. In the theatre we don’t want our audience to get exhausted by the effort of having to tenaciously maintain their attention. Concentrating too hard causes fatigue. What we aim to do in the theatre is ‘hold’ the audience’s attention by means of seduction, offering them interesting characters, credible conflict, and enough (not too many) climaxes with the appropriate amount of space in between.

TIME OR DURATION IS NOT SPATIAL

Music annihilates the conditions of Space.255

Intensity, duration, voluntary determination, these are the three ideas which had to be clarified by ridding them of all they owe to the intrusion of the sensible world and, in a word, to the obsession of the idea of space.256

Even though my graph looks like a ‘spatial’ representation, it is no more so than an ECG is a spatial representation. An ECG is the visual display of electrical activity in the heart; the dramatic graph is the visual display of ‘dramatic force’ in the play, movie or TV show.

To understand the intensity, duration and voluntary determination of psychic states, we must eliminate the idea of space.257

When isolated from one another and regarded as so many distinct units, psychic states seem to be more or less intense. Next, looked at in their multiplicity, they

251 Bergson, p. 16.
252 Bergson, p. 17.
253 Bergson, p. 28.
254 Bergson, p. 28.
256 Bergson, p. 224.
257 Bergson, p. 224.
unfold in time and constitute duration. Finally, in their relations to one another, and in so far as a certain unity is preserved throughout their multiplicity, they seem to determine one another. Intensity, duration, voluntary determination, these are the three ideas which had to be clarified by ridding them of all that they owe to the intrusion of the sensible world and, in a word, to the obsession of the idea of space. 258

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![Figure 54. An attempt at a Bergsonian graph of dramatic structure.](image)

**WILLIAM JAMES**

**WILLIAM JAMES ON TIME AND AWARENESS**

The knowledge of some other part of the stream [of consciousness of time], past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present thing. 259

Therefore, the job of the dramatist is to control that ‘mixing’ of past, present and future. There’s no point having a climax deliver emotional or plot density until we’ve prepared the audience first, with a body of knowledge and experience.

Awareness of change is thus the condition on which our perception of time’s flow depends; but there exists no reason to suppose that empty time’s own changes are sufficient for the awareness of change to be aroused. The change must be of some concrete sort—an outward or inward sensible series, or a process of attention or volition. 260

The process of change is recorded on the graph. The more sudden the change, the greater the angle of the line, 90° being the greatest angle possible. The ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ the ascent of the line, the greater the intensity of even represented. If there are too many climaxes, the spectator can’t differentiate them, and they appear to the audience as a block of no change, become ‘empty’ of significance – James ‘empty time’. If there are not enough climaxes, then there are not enough intense or memorable events to impress upon the memory of the audience, to help them build the illusion of ‘full’ time. Again, the impression is of ‘empty time’.

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258 Bergson, p. 224.
260 James, p. 406.
In general, a time filled with varied and interesting experiences seems short in passing, but long as we look back. On the other hand, a tract of time empty of experiences seems long in passing, but in retrospect short.\(^{261}\)

[As] each passing year converts some of this experience into automatic routine which we hardly note at all, the days and the weeks smooth themselves out in recollection to contentless units, and the years grow hollow and collapse.\(^{262}\)

Ah, that last sentence describes many a night in the theatre for me! To return to the ‘formula’ above, there is another way of expanding on it, if we substitute ‘events’ for ‘years’. The child has had 10 experiences, so each one is a tenth of the whole number. Each successive event or experience is smaller than the last. The first is 100% of the whole, the second is only 50% of the whole, etc. Get to 50, and the most recent event in the person’s life is only 2% of the whole. Remember, she has now had 50 experiences. Every event in both lives is the same = one event = a totality, but as the person gets older, the person must expand her capacity for memory and the comprehension of meaning, or it’s all too much. I disagree with James that the ‘formula’ demonstrates that the same space of time seems shorter as we get older. What about reading a book? By the time we get to page ten of a book, each page represents a tenth of the whole. By the time we get to page 50, each page represents a fiftieth of the whole. Do the more recent pages go ‘faster’ than the earlier ones? They do if we skim, and they will if we get tired. But if we are able to maintain equal attention and interest, each page will go as fast or slow as there are interesting events and thoughts expressed on each one. This is the same in life. There is a cumulative effect expressed in the ‘formula’. There are 15 scenes in *Othello*. By the time we get to ACT 1, Scene 2, the audience has only experienced two scenes, each scene representing half their total experience of the play, or ‘life’ in the play. Does that make these scenes feel ‘bigger’ or ‘slower’ than the later scenes? By the time we get to ACT 5, Scene 2, each scene represents a fiftieth of the whole experience. Does that make ACT 5, Scene 2 go faster? I don’t know. It certainly doesn’t make it small or routine. But, perhaps this is why most dramatists pile on more drama the further in to the play we get. Plays very rarely ‘thin out’ as they pass the half way mark. We all depend on the accumulation of the audience’s ‘life in the play’ to make Othello’s terrible realization of what has happened work, but in case they’re tired, the events have to be super-dramatic or super-funny, or there has to be a super-realization or revelation to keep them interested and, we hope, moved.

The feeling of time and accent in music, of rhythm, is quite independent of that of melody. Tunes with marked rhythm can be readily recognized when simply drummed on the table with the finger-tips.\(^{263}\)

The dividing up of a script into ‘units’ or ‘bits’ is similar to what James is describing when referring to an experiment using a metronome to ‘divide up’ units of time or *durations*.

**AWARENESS**

\[\ldots\text{in each of us, when awake (and often when asleep), \textit{some kind of consciousness is always going on}. There is a stream, a succession of states, or waves, or fields (or whatever you please to call them), of knowledge, of feeling, of desire, of}\]\n
\(^{261}\) James, p. 408.

\(^{262}\) James, p. 409.

\(^{263}\) James, p. 405.
deliberation, etc., that constantly pass and re-pass, and that constitute our inner life.264

INFLUENCING THE AUDIENCE’S AWARENESS

... in each of us, when awake (and often when asleep), some kind of consciousness is always going on. There is a stream, a succession of states, or waves, or fields (or whatever you please to call them), of knowledge, of feeling, of desire, of deliberation, etc., that constantly pass and repass, and that constitute our inner life.265

How do we dramatists interact or participate in those waves or successions of states?

- We muster the audience into a place and posture where they can concentrate their attention on what we are communicating.

- We work the audience into such a state of attention that every other object of attention is banished from their minds.

- Then we reveal what we wish to communicate to them so effectively that they will remember the occasion till their dying day.

The pace and intensity of that ‘revealing’ strategy is determined by Dramatic Structure. Having corralled the audience into this state of attention, we have to ‘ration’ our Dramatic Energy so the audience don’t get over-familiar with it or lose their own sense of discovery.

This is not just about plot. You can announce at the start of a play, just as at the start of a lecture, what it’s going to be about and what is going to happen. Also, you can tell a story that is well-known to the audience already. It’s in the skill of the telling that the audience is going to be ‘hacked to pieces’ or not. We need interesting characters, vivaciously portrayed; coherent narrative articulated, especially if complex; visible conflict, energetically pursued. We are starting to work our audience into a concentrated and we hope excited state of interest.

But all of this will fail if we don’t pace the drama.

What does dramatic structure actually do to or for an audience? Given that this ‘geodetic line’ is hidden from them, this is not that easy to describe. I doubt that I could ‘test’ an audience to see if they had comprehended the structure when it was there, to the satisfaction of the cast and director, or not there. I know in my heart of hearts that it works, and I test myself constantly, especially when I deem that structure is not being effectively implemented in a play, film or television show. The sign is, I get bored.

I have come to realize that the job of an entertainer, be it actor or director, is similar to that of a teacher. What sort of teacher? Heuristic or didactic? Well, there’s the trick. Didactic pretending to be heuristic. I believe it is the director’s and playwright’s job to trick the audience into thinking they are ‘discovering’ the plot and significance for themselves, but there is an


265 James, 1907, p. 14.
invisible (to the untrained eye) hand guiding the discovery – that is the ‘map’ of the structure of plot and dramatic energy. We often hear critics and other observers of the Drama complain when they feel like they have had something ‘rammed down their throats’ or ‘spoon fed’. We also hear them complain when they think something is ‘formless’ or ‘a mess’. One of the most common complaints that I heard about the work of Peter King is that it ‘didn’t make sense’ or that it was ‘a mess’. The indulgent or supportive audience member would offer to ‘let go of wanting it to make sense, and just let it wash over me.’

An audience can’t sustain their attention throughout a play or movie to the same level. We have to give them rests. The structure of the play comes in waves or beats. Climaxes concentrate the attention; subsidences allow a little ‘relaxation’ of attention.

If the actor does everything at one ‘level’ of intensity or richness, it’s boring. If there are ‘highs’ and ‘lows’ – in rhythm, intensity, vocal colour and so on, it’s interesting. When you pay close attention to time it goes very slowly. Sometimes this is good in the theatre, and sometimes not. The image of an audience member looking at his watch is one to strike horror into the heart of an actor. So this passing of time slowly can be a bad thing, if time is passing slowly in monotony. But it can be a good thing if every moment is filled with interest. It’s very hard to judge how long a play is or has been if it’s interesting. The Melbourne Theatre Company’s production of *August Osage County* (2009) was three and a half hours long, including two intervals, but my sense of time went quickly. My production of *The Weather and Your Health* is only 45 minutes long, but my sense of time goes slowly. What does that mean? It certainly has nothing to do with the measurement of time by a clock.

A word from Thomas Mann:

> What people call boredom is actually an abnormal compression of time caused by monotony – uninterrupted uniformity can shrink large spaces of time until the heart falters, terrified to death.  

This is a crux: it’s not just about subject matter. A play or a book or movie can be full of the most interesting subject matter and yet be boring. A play can be very slender in terms of subject matter and be gripping. It’s the uniformity in Dramatic Force that makes something boring. Sometimes even a stage pause, where there is no physical action, can be riveting, if there is dramatic force behind it.

The night when *The Weather and Your Health* was ‘too short’ and a bit boring coincided with the actor’s not giving each moment its full detail: I had the impression that the scenes hurtled past:

> at an ever-increasing speed . . . it must be habit that causes it.

Yes, the actor dispensed the storytelling with an attitude of habit, and this attitude was directly communicated to the audience. It felt like habit to us; ‘I’m familiar with this – this is a bit the same as the last bit’. But if every bit is a little bit different from the last bit, this keeps our interest. What if the character’s *situation* is the same as in the last bit, and not very

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267 Mann, p. 123.
much happens? What keeps habit at bay is the structuring of the Dramatic Force. There is always the 'inexorable forward movement' and the intensifying and releasing of Dramatic Force. Why do most of us never tire of looking at the sea?
INSIDE THE STRUCTURE: the y-axis

As mentioned at the end of the Second Movement of this document, an integral part of the task of drawing and explicating the dramatic structure is to uncover, discover and reveal what the y-axis represents in the context of that play or screenplay. In doing so we hope to reveal what the play is about, what the journey through the structure of a play is about, with implications as to what any play is about.

As we know, the graph goes up or down. What is being represented by this movement of the line of the graph? It would have been good to coin a neologism for the purpose of this PhD, but I didn’t have the courage. The word would be something like ‘drama-ness’, ‘dramatic-ness’ or even ‘dramacy’, but these are too clumsy-sounding to use with working actors who, as a rule, appreciate plain speaking. ‘Dramatic action’ doesn’t quite do it, because that can mean sword fights and soul-baring confessions.

Freytag has a good stab at trying to pin down what this is all about:

WHAT IS DRAMATIC?
The dramatic includes those emotions of the soul which steel themselves to will, and to do, and those emotions of the soul which are aroused by a deed or course of action; also the inner process which man experiences from the first glow of perception to passionate desire and action, as well as the influences which one’s own and others’ deeds exert upon the soul; also the rushing forth of will power from the depths of man’s soul toward the external world, and the influx of fashioning influences from the other world into man’s inmost being; also the coming into being of a deed, and its consequences on the human soul.

An action, in itself, is not dramatic. Passionate feeling, in itself, is not dramatic. Not the presentation of a passion for itself, but of a passion which leads to action is the business of dramatic art; not the presentation of an event for itself, but for its effect on a human soul is the dramatist’s mission.

Freytag, much later, in describing the ‘descent’ of Othello describes his tragic journey as ‘the convulsing soul-conflict in which the hero perishes.’ That’s really a marvelous description, worthy of Nietzsche at his most febrile.

PALLADIO

INSIDE A PALLADIO CHURCH

When asked if he still preaches in retirement, former Bishop of Edinburgh Richard Holloway answered:

I preach occasionally, but on the whole I’m happy to be a lay person, a pew-dweller, rather than someone up at the holy end.

Why have I quoted this innocent little statement? Because I find it suggests something important about dramatic structure. I presume ‘the holy end’ is the eastern end, which

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268 Freytag, p. 19.
contains the presbytery, altar, choir and passages off to rooms not seen by the general congregation. I daresay that the eastern end of a church is no more holy because it is up the eastern end, but because the design of the church makes it ‘feel’ holy. I’ve been in churches that don’t feel holy at all – for example the 1960s blonde brick ‘ski-chateau’ A-frame design. And I have been in churches that do feel holy, even to a non-believer such as myself. As a lay (non-architect) visitor to buildings, I find that the design makes me feel things, and the journey through a building makes me feel things as well. The journey through the structure of the play, if it is ‘taken on’ as a non-spatial entity or intensity, if I can call it that, also makes the actor feel things. It’s not necessary to imagine it as a space – a cathedral or whatever else, but it is necessary to feel it.

You could look at church design and say it’s like a stage set insofar as the design is supposed to create the impression or illusion of holiness. But to a believer, the ‘holy end’ of a church is actually holy. I’m not a ‘believer’, but I have been in a few churches, and have always been affected by being ‘up the holy end’. I have performed in a couple of churches – one functioning, and one de-consecrated. On both occasions I felt a ‘charge’ or ‘force field’ around the area of the altar. Let’s suppose that this ‘charge’ is not something being felt from under the ground like Underwood’s Geodetic Lines, above, but a direct result of the design of the church. For my purposes, this means that the design of the church has created a feeling of holiness in the visitor. This design has been imposed from without, but having been so, the ‘holiness’ exists. So the structure or design of the church has simultaneously imposed or fabricated ‘holiness’ and revealed it to the believer and non-believer alike.

Of course this doesn’t happen with every church, and not every church design is relevant to my argument. The idea of ‘procession’ is important – or ‘progression’ from one end to the other. For example, I’ve never been to Le Corbusier’s Notre Dame du Haut, but judging by pictures and plans of it I imagine the experience of that church is more about ‘being’ somewhere rather than ‘going’ somewhere.

This is why I’ve chosen a particular type of church design as a metaphor for dramatic structure. I would necessarily have a long nave, cruciform floor plan, pronounced transepts, and large crossing surmounted by a magnificent tower or dome. I spent some time contemplating this inside William Wardell’s St Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne, which I thought was the perfect shape for this project. Robin Boyd was inspired to write lyrically on its beauty:

A half-circle of small chapels around the apse at the north-east end makes an intricate but cleverly controlled pattern of repeated windows, pinnacles and peaked roofs. But the real beauty of St Patrick’s is internal. The ring of chapels provides a fascinating interplay of spaces around the altar. Viewed from this end, in the golden light of amber glass windows, the cathedral’s interior presents a Gothic vision probably unsurpassed by any other building in the four hundred years since the great Gothic era.270

However I find it a very grim place and don’t enjoy being in there at all. I’ve walked up and down the nave many times trying to get the feeling of what I imagined. I just felt oppressed.

This is actually quite interesting. As I have very ambivalent feelings about all churches, even very beautiful ones, even genuine gothic ones, it’s interesting that the image of a cathedral should have occurred to me at all. Undeterred, I became fascinated by churches I’ve never been to – in particular, Palladio’s San Giorgio Maggiore which I have only seen in photographs. This infatuation with Palladio led me to devote a chapter to him below.

I therefore imagined a church after Palladio. Here is a sketch representing the plan of that imagined church (a cross-section of the same church can be seen above in Figure 6):

![Sketch of a 'generic' church plan, loosely based on a Palladian original.](image)

The design of the building is supposed to create the experience of holiness. It’s not just about looking holy or special, but the experience of the divine. Well, this is what I think. Why isn’t the altar at the front door? After all, if churches are supposed to be dispensing the body and blood of Christ, why not do it as you come through the front door? The answer, I believe is Drama of procession. The liturgy is structured to prepare the faithful for the experience, and the design of the church also enhances this experience. The design wants to ‘save the best till last’. Why isn’t the cupola at the side, its own special structure for people to visit as they feel like it? Why aren’t there two cupolas? The reason is the design is perfectly measured to create the right impression and effect. There is a procession and progression from the everyday at the entrance to divine transformation or transubstantiation at the altar. There is also the lived duration of that journey.

The following is an imagined walk through Palladio’s church of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice:

As an experience, the interior of San Giorgio overwhelms any visitor through its scale and the grandeur of its architect’s imagination. The stone bases of the Composite piers tower overhead, and their entablature projects sharply forward,
framing the lunettes that pierce the barrel vault. The initial quadrilateral impression of the basilica is unexpectedly broken up by the cross-axis of the transept, equal in length to that of the nave. At the crossing, the cupola appears to float overhead, an effect enhanced by the slender dimensions of the piers. Palladio could afford to make them much slenderer than in a Central Italian church because the cupola is built in the Veneto-Byzantine tradition with a low drum supporting a light timber construction, unlike, for example, the masonry dome of Saint Peter’s. Though the church is dominated by its two main axes, subsidiary views open on all sides, and the interplay between parts means that clarity and rationality prevail over confusion or clutter. In his orchestration of different scales and spaces, Palladio applied the lessons learned from his study of the baths: each component is distinguished from the others, and all interlock in a tradition that looks back through Cosussi to Brunelleschi.271

In keeping with the idea expressed early in this document of ‘structure-as-church’, this description serves as a visual and experiential metaphor for dramatic structure. The ‘underlying forward momentum’ felt during the journey through the church draws the attention ineluctably toward the high altar. That’s not quite it either – it’s not about being drawn through the structure – it’s somewhere between being drawn and drawing – of both. Like being on a train. There is the unceasing forward movement below – on the tracks, but ‘above’ we can read, play with our iPhones, chat, blow our noses, and so on, while still enjoying that deep motion. Again, it’s not quite right, because the actor both ‘sits on’ the ‘tracks’ of the structure and propels herself along them.

Why do we say that we walk ‘up’ the nave of a church or ‘up’ the aisle in a theatre as we approach the stage? Even at an outdoor wedding in a park, the bride is said to walk ‘up’ the aisle.

This is a rather complex analogy, but more and more it seems to suit my purpose.

However, how might I use this in rehearsal? I would ponder this at my desk, while writing this PhD, but how do I apply it in the strapped-for-time context of rehearsals for a play? Do I literally build a model of the play out of plaster of Paris or papier-mâché? Do I present a 3D rendering of the play, in the form of a cathedral? Well, no. It’s a wonderful idea, which couldn’t work for a number of reasons:

Actors have to keep running back to it to see where they are – a simple roll of paper on the floor is much easier to see and ‘walk along’, rather similarly to how dancers monitor themselves in room-length mirrors.

The actors can stand next to the bit of the structure where they are supposed to be – they can’t do that with a plaster of Paris model (unless it were on a huge scale of say, 1:4).

With a roll of paper, the actors can ‘walk the structure’ and start to feel that strange ethereal experience of the structure. It’s impossible to feel that while craning one’s neck to see inside a museum-like model.

Is there something actually ‘there’ in the design of a church? It was created or constructed out of nothing, but once it was constructed, it seems to provoke feelings and sensations that

seem real. The church has created or imposed something on the small bit of land where it is built, but in doing so has also revealed something that to many, is real.

This is the same with dramatic structure. Through the imposition of a rule or structure, we reveal something that at least to me is real.

How universal is this? Do the congregation inside Le Corbusier’s Notre Dame du Haut feel the same as those inside Palladio’s San Giorgio Maggiore? Is their experience of God, holiness, the Blood and Body of Christ different? What about a Quaker hall? I expect their experience is very different. Is it affected or even induced by the architecture? This is beyond the scope of my enquiry, but I’m tantalized by it.

What about pre-dramatic literature and stories? Is it right or relevant to impose structure on them? Joseph Campbell has done with myth, but the thing about myth is the telling. The myth itself will have a narrative structure, but how it’s told in say the Oxford Classical Dictionary and in Sophocles is different in the telling, and the telling has a structure. Is there a better structure?

The Campbell structure is a sequence of events, which is different from Dramatic Structure. This sequence of events as is eligible for dramatic analysis as Othello or Pillow Talk.

NIETZSCHE

INSIDE THE NIETZSCHEAN JOURNEY

. . . there are around us daemonic energies which prey upon the soul and turn it to madness or which poison our will so that we inflict irreparable outrage upon ourselves and those we love.  

Man fixes some wonderful erection of his own between himself and the wild chaos, and gradually goes bleached and stifled under his parasol. Then comes a poet, enemy of convention, and makes a slit in the umbrella; and lo! the glimpse of chaos is a vision, a window to the sun.

This way is indescribable; and I do not think that anyone could believe or understand it who has not already experienced it. It is a communication made not to comfort the soul, but to show it the reason why it is weary – which is because it is absent from that Good that contains all good things within itself.

In this communication the desire grows, and so does the extreme loneliness in which the soul finds itself, and with it there comes a distress so subtle and piercing . . .

A full study of Nietzsche in relation to dramatic structure could easily and happily be a PhD by itself. Another aspiration for post-doctoral study would be to do a ‘Nietzschean’ analysis and performance of a play. Coward’s Private Lives? Just kidding. Of course it would have to be Shakespeare. This chapter is not only my marginalia from my reading of Nietzsche, but it also takes the form of a series of febrile, rhapsodic Nietzschean Aphorisms. In this chapter I

am somewhat taken over by the spirit of Nietzsche in response to a beginner’s reading of The Birth of Tragedy.275

The Nietzschean ‘journey’ is from the Apollonian276 to the Dionysian. The journey starts with Apollo’s ‘unshaken faith in the principle of individuation’ (principium individuationis)277 and, after a period of terror, ‘vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness.’278 I’m not sure how we get back, and Nietzsche isn’t a particularly helpful guide in this respect. However, this is an exciting model for the downward trajectory of the tragic journey, and certainly describes that of Othello and King Lear. I think in tragedy the protagonist returns from this catastrophe changed into a ‘false individual’ or a ‘false Apollo’ – who thinks he is whole and even serene, but in the view of the audience, certainly is not. I agree with Nietzsche that the ‘start’ of the tragic journey is in or at the Apollonian, but I’m not sure if the ‘descent’ is best characterised as a descent to the Dionysian. His descriptions of ecstasy and union feel right to me in terms of a spiritual journey, but I don’t think Tragic protagonists complete a spiritual journey. In a way, that’s the Tragedy of Western literature. We go only so far, and no further. We don’t actually achieve the great Awakening or Insight or Clarity that would complete the journey. I thought this when I first read Proust. I thought, ‘He’s close – he is so magnificently close, but he doesn’t take the last step that Buddhism takes’. The same with Shakespeare, and this is why I think Shakespeare is dangerous. He takes us into the abyss, but I don’t think he is a reliable guide to the Return from the abyss. In terms of the Four Noble Truths:

- The truth of suffering
- The truth of the cause of suffering
- The truth of the end of suffering
- The truth of the Way to the end of suffering

Western literature is good on the first three, but not good on the last one. Shakespeare doesn’t even consider the last one. Literature that does posit a Way to the end of suffering is either ‘religious’ or sentimental – dogma or doggerel. The only Way that has made any sense to me is the Buddhist Way – to Emptiness – and that is a kind of Union and Explosion of matter at the same time. Union-as-Big-Bang sort of describes my response to music.

Is the journey of the hero in tragedy a journey in the Minotaur’s labyrinth? Is the Turning Point the arrival at the centre of the labyrinth? The hero in tragedy returns, but scarred. Is the hero eaten by the Minotaur and vomited out changed?

Journal, Saturday 13 September 2008:

During this dark time when I feel like I am making no progress, there is still a guiding principle or impulse – music. How natural, inevitable even, that I should be delivered Nietzsche’s The Birth of Tragedy at this time, especially considering the subtitle of the first edition: The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music. Music

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276 I use the more common ‘Apollonian’ whereas Kaufmann uses ‘Apollinian’.
277 Nietzsche, p. 36, and passim.
278 Nietzsche, p. 36.
is the key. This ‘downward’ journey of performance and participation by audience agrees with Nietzsche’s idea of the abyss. So, the Freytag triangle has to be turned upside down and the y-axis might be called ‘depth’. The level of depth coincides with depth of incomprehension or rationale. Depth goes to the Dionysian. The performer has to be careful not to ‘fall’ into the depths, but to step as carefully as Dante and Virgil.

In the ritual of the theatre, we don’t ‘come together’ like in the Beatles’ song, but we each suffer/experience our own private heaven or hell. Note the reaction of the men in the audience of the first night of Death of a Salesman. They found it difficult to ‘return’:

. . . there was no applause at the final curtain of the first performance. Strange things began to go on in the audience. With the curtain down, some people stood to put their coats on and then sat again, some, especially men, were bent forward covering their faces, and others were openly weeping. People crossed the theatre to stand quietly talking with one another. It seemed forever before someone remembered to applaud, and then there was no end to it.\textsuperscript{279}

Reading Nietzsche, especially The Birth of Tragedy (Out of the Spirit of Music) in the context of the PhD is thrilling in terms of addressing the problem of identifying the vertical coordinate. I think I have discovered or am discovering what that coordinate is, or what it represents. So the PhD now is not about trying out new structures, but about re-defining what dramatic structure is, and therefore, what a play is, what the audience’s journey through the play is, what the characters’ and the actors’ journeys through the play are.

No matter what structure I have tried to employ or experiment with, I have always come back to the triangle. I will allow the enhancement of the three circles, but I'm not sure how to employ the nine steps.

So, I always come back to the triangle. But the triangle points down, not up. The whole graph is turned upside down. Time is still time, but the vertical coordinate could now be called:

depth
incomprehension
descent into the Underworld
descent into Dionysian intoxication
journey into the Dionysian Abyss
journey into the primordial

I disagree with Nietzsche when he says the Dionysian is group experience and the Apollonian is the individuated experience. My experience of music and religion for example is the opposite. My experience of Dionysian bliss is profoundly lonely. What about the case of Othello? He is a respected member of society at the start of the play. His ‘descent’ casts him out of society and into an existential alone-ness. He meets the obstacle utterly alone.

Am I wrong about this? I have little doubt that the journey of the structure of the play is an ‘un-civilizing’ one. Olivier’s Othello (in the 1965 movie directed by Stuart Burge) tears off his Crucifix soon after the climax.

The journey ‘up the mountain’ of the structure is actually the journey to the Underworld. The difficult part for an actor though, is that the journey should not feel like a ‘hurling’ into the Underworld or a ‘falling’ into the Underworld.

I have no doubt that I experience Dionysian ecstasy when I listen to great music:

Journal, Sunday 30 August 2008:

Today I listened to the Rachmaninov 4th Piano Concerto then the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (Stephen Hough – brilliant!). The 18th variation – so well known, hackneyed even, but so surprising – caused me to burst into tears – this is not unusual, but I managed to think a bit more articulately than usual:

This is so sad, so sweet. It is saying ‘We are going to die soon, and all our hopes, aspirations, savings, bankruptcies etc will be for nothing. I know, I know, and I embrace you, enter you, comfort you.

So, oblivion, the ‘tragedy of individuation’, dying alone, and union all at the same time? This would help to explain the feeling of disorientation I experience after any of these deep musical events. I used to think that these moments were only about the pain of individuation – of alone-ness in the universe – but maybe that’s not quite it. It’s an explosion – fission and fusion! Union and individuation at the same time. That makes ‘sense’.

So, the Journey is like this? From wholeness to fission/fusion? From integration to disintegration? From homogeneity to shattering?

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280 See also Figure 18.
What is this ‘rapture’?

**Journal, Saturday 8 November 2008 (excerpt):**

**MUSIC.** Just listened to the scene from the Beecham recording of Die Zauberflöte when Papageno’s mouth-lock is removed and the three boys come to guide him. From there to the arrival of the three boys. The arrival of the boys,

‘Drei Knäbchen, jung, schön, hold und weise,’

moved me to tears. I thought, ‘there can be no wiser, saner, more beautiful sound in all the world’. Then I looked up from my semi-recumbent position on the chair and my eye hit Bleak House. This moved me even more, as I remembered some favourite scenes from that and other Dickens novels – then books by other authors. It struck me that I will die one day and leave all these loved ones behind. Everything will be dissolved into oblivion. It felt unbearable. Mozart, Dickens, Proust, the Bach St John Passion, all gone. This is terrible and unavoidable. Is this what my reaction to music is all about? Is it the grief of dying? I feel that grief of being torn away from something. At the moment I hear ‘Es ist vollbracht’ in the St John Passion I feel I am dying. [This moment in the *St John Passion* happens to be exactly three-quarters the way through. That would be a neoclassical ‘catastrophe’ – Christ giving up the ghost – except it is depicted in the libretto as ‘comfort for suffering human souls!’ and ‘the end of the night of sorrow’ (trans. Kurt von Fischer in the recording conducted by John Eliot Gardiner). Here is where the PhD comes in. Is that the ‘Dionysian abyss’ or ‘ecstasy’ of Nietzsche? This tearing away of the soul toward death? The Sufis say that music is the sound of the soul weeping at having been separated from God. Is the ‘death’ I feel a death of the soul or ego? I suppose that’s the only death I can really imagine, even though I ‘imagine’ that I imagine a death of everything, a dissolution, an ‘Auflösung’. Is that what happens in Tragedy? Is that the ‘meaning’ of the y-axis? The taking apart of the ego, the tearing apart of Hippolytus by horses? The goring of Adonis by the boar? Iago leading the becoming-denuded Othello into the snake-pit?

There was an acting exercise that we were taught at VCA by David Latham, called ‘The Journey’. In the first ‘journey’ exercise one person lies down on the floor with eyes closed. Another person kneels beside them and asks questions such as ‘What do you see? Where are you?’ The person lying down allows their imagination to wander and change unbidden by any plan or sense of a journey. The person asking questions does not psychologise or ‘lead’ their partner anywhere. The questions should be simple and focussed on the ‘subject’s’ senses rather than thoughts. This way the ‘subject’ can change his mind as often as the mind’s whim allows.

The ‘state’ of the subject is semi-dream, or ‘daydream’. From the ‘civil’ state, the subject ‘descends’ into a state of semi-dream, where the sense of self is quite different from the ‘waking’ state. There are a lot of quote marks here, because this is all conjectural or invented. The partner kneeling beside the subject is like the Guide in Joseph Campbell. The partner must not or should not ‘lead’ the subject anywhere, except in the special circumstance of the subject being ‘stuck’ somewhere like a cloud or a windowless room. Only then can the ‘guide’ suggest a way out.

This raises the question of what constitutes an ‘unreliable’ guide? If the partner were to suggest to the subject that he/she find a snake pit and descend into it, is it likely the subject
would accede in this semi-dream state. Is this what Iago does? He manages to skillfully denude or disrobe Othello of his civility or ego, and in that semi-waking state guides him through the gates of Hell.

*y-axis*. I still think that the idea of the journey from the Apollonian to the Dionysian is good, but I guess I just have to go further in describing what those two ‘poles’ are. The Dionysian, for example can, I think, be ecstasy or abyss, union or initiatory alone-ness, both of which involve the divesting or dying of one’s ego.

*y-axis*. Is it about the journey of the ego, from belief in the security of one’s perception of oneself toward ego-death, and back again . . . as what? As who? What is the transformation that occurs while swimming in this abyss?

Is the *y-axis* ‘ego-death’?

Journal, Thursday 16 October 2008:

I’ve just listened to Schwarzkopf/Furtwängler/Wolf. The *y-axis* = ego death = Nietzsche’s initiation = the terror of initiation. Where does terror come into it?

A colleague and I were talking about *The Taming of the Shrew*. He said he couldn’t understand Katerina’s final speech:

Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,  
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,  
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor:  
It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,  
Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,  
And in no sense is meet or amiable.  
A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,  
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;  
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty  
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.  
Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,  
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,  
And for thy maintenance commits his body  
To painful labour both by sea and land,  
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,  
Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;  
And craves no other tribute at thy hands  
But love, fair looks and true obedience;  
Too little payment for so great a debt.  
Such duty as the subject owes the prince  
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;  
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,  
And not obedient to his honest will,  
What is she but a foul contending rebel  
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?  
I am ashamed that women are so simple  
To offer war where they should kneel for peace;  
Or seek for rule, supremacy and sway,  
When they are bound to serve, love and obey.  
Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,  
Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,  
But that our soft conditions and our hearts
Should well agree with our external parts?
Come, come, you froward and unable worms!
My mind hath been as big as one of yours,
My heart as great, my reason haply more,
To bandy word for word and frown for frown;
But now I see our lances are but straws,
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,
That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.
Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
And place your hands below your husband’s foot:
In token of which duty, if he please,
My hand is ready; may it do him ease.

ACT 5, scene 2, lines 137-180

He said he didn’t understand if she was playing a game. I said I believe it to be the strongest and most profound public declaration of love, duty and civility.

Katherina starts the play in a sort of hormonal frenzy. Nietzsche would say, she starts in the Dionysian world – which is unusual – in most Shakespeare plays characters start in a usually ordered universe that has recently or presently experienced some sort of upheaval. But Katherina’s world is Dionysian. She rejects the advances of civil society – represented by marriage.

Petruchio is, at the start of the play, the representative of Ordered (Apollonian) Society, albeit not the most reliable or exemplary representative! His interaction with Katherina causes his ‘descent’ into the Dionysian. He meets her there. See, in about the middle of the play, Petruchio’s strange behaviour, described by Biondello. There is a point in the play when he has lost control, and he too has descended to the Dionysian. I believe there is a moment in the play when Katherina recognizes this – recognizes a fellow or peer, and it is she who ‘tames’ Petruchio, by leading him back to the ‘upper’ world. Her final speech is the Nietzschean model of Apollonian civility and generosity.

DOORS OF INITIATION

Rather than descent and ascent, should the structure be all horizontal? Perhaps the three major ‘points’ on the journey are thresholds or ‘doors’. They act like thresholds or transformative experiential places for the character.

281 ACT 3, scene 2.
The significance or feeling associated with the ‘Turning Point’ or ‘Strait Gate’ in the drawings above can be illuminated by an idea from Donald Meichenbaum. Othello’s ‘self’ is squeezed ever tighter, with fewer and fewer ‘options’ or escape routes. A character in the midst of a well-constructed play can’t just choose to opt out. The playwright and director and actor have all forced the character onto these narrow tracks, and the character’s choices are narrowed and the character is forced to pass through a narrow opening:

stress-prone individuals are primed to make extreme, one-sided, absolutistic, categorical, global judgments. They tend to personalize events and engage in cognitive distortions such as polarization (black-white dichotomous reasoning), magnification and exaggeration (overemphasis on the most negative possibilities
in a given situation), and overgeneralization. Such conceptual distortions can occur in an automatic, unconscious fashion.282

‘Gestalt’ is a German word meaning simply ‘form’ or ‘shape’. The illustration above illustrates the shape of the stages an experience, or experience as a whole. How might I apply this to an analysis of *Othello*? How can a circle work as a dramatic structure when it doesn’t indicate the passing of time, and the fact that at the end of it we’re all two, three or four hours older.

STRUCTURE

In his book *The Gestalt Approach* Fritz Perls uses the example of guests arriving at a cocktail party to indicate that for different people with different interests, different objects or thoughts will be foregrounded, leaving the rest in the background. For the alcoholic the bar is in the foreground and the rest of the party recedes into the background. The painter looks immediately to see how her paintings have been hung. There is a young man looking to meet his current girlfriend. There is the peripatetic guest who sees the party in different patterns at different times – foreground and background change. Then the last guest arrives – he doesn’t want to be there at all. For him the scene remains disorganized and meaningless unless or until something of interest happens.

This is all gold. The dramatist decides what is in the foreground and what is in the background. Directors, designers and actors must be sensitive to this. How and where to direct the audience’s attention is as important when directing and designing a Chekhov play.

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as it is for a stage magician. In terms of dramatic structure, we the dramatists direct the
guests’/audience’s attention through careful attention to climaxes and their abatements.285

Something this example doesn’t address is the time it takes for the peripatetic guest to melt
and flow between his many interests. If there is too much going on, he won’t be able to have
any satisfactory experiences at the party. If there is not enough going on, his experience will
be equally unsatisfactory. It takes a certain amount of time, when arriving at a party, to sort
out the ‘blobs of color and movement’ into meaningful units that might attract our particular
interest. For the peripatetic guest, there is a rhythm that he will establish. He won’t run from
group to group, from individual to individual, exchanging a couple of words then moving on
– though if he does, this is a recipe for an unsatisfactory party experience. He won’t spend
too long with one group, especially if he is gregarious and knows there are interesting people
in other groups as well, including those gathered around the piano and those out the back
smoking dope. His journey through the party will probably look something like this:

arrival at a new group. After a moment of settling physically into his position he
observes and waits for a break in the conversation in order to introduce himself. He
might listen to the conversation before introducing himself. A skilful partygoer will
use this opportunity to gather information in order to move effortlessly into the
conversation

introductions. There are many ways of doing this. The skilful partygoer will try not to
interrupt the flow of conversation, but use his introduction into it as a way of
‘springboarding’ the conversation

main body of the encounter. This will include conversation, perhaps some flirting,
perhaps some judging of some people in the group as either potential future contacts
and others as people to be avoided.

deciding to move on. This will happen either because something more interesting is
happening somewhere else, or because this encounter isn’t interesting enough – it
has ‘run out of steam’. The partygoer will usually announce his moving on in a
variety of ways, perhaps using the excuse of needing to refill his glass, or ‘Is that a
tray of smoked salmon I see?’. He will rarely just announce that he is moving on,
unless he wants to make a point about the unsuitability of this company.

transition. The time spent between encounters can be used to reconnoitre, eat,
meditate, observe, ‘freshen up’, or to head straight to the next encounter, while
wondering what it might bring. These transitions can be quick or sustained, full of
thought and feeling, or merely perfunctory.

Each of these encounters at a party has its own three-part structure or beginning, middle and
end; Introduction, Development and Conclusion. Each of the partygoer’s encounters will be
a different length, but each of them will seem longer or shorter to the partygoer, depending on
the density and interest in the events. There might even be a moment in one of his
encounters where ‘time stands still’.

285 See also ‘Influencing the audience’s awareness’, above.
Time stands still with gazing on her face,
Stand still and gaze for minutes, hours and
years, to her give place:
All other things shall change, but she remains
the same,
Till heavens have changed their course and
Time hath lost his name.
Cupid doth hover up and down blinded with
her faire eyes,
And Fortune captive at her feete conten’d
and conquer’d lies. etc. 286

His overall experience of the party will also probably have the same structure, unless some unexpected ‘interesting’ even happens, like a power failure or surprise sexual liaison. Without a ‘climactic’ event, the partygoer will probably arrive (Introduction), survey and interact (Development) and in time decide to leave (Conclusion). Each of his encounters will also probably follow this outline. But where is the climax or Turning Point? I have to propose this without any hope of proving it, but I believe that even for the peripatetic, easygoing partygoer, there is going to be a point, about in the middle of his party experience, where he ‘peaks’. We won’t know where this is going to be until afterwards – depending on whether he stays for half an hour or four hours – there will be a point, about in the middle, that precipitates the concluding of the experience.

How precise is this graph? Can we graph the structure of a play in as precise detail as a statistician will graph population trends or consumption of alcohol among minors? Well, not yet, though this might be something to think about for future research. We employ the idea of precision, even thinking in numerical terms about the ‘levels’ of drama on the $y$-axis. It is possible to think of drama from 1-10, maybe even with a decimal place here or there, but absolute accuracy isn’t really possible, any more than it is possible for an actor to perform a scene at ‘8.5’, especially as the performance changes by degrees every night – but again, it’s worth thinking about at another time. Something that would hopefully never happen, though, is the actor doing a scene at ‘8’ that we’d plotted at, say, ‘3’.

When we graph the structure we are very precise about the spots in the script where the dramatic moments occur – sometimes to the word, sentence or stage direction. We are very precise about the $x$ axis, knowing precisely how many pages or Units have been traversed to get to those spots. Even though we might not be accurate to three decimal places, we do agree on the height of a peak in a graph – especially comparatively – being very clear about what peak is higher than another, and why.

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286 From the Third Booke of Songs by John Dowland, words attributed to Sir Henry Lee.
CONCLUSION
the meaning of the journey
and future directions
for the philosopher-practitioner

I said in the General Introduction to this document that through the transformation of thinking prompted by the PhD process, and compelled to interrogate the meaning of theatrical drama itself, I became a philosopher-practitioner. In June 2007 Peter Corrigan said to me, at a Graduate Research Conference, that this might be a ‘heartbreaking journey’ – I might fail – the PhD might end up still ‘in air’ – I might never find the ‘perfect graph’. He pointed out that over the course of the PhD I was trying to be ‘smooth’, and he advised me to allow myself to be ‘rough’. He was reacting to my declared embarrassment that my graphs are indeed ‘rough’ and perhaps not good enough for a PhD!

In view of the above, where am I now, and what is next?

Compared to the grand plans early in the PhD to devise radically new graphic representations of dramatic structure I find that the shift from the basic, original graph has been subtle. I doubt that any 3D models of churches or elaborate computer modeling will appear in a rehearsal room of mine. However, as a result of the deep re-thinking provoked by the PhD process, a range of possibilities have opened up. Peter Corrigan insisted that drawings are crucial to this PhD, because, hieroglyph-like, they are the little windows into the work itself. He was right. The ‘Inverted Triangle’ (Figure 18), the ‘Doors of Initiation’ (Figure 55 and 56) the ‘Three Stages of the Sufi Path’ and the other ‘new’ structures are not so much finished products but suggestions as to how to continue asking questions through drawing.

And what of my practice generally?

These words from Leon van Schaik are helpful:

[ . . . ] Denton Corker Marshall’s architecture, [is] an architecture that is essentially ‘weak-force’ in its conception, precisely where the works by so many devisers of iconic buildings . . . are inherently ‘strong-force’. This ‘weakness’ in architecture is a concept derived by Ignasi de Solà-Morales [footnote: de Solà-Morales, Ignasi, Trans. Graham Thompson, Ed. Sarah Whiting (1996). Differences. Topographies of Contemporary Architecture. Cambridge. The MIT Press, pp. 68-71. That strength that art and architecture are capable of producing precisely when they adopt a posture that is not aggressive and dominating, but tangential and weak.] from the concept of ‘weak-force’ in physics – a force that is essential to the ordering of the universe, but that is not as readily apparent as the strong attractions between nuclei and particles. A work of architecture that uses ‘weak-force’ strategies will not strike the eye with immediate effect, but will slowly impart its intelligence to the observer, repaying
repeated attentions and growing in stature over time, where a ‘strong-force’ or ‘iconic’ work serves well as a postcard, but may pall in time.287

‘Weak force’ identifies what I aspire to in creating/constructing theatre. I don’t transport my ‘brand’ from production to production, in the way that ‘iconic’ or ‘high-concept’ international directors do. I see my task as adopting ‘a posture that is not aggressive and dominating’ and ‘will not strike the eye with immediate effect, but will slowly impart its intelligence to the observer, repaying repeated attentions’.

My work is not visible in the ‘product’, but it is highly visible in the process. Actors love working in this way. Audiences don’t see it and I don’t want them to see it. Even my most loyal employers don’t see it. Potential employers don’t see it either. That’s just the way it is, and I love working in this way.

POST DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Non-Western structures in theatre and storytelling. The next ‘big step’, post PhD is to go much deeper into structure and what it’s all about. This will involve journeying into the (for me) unknown realms of non-Western theatre. I made scant mention of Australian Aboriginal culture in this document, and deliberately cautioned myself against going further – but post PhD I would like to go into this mystery.

Further research into dramatic structure and the testing by project of different models for analysis, such as a ‘Nietzschean’ model, a ‘Joseph Campbell’ model, a ‘Ted Hughes’ model, a ‘Gestalt’ model the Golden Section, etc. Regarding the Golden Section, I started to look at it as a model briefly in the final weeks of the present PhD, but the mathematics of it proved to be more complicated than I’d imagined. It’s not just a matter of dividing the total number of lines by .61803. Because the result is asymmetrical, I would have to experiment with ‘weighting’ the graph in different directions, then experiment with calculating the divisions of the other dramatic moments (Complication and Catastrophe). Then, if the graph were inverted . . . this is exciting, and I have a ‘hunch’ that there’s something in it, but it is definitely for another time.

A return to a research preoccupation touched on briefly in the first version of the PhD: theatrical gestures in the novels of Charles Dickens and their current application in actor training and performance.

All fertile ground for the philosopher-practitioner.

APPENDIX 1:
The gesture is everything

Figure 1. Poster for my first Review of Candidature at RMIT, October 2006.

Appendix 1 *The gesture is everything* describes the nascent stage of the PhD in 2006, when it was about heightened physical gesture in performance. The structure of this Movement mimics the structure of the PhD as a whole, but in microcosm. It illustrates the content and progress of the PhD up to the moment of major change in direction and subject. It includes a description of the one case-study project designed to conjecture on future practice relating to gesture, and demonstrates the link between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ PhD topics.
Proposal/hunch

All gestures . . . are laden with history, with unconscious memory, with incalculable anonymous wisdom. The exercise should not be neglected, otherwise the gestures will shrink, and everything else along with them.288

My first ‘hunch’ as to what the PhD would be about was concerned with heightened theatrical gesture.

All my professional life I have been an obsessive observer, collector, performer and teacher of heightened theatrical gesture. I have sought to observe, unlock, physically imagine and perform gestures that are beyond the catalogue of the familiar, the everyday, the psychological. To achieve this I have searched for gestures to copy, looking in a wide range of places, abstracting them and ‘collecting’ them in order to make them available for performance. Common sources would include; ‘real’ people observed in life; actors, using personal observation and the reading of first person accounts of great actors of the past289; animals; art – especially figurative art that depicts heightened physical gestures, but I have also ‘dabbled’ in non-figurative art; sport – especially sport photography, which often seeks to capture the ‘grand theatrical gesture’ in sport; dance, especially non-western dance; music, focussing on non-programmatic or non-dance music; finally, there are the novels of Charles Dickens, who goes to great lengths to describe what his characters do physically – how they move. If you duplicate his instructions, you have the character. I have compiled my own extensive ‘catalogue’ of physical gestures described in Dickens’s novels.

There are two aims to this work with gestures; to enhance and broaden the imaginative and expressive potential of the actor using physical activity as the medium, and to fight what I perceive to be the deadening tendency in modern performance to make bland copies of bland copies of the everyday.

One source that I had not explored up to the time of the original PhD proposal was architecture. This represented the ‘gap’ in the work. How would I collect and perform gestures observed or ‘experienced’ in buildings—gestures ‘performed’ by the buildings themselves? Certainly by looking at photographs, but I thought it would be crucial to visit buildings and ‘inhabit’ them, in order to get more of a ‘feel’ for their gestures. I proposed a ‘Grand Tour’, where I might learn a building’s gestures and ‘play them back’ to it by performing in situ, documenting the process on video; then there would be a performance or series of performances upon completion. I had a short list of buildings I wanted to visit, which were inspiring enough in photographs, but might yield different, more intense results if visited.290

In the next section I will flesh out the sources and types of gestures mentioned above, in the context of my practice and the practice of ‘significant others’.

290 For example, the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum by Tadao Ando, and Baker House, Massachusetts Institute of Technology by Alvar Aalto.
REVIEWING THE FIELD

own practice + literature & practice of significant others

What I do and what others do who almost do what I do.

Introduction

What is a ‘gesture’? According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Third Edition), a gesture is

A movement of the body or any part of it . . . as expressive of thought or feeling.291

If we include the activity of the vocal organs in ‘bodily movement’, then this definition includes ‘vocal gestures’.

Even in view of this clear definition, the understanding and use of the word ‘gesture’ is broad and eclectic, even in the theatrical context. In this section I will review, in ever-narrowing scope, the field of understanding and practice, with particular emphasis on the use of gesture and the word ‘gesture’ in theatrical practice, until I arrive at a description of my own practice. This is not an exhaustive history of theatrical gesture, but a portrait or ‘capture’ of where I got to by the time the PhD changed direction.

First I will describe understandings and usages that have not influenced my practice, then I will describe understandings and usages that have influenced my practice, before going on to comment on my own practice.

PART 1. Non-influences (and why)

1a. Symbolic gestures

Making a cup of tea for a sad friend might be called ‘a kind gesture’. On the second anniversary of Prime Minister Rudd’s Apology to the Stolen Generations, the National Sorry Day Committee said:

One minute’s silence and a handful of free tickets to the NRL Dream Team Match is what is being offered to the Stolen Generations, to the NSDC these gestures seem to be as empty as the ‘clanging gong’ the Prime Minister referred to during the Apology.292


A ritual practice in orthodox Judaism, a gesture of atonement, called ‘Kapparot’ (‘Atonements’), involves waving or swinging a live cock around the head on the eve of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and reciting the words: ‘This is my substitute, this is my vicarious offering, this is my atonement. This cock will go to its death, but I shall have a long and pleasant life of peace.’ Vegetables, fish, money, or other objects have also been used instead of the cock, altering the wording of the ritual accordingly.293

These gestures are whole parcels of intention and meaningful action, governed by social, psychological and emotional considerations. They are ‘symbolic’ gestures. They are ‘expressive of thought or feeling’, and are identified or labelled according to their thought, feeling or meaning. The tea-offering is called ‘kind’ because its intention is deemed to be kind – to make the sad friend feel better. The Apology is called ‘empty’ because the Government has not matched the words or rhetoric of the Apology by being . . . actively engaged in genuine initiatives and actions that positively change the individual lives of the Stolen Generations in ways that assist healing and uphold their rights to true justice.294

The intention of ‘Kapparot’ is atonement, and the enactment of the gesture is deemed to achieve that aim – not an ‘empty’ gesture, but a very ‘full’ one.

I am not interested in the symbolism, intentions or desired outcomes of these gestures. As I will explain at length below, I am only interested in the performatory values of these ritual ‘performances’. What shape does the tea-maker’s body make when offering the cup of tea – is the head cocked sympathetically to one side? What shape does the non-tea-bearing arm make? Does it hang limply by the side, excluded from the act of tea-offering, or does it make a rounded gesture of double-offering? Does the performer of ‘Kapparot’ dip at the knees upon each revolution of the cock? Does he look upwards, or is the chin tucked modestly into the upper chest? Is the swinging light and graceful, or strong and ‘punchy’? What gestures or shapes does the Prime Minister’s voice make during the speech? When are there dramatic pauses or rises in tone? Though limited in physical expressiveness, what physical gestures does the Prime Minister perform during the speech? When does he change speed?

The point I am making is, rather than focusing on the meaning or intention of the gesture, I am interested in its purely physical affects or qualities. We are entitled to infer meaning from any physical gesture, but as I will explain later, in my practice I have been diligently interested in removing the meaning from the gesture by removing the gesture from its context or ‘story’.

1b. Actors copying ‘real people’ and each other

Actors have been observing other people and ‘copying’ their physical gestures and characteristics since . . . This is not new. The most common reason to do it would be in preparation of a role in a production, movie or TV show. Many actors though, enjoy ‘collecting’ the results of their people-watching, including ‘vocal gestures’ such as accents and

294 National Sorry Day Committee.
dialects, even when they are not necessarily researching a role. This helps the versatile actor maintain an ever-growing ‘repertoire’ from which to draw.

The actor might observe a person making an interesting gesture – let’s say a particular hand movement made while making a point. She would copy it or imitate it, repeat it many times in order to make it feel familiar or ‘natural’, then practise putting it into a context – either the current rehearsals, or ‘just for fun’.

This is a time-honoured method of ‘collecting’ gestures, but isn’t quite what I do. Except in rare cases, ‘everyday’ gestures performed by ‘real people’ are quite small or ‘domestic’ in scale. Of course there’s nothing wrong with this, and is excellent research and particularly suitable for film and TV, but as I will explain later, I am interested in big gestures.

Actors also ‘collect’ gestures from other actors. Tom Cruise began using a set of elaborate hand gestures that became popular in the 1990s, especially with American actors. One rather elaborate one is done with both hands. It is used to emphasize a rhetorical point. It resembles the Apana Mudra, also known as the Deer Mudra. A mudra is a hand gesture used in yoga and Indian Classical Dance. Both hands are held up, making the following shape:

![Figure 2. Apana Mudra.](image)

They are both moved forward during rhetorical emphasis, while the actor maintains a forceful stare in the direction of the interlocutor. Other actors, including my students, started using these gestures as well. The style is thoroughly lampooned by actor Miles Fisher in a scene from *Superhero Movie*.

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A gesture currently ‘doing the rounds’ is a repeated sideways glance, sometimes with the eyes only, sometimes moving the head as well, sometimes with an accompanying in-breath. The eyes-only version can be seen demonstrated in a particularly obsessive and repetitive way by Ben Whishaw in Jane Campion’s *Bright Star* expression while keeping the head forward. I think this is supposed to evoke ‘naturalness’, but to me it looks like contrivance. These *memes* are passed from actor to actor, but unlike the Great Ideas, they usually die out. To me these sorts of ‘popular’ actors’ gestures often look studied and empty—the expression of an idea without any connection to an inner emotional experience.

There was a time, before acting schools, when beginner actors would serve apprenticeships in theatre companies, under the aegis of the actor-manager. The young actor if lucky, would have the opportunity to observe great actors in great roles. Imagine if one were fortunate enough to witness Edmund Kean’s performance of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, as William Hazlitt does in February of 1814:

> The concluding scene, in which he is killed by Richmond, was the most brilliant. He fought like one drunk with wounds: and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is taken from him, had a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power.

. . . then in October of the same year, remembering the same gesture from February:

> He . . . held out his hands in a way which can only be conceived by those who saw him — in motionless despair — or as if there were some preternatural power in the mere manifestation of his will:

. . . then noting a change:

> . . . he now actually fights with his doubled fists, after his sword is taken from him, like some helpless infant . . .

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[*Mazin, Craig. ‘Superhero Movie.’ 75 min. USA, 2008.*]

[*Campion, Jane. ‘Bright Star.’ 119 min. UK, Australia, France, 2009.*]


[*Nagler, p. 459.*]

[*Nagler, p. 459.*]
l.c. ‘Body Language’

The reader will be aware that there is a proliferation of books on ‘body language’ available for presenters and public speakers, police officers, executives, human resources managers, anthropologists, and the ‘interested lay-person’. An Amazon.com search brings up 3,479 results!\(^{302}\)

Many of these books and resources are like bilingual dictionaries that ‘translate’ gestures and ascribe uniform meanings to them.

Desmond Morris’s books, *Gestures: their origin and distribution* (1979) and *Bodytalk: a world guide to gestures* (1994) are ‘encyclopaedias of gesture’. They contain hundreds of photographs and descriptions of gestures, roughly divided into two types; those that are used spontaneously in speech, often described as ‘gesticulation’ and mainly performed by the hands. Most of us are familiar with an observation such as ‘Italians use their hands a lot in conversation’. The other type of gesture that he illustrates are the ‘emblematic’ ones such as ‘OK’ and obscene ‘thumbs up’ gestures. These are used to convey meaning or they ‘stand in’ for specific pieces of information. All these gestures have prescribed or ‘given’ meanings.

Wikipedia has a very interesting page called ‘List of Gestures’\(^{303}\) which is like a web version of the Morris books. Again, gestures are given specific, culturally explicit meanings, as in a dictionary.

Another author of Morris’s ilk is Paul Ekman, who published his own versions of the ‘gesture dictionary’,\(^{304}\) focussing mainly on the face. Ekman’s proposition is that facial gestures, especially those expressing emotion, are universal.

These prescriptive methods are not influences on my practice, as they are concerned with set meanings. As I will explain below, when I collect gestures, I diligently extract them from their contexts and *strip* them of their everyday or contextual meanings, in the hope that new, unexpected and deep meanings can emerge.

PART 2. Precursors and Influences (and why)

2b. Acting teachers

2bi. Bharata-muni

The *Natya Shastra* is a precursor to all other ‘acting manuals’, of interest in the context of gesture because of its exhaustive codification of gestures and their meanings and use in the

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\(^{302}\) Amazon.com website, viewed 13 February 2010, &lt;http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=body+language&amp;x=15&amp;y=20&gt;.


theatre. This incredibly detailed Indian treatise covers acting, dance, music, writing for the stage, stage design, makeup, and virtually every other aspect of stagecraft. Originally transmitted through the oral tradition, it was possibly written down between 200 BCE and 200 CE by Bharata-muni. The aspect of Bharata’s work that resembles an ‘acting manual’ is rather similar to another great codifier – Delsarte, who is discussed below. The work bhavas, or imitations of emotions performed by the actors, which elicit predicted emotional responses in the audience. The Natya Shastra doesn’t contain pictures of the gestures, but detailed verbal descriptions. The following two examples are from Chapter IX, Hastābhinnaya (acting by hands):

1. Paākā: With thumb bent and other fingers stretched out. To convey striking, driving, joy, pride, etc. With both hands and fingers moving, it suggests rain, showering of flowers, etc. Both hands forming a Swastika suggests something falling down; and loosening and tightening the Swastika position suggests opening and concealment, etc.\(^\text{305}\)

17. Catura: Three fingers spread out with the thumb beneath them and the little finger raised. This suggests . . . many things, including grace, hope, affection, youth and so on.\(^\text{306}\)

An example from Chapter X, Abhinaya of the Hands and of the Major Limbs (Major Limbs):

The Chest

Movements of the chest are of five kinds:

[. . . ]

1. Ābhugna: both the shoulders are drooping down and arms loosely held, while the back is arched outwards. That is Ābhugna. It conveys or suggests agitation, fear, sorrow, touch of cold, rain falling, etc.\(^\text{307}\)

The chapters on acting (abhinaya), are divided into parts of the body – hands, major limbs (including the sides, the belly the hip, the thighs, the ‘shanks’ and the feet), ‘subordinate parts of the body’ (including head, eyes, nose, cheeks, lips, chin and the neck). There is a chapter on cānī-s or movements with one foot. There is a chapter called ‘The Stage Walk of Characters’.\(^\text{308}\)

There are also chapters referring to emotions conveyed by actors (bhava), and the desired reaction or response of the audience (rasa).

The gestures themselves are of interest. I have long believed that a gesture from a Bharatanatyam or Kathakali dance can be extracted from its context, learned by an actor, thereby enriching her expressive vocabulary, and used spontaneously in a completely different context. Like all ‘methods’, the Natya Shastra is susceptible to degradation, resulting in empty posing like the Tom Cruise example above.


\(^\text{306}\) Bharata, p. 85.

\(^\text{307}\) Bharata, p. 87.

2bii. Delsarte

François Delsarte was a French teacher of acting and singing. He went on to develop an acting style that attempted to connect the inner emotional experience of the actor with a systematized set of gestures and movements based upon his own observations of human interaction. This was a reaction against what he saw as the arbitrary and posed style of acting taught at the Paris Conservatory, where he was a student of singing. Though he never published a manual himself, some of his lectures and thoughts were recorded and a coherent ‘method’ was written by Genevieve Stebbins, a student of Delsarte’s American protégé, actor Steel MacKaye. The ‘method’ became so popular that it was taught throughout the world, but particularly in America. Unfortunately unregulated and uninspired teaching caused the method to deteriorate into mere melodramatic posing or striking of attitudes, with little or no connection to an inner emotional experience. An amusing example of this can be seen in the movie of Meredith Wilson’s *The Music Man*:

![Figure 4. The 'Delsarte Display' rehearsal in The Music Man.](image)

Had I continued with gesture as my PhD topic, I would have spent a lot of time on Delsarte, as he is of great interest. As can be seen in the documentation of the case-study project for this part of the PhD, I might have even developed my own ‘catalogue’ or ‘encyclopaedia’ of gestures, inspired by Delsarte.

2biii. Brecht

Brecht developed an acting technique or method called Gestus or the Gest. It is a combination of physical gesture and ‘gist’ or attitude. It is ‘an attitude or single aspect of an attitude, expressible in words or actions.’ It is in direct opposition to the Aristotelian idea of imitation, which is mentioned throughout the Poetics.

Brecht’s first mention of the gest is very interesting:

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... basing everything on the gest. They eye which looks for the gest in everything is the moral sense. In other words, a moral tableau. A subjective one, though ...

The *gest* is both gesture in the physical sense, as the means of ‘epic’ narration, and ‘symbolic’, rather in the way of the ‘symbolic’ gestures above. I think Brecht would agree that ‘The Gesture is Everything’, and I suspect he would consider Dramatic Structure a *gest* also.

As with Delsarte, had I continued with gesture, I would have spent much time with Brecht.

The Brechtian idea of the *Lehrstück* has also been useful and inspiring

2biv. Stanislavsky, Michael Chekhov, Rudolf Laban

When I was studying at the VCA from 1987 to 1989 David Latham was the Head of Acting. He taught what he said was a version of Stanislavsky’s Method of Physical Actions. This Method, as described by Bella Merlin focuses on ‘all the little things you have to do to pursue your OBJECTIVE, such as ‘I open the door, I turn on the light, I switch on the aircon, I set up a circle of chairs, etc.’

In David’s work we had someone say our lines out loud to us, and we would say them back while allowing our bodies to express freely – even anarchically – whatever impulse struck us in that moment. It wasn’t quite as simple as that. A part of the general actor training at the VCA at that time was to do with physical expressiveness. For example, we did a lot of Laban and Feldenkrais work (I’ll talk about Laban a little later). These disciplines were both about opening up new possibilities of expressiveness and awareness, and I have continued to use both in my work. So by the time we arrived at these wild, impulsive improvisations, our physical expressiveness was quite available. These études were different from the Stanislavsky and Meyerhold études. In Stanislavsky the text is improvised, whereas in Latham the text is repeated verbatim from the script. In Meyerhold there is no text and the movement is not improvised.

This exercise climaxed in a rehearsed ‘reading’ of Shakespeare’s *Pericles* where we did the whole play in this manner. David made it clear that this was a rehearsal tool, and that eventually, as in the Stanislavskyan étude the cast would repeat and refine their work until it was ‘performance’ rather than ‘exploration’. I found this level of non-naturalism extremely exciting.

It would be impossible to talk about gesture without mention of Michael Chekhov and the Psychological Gesture. My understanding of Psychological Gesture is that we are making them all the time to express out feelings, desires, yearnings. They are not the same as the ‘symbolic’ gestures described above. They are the more spontaneous and individual attempts by people to express themselves, often when words fail. The ‘symbolic’ gestures are rehearsed and culturally specific. The Psychological gesture is rooted in an individual’s own unique expressive language.

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314 Brecht, p. 36.
Chekhov advocated the use of Psychological Gesture not only for ‘moments’ like that in the photo above, but to ‘find’ the deep physical expression of a character – the character ‘has’ as Psychological Gesture. This happens in life too. When trying to describe a person to another person, sometimes we use a gesture to fill in the bits that are too hard to express in words. For example,

‘I don’t know, she’s just so . . .

Of course Chekhov’s own examples, given in the form of rather monumental drawings, are rather more ‘elevated’ than these.\textsuperscript{317} However, most actors are going to source their gestural language from their own life experience. The Meyerhold training ‘forces’ the actor to expand her physical expressiveness by explicitly \textit{training} the actor in expressiveness. Chekhov urges actors to look at architecture, art and objects in order to experience their qualities,\textsuperscript{318} but he doesn’t go so far as to suggest ‘doing the gestures’ of those buildings or objects. Under the influence of a genius like Michael Chekhov an actor might be inspired to expand his view and take on a broader physical expressiveness, but he might not. I believe that actors have to


be trained to expand their physical range, just as footballer have to be trained to kick properly and tennis players have to train their bodies to perform a range of gestures spontaneously.

So, in a way combining Chekhov and Meyerhold I pursued the idea of training the actor to expand her physical expressive range and quality by inventing a vast range of ‘Meyerholdian’ études, sourced from paintings and sculpture, sport and folk dance. Architecture was to be the next ‘frontier’ activity in the context of this PhD.

The Laban work that we did at the VCA under David Latham focused on movement analysis as a way of training the actor to not only extend her physical expressiveness, but to be aware of it at the same time. We did many exercises that demanded the full engagement of one’s rational mind and expressive self. For example, if I were to perform a gesture, that gesture can be analyzed as to its movement or effort qualities. These are the basic criteria as taught by David Latham.319

The Four Continuums:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
<th>direct</th>
<th>flexible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>sudden</td>
<td>sustained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>bound</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Weight’ refers to strong or light resistance to gravitational force – in any direction. That’s why we use the word ‘strong’ rather than ‘heavy’.

We explored at length the eight effort actions below, allow feelings, ideas, stories and emotional connections to occur:

Direct, sudden, light  dab  bound
Direct, sudden, strong punch  free
Flexible, sudden, light flick  free
Flexible, sudden, strong slash  free
Direct, sustained, light glide  bound
Direct, sustained, strong press  bound
Flexible, sustained, light float  free
Flexible, sustained, strong wring  bound

There is a rather beautiful, though rather difficult to follow three-dimensional graphic representation of this in Laban’s book Modern Educational Dance:

After VCA I discovered the Kinesphere, which is a ‘map’ of the area that a person’s body is able to move within while remaining stationary – without ‘traveling’. Again, an extraordinary degree of concentration is required to keep track of where one ‘is’ in the Kinesphere:

This analysis is invaluable in terms of finding the specificity of a gesture or movement. Whenever doing an exercise such as The Dying Slave, in Part 3, below, I would always urge students to identify the effort qualities of any gestures they performed. This would ensure

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321 Laban, p. 37.
that the gesture was not simply a picture, but an action full of human energy and feeling, and
would also help the actor to be able to repeat the action every time exactly.

Using the Kinesphere and the Four Continuums is a wonderful route to physical versatility
and increased expressiveness. The danger is that it can become a bit mechanical – not like a
machine exactly, but a ‘bit of an exercise’ – excellent for ‘training’, but a painting or sculpture
has that added element of inspiration. A footballer needs to learn about the range of
movement necessary for a drop-kick, but she also needs to watch great and inspiring
footballers for that added ‘something’.

2bv. Meyerhold

Something life-changing happened to me in 1999. I took a one-week workshop with
Gennadi Bogdanov – a Russian Meyerhold master teacher who was taught by a student of
Meyerhold himself. We spent the whole week doing physical exercises – presumably the
same sort of exercises done by the extras in Eisenstein’s film Battleship Potemkin when we see
hundreds of extras jumping from huge heights onto cement (Eisenstein was a student of
Meyerhold). Then we spent the latter part of the week learning several of Meyerhold’s études.
These are very different from Stanislavsky’s études (described below in Lear). The Meyerhold
'étude' is a prescribed, silent pantomime exercise that enacts an event such as ‘shooting an
arrow'.322 This 'étude' was performed in its entirety by Grant Piro in the 2009 Melbourne
Theatre Company production of Paul Galloway’s Realism. Meyerhold derived these études
from a variety of sources, such as commedia dell’arte and the work of individual actors. Once
adopted they were taught as prescribed set pieces. The whole repertoire of études, combined
with the purely physical exercises such as the gruelling squat-hopping from one side of the
studio to the other. According to Bogdanov, these were intended to train the actor in
physical expressiveness, to the full range of possibility. He claimed that if the actor mastered
the physical exercises and études, then the actor would be prepared for every possible
expressive need in the theatre, and able to express physically and spontaneously any moment
in a drama, be it ‘naturalism’ or circus.

I didn’t learn the études very well, but this workshop was a revelation. For many years I had
‘taken’ gestures from such sources as folk dance and paintings, and used them as a sort of
actor-training, expanding the actor’s expressive potential. Here was a coherent method aimed
at achieving this. From that point on I not only felt I had the imprimatur of Meyerhold
himself, but I wanted to go further, not quite believing that Meyerhold’s études could possibly
cover every single expressive possibility.

I believe that my painting/sculpture/folk dance work is a fusing and extension of the work
of Stanislavsky, Chekhov, Laban and Meyerhold.

322 Described on p. 203 of Meyerhold, V.E., and Edward Braun. Meyerhold on Theatre. London: Eyre
Methuen, 1977.
PART 3. My practice: assimilation, dialogue and disputation with Significant Others

In this section I will answer some of the Significant Others from the previous section, pointing out which of them I have assimilated into my own practice, which ones I am in dialogue with, and which of them I reject. In the process I will start to build a picture of how I observe, collect and perform gestures in my practice.

Very well then, how would I ‘collect’ a gesture? Let’s take an example of a picture of someone sheltering himself from rain – perhaps with the aid of a newspaper.

Rather than, say, observing a photograph of someone sheltering themselves from rain and giving the phot the caption ‘sheltering’ and using this later when a sheltering action is required in a play or movie, I would ask the student to copy the gesture exactly – in precise detail – then remove it from its original setting. Then I would ask the student to perform component parts of the whole – perhaps just the arms. By ‘deconstructing’ the gesture in this way, the student now has a range of gestures that might well be used in other contexts from the one in which the gesture was originally observed.

An analogy: let’s say I am learning a new language. It is necessary to learn vocabulary, grammar, and phrases, in the hope that one will eventually be able to make up one’s own sentences. It might be very useful to learn the phrase ‘I think I am having a heart attack.’ However, it would be a pity if the student could only use the word ‘heart’ in the context of that phrase. Also, it is possible, and fun, when learning a new language, to ‘try out’ new phrases without actually ‘meaning’ them. When I was living in Israel and learning Hebrew I used to amuse my fellow pupils with extravagant compositions involving all sorts of disasters and misfortunes. Likewise, the acting student, or collector of gestures, will be able to put together his or her own ‘sentences’ out of the bits of gestures collected. Let’s look again at the example of the ‘sheltering’ gesture. The whole gesture is like the phrase or sentence, and the individual movements of the various body parts are like the vocabulary. It is perfectly acceptable to remember and use the whole gesture at some time when such a gesture seems appropriate – a rainy scene in a movie, for example – but it is even more useful to also be able to use the component bits, in contexts other than rain. For example, if you take the gesture out of context and remove the newspaper, the gesture could represent a sort of ‘dancing for joy’ or celebration. If you use only the arms, these could be part of a gesture expressing threat or frustration.

There are many sources for the ‘collection’ of gestures:

Here are some examples of sources of gesture that I have drawn upon in my practice:

The gestures described in the ‘bilingual dictionaries’ are interesting, and would certainly be suitable subjects of study, but here is the main difference between them and what I do in my practice; as mentioned earlier, I eventually remove the gestures from their contexts, thereby distancing them from their commonly given meanings. This takes us into the realm of ‘pure’ gesture – gestures that are made before speech and verbal meaning – a pre-verbal
expressiveness. For example, this is how I would ‘observe, collect, perform and teach’ the following set of heightened theatrical gestures

Let’s start with a picture:

![Figure 7. Michelangelo's Dying Slave.](image)

First I would ask a student to copy the gesture exactly, as it is in the photograph, observing and reproducing it in precise detail, paying close attention to fingers, eyes, the exact angle of the head, etc. Having mastered this stage of the process, I would then ask the student to put the photo away, forget about its title and given story, and start to discover how the gesture moves. I would prompt the student with questions such as, ‘Is this frozen moment the beginning, middle or end of a complete moving gesture?’ and ‘Find out how this gesture moves. Discover its effort values. For example, is it a sudden or sustained gesture? Is it a strong or a light gesture? Is the energy of the gesture bound, or does it flow? How long does it take to perform the gesture – a long time or a short time?’ Give the gesture a beginning,

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middle and end. Perform the whole gesture from start to finish. Different students will come up with different gestures from the same raw material – this is encouraged.

The reader will notice that these prompts are not psychological or emotional. It is important first to get the gesture exactly right in a technical sense – in a pre-performance sense, then I would suggest, ‘Once you have perfected and repeated your gesture, keep repeating it and allow it to affect you – allow it to fill you with feeling and thought – allow any feelings, thoughts and/or stories to emerge, but don’t let the feelings and thoughts change the gesture – the gesture leads and you follow.’ Only after much repetition would I suggest to the students that they actually think of performing their gestures, filled with thought and feeling. Depending on the skill level of the students, I often then suggest to them that they allow sound to ‘emerge’ from their gestures – this has to be done carefully, and the students should be cautioned against ‘thinking-up’ suitable sounds or words, or worse, words or phrases to entertain. It is better to simply allow sounds such as grunts or sighs to emerge spontaneously, without thought or preparation, then allow this to develop into coherent speech if the student is able.

Over the course of an introductory exercise, I would usually ask the student/s to repeat this exercise with at least two other gestures derived from visual material. Then I would ask students to work in pairs and start a ‘dialogue’ of gestures, where their only vocabulary for the sake of the exercise comprises the three gestures they have just worked on. What emerges is a range of performances and performance qualities. Sometimes the performance remains very abstract and ‘stylised’, sometimes a new story emerges, even without words. What always happens is the students feel that they have expanded their gestural ‘vocabulary’ or expressive capacity.

Again, the observation and collection of gestures takes the form of ‘training’, reminiscent of the protagonist’s training in the movie The Karate Kid. He learned the gestures of combat out of context. The famous ‘wax on, wax off’ sequence had him learning an essential karate defensive move while applying wax to a car. His body learned the moves so deeply that when called upon to fight, he employed them spontaneously. Similarly, but differently, I would have my student learn the ‘wax on, wax off’ move, but allow her to apply it spontaneously to any performance situation that felt appropriate; for example, the actor might employ the ‘wax off’ gesture as a gesture of ‘refusal’, or even ‘greeting’. Unlike Delsarte and Bharata-Muni and Ekman, I believe the same gesture can serve a multitude of purposes, depending on the character.

Getting closer to the work I find most interesting, another source of gestures is painting, drawing and sculpture.

The actor observes this, copies it then incorporates it into his repertoire of gestures. Well, an obvious source would be other people observed in the course of everyday living, or specific research for a character. Most people have unique ways of expressing themselves physically through physical gesture, but some are more expressive than others. An actor would usually observe a person, then copy or imitate their physical gestures, repeat and ‘assimilate’ the gestures into a coherent whole.
GESTURE

George Steiner’s essay *The Uncommon Reader* is for the most part a brilliant parsing of the painting by Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin, *Le Philosophe lisant*. Only one detail is omitted from Steiner’s thorough explication of the signs in the painting as regards the meaning of reading — the pose of the reader subject. Steiner notes a ‘ceremonious encounter between reader and book’. He notes all the signs and objects in the painting to support this reading. I imitated the subject’s pose in reading. In imitating it, observing the sideways, semi-recumbent position, the right arm laid across the right hand page, the left hand holding up the left hand page – apparently not to turn the page, as the right arm would prevent that. I had a different feeling; one of casualness, of easy familiarity. But there could be other meanings also. After enacting the scene, I could imagine that the rich clothing, the hourglass, the quill and the coins mean that the sitter is a merchant, who has little time to do this reading, and his relaxed attitude might even denote a feeling of scorn for his book. All this was inferred from the gesture.

The practice-based research that provided the speculation on this part of my practice was concerned with a method of abstracting, adapting and incorporating non-theatrical visual material into the physical gestures used by actors in performance.

The practical activity of this research involves abstracting, adapting and incorporating this material – sometimes literally, sometimes secretly – into theatrical practice, including acting for screen. The positive aim of this research is to enhance and expand the imaginative world and expressive potential of the actor using physical expressivity as the medium. The negative aim is to fight what I perceive to be the deadening tendency in modern performance to make bland copies of bland copies of the everyday.

These are some of the objects of observation that might be used as sources of gestural material:

‘real’ people observed in life;

actors, using personal observation and the reading of first person accounts of great actors of the past;

animals;

art – especially figurative art that depicts heightened physical gestures, but I have also ‘dabbled’ in non-figurative art; Figurative painting and sculpture that depicts strong physical gestures. Some masters of gesture include Titian, Michelangelo and Goya. Non-figurative painting that depicts strong gestures;

sport – especially sport photography, which often seeks to capture the ‘grand theatrical gesture’ in sport;

dance, especially non-western dance;

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While one might observe a person making a gesture of ‘sheltering’ oneself from rain, it is necessary in the notation or collection stage to remove the psychological or emotional ‘meaning’ of the gesture in order to record it and perhaps use it in a different way from that observed. For example, it the ‘sheltering’ gesture involved bending the spine forward, so, at the collection phase, the gestures are not psychological or emotional. Rather than jumping straight to the meaning or the psychology, I am interested in the pure physical form of the gesture. Then of course, we can extrapolate of course, by moving the body or voice in a certain. In other words, which it is can include ‘vocal gestures’, when the voice expresses a ‘shape’. Gestures may be very bold and obvious, or extremely subtle – even the ‘rising thought’ in a screen close-up is a gesture, though only the face is visible.

3a. footnote: physical gestures in the novels of Charles Dickens

The novels of Charles Dickens are crammed with descriptions of highly expressive physical gestures. He uses these as a means of identifying characters – not through psychological or ‘inner’ detail, but exclusively through descriptions of what they ‘do’ physically. Over the years, as I’ve read my way through the novels, I have ‘collected’ hundreds of these descriptions by recording them in notebooks. They are filed grouped under character names. It would be exciting to one day group them also according to different criteria—perhaps ‘types’ or ‘categories’ of gesture.

GAPS
identified between the current practice and the hunch/where I want to be

As mentioned in the Hunch/Proposal chapter above, at the time of my original proposal, I felt that there was a gap in my practice caused by having not used architecture as a source of gestures. I proposed that buildings ‘perform’ gestures that can be observed, ‘collected’, and absorbed into the performer’s repertoire, and gave examples such as the ‘gliding and arcing gestures of Tadao Ando’s Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum’ and the ‘dancing ceiling of the Griffins’ Capitol theatre in Melbourne’.

It was not long before I realized that there must be other sources that I had not ‘plundered’, though I didn’t yet know what they were. Part of the research would be to discover new sources of gestures and then use them.

One of these arrived unexpectedly when in 2006 Andrew Keen presented me with a concrete poem he had written (see illustration, Project ALEA, below).
Though I had written and performed sound poetry in the past I had not looked at the potential of concrete poetry for physical gesture.

The following chapter is an account of the one case-study project associated with this initial part of the PhD.

PROJECT devised to address gaps: ALEA

Brief description: ‘Embodied’ concrete poem. Gestures abstracted and developed from concrete poem of the same name, using a photocopier to ‘vary’ the original material

ALEA = Latin for ‘die’ – the singular of ‘dice’. It also is the acronym for Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA).

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\text{G} & \quad \text{L} \\
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\text{E} & \quad \text{R} \\
\end{align*}
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Figure 8. Page one of three of the original concrete poem.

\[^{326}\text{Ur Sonate by Kurt Schwitters and my own Schedule 2 Sonata written and performed in 2005.}\]
\[^{327}\text{For a definition of concrete poetry, see next chapter; ‘Project: ALEA’.}\]
An original abstract physical performance based on a concrete poem by Andrew Keen. Performed by CSU acting students Lauren Gore, Ben Jones, Bethany Simons and John Smith. Co-devised by the cast with David Wicks, with assistance from Ashley Wain, Tamara Searle and Bagryana Popov.

First performed at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, September 2006, then performed at RMIT University Graduate Research Conference, October 2006.

Concrete Poetry is a recent term for an ancient type, called pattern poems, which experiment with the visual shape in which a text is presented on the page . . .

Prominent later experiments with pictorial or suggestive typography include Stéphane Mallarmé’s Un Coup de dés (‘A Throw of Dice,’ 1897) . . . Many concrete poems, in fact, cannot be read at all in the conventional way, since they consist of a single word or phrase which is subjected to systematic alterations in the order and position of the component letters, or else are composed of fragments of works, or of nonsense syllables, or even of single letters, numbers, and marks of punctuation.\(^\text{328}\)

The title of ALEA was, in part an homage to Mallarmé’s poem.

When Andrew Keen brought me his concrete poem he wondered if it might be possible to perform it – he wasn’t at all sure. I assured him that it was certainly possible, and I enlisted the help of four Third Year Acting students at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga to co-device a performance based on the work. This struck me as an excellent opportunity to ‘try out’ the observing, collecting and performing of gestures derived from a source that I had not used before. The interesting thing about this project is that the raw material appeared to be lacking any gestural potential. Not a ‘gliding and arcing’ gesture or a ‘dancing ceiling’ in sight. How would we turn this into a piece of ‘physical theatre’ without simply making something up and imposing it on the original?

It was also an excellent opportunity to create a Brechtian Lehrstück or ‘learning-work’.

How did we proceed? A partial description appears below. We followed my own principles of performance making.\(^\text{329}\)

Phasing/chance played a very important role in the creation and performance of ALEA.

The probability that four actors will all choose to do the same gesture at the same time. Let’s say there are 12 gestures to choose from in a section. The probability that all four actors will do the same gesture at the same time – within a rhythmic count – is \(\frac{1}{12} \times \frac{1}{12} \times \frac{1}{12} \times \frac{1}{12}\), or approximately .000047 – this is exciting! That’s the ‘throw’ part of the piece – as in ‘throw of the die’. It does happen, as does the phenomenon of ‘phasing’ in and out, like clocks sitting side by side (old-fashioned, wind-up ones). Does the audience sense this? I think they do. There are factors that impinge upon the phasing and unison frequency – to do with ‘contagion’, ‘resistance’, ‘following’. Some actors will follow others and often the whole group


\(^{329}\) See APPENDIX 2: principles of performance making.
will tacitly agree to move into a unison sequence. The audience can also feel this atmosphere of ‘following’.

TYPOGRAPHY

We started working on ‘typography’ first, and using the principal of ‘discard nothing’, spent some hours ‘playing’, ‘doodling’, and just playing or ‘mucking around’ with the original. For many rehearsals I would leave the student cast to play with the photocopier, which proved to be a rich medium of invention and discovery.

Here are some examples of some of the students’ ‘doodles’:

Figure 9. A ‘doodle’ with photocopier.
Figure 10. Another ‘doodle’, using paper and transparency.

Figure 11. A rather poignant ‘doodle’.

Clearly, the original has been ‘subjected to systematic alterations’ in the course of the creative development phase. Not only are many of these images quite beautiful and
even touching, but they also start to demonstrate shapes, patterns and ‘atmosphere’ that can be interpreted or extrapolated as gestures to be performed.

STORY/NARRATIVE

story of ALEA

story of the monastery

story/narrative

the story of the writing of ALEA

the story of the monastery/concrete poetry

4. Shaping/redaction

90% of the experimental material was cut. Cut, but not forgotten. The immersion in this material and the playing and musing during rehearsal all contributed to the development of the language unique to this piece, with this cast at this time – the language, the atmosphere, the gest.

I invited the students to make their own selection of favourite images upon which we would start to base the actual work. This phase represented the ‘script development’ phase of the piece. The script would eventually be a set of instructions that included set pieces, free improvisation, structured improvisation, set movements to set images, and some flexibility in the order of events (the ‘aleatoric’ element). The students would show me ‘drafts’ of their musings and creations and I would start now to impose a directorial ‘view’ or ‘taste’ upon the mass of repertoire.

Below is a selection of images that were included in the ‘script’s as final selections. They were then inserted into a physical folder that became the ‘master script’.

The method for extracting/extrapolating/abstracting gestures from these images is the same as for Michelangelo’s The Dying Slave, in the ‘Review of Practice’ chapter, above: ‘what is that bit of the page ‘doing’? and ‘how might one ‘do’ that bit?’ and ‘now do that’.

5. Draft

The draft ‘script’ was made up of pages of photocopied images. The ‘dramaturgy’ consisted in shuffling these pages, laying them out on the floor, and deciding a final order. I didn’t write it up into the text version that you see below until after the project was over. This process was, interestingly, rather like the process of études discussed below in the Lear project chapter:

1. you read a scene;
2. you discuss the scene;
3. you improvise the scene without further reference to the script;
4. you discuss the improvisation, before returning to the script;
5. you compare whatever happened in your improvisation with the words and incidents of the actual text.

Our ‘script’ in this case was a collection of images. In bringing those images to life the actors ‘created’ the sounds, and so knew them already – there was no need to write the sounds down.

PART 2: PRODUCTION

6. Rehearsal/refining/structuring/technical production/production management

Once the order was more or less decided, we hardly ever referred to our ‘paper’ version again. Through repetition and discussion we shaped the final version of the piece.

7. Performance

It was performed in the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery during the touring 2006 Archibald. The four actors were dressed in Wagga Corporate clothes, carrying briefcases. They converged, un-announced, onto a square of floor in the gallery, did the show, which lasted about 15 minutes, then departed. The regular gallery visitors were sometimes amused, sometimes irritated.

Figure 12. ALEA at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, October 2006.

Below is a transcription of the script as performed:

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ALEA

A repertoire-based, structured improvisation
based on an original concrete poem by Andrew Keen

Section 1

In the first section actors choose when to be 'consonant' with the other actors, and when to be 'dissonant'. The actors have learned, through rehearsal, when to be absolutely together.

Four actors stand at four points in the space creating a square perimeter. Each holds a bag/briefcase. They are dressed in office attire, the men in suits and ties, women in skirts, cardigans and low-heeled shoes.

All wander inward and simultaneously place their bag/briefcase on the ground at each corner of the now smaller square. They run to the centre as though about to huddle, arch their backs and throw their arms and faces upwards while sounding the cry:

ALEA!
All turn and face their respective corner
Pope oboe (repeated, ad libitum)
Pahle eavaye wah
Cree was
D-bo D-bie
Oh Gee Ee wera saad
Teem Ogre Al
Aleef Aleef
Uwa-a-a-ck
Hi-i-i-de
Shuddup-Al
Zulu ooorrrr do
Ssmm guh Fro-o-o-g
B-aaah rat
Duh Air
Gharf!
Oo-Oo t-t airss
Ay Ay
Sss K B D, Sss K B D (slap x 4)
Eh Gh Gh Ss
Vagayah Dischaya Yah Yah
Yellow words are sometimes yes words
Deeb’deeb’deeb’deeb’deeb’
Rosch!
Sayah!
Tlemayoum
Ageh!

Section 2

fully choreographed (non-improvised) section

IBIS (cue to start)
Rehs
Ay-oh
D-bo
Ree on seeeeeden
Gralee o dee
Fusseel
……EAD……EAD
See la wah see (ooh, ree, or, ive, see, sehen, aye, nye, den)…CIAO!
Ooz-gh
Lhl-lhl-lhl-lhl
Eeeeee
Heederop tee-ee-ee-eet (high to low)
Heederop tee-ee-ee-eet (low to high)
Elyo Ee…Dee.…Ss…Ee
Luni Pah
Fusseel

Section 3

Explosive repetition of ‘themes’ from Section 1

Coda

Unison repetition of the following:

Huge…Ugly…Glue…EYES
Huge Ugly Glue Eyes x3

Veh Veh Veh x6

There is a pause before actors stand, collect their bags and leave the space.
EVALUATION OF PROJECT
and progress to date

There’s no other way to say it. The project was boring. Yes, I achieved what I set out to achieve, but it all felt dully familiar. I used a new source of gestures and turned it into a performance, and I could have gone on finding all sorts of new sources, but at that time, it felt perfunctory. This feeling was in the background, but brought vividly into the foreground by a conversation with Andrew Keen described in the Introduction to this document. The evaluation of ALEA led to the change in direction of the PhD, which was to become DIVINING THE STRUCTURE: the use of graphic representation in the analysis and performance of dramatic material.
APPENDIX 2:
Principles of performance making

The process of making a new creative work can be divided into two main parts: Creative Development and Production.

PART 1: CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

1. Hunch/Decision

You have a hunch about something. An idea. Sometimes you see the result or objective in a flash, sometimes the only thing that is clear is that you have had an idea. Having made the decision or given yourself that suggestion, let the piece start making itself. If you choose, you could say ‘I’ve made a decision to turn the piece over to a higher power’ – this ‘higher power’ might be your creative mind, it might be other people’s ideas and input, it might be your dream mind, higher consciousness, G-d – it’s up to you. Having made the decision, trust that the piece will come. Open yourself up to receiving ‘inspiration’. Don’t decide what ‘inspiration’ looks, sounds or feels like. Make a decision to discard nothing – at least until you have considered it. Whatever ‘comes up’ for you while thinking about the piece, collect it.

The rule is, there is more inspiration around you than you can possibly manage, so make the decision to start, then start. Don’t make the fatal mistake of ‘waiting for inspiration’ – you will miss opportunity after opportunity and suffer paralysis of integrity.

I head on the radio on Saturday a show about spells and magic, from a historical and contemporary perspective. The presenter compared the book Spotless to a medieval book of spells. This struck me as interesting. She also quoted briefly from the Witches in Shakespeare’s Macbeth. I’ll do a short piece and see where it goes.

I once sat on a long plane flight with a scientist. We chatted about the differences and similarities between what we do. He proposed that the main difference between theatre and science is ‘In the theatre you have an idea or a vision of what you want to achieve or realise, then you go ahead and try and realise that vision. In science, we take a blade of grass and a pencil and say ‘Now what can we make of this?’ That’s not quite true. We both have a hunch – it might be no more than that – and we follow it. In performance making, you can take a blade of grass and a pencil, but it will usually be a hunch that led you to that act. The hunch might just be ‘I wonder what would happen if I took two apparently unrelated and unrelated-able objects and made a performance from that beginning.’

2. Schedule and budget
As soon as you’ve made the decision, start. The first thing you need to do is work out when you’re planning to perform the thing. Even if you don’t know, you need to come up with a plan at least. ‘I’ll perform it when it’s ready’ is a recipe for never finishing. Plan to spend a certain amount of time on creative development, climaxing in a showing or some sort of review of your work. You might decide that it never goes forward to production, but you must plan to do something otherwise you’ll never do anything.

But just before you start collecting, you need to decide whether this piece is going to be performed or not, and if so, when. Using the rule of working backwards, at least sketch out a schedule, following the steps in this process.

**DRAFT SCHEDULE**

- chart key dates, working backwards
- closing performance
- opening performance
- dress rehearsal: always do a dress rehearsal, even if you are working alone, preferably at the exact time of the ‘real’ performance
- ‘tech week’: anything from elaborate light and sound plotting to simply ‘getting the show on’
- runs: you need to decide on the point after which you will make no more changes to the writing or devising of the show, and simply run it. At least a week of runs is essential. If it is a low-tech show, this can be combined with the ‘tech week’ stage.
- start rehearsals: you can still make some changes, but the general shape of the piece is, by this stage, fairly clear.
- end of creative development period
- start of ‘shaping’ period
- start of ‘collection’ period
- production schedule
- the decision
- the hunch

**THE BUDGET**

This might sound irrelevant at this stage. I suggest you think about it right at the start. You might look at your pencil and your blade of grass and think, ‘I’m broke – I’m not spending a cent on this – except I might buy a pencil – so my budget is about $1.’ Or you might be making a performance for a festival appearance. Again, look at your situation – how much are you prepared to spend on it? Again, it might be nothing, but what if the show is obviously going to cost a bit? Then you need to
look for sponsorship. ‘I’m not going to invest any of my own money, but I need to raise . . .’

This might all be a hunch as well, but you need to start thinking about it as soon as you start, or you will just drift into spending money that you didn’t want to. You’ll blame the project and start hating it – this could ruin your work. Don’t underestimate the power of the budget!

Even if your budget is $10 – work with it, hold yourself to it. If you find it’s costing you more, adapt the project. Take notes for later – for the funded version of this prototype.

Don’t make the following mistake – ‘I can’t afford to buy a copy of *Spotless* at the moment, so I can’t move forward with the project.’ Or ‘I can’t find a copy of *Macbeth* just yet, but I’ll start work as soon as I get one.’ Wrong!

3. Collection, including ‘brainstorming’

What do we collect? What do we have available to us? What can we apply and/or discover? What we ‘collect’ is ‘repertoire’, which includes anything that can be performed. This means – what am I able to do? What are my resources? Buy an artist’s visual diary and some coloured pens and pencils. Take the visual diary with you everywhere. A video or still camera and some sort of dictation machine would be good, but not essential. You should write and/or draw in your diary at least once a day, for at least five minutes. Collect everything in one place. Do not entrust material to scraps of paper, backs of envelopes or worst of all, memory. If you don’t have your diary with you, try and get the material into it as soon as you get home. Pasting material into the diary is fine.

**COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

- your personal journal writing can yield much material. Write and/or draw for at least five minutes per day.
- meditation/contemplation. You might choose to do formal meditation, or simply spend time quietly contemplating your material and ideas.
- lying down on your back with your eyes closed, but not asleep – alive to your imagination. If you become practised at this, an abundance of material will appear for you.
- Journey Work, both lying down, as above, and the Physical Journey
- Laban Analysis of material that interests you
- read Chapter 1 of Michael Chekhov’s *On the Technique of Acting*, do the exercises, 1-10, then apply them to different objects/material.
- keep your eyes and the other senses open. Start to note the potential material in art, architecture, flowers, music, animals, the weather, literature (be careful of literature – try not to just quote)

**THE MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTION TECHNIQUE**
- discard nothing – this needs to be explained further, as it’s not entirely true. Make a loose agreement with yourself and/or your collaborators, if you are working in a group, that if the project is, say, about ‘Colour’, then you can collect everything and anything to do with colour, even if you’re not quite sure how it’s relevant at first. Even thoughts that occur to you while thinking about the project can end up as material. You will start to shape and discard things later. However, you don’t have to include absolutely *everything* in your life, but you will be amazed at the unexpected places where material will turn up!

Here are some examples of repertoire. Add your own:

**VOICE**
- pitch
- volume
- physicality/gesture/shapes
- words
- parts of words
- repetition
- colour
- stress/emphasis
- variation
- rhythm
- tempo
- phasing

**WORDS**
- sounds
- parts of words
- repetition
- colour
- stress/emphasis
- variation
- rhythm
- tempo
- phasing/chance

**BODY**
- Laban qualities
- pitch/scale
- volume/size
- physicality/gesture
- shapes

**TYPOGRAPHY**
- font
STORY/NARRATIVE

Text? Be careful not to slip into ‘performing a story’. That’s fine, but in terms of Performance Making, find out how the story can springboard new creative work. You might focus on one small portion or aspect of a story.

There is no limit to the material available to you if you want to make a performance. Pick up two objects. Decide to make a performance, then we’ll start to make some rules/set boundaries.

The thing that stops me from making performances is there’s too much material. But if someone comes to me with a piece of paper with a few letters written on it, asking if it’s possible to make a performance out of it, I’ll jump at it, happy to have the boundary, rather than limited by it.

4. Shaping/redaction

90% of the experimental material will probably be cut. Cut, but not forgotten. The immersion in this material and the playing and musing during rehearsal all contribute to the development of the language and atmosphere unique to the piece.

5. Draft

The draft ‘script’ might be made up of pages of text, images, suggested sounds, or a combination of all these. The ‘dramaturgy’ consists in shuffling these pages, laying them out on the floor, and deciding a final order. You might want to use a process of étude rehearsals:

1. you read/perform a section;
2. you discuss the section;
3. you improvise the section without further reference to the script;
4. you discuss the improvisation, before returning to the script;
5. you compare whatever happened in your improvisation with the words and incidents of the actual text.331

PART 2: PRODUCTION

6. Rehearsal/refining/structuring/technical production/production management

Once the order and shape is more or less decided, you will probably not often refer to your ‘paper’ version again, as by now you and your cast will have rehearsed the piece thoroughly while creating it. Through repetition and discussion you shape the final version of the piece.

7. Performance

The season, one-off, ‘showing’, ‘event’, etc.

8. Evaluation

How did it go? What were the gaps? How might these be addressed next time, if there is a next time?
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