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Claire French

*Theatre and Performance, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom*

[claire@clairefrench.com](mailto:claire@clairefrench.com)

Twitter: @cfrenchtweeting

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/frenchclaire/>

## **Languaging a widened embodied repertoire**

This article develops a languaging lens for analysing actor training with Mary Overlie's viewpoints to reveal an actor's widened embodied repertoire when privileging peer actors over spectators. I draw from interactional sociolinguistics to introduce the notion of a repertoire as a collection of embodied and linguistic resources that are known and unknown by the actor. Overlie's viewpoints are proposed as useful starting points for facilitating the actor to access such resources. A training example with third-year actors in an Australian acting conservatoire is the focus of the analysis. Within this context, languaging helps to conceptualise the moments that actors prioritise the intelligibility of their peer actors to draw more widely from their socio-cultural, linguistic and embodied resources. Facilitating these moments uncovers actors' increased access to resources that are otherwise omitted in actor training and devising contexts due to the hegemonic restraints of the spectator's gaze.

Keywords: Languaging, embodied repertoire, embodied resources, hegemonic spectatorial gaze

### **Introduction**

Disinhibiting the actor's body has been a central tenet of actor training since the theatre of the avant-garde (a.c. 1890). What the body is disinhibited from depends on the practical and theoretical acting inquiry: Jeungsook Yoo has aimed towards sensing 'ki (기, 氣)' (2018) as a linking state between body, mind, environment, and the present moment, thus aiming for disinhibiting the actor 'to watch' (2018, 18). Such watching suggests the actor's heightened state of consciousness and reflection as well as agency in choosing their future actions and participation. This follows the earlier work of Grotowski who sought 'transcendence' to reveal a core phenomenal body most ready for conscious and reflective layering of semiotic signification or role development (2002, 131). Arguably visible within this theorisation is the director's relationship to the actor as Grotowski guided actors' phenomenal bodies through

layering and accumulation. Later in Grotowski's paratheatrical work, such absorption with and reliance on the director for processes of disinhibition was replaced with the spectator. Here, the blurred boundary between the spectator and actor and reliance on the spectator's participation again left actors' disinhibition in the hands of others. Power, particularly the power yielded by the phenomenon of the spectator, thus manifests differently across the various psychophysical notions of disinhibition – between actors and their rally of curators and onlookers. This article examines how such power impacts and limits actors' organisation of embodied resources. It looks to show how disinhibited actors who turn from the spectatorial gaze and towards peer actors may widen their embodied repertoire to aid reflection, knowledge, and skills across more socio-culturally diverse resources.

The limitations of a distant albeit persistent spectatorial gaze on actors in a training and devising context is a matter emerging in my research and others'. A spectatorial gaze is understood as the actor/director keeping the invisible or distanced spectator in mind when creating performance material. Spatz suggests that theatre and performance studies 'privileges the phenomena of (public) spectatorship' (2015, 7), and 'thus grounds itself in the techniques of the observer and of distanced spectatorship that underpins patriarchal and colonial epistemologies' (2019, 13). Such hegemonic epistemologies, understood as accepted and dominant 'ways of knowing' (Tuhiwai-Smith 2008, 166), are reproduced by actors in training and devising settings who are instinctively tailoring their performance material to the spectatorial gaze. Hegemonic epistemologies enter these training and devising settings because of how the distanced spectator is conceptualised in relation to institutions and a majority theatre-attending audience. For example, the venue in which the material will be performed and its statistics on audience attendance have, at least in the global north, legitimised the view of a middle-class, standard language-speaking, white theatre-going spectator. Such a view legitimises European colonial authority over the theatre, prioritising its systems, forms and

epistemologies. With this spectator in mind, the actor draws on standardised sets of linguistic and embodied resources that will be intelligible to them and omits the diverse resources accumulated in their everyday lives. I have discussed this idea elsewhere, suggesting that the actors' conscious awareness of the impact of the spectatorial gaze within devising processes saw increased cultural and linguistic diversity within the performance material (French 2021, 19). There are obvious economic implications to this approach; however, more thought needs to be given to the socio-political, cultural and linguistic implications of the spectatorial gaze in actor training and devising and this article contributes to this need.

The focus of this article unpicks the processes engaged by an actor in disinhibiting the spectatorial gaze and consequently accessing a widened embodied repertoire. It focuses on the *Viewpoints intensive*, as a precursor to *Standing in space* in the last week of July 2020 and at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. The *Viewpoints intensive* ran for five consecutive days of afternoon sessions (2-6 pm) for the 16 third-year BA Acting students (hereafter 'actors'). *Standing in Space* was a presentation of this work to students and staff on the evening of Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. Both were part of The Creative Physical Actor (ACT3002) module, with its first three weeks led by Head of Movement (Acting) and devising lecturer Samantha Chester (she/her). For Chester, the aim of the intensive was to coax to maturity some of their first and second-year training in Overlie's viewpoints and provide a more sophisticated embodied understanding of its uses as a philosophy for devising. These aims fed into the module more generally by providing tools that 'refine[s] the skills of the actor to a professional working standard on challenging plays of different genres and styles' (ECU Handbook 2022). My role was to observe both the five-day intensive and film the 45-minute performance in the capacity of a Visiting Fellowship. I will closely analyse a segment from the performance and draw from anecdotal experiences of the intensive.

Key questions posed extrapolate on how actors' resources are drawn from differently when listening to varied sets of interlocutors - peer actors and spectators - as well as which resources signal hegemonic epistemologies. The interdisciplinary conceptual framework highlights *embodiment*, *embodied resources* and *repertoire* within processes of *linguaging*. I bring the concepts together to suggest that when at least two forms of embodiment are activated with peer actors, the actor's body can be disinhibited from the spectatorial gaze to mobilise linguaging. I argue that when an *actor linguages*, they also draw more widely from their embodied repertoire.

This article is structured by first laying out the definitions and connections between the key terms; situating Samantha Chester's intensive within its socio-cultural context; analysing an actor's organisation of her embodied resources for the spectator and the spectatorial gaze; and finally, analysing the same actor's organisation of embodied resources for a peer actor. The latter analysis is evaluated as the actor linguaging her widened embodied repertoire.

### **Linguaging and embodiment**

A linguaging lens provides this article with analytical possibilities for conceptualising actor training modalities as interactions and for locating the multiple interlocutors that limit and influence these. The term linguaging, as well as the numerous alternatives that have followed (translinguaging, poly-linguaging, metrolingualism), reconceptualise structuralist sociolinguistic configurations of verbal and embodied language, the body and interaction that have reproduced 'allegations of language as imagined or invented' (García 2007, xi). By imagined or invented, García refers to the historical view of language as a noun and therefore as a whole and static object to be learnt and mastered. However, in the sociolinguistics scholarship (Heller 2006; Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Duchêne 2008) it is generally agreed

that processes of interaction are fluid, reliant on the interlocutor and other context-relevant dimensions. Thus, language is often considered a *verb* and the term languaging helps to make this explicit. Using this idea in a conservatoire context such as WAAPA reframes views of interaction across all storytelling modalities for more socio-culturally conscious pedagogies and curricula.

Languaging makes the mobilisation of actors' resources conditional on their interactional context, revealing what is being included and omitted. This is useful considering the socio-cultural diversity at WAAPA which puts into contact multiple ethnicities and linguistic varieties from Indigenous, diasporic, and migrant backgrounds. At the university level, despite WAAPA's low international intake (1.4% in 2020 compared to 21% of ECU more generally) (ECU 2020, 6), it has a high volume of students from all parts of the country. A large percentage of the third-year actors of 2020, for example, were from out of Western Australia. This cohort brought together diasporic Asian and European backgrounds as well as Indigenous Australian. At the local suburb-level, these actors are in contact with Mount Lawley residents which are similarly diverse to the rest of Perth in terms of ethnic and linguistic categories. Almost 42% of Mount Lawley residents (47% in Perth) were born out of Australia (Census 2016), from countries including England, Italy, New Zealand, India and Scotland; while 23.1% of those in Mount Lawley speak at least one other language at home (26.5% in Perth) including Italian, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Greek and Spanish (Census, 2016). The nature of this diversity means that there are multiple layers of communities of contact shared across the student demographic at WAAPA but very little conscious attention for these to enter training (ECU 2019). A languaging lens locates this omission of socio-cultural diversity and conceptualises interactions that invite widened resources into this context.

The uniquely vast number of interlocutors within a rehearsal studio context (i.e., director, peer actors, administrators) and future listeners of the performance material being explored (i.e., spectators) requires a definition of languaging that focuses on the most immediate interlocutor (i.e., peer actors). For this article, I suggest that languaging occurs when actors *select* and *draw* from their linguistic and embodied resources to negotiate intelligibility with their most *immediate* interlocutor that is *known* to them. Within an improvisational performance context such as that examined here, languaging can occur only with actors and not spectators because the resources of the latter are unknown to them. Within immersive performance contexts, where this information can be gleaned by actors, languaging may also occur in situ with spectators. This definition of languaging draws from Jørgensen and Juffermans' emphasis on the 'processes' of drawing from 'features' of unique individual repertoires (2019, 1). Thus, what they see as 'features', I explore as resources, while the repertoire encompasses such resources. Resources include linguistic varieties and embodied resources specific to the individual and always shifting in contact (French 2021, 8). Resources can be *known* and *unknown*, attached to identity factors and communities of contact. In emphasising Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz view of resources as not '*all known* by all individuals' (2006, 59), I harness the potential for actors to unearth new resources as well as tap into more familiar everyday resources used in communities of contact. A repertoire is used to encapsulate collections of resources based on their interlocutor. In performance studies, the repertoire has been 'a treasury, an inventory' whilst also meaning 'to find out' (Taylor 2015, 20). The view of a repertoire proposed continues this idea of exploration and reflection, tailored to a close interactional context.

Finally, processes of embodiment in actor training guide actors' organisation of resources, or repertoire, and potential for languaging. Erika Fischer-Lichte's suggestion that embodiment involves the 'object, subject, material and source of symbolic construction, as



well as the product of cultural inscriptions' (2008, 89) guides my definition of actors' complex modes of embodiment. I suggest that embodiment for the actor involves *acting* as an object and *being acted on* as a subject, in their materiality and as a bearer of their socio-historical context. The actor accesses their semiotic or sign-bearing body while *acting* and their phenomenal body while being *acted on*. Since the body exists in a 'state of becoming' (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 92), I emphasise the overlapping spaces between the actors' embodied modes of becoming by referring to these bodies as being/becoming (semiotic) and having/becoming (phenomenal). Zarrilli examines these modes, and others, in some detail, suggesting that actors' aesthetic 'inner' bodymind and aesthetic 'outer' body are just two of their 'bodily modes of being-in-the-world' (2005, 655). This duality of modes adds to understandings of being/becoming and having/becoming because it proposes that being a body is made up of both the cultivated aesthetic 'inner' bodymind, as well as the exterior shell of the body that makes itself accessible to peer actors and the spectator. Moments when the actor is *acting* and being *acted on* simultaneously, described as simultaneous embodiment, are proposed as a first step to being disinhibited from the spectatorial gaze. These moments are then conceptualised and read as languaging.

### ***Chester's Viewpoints intensive***

Samantha Chester's emphasis on horizontality in her facilitation of Overlie's viewpoints gave actors the materials and the autonomy to explore the materials freely. Overlie proposes horizontality most simply as the existence of a 'non-hierarchy' or 'impartiality' between actors and facilitators drawing from the viewpoints (2016, vii). Within dance, the notion of horizontality fits well within postmodern paradigms of deconstruction such as the work of Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown, each relying on actors' impulses to 'enact microscopic interrogation of our physical, mental and emotional world' (Overlie 2016, xi). In theatre, horizontality echoes training and devising of the late twentieth century that have aimed towards

‘democratisation’ (Govan, Nicholson and Normington 2007, 48) or equal opportunities for participation within the ensemble. The horizontality that is embodied by Chester rests on several principles that see her guide actors to take control of articulating their actor training trajectory, together with framing and facilitation that stimulates actor-led discourses.

The structure of Chester’s *Viewpoints intensive* scaffolded various types of learning to stimulate actor-led discourses. Each afternoon session began with a one-hour physical warmup, followed by three-hour investigations of varying lengths (5-30 minutes), which were each proceeded by 5-10-minute evaluations. The warmup was often led by an actor in the cohort and bookended by independently led stretching and meditation. A result of this approach saw every class begin energised by actors and less reliant on Chester. She framed the investigations with sparse instruction, allowing actors to draw from their previous training experience while learning patience with interspersing forms and materials. Actors sat on chairs in a circular pattern around the playing space and began by entering. Chester ended each session with the cue word ‘end’. She experimented with changing the audience location and perspective (i.e., in the round, outside amongst the trees, in a black box studio, against the background of the actors, etc.); and honing elements of focus through cue words and expressions to remind them of their training (i.e., ‘remember the logic and the story’, ‘focus’, ‘be present’, ‘listen to each other’, ‘allow it to be’, and ‘know when it is over’). She modulated between silence, basic rhythms, recorded and live music, before bringing these into the evaluations. Changing the space and reminding actors to be present to one another took the focus off her as the facilitator, minimising the teacher-actor hierarchy and maintaining horizontality. Evaluation sessions were similarly horizontal with Chester supporting an accumulative and circular feedback loop where actors described and critiqued their practices.

Chester's demanding and deeply explorative sessions drew heavily on Overlie's six viewpoints or SSTEMS: Space, shape, time, emotions, movement and story, as well as the bridge which accompanies the natural investigation of these materials. Space can be understood as a renewed attention to the space existing before the body enters, as well as the spatial patterns made with the body; shape involves fine and minimalistic levels of awareness to the position, proximity and exertion of the limbs, with gesture the most basic level of shape; time involves processes of recalibrating rhythms and time signatures; emotions are defined through the notion of presence, whereby actors' active self-awareness allows them to access personal and intimate aspects of themselves for the activity; movement involves deconstructed dance and choreographic techniques as well as kinetic sensation; and, finally, story is defined by a logic which 'functions as an organisation of sequences of information' (2016, 46). Anne Bogart provides her own articulation of these viewpoints (Bogart and Landau 2005) but Chester suggests the above as closer to her movement vocabularies. A closer opportunity for reading Overlie's viewpoints is provided in the analysis.

Chester's guidance of actors to be independent, thinking, and creative artists paved the foundations for the interactions that I will now outline. This forthcoming analysis focuses on one she/her-identifying actor, who will be referred to as Lilly. This actor was selected because of how she demonstrates a clear trajectory that begins with privileging the spectator to achieve certain ends and then allows the influence of peer actors to other ends.

### **Limitations of the spectatorial gaze**

Lilly's prioritisation of the spectator and the spectatorial gaze throughout the *Viewpoints intensive* and *Standing in space* comes to influence, and limit, her organisation of resources.

Within the *Viewpoints intensive*, my eyes followed Lilly relentlessly due to her sophisticated abilities to engage me as a spectator. I was overcome by her and made to feel as though we were caught in a meaningful dialogue. Fischer-Lichte has suggested that the ‘bodily co-presence of actors and spectators’ occurs when the spectator is ‘infected’ by the actors’ phenomenal body on stage (2014, 1443). Given the viewpoints training context, Lilly might be said to have drawn from Overlie’s emotions viewpoint to activate her self-awareness or presence for the spectator. I understand presence to be the generation and transfer of energy between interlocutors, calling on Barba’s definition of presence as energy (Barba 2010, 49–156). Lilly might be said to have been generating and transferring energy to me, as one of the two present spectators alongside Chester. In so doing, Lilly was inviting me *to act* on her phenomenal or having/becoming body. My having/becoming body attempted to signal its presence by leaning in towards the playing space, with gaze, eye contact and occasional laughter. In order to make herself accessible, Lilly drew from embodied resources (being/becoming body) that she thought would be intelligible by me. Within Overlie’s viewpoints lexicon, I read her approaches to shape, movement and emotions as particularly advanced. She explored the movement viewpoint via a full extension of her upper limbs, an oscillation of her head and neck and generally rapid response to the movement of actors around her. The shapes that she made with her body appeared bird-like and angular, with careful extension from her shoulders to her fingers. This organisation of resources signalled a deep understanding of her body owing to technique. I made inferences at this moment that some of the foundations for such technique came before her training at WAAPA and included contemporary dance. I also assumed that Lilly was accessing the simultaneous embodiment of the having/becoming and being/becoming body which was reliant upon Chester’s facilitation.

The interaction between Lilly and me was multi-layered in terms of spectators and the spectatorial gaze. Beyond the presence of my body, Lilly was aware of the *Viewpoints*

*intensive* as a form of preparation for her performance to an audience at the end of the week. Thus, at some level, she had in mind a distanced spectator that she was preparing for – a spectatorial gaze. In allowing herself to be *acted on* by me, she was also rehearsing for a distanced spectator. Such an evaluation goes against the nature of Overlie’s viewpoints in how the actor’s investigation of materials in any moment *is the right moment*, rather than a preparation for some other. Chester made links to this aspect of the philosophy by using the key word ‘muddy’ and suggesting that when things get ‘muddy’ i.e., they are not working in the present moment, you need to ‘get outta there!’ (Chester 2020). With this logic, any time that the actor began to feel as though they were rehearsing for the Friday performance, things would get ‘muddy’ and they should drop it to move out of the space. However, as a third-year actor, an interplay of other training discourses influenced Lilly’s organisation of resources, making it likely that she was cognisant of and tailoring herself to multiple spectators. My whiteness, middle-classness, gender identification and education in the global north may have aided her in this process, due to how my demographic information isn’t far from those of the distanced spectator. This process would have seen her subtracting information from me to draw from embodied resources which were intelligible in how they communicate a story (i.e., bird) and technique (i.e., classical dance and Overlie’s viewpoints), and storing them away for the distanced spectator.

Lilly showed a similar approach to prioritising the spectator within *Standing in space* to limit her resources. As a spectator amongst others privy to this performance, I was enamoured by Lilly in ways similar to my experience of the intensive. Nevertheless, filming the performance mobilised opportunities to stand back from the role as a spectator in situ with the actor and read them differently. In the filmed performance, I observed very little variation across Lilly’s organisation of her embodied resources. For an actor that only entered the playing space four times in the 45-minute performance, she tended to repeat a standardised

formula: Repeated oscillation of neck and shoulders, an extension of her arms, and a tendency for independent and spectator-reliant investigations of Overlie's viewpoints materials. For example, in exploration with a peer (he/him), Lilly held her body and neck upright, and hips slightly forward to allow her limbs to push through gravity. While her elbows were cinched towards her waist, her arms elevated and waved loosely across her body, wrists held, and hands relaxed. This cis male actor joined her, entering from downstage right to mirror her elbow, arm, wrist, and hand movements in the same rhythm as she strode while gazing in her direction. As laughter erupted from spectators in response to his mirroring, Lilly responded by exaggerating her movement. As this sequence increasingly intensified, Lilly provided him with no porosity, neither accepting his offerings by mirroring his movements, nor allowing him to lead the interaction in any way. This example is evidence of the impacts of privileging the spectatorial gaze over the peer actor. Evidence of Lilly's prioritisation of the spectator is seen in her intensification of resources. She allowed the spectator to *act on* her having/becoming body which dictated to her being/becoming body. Her little knowledge of the spectator's socio-cultural and linguistic resources saw her remain safely with her known resources, rather than borrow from or mirror those of her peers. Thus, she not only privileges the spectator, but also the generic demographic attributes of the spectatorial gaze.

The combined limitations of the spectator and the hegemonic implications of the spectatorial gaze have detrimental impacts on the actor. These include both her collaborative possibility as well as decreased access to and variation of resources. By Lilly dedicating her presence to the spectator, she followed set parameters of their/our intelligibility. In carefully listening to and generating energy for the spectator, she drew from resources that she felt would be understood and read favourably. At this level, the spectatorial gaze is what introduces the hegemonic implications of her performance: Not knowing the socio-cultural and linguistic profile of the spectator saw the actor privilege the spectatorial gaze in tandem with the

spectator. Thus, the spectatorial gaze exists hegemonically in terms of its influence at multiple levels. In the case of Lilly, the illusion of the generic characteristics needing to be intelligible to a spectatorial gaze legitimised her limited resources into a safely guarded repertoire, rather than urging her to challenge her limits as a performer with peer actors. Whether understood as accommodation theory (Giles and Coupland 1991) or audience design (Bell 1984), there is sufficient scholarship to evidence how interlocutors mark mutual identity factors in interaction. Yet, the uneven responsibility of the performer to engage or entertain the spectator amplifies their felt obligations to signal such alignment through markers of sameness and respect. Lilly intensifying her movement in response to the spectator's laughter is a simple example of alignment with the spectator that is in part due to this felt obligation. The historically economic exchange implied by the spectator is embedded within such an obligation, but it doesn't justify its multiple hegemonic implications on her repertoire.

Lilly's repertoire for the spectator not only prevents her from experimenting more fluidly with her resources in situ with her peer actors, but it reproduces hegemonic epistemologies. Such claims are of course based on the subjective reasoning between her embodied resources and my inferences made from them, conditional on my socio-cultural background. Since Lilly's resources were within the range drawn from in the intensive that originally had me transfixed, I am interested in a reflexive interrogation of these readings.

My understanding of her investigation as signalling an advancement in 'technique' is part of a semiotic process with embedded hegemonic epistemologies. Although the term technique has been expanded as not merely 'technical' (Roach in Spatz 2015), it is this simple definition that I had in mind when initially making meaning from her performance. Lilly's repertoire that I read as technically proficient signalled norms in actor training that differentiate the trained from the untrained, the amateur from the professional. While I don't consciously

look for these norms as representational of so-called good and bad acting, I occasionally catch myself using them to select whom to watch. Thus, my own hegemonic epistemologies that decide on what is a good and bad actor are intrinsic to the semiotic process. The combination of our joint Anglo-Australian and cis female demographics, together with my education in the global north, saw a meaning-making process that signalled a well-trained WAAPA actor. Lilly's embodied repertoire had been nurtured within WAAPA and legitimised by its national reputation. Since prestige is essential to legitimise knowledge, the fact that this institution is reputable is important. Lilly's repertoire reproduced hegemonic epistemologies insofar as it legitimised beliefs suggesting minimal variation and maximum function. In providing a limited repertoire, she signalled proficient technique that can be read as well-trained. This process of sharing and legitimising beliefs of a standard repertoire achieves similar hegemonic impacts on resources omitted as the 'standard' language (Milroy and Milroy 2002; French 2021). The semiotic process analysed here saw Lilly's standard embodied repertoire as reproducing and reproduced by hegemonic epistemologies.

### **Languaging a widened embodied repertoire**

*Standing in space* features one sequence where Lilly allowed herself to be *acted on* by a peer actor and accept their offerings to language. In the following analysis, I draw from transcriptions to enter the detail needed for locating the nature of the interactions that privilege new interlocutors. Methodological elaboration is needed so that one can clearly follow the transcribed episodes covering parts of the three-minute interaction. Transcription approaches adapt Gail Jefferson's Conversation Analysis transcription style which developed constructions for closely describing and analysing verbal language and the body (2004, 13). Amendments to this approach include adding a column for movement so that it is not hierarchically positioned as lesser than linguistic resources. Line numbers for reference are seen down the left column (i.e., L2) and I cross-reference to the action by referring to these numbers.



Figure 1. Episode 1 from *Standing in space*: Time and interest-building with a peer actor

Line no.	Timecode	Actor	Embodied resources	Actor	Embodied resources
1	(16:25)	PIANIST:	Slowing, minimal piano. Chord progressions	ARI:	Walks into the middle of the group, leans into left leg and stretches arms above her head
2	(16:30)			ALL:	Three of the actors (mixed gender identifications) mirror ARI's arm stretched movement in the next four beats
3	(16:38)			ARI:	Arms dissolve to fall loose by her sides, kneeling, weight into her right knee, cradling her right elbow with her left hand
4	(16:54)			ARI:	Stands back three steps to gaze inwards, towards the action centre stage, continue arm motif
5		PIANIST:	Increased pace. Continued chord progressions	ALL:	Three actors (he/him) disperse, returning to the seated area
6	(17:30)			ARI:	Walks anti-clockwise around the space, circling the two seated actors (she/her). Two other actors (she/her) disperse, returning to the seated area
7	(17:47)			ARI:	Slows as she reaches the seated actors, begins to roll into hips, with accentuated hip movement and slowed gait
8	(17:55)			ARI:	Gazes over her right shoulder back at the seated actors as she walks to the black curtain, upstage, the only one standing and moving onstage

An actor, whom I will refer to as Ari (she/her), mobilised Overlie's viewpoints time, movement and space to gain the attention of Lilly in ways previously unseen throughout the intensive and performance (Figure 1). Time is understood subjectively and able to be changed and moulded based on the actors' investigations. A jazz pianist (he/him) playing live with the actors for the latter part of the intensive and the performance tended to guide actors' experiences of time, particularly tempo, rhythm, and the time signature. In the intensive, Chester supported actors to be conscious of his potential control and to remember to activate their other senses to listen to one another. In this episode, the pianist slowed the tempo, maintaining the 4/4 time signature, and continued only chord progressions. As his left hand remained stabilised on the first chord and his right hand provided variety with three of the

same chords across multiple octaves, he dissipated the embodied action. While the majority of the actors slowed their movement down and used the chords to accent each movement, Ari created a melody with her body. She began by standing proximal to four scattered actors, leaning into her left leg and stretching her arms upwards and parallel (L1). Within a few beats, the majority of the actors mirrored her (L2). Lilly and one other actor, Florence (she/her) sat on the floor eagerly gazing towards her. Rather than continuing and leading the sequence for these actors, Ari walked backwards to continue the parallel arm motif in a forward-facing direction away from them (L4). Her movements and use of space repeated a melody that fit the pianist's time signature simultaneous to her own accents and points of interest. She woke up the actors from being guided by the sparseness of the music, putting into practice Bogart's concept of vertical time which is 'real and non-divisible' and 'disrupts the experience of linear time' (Bogart in Evans et al. 2019, 4). Lilly was privy to this sequence, eagerly observing Ari as she cut through the linear time provided by the musician. In providing an alternative experience of time, Ari creates a clear sense of creative agency that builds Lilly's interest.

Figure 2. Episode 2 from *Standing in space*: Disinhibiting the spectator

Line no.	Timecode	Actor	Embodied resources	Actor	Embodied resources
9		PIANIST:	Chord progressions and melody		
10	(17:59)			ARI:	Pivots on her left foot, turns then pivots on right foot, turns, and floats hands in an L-shape from her waist, right
11	(18:00)			ARI:	Floats hands and arms left, gazing into the centre of the space
12	(18:01)			ARI:	Turns palms from facing downwards to upwards in one beat
13	(18:02)			ARI:	On the next beat, drops the left arm downwards, leaving her right arm pointing in the direction of the actors on the floor. She rolls in her right shoulder as she pushes her hand into the space for four beats, before drawing it back to hang by her side
14				LIL & FLOR:	As ARI draws her right arm back, the actors both get up from seated position
15	(18:05)			LIL:	Turns on the ground, transferring from her knees to her glutes, twice, and ending in a position facing ARI on her knees, a metre apart
16	(18:10)			ARI:	Pivots on one foot, gazing towards the other actor, FLOR, as she turns and returns to gaze down to LIL
17		PIANIST:	Plays a more clearly defined melody		
18	(18:16)			LIL:	Tilts her head to the side, leading with her left ear to her left shoulder, maintaining gaze with ARI

Ari gestured towards the company of her captive listeners to provide an invitation to investigate Overlie’s viewpoints materials together (Figure 2). She harnessed the rapid semiotic abilities of gesture for her peer actors, Lilly and Florence. Noland’s descriptive gestural analysis emphasises how ‘the hands of the actors attract the attention of the viewer as much as, if not more than, the facial gesticulations’ (Noland 2009, 69). Ari gazed towards the centre of the space (L10) as she began her next sequence in the vision of the seated actors. She took a few steps from the black curtain to lean into her right leg, extend her arms into an L-shape from her waist, and push into gravity (L10-12). She lifted her arms up, splaying her fingers out as if to signal the gesture of a question such as ‘what am I/we to do?’ before

extending her right arm in the direction of the seated actors. Both seated actors interpret the gesture as an invitation to stand immediately (L14), and this catalyses the interactions that follow. Ari's approach to gesture functioned as a shortcut for the actors to move from seated spectators of Ari's movement to co-investigators. In so doing, Ari navigated Overlie and Chester's avoidance of pedestrian gestures such as pointing or cupping a closed hand, as it stymies creative embodied exploration. She instead pushed through the fingers of her right hand in the shape of a pointing gesture towards the actors and released her right shoulder (L13). Her gestural vocabulary symbolised hand gestures signalling 'join me' or 'come here' for some communities. Aware of the two actors' socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds, she drew on embodied resources intelligible to them while working within the compositional materials of Overlie's viewpoints. Thus, Ari embedded everyday gestural vocabularies shared with actors in her investigation of Overlie's viewpoints to create an invitation to collaborate.

Lilly's response to the invitation signals her willing acceptance of Ari to act on her having/becoming body, thus languaging. She began the next sequence by turning while close to the ground (L15), ending in the position with her knees wider than shoulder-width apart, gazing upwards to Ari who has also turned towards her (L16). In this beat, as they met each other's eyes, Lilly tilted her head to her left (our right) and they held each other's gaze with eye contact for five seconds. Lilly prioritised her having/becoming body as she activated presence for her peer actor similarly to previous interactions with the spectator, beginning to language. Her turn on the floor and tilt of the head provided simultaneous interest in drawing innovatively from her embodied resources to add to her being/becoming body. At the moment that they both caught each other's gaze, she showed a newfound presence for peer actors. This moment reflects Campbell and Farrier's queer dramaturgies that privilege 'the identity of the maker/s...the making processes and the context in which they are seen' (2016, 25). Perhaps by spending the time observing Ali from the floor for some minutes previously, she shifted into a

new actor-centred paradigm that was disinhibited from the spectator. Her body was disinhibited because she engaged simultaneous embodiment that was dependent on deep focus, listening and presence for her peer actor in a way that challenged obligations to engage or entertain the spectator. This moment of pause signals a deep connection and trust between the actors as they remained motionless, despite the felt obligations to the spectator and the spectatorial gaze. While languaging, they focused entirely on each other's intelligibility.

Figure 3. Episode 3 from *Standing in space*: Widening an embodied repertoire

Line no.	Timecode	Actor	Embodied resources	Actor	Embodied resources
19	(18:17)			FLOR:	Gazing at the two actors who are gazing at one another, stands, walks towards them and stands between them, turning her head to the right and gazing over her shoulder at ARI
20	(18:19)			LIL:	Slides into the floor, weight into her left side and shoulder, holding gaze toward ARI
21	(18:24)			FLOR:	Raises her arms above her head, parallel, arches her back and sways her hips from side to side, slowly dropping her arms
22	(18:25)			LIL:	Whilst gazing at ARI, slowly makes her way to parallel, pushes hands and arms forward to squat, runs both hands parallel to the sides of her body and above her head. Then, mirrors FLOR's movements in L21, continuing to gaze at ARI
23		PIANIST:	Stops playing	Spect ator:	Laughs
24	(18:26)			FLOR:	Turns to gaze toward LIL on a beat
25		PIANIST:	Stops playing	Spect ator:	Laughs
26	(18:27)			LIL:	Drops arms by her side on a beat
27		PIANIST:	New, lower octave, flowing melodic sequence	ALL:	Actors dissolve from the action and head their separate ways, FLOR exiting the stage

Lilly drew from previously unseen embodied resources across the combined 25 hours of the intensive and performance while languaging with Ari and Florence in the sequence that followed (Figure 3). Florence ran over to stand between the actors in response to the

connection that they formed upstage right (L19). While gazing toward Ari, Florence shot her parallel arms upwards before curtailing them close to her body as she arched her back and dipped her hips from side to side (L21). Quickly rising to a standing position in the next beat, Lilly mirrored Florence's movement while gazing toward Ari. In this moment, Lilly lowered the centredness in her body, accentuating her hips and circling her buttocks and thighs (L22). At this point, spectators, including me, laugh in response to the interaction. Within a comic narrative reading, the interaction saw Florence break up the lovebirds and attempt to gain Ari's attention before Lilly tried to win it back. Lilly maintained her presence to the playful investigation with peer actors despite the slowly forming comedic sketch indicated by the spectators' laugh. In this instance, Lilly was languaging with her peers because she was engaging simultaneous embodiment and prioritising her central interlocutor. Additionally, she embodied what Thibault proposes as a 'organization of processes that enables the bodily and the situated to interact with situation' (2017, 78). In this sense, Lilly was relying entirely on the interaction in motion to draw from her embodied resources rather than being inhibited by the spectatorial gaze. As she mirrored Florence's embodied resources, she signalled presence to her peers (having/becoming) while also adding her own flourishes to these resources, adapting them for their semiotic potential (being/becoming). Consequently, new embodied resources were revealed. Lilly was centred in and prioritising her hips, thighs, knees, buttocks and lower back and explore new roles and relationships through such resources. This centredness in her lower body was appreciably distinct from what had been previously drawn from her standard repertoire focusing on the upper body. Additionally, Lilly's pace rapidly changed as she carefully tiptoed through this playful collaboration with her peers, versus the more rapid, high energy and intensified responses of her standard embodied repertoire.

Lilly languaging her widened embodied resources came to signal a changed placement in her body owing to the known vernaculars of actor training with her peers at WAAPA.

Across the intensive and the performance, Lilly went from carrying the weight from her centre to her hips and knees as she circled her hips and crossed the playing area in the moments that followed. Her movement mirrored peer actors' lower centredness in their bodies such as the hip rotations drawn from by Ari when first engaging her (Episode 1, L7) or Florence dipping her hips in this most recently analysed interaction (Episode 3, L21). Additionally, the entire minute that proceeded this episode saw Lilly accentuate this lower centredness in her body with an interest in exploring variations through deep hip rolls and wider travelling movements. For this extended sequence, Lilly not only allowed herself to be acted on by Ari, but consistently chose to be acted on - as one story dissolved, and another began. Through a reading of the actors' previous training, the lower centredness resonates with the devising or Suzuki training taken at multiple points of their degree. Several psychophysical techniques taught in either of these modules propose how the bent-kneed position prepares the lower centredness of the body to be ready for 'the impulse towards an action which is as yet unknown' (Barba 2015, 110). Barba's synthesis of the practices of the so-called 'east' signals the complexity and overlap of actor training approaches in institutions like WAAPA. In this example, some knowledge of each other's training backgrounds provides actors with the tools to be able to share specific, known and shared vernaculars, while languaging.

The actors' sharing a gender identification is additionally crucial to locate as another community influencing Lilly's lower centredness while languaging. A post #MeToo ecology has stirred a consciousness for female actors surrounding the impacts of sexualising the body. This ecology has been embraced by WAAPA since 2018, with intimacy training and policy implementation (Linscott 2018), suggesting that these actors have participated in an institutionally specific discourse. Lilly was thus conscious of the potential for wrongly signalling sexiness or provoking male interest by mobilising historically sexualised areas such as the buttocks, thighs and hips. Although this consciousness opposes patriarchal and therefore

hegemonic epistemologies it also may see the omission of resources connecting these areas of the body. For Lilly, it initially saw her focusing on her upper body with oscillating shoulders and elbows and extended arms. However, when she focuses entirely on activating presence for her peer actors, she centres herself differently. There is the good potential here for Lilly experiencing decreased inhibitions around sexualising her body in their company. In this case, without the patriarchal gaze of the spectator, Lilly was disinhibited to draw from embodied resources shared with actors and not revealed to other socio-cultural communities (i.e., cis males) outside of the trio. Thus, through this reading, Lilly languages with known shared resources to temporarily free herself from the hegemonic restraints of the spectator's gaze. The performance of these resources may, of course, have ramifications in terms of signalling the female body as a sexualised object to some spectators; however, it is a starting point for challenging hegemonies through a process of reclamation and interrogation.

Lilly's interest in being acted on by her peers, together with her knowledge of the two socio-cultural communities that she shares with them, gave her new access to and knowledge of her resources. Accessing resources that Lilly would otherwise use in female dominated contexts, for example, provides her with increased versatility and reflective possibilities for her large gamut of resources. This is particularly important for what might be understood as lower status resources (i.e., sexualised female lower body) common to minoritized or marginalised communities because of the shame and discomfort attached to them. Unravelling new resources is additionally important for actor training which ultimately looks to offer actors skills and knowledge for articulating their bodies in interaction. Opportunities for deepening known embodied resources in interaction with her peers, combined with the reflective capacities of the evaluations facilitated by Chester, meant that Lilly could engage processes of deep embodied learning. The new resources accessed in such processes combine to develop new embodied repertoires that are context-relevant and disinhibited from the spectatorial gaze.



Thus, languaging opened doors for Lilly to deepen her acting practice, understand her body and others. Since languaging is intrinsically linked to other communities of contact, it provided approaches to harnessing actors' multiple socio-cultural and linguistic communities.

## **Conclusion**

This article has presented several challenges and provocations for thinking about the impact of the spectator on actor training and devising. I have focused on the outcomes of one actor privileging the spectator and the hegemonic spectatorial gaze, revealing their limited and standard embodied repertoire. Such an analytical undertaking provided opportunities for unpicking the semiotic process of reading performance and the guesswork involved in the actor tailoring themselves to the spectator. By the actor not knowing the spectator's socio-cultural and linguistic resources, they continue to develop a generic spectator or spectatorial gaze, even in the presence of a spectator. By analysing the conditions for which the actor allowed herself to become *acted on* by peer actors, I articulated the processes of languaging. Here, the actor drew from previously unseen embodied resources rather than being limited by the standard embodied repertoire. At the height of their collaboration, the two actors communicated to one another in their bodies as if no one else was in the room, revealing the resources of multiple shared communities.

Languaging is thus conceptualised as not just a lens but also a working practice that provides actors with access to identities, epistemologies and histories that are otherwise omitted in actor training and devising. Such findings are particularly useful for documentary and autobiographical theatre and performance-making because of how they locate and harness actors' multiple socio-cultural resources. They additionally have ramifications for actor training and devising contexts more generally. By understanding acting as an interaction, facilitators can support actors to be conscious advocates for knowing who their interlocutors

are, and how they change their resources as a result. By understanding language as a process, facilitators can be mindful of hegemonic, particularly colonial, constructs of languages, so-called dialects and accents. By understanding how we tailor our resources to interlocutors, facilitators can support actors to draw from multiple resources which may otherwise seem contradictory for one character. Linguaging, as a lens and a working practice, provides actor training with tools to support an actor's confidence in diverse socio-cultural and linguistic resources, while supporting devising practices with needed methodologies that prevent standard repertoires from dominating collaborative theatre and performance making. The examples cited in this article provide visibility of the complexity of Lilly's performance of identity when given the parameters to break through the standard embodied repertoire that she developed with institutions and the spectatorial gaze in mind.

A heuristic for these theorisations in practice might see more experimentation with diverse socio-cultural and linguistic actors for processes of decolonisation and queer dramaturgies. Given that WAAPA is positioned in a socio-culturally diverse city, with a multicultural actor training cohort and on Aboriginal land, such experimentation is conducive to some of the major challenges of the future. Small steps are equally as vital: Consciousness-raising amongst the actors so that their resources are known to one another will provide opportunities to help them draw on these resources in future shared improvisations. If facilitated with this in mind, Chester's exploration of Overlie's viewpoints as a philosophy and toolkit, stimulates opportunities for actor autonomy and deep peer investigations to provide greater chances for languaging.

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*Claire French is an Arts Research Africa and Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa (SA) and an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Warwick, United Kingdom (UK). Her current practice as research project Decolonising language ideologies in the body collaborates with Sibusiso Mkhize to develop embodied and improvisational approaches to multilingual SA (isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, English) performance making. She is also adapting her interdisciplinary doctoral research into the monograph Making multilingual performance: Omission, alignment, disruption (Routledge).*