

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Barker Compared

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This thesis explores the use of theatre games and play in actor training as postulated by Viola Spolin and Clive Barker, both experts in this field. Play is a natural educational process involving behavior modification on a subconscious level. Play, implemented as games, is used to explore inhibitions in safe situations, build new skills, and instill a theatrical sense. This thesis explores the differing approaches each author takes to the games process and the theories and intents each has developed to facilitate their work. The role of the leader and the evaluation process is also covered.

Each author has targeted his work to a different level of actor. Viola Spolin is concerned with the beginning acting student. Her system works to give the actor an understanding of theatre and how to bring the parts together.

Performance is the communication of action to an audience, and the actor can be taught this skill through the physicalization of action. Barker deals with the more experienced actor. His use of games is concerned with realizing the actor's individual problems and using games which will solve these problems. The works of Spolin and Barker stand as individual approaches to games use. Taken together they provide substantial understanding of the potential and problems of using theatre games in actor training.

THE USE OF GAMES IN ACTOR TRAINING
BARKER AND SPOLIN COMPARED

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Play is more than a simple activity to keep children entertained. It is a complicated process of learning. In play, conscious control is by-passed, and learning becomes a feature of the personality. Learning results from the simulation of real actions, either physical or imagined. The learning process takes place through trial and error while the child is relaxed and enjoying himself. The child attempts an action or a situation, then as a result of his play, he modifies the action and repeats it. As play is modified and repeated, the child expands his knowledge and skills.

Play is a very complicated area of human behavior and as such it has become a major interest for psychologists. Their research has resulted in numerous theories about the purpose and derivation of play. According to Richard Courtney, psychologists Carr, Lee, and Groos believe that play arises from instinct. A child must learn in order to survive, and play provides a safe avenue of exploration.¹ Then too, many psychologists consider play a necessary emotional release. Freud ties Aristotle's concept of catharsis,

¹Richard Courtney, Play, Drama, and Thought (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1974), p. 34.

or the purgation of emotions through art, to the use of games as a safety valve for pent-up emotions (Courtney, p. 33). The recreation theory of play contends that play is needed to recuperate man's mental and physical powers (Courtney, p. 35). Some psychologists also suggest that play is not as much a preparation for the future through instincts as it is a reliving of the past. Play rehearses the activities of man's evolution, thus hastening his development (Courtney, p. 37). No matter which theory of play is adopted the fact remains that play is the primary method a child has for learning about his body, his life, and his environment.

Play takes structure through games. The structure comes from a set of rules which belong to the game. The rules provide guidelines for the child playing the game, and a source of continuity when the game is repeated. Rules provide the internal structure for play, and the child's development provides the outer structure of play. According to Courtney, play falls into three developmental stages: a child begins with sensory and motor play; from this, he moves to games with rules; finally, he moves into artistic-aesthetic play (Courtney, p. 26). This process does not move in only one direction, like a straight line: from sensory games to games with rules to aesthetic games. After mastering some motor and sensory skills, the child advances to games with rules. At some later time, the child will return to sensory work, this time adding the skills and knowledge gained from playing games with rules.

The question at the center of this thesis is: since play works to teach a child, will it work to teach an actor? I assume at the outset that the answer is yes. Freud defines an artist as a man who uses the world of fantasy as a child does in his play (Courtney, p. 112). Acting and play are closely related. By substituting play for acting, the actor can absorb the technique and technical aspects of performance, making them intuitive. One of the best ways to develop techniques intuitively is through the use of games and play.

Statement of the Problem

In current dramatic training, play is being used to train actors through the use of theatre games. Some form of play is being used in most college and university performance courses. The concepts and techniques of games training for the actor are derived from only a handful of theorists such as Clive Barker, Viola Spolin, John Reed Hodgson, Milton Polsky, and Robert Benedetti. Of these, Clive Barker and Viola Spolin are two of the most important theorists. Spolin's concepts, as outlined in her book Improvisation for the Theatre, have been the basis for most games used in America since 1963. Barker's ideas, developed from his work with Joan Littlewood, are more recent. It is necessary to point out that, his 1977 book, Theatre Games, A New Approach to Drama Training, makes no mention of Viola Spolin or her

book. As a result, two independent uses of theatre games have developed.

Definitions

In any study of theories and concepts, there must be definitions of terms unique to the research. These definitions provide a common vocabulary and limit the scope of the work. The terms defined below have several meanings. As they will be used in this thesis, however, the definitions suggest the boundaries of my exploration.

Play: An activity undertaken for enjoyment, generally by a child.

Dramatic Play: The child adds impersonations of other people and identification with other's problems to play.

Game: Play which has been formalized through the introduction of rules and goals.

Exercise: A physical activity which may have rules but no goal.

Theatre Game: Play which adds rules, goals, and theatrical related reasons for undertaking the play.

Improvisation: A form of theatre game which has added impersonation, identification, and scenic elements.

Player: Someone participating in a game.

Actor: Someone performing either with or without a script.

Leader: A trained participant who's responsibility is to guide the players.

Group: An ensemble formed by the players and the leader during games work.

Limitations

Games theory is an advanced, intricate approach to the study of psychology. It affects several other areas of human endeavor. This thesis will explore games theory only as it applies to the training of actors. The exploration of games in actor training will be further limited to the conscious use of games. That is, theories where games are used specifically for their value as training mechanisms through play. These limitations helped to narrow the study to the work of Viola Spolin and Clive Barker, both well recognized in their field.

The exploration and comparison of the theories and concepts of Spolin and Barker will be restricted to the personal approaches and applications expounded in their respective books. The thesis will focus on five areas of study and comparison: intent, theory, games structure, the leader, and the evaluation process.

Justification and Importance

In deciding upon this topic for a thesis, my main guideline was to limit myself to the area of theatre performance, specifically acting. The decision was also affected by an interest in creative dramatics. Theatre games use play to train actors just as creative dramatics

uses play to teach drama. During preliminary research, I discovered there are few published experts in the field. Even more important is that most concepts and procedures could be traced to or were influenced by either Viola Spolin or Clive Barker. This thesis will explore the use of theatre games by Spolin and Barker, thus proving a helpful study of a current theatrical trend. The originality of this thesis has been verified by my research into dissertation and thesis abstracts. I found no listing of research into either author or theatre games.

Procedure

The first step will be to study the work of each author individually. The study falls into five categories. The intent involves what each author is trying to accomplish through the use of games. The theory treats ideas and concepts which form the bases of their work. The process involves the games and the way they are structured. Study of the leader includes the requirements and information necessary to understand and fulfill the function of the leader. The evaluation includes the process of understanding and discussing the games.

Once each author's work has been explored individually, their methods will be compared. This section falls into three areas. The first covers those aspects on which Spolin and Barker disagree. The second involves those aspects on which they differ. This includes those aspects

which are unique to each system. The final area will treat aspects on which they agree.

Background

According to Clive Barker, there is a return to actor-centered theatre for which the actor is ill-prepared.² He and Viola Spolin have found games to be effective in helping the actor train. According to Spolin, games work because they make "the theatre techniques so intuitive that they become the student's own."³ This concept is backed up by Madame Eva Alberti: "Technique must be so assimilated that it becomes part of the actor's subconscious self."⁴ Games make the actor's techniques intuitive and subconscious since they are aspects of play. Play teaches through the subconscious by providing an enjoyable focus and by removing conscious control.

An actor's best work happens when he is faced with a problem and creatively solves it. The problem is not the acting technique to be worked on, such as characterization. Each game not only has a set of rules, but also a goal or focus which marks the end of play. As the player works

²Clive Barker, Theatre Games: A New Approach to Drama Training (London: Eyre Methuen, Ltd., 1977), p. 136.

³Viola Spolin, Improvisation for the Theatre (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), p. 4.

⁴Madame Eva Alberti, A Handbook of Acting (New York: Samuel French, 1932), p. 145.

toward the goal, he subconsciously develops his technique for solving an acting problem.

Besides working to solve the actor's problems, games create an understanding in the actor of how his emotional and physical body works. As Barker points out, the actor imitates life. Too often, however, he repeats the end result, or the physical sensation, not the emotional cause (Barker, p. 44). For example, the actor cries during an emotional scene, because he feels that is what the character should be doing, instead of feeling the emotions of the scene. Games provide an opportunity to experience different aspects of life. The sensations expand the actor's knowledge of his body and are stored in the actor's subconscious. The storing of these sensations has an added advantage, as Alberti points out: "Through perfect technical training, the actor's subconscious mind will coordinate with his body during a production without the interference of his or his subjective or thinking mind" (Alberti, p. 144).

Richard Courtney points out that the concept of using play for educational purposes is not a new idea. Thinkers as far apart as Plato, Rabelais, Rousseau, and Dewey have felt that play was educationally important. It was not until this century, however, that education through play was put into effect (Courtney, pp. 9-21).

Using play to train actors is a natural outgrowth of the functional aspects of play. It is also a logical step. Both play and theatre are social activities, and games are

essential to social life. Unfortunately, games in modern times have become less creative and more institutionalized. This has resulted in games and play becoming more vicarious and less participatory.

The vicarious experience in games suppresses the learning which happens through participation. During a game, the player is relaxed and enjoying himself allowing the skills and concepts of the game to be absorbed. The structure of the game provides the technique and skills needed to play the game. After the skills have been developed, they are added to the player's repertoire to be drawn on whenever needed. However, the whole process can be inhibited at any time. Generally, these inhibitions come from peers or society. The resulting fears become crucial to the actor because they prevent his complete involvement on stage. Games return the actor to the method of learning used at the time the fear was conceived or skill development stopped. The game then provides the opportunity to overcome the problem. Games and play work to solve problems and release fears because they are associated with a time of little anxiety and much happiness. Learning is no longer stressful, but joyful, since the player does not reflect on the play but reinstates subconscious learning.

The following chapters will explore and compare the work of Spolin and Barker in the individual areas outlined in the Procedure section. Chapter Two will cover the first two areas of study--intent and theory. The intents of each

author will be first presented, then compared. This procedure will then be followed by an examination of their theories. Chapter Three will explore the process each has developed. This will include study of the group concept, specific training work, and how each author organizes his games into an overall structure over several sessions. Chapter Four will be concerned with the treatment each author gives the leader and the evaluation process. As in Chapter Two, each area will be explored separately.

Chapter 2

INTENT AND THEORY

Intent

Behind any actor training method, there is a reason why the instructor chose that particular method over any other. This reason, or intent, gives direction to the work. The intent guides the leader in his choice of material, how it is explained, how it is played, and how it is evaluated. This section will explore the reasons behind use of games and play in actor training by Spolin and Barker. This will provide a basis for understanding how their theories and methods evolved. Understanding of the intents should also prove insights into the actual use of play.

Clive Barker believes games should be used to provide skills for potential actors. The use of games is part of a cycle of development. As the player learns new skills, he is prepared to play more difficult games which will build more advanced skills. Barker's emphasis on development of skills stems from his belief that acting can not be taught (Barker, p. 6). The most the leader can do, he feels, is to create situations in which the player will learn and grow. The games provide the skills and knowledge, but each individual must put all he has learned together during performance.

The key to the Barker system is that the whole group should not be working to make things happen, but to let them happen.

Viola Spolin has created a process in which anyone can be taught to act (Spolin, p. 4). This applies not only to the gifted student but the average student as well. In order to do this, the teaching process must be oriented to making theatrical techniques intuitive for the actor. Spolin feels acting can be taught to anyone because acting is doing, not reacting. When a player reacts, he is protecting himself and withdrawing from the environment and others. By doing, the actor's work is kept vital.

Anyone may be able to learn to act, but the leader does not strive to teach precepts and methods. According to Spolin, his job is to expose the actors to a theatrical environment through the development of skills. The player will then find his own way. At the same time, the players are learning to build relationships within the group.

The disagreement between Viola Spolin and Clive Barker, with respect to intent, is largely a matter of semantics. Barker says acting cannot be taught; Spolin says it can. In both cases, they are using games to develop skills and provide information from which the player acts. The disagreement arises in Spolin's belief that acting is the combination of skills and the actor's application of those skills. For Barker, acting takes more than the skills and their use. To Spolin, acting is the sum of its parts, movement, voice, characterization. Once these abilities are

mastered, an actor is made. For Barker, acting takes more than the skills but a talent which the actor brings to his work. It is this talent which marks the difference between an artist and a technician.

The differing intents of each author becomes more apparent when the actors for which the books are intended are compared. Spolin's work deals with less experienced actors, for example, children. The skills she deals with are the more basic concerns of less experienced actors. For example, simple mime skills or basic sensory work. She also provides all the information the leader will need in guiding the group. Barker, on the other hand, is concerned with older, more experienced actors. His book deals with the needs of an advanced actor; elimination of inhibitions, or the development of body control to name a few. Barker also expects the leader to have advanced knowledge of acting and theatre.

Despite these differences of intention Barker and Spolin are in one respect basically agreed. Each has created a system of games to help develop player's skills.

Theory

In this study, theory differs from intent in that theories are those ideas and concepts on which Spolin and Barker base their work and implement their intents. This section will explore the concepts and ideas each author feels necessary to understand and carry out the games process.

For Clive Barker, games work is twofold. Play provides the means to eliminate inhibitions and weaknesses in the actor's technique, and it allows the development of new skills to replace the old. He adapted this concept of "via negativa" (Barker, p. 2) from his work with Joan Littlewood. During "via Negativa," work is centered on the elimination of self-perceptions, which cause inhibitions and problems. Work starts by showing the players what they are unable to do. According to Barker, this motivates the player to work harder (p. 7). This also opens the player to new, fresh, and authentic responses to stimuli from the games and other players. These new responses become part of the player's automatic reflex through positive response to the trial and error process. This process is not objective but built on what the player has found to be secure. For example, a player may be inhibited against making falls. He can rationalize that a staged fall will not hurt him. Until he has actually made the fall, however, the subconscious will persist in its fear. Games work allows the player to try new experiences until he finds one which will work. It is important to stress that use of the "via negativa" approach does not mean that all the player's past reflexes are thrown out. "Via negativa" shows the player where he is not working up to his capabilities.

The use of "via negativa" grows out of Barker's understanding of the actor's job and obstacles facing him.

He divides the actor's work into five areas. First, he exhibits real physical and vocal skills. These skills make a greater demand on the actor than on the average person. Second, the actor exhibits mimetic skills. Third, he imaginatively explores situations of time, space, and character. Fourth, the actor exhibits patterns of human behavior which are not natural to him. Finally, the actor exhibits the above four skills while he interacts with other human beings on the stage (Barker p. 11). In order to maintain these skills, Barker outlines several factors on which the actor depends. He must achieve and maintain physical fitness and flexibility. He must gain the ability to control his body resources. He must develop the range of his imagination. He then must be able to put the intentions of his imagination to immediate physical effect. Finally, he must be able to interact spontaneously. The skills the actor uses and depends upon are not unique to his profession. To some extent, the skills are employed by all. However, the actor must do them consciously and repeatedly in front of an audience (Barker, p. 11).

Because of the pressure of performance, several obstacles arise within the actor keeping him from complete interpretation. Resistance of the body to carry out patterns of movement and actions. Difficulties arise in translating the intentions of the mind into physical actions. Problems arise from engaging in spontaneous behavior when the outcome is known (Barker, p. 12). These obstacles can happen at any

time, however, they are more pronounced during performance when actions are delegated to the subconscious.

In order to overcome the obstacles or individual problems, the group must work on the same level as the problem--the subconscious. Since play is concerned with the automatic response, Barker incorporates an explanation of the brain into his theory. The study of brain functions is important to the leader of the game. The leader needs to understand how the actor converts understanding into intention, intention into physical action, and adjusts the action to the audience and actor interaction. With the understanding of brain functions, the potential leader not only has the information of brain function, but also the insight he needs to build his own games.

The brain is divided into two sections. The conscious is centered in the front of the brain. The front deals with visualizing, reflective meditation, abstract thinking, deliberate body control, and direction of actions. These are sentient activities where the person does the activities knowingly (Barker, p. 17).

The back of the brain is concerned with spontaneous activities. These are the automatic physical actions and reactions the body makes unconsciously. They include complex activities such as breathing, reaching, or body coordination. If the back of the brain is allowed to work without conscious interference, the body works more efficiently. The subconscious brain work is not as automatic as

it seems. Even the most simple subconscious work requires time to process the information it receives into a response. Barker divides it into a three-step process. The first step is the study of the facts; secondly, the brain processes the information; finally, it produces the finished product, which is the appropriate response (Barker, p. 20). It is important to let the subconscious work naturally, but it should not be trusted uncritically. The response is only as good as the facts and processing on which it is based. If something is wrong with any step of the processing, the response will be wrong.

The difference between the subconscious and the conscious centers on the quality of thought involved. Conscious thought involves about what one is doing. Subconscious thought involves thinking what one is doing. In subconscious thought, thinking can take place before or after the action, but not during it (Barker, p. 27).

Another important function of the subconscious is to reveal the states of mind. Posture is one of the best clues to the activities of the brain. There is no thought which takes place without a body movement. The movement may be imperceptible to the eye. For example, depression often results in a slumped body posture. It is no wonder that the physical metaphor of a balanced person is used to describe someone of a mature mind.

The back of the brain is directly involved with the kinaesthetic sense. This is a sixth sense which Barker

calls the body/think (p. 29). He defined it as "the process by which we subconsciously direct and adjust the movements of our bodies in space, either in response to external stimuli, or to intentions arising in the mind" (Barker, p. 29). The kinaesthetic sense directs the back brain function on the front brain. The kinaesthetic sense can be easily disturbed from illness, physical fatigue, drunkenness, or the like. This interferes with the normal ability of the body to orientate itself in space relative to other people or objects. Disturbance of the body/think is not an unusual happening, conscious thought regularly displaces the subconscious, but it automatically rights itself when conscious thought and direction ceases.

Since the kinaesthetic sense controls the subconscious, Barker poses several questions concerning how the automatic functions arise. How does one by-pass conscious control allowing the processes to work naturally? What inhibits or interferes with the processes acting naturally? How may the actor be aware of how the body/think works to prevent interference and remove inhibitions (Barker, p. 31)? The answer to all three questions is the body program. The body program consists of the automatic responses each individual has built to react to various situations and how the mind processes subconscious material it is given. This shapes the kinaesthetic sense to the actor's individual personality. The body program includes all levels of brain functions: intellectual, emotional, and physical. The body

program adds additional points of vulnerability to the actor's subconscious actions. The kinaesthetic sense can be stopped through two types of interference: physical problems such as illness, or conscious thought. The body program is vulnerable not only to interference from physical problems and conscious thought but through emotional and intellectual stimuli. Emotional interference could come from preoccupation with personal problems or prejudices. Intellectual stimuli can be as simple as facts which contradict the individual's beliefs.

The body program is built through social, educational, and physical influences. Because of its large scope, the program is often challenged. When this happens, the individual must deal with new problems for which he has no solutions. Usually, the challenge is minor and can be dealt with by means of minor reprogramming. For example, in a social situation the actor is presented an idea with which he strongly disagrees. If he presents his view, however, he could lose a job. His program is easily altered to allow him to remain quiet and ignore the comments. An emotional crisis arises, however, when a major challenge is presented. At this time, the body program fails and cannot be dealt with by reprogramming. For example, when a person is faced with a situation about which he has a phobia, such as heights or falling. When a person is faced with a strong fear, there is no way to ignore or to rationalize it, he must avoid the problem. An emotional crisis is an uncommon

occurrence, but it is known to everyone through drama. Drama is an emotional crisis. In comedy, the protagonist attempts to readjust, rather than change, his program. In Neil Simon's Star-Spangled Girl, Andy ignores his own beliefs and commitments in order to keep his paper going. When the protagonist faces an inability to change a program, a tragedy results. In Sochocles' Oedipus, despite all advice to the contrary, Oedipus continues to search for the cause of his country's problems.

How does one change an ineffective body program? Barker feels the change must come subconsciously. The first step is to make the actor aware of what the program is in this area. This is not a contradiction, the actor must know and understand the problem before he can attempt to change it. Once the crisis is understood, work returns to the subconscious level. If the actor thinks and tries to solve the problem consciously, the problem tends to increase. Games allow the player to place the focus away from the problem, while the game builds a better program. Since the body physically represents the mind, a cycle of physical and emotional responses is developed. The physical is the most tangible and apprehensible point and thus the cycle is best broken at the physical, through the subconscious (Barker, pp. 22-27).

Barker feels the use of games is like a parable. They provide images of actions which anyone can understand. This is because the games get at the subconscious from the

start through physical actions. Games return to the root of the learning process to find where inhibitions started or development stopped. They allow the actor the chance to use adult powers to overcome the obstacles. Games reinstate body/think mechanisms in which the actor, just as a child, does not consciously reflect on his play. For Barker, "The object of the games and exercises is to reveal to the actor what happens when he works, and to help him be aware of the mind/body processes involved in his work" (p. 51).

The keynote to Barker's theories in games work is that games provide the experiences before the knowledge. Too often, traditional acting methods give the actor information, techniques, and theories before he has the practical experience to understand them. The games process is a course of exploration and discovery not the direct acquisition of skills. The development of acting techniques is the by-product of the work. The actor improves because the games are self-reinforcing, and they lead to natural self-improvement.

Barker feels that it is important to his process and the use of games that there be an understanding of the difference between cliché and prototype. A cliché is a character or role which is already total and consciously defined before it is employed. For example, a stereotype such as a dumb blonde is a cliché. The cliché is built on the basis of information from a script or a game, but it is used without further thought or interpretation. It is not open to change. Barker defines a prototype as, "a structure

based upon limited knowledge from which further investigation and development can take place" (Barker, p. 117). A prototype is a process of knowledge. As the player or child gains more information, the prototype grows richer. It is the prototype which the actor creates and acts on. When the development of the prototype stops and the actor intellectualizes the process, a cliché is formed.

The prototype is important to the actor involved in games training because of its importance to play. When a child role plays, as when he plays house, he creates a prototype. He starts with limited knowledge, but by playing the role, the child learns more. This new information is then incorporated into the prototype. This prototype continues to develop until the child reaches adolescence. At this time, the child intellectualizes and questions what he has learned. This is why adolescence is so difficult. Barker likens the development of prototypes to Stanislavski's "magic if."*

Barker outlines five objects of purposes of games process. The first object is "to reveal something of the actor's movement problems and possibilities." The second object is "to lead actors to physical experiences and sensations that they could not find directly." The third object is "to initiate in the actor a process of self-awareness

* Using the "magic if," the actor asks himself what his character would do under given circumstances.

and discovery." This allows the actor to understand more of his developmental and emotional stages. Barker's fourth object is "to create a shared body of experience which one uses to build up relationships within the group and to develop the ensemble." The final object is "to create a common vocabulary, based upon shared experience, with which to discuss the process of human action and interaction and the work of the actor" (Barker, pp. 65-66).

While Barker's theories deal with the physiological bases of games and play, Viola Spolin's theories deal with the practical applications of games to train actors. For Spolin, games provide a learning experience through trial and error. From this experience, the player gains involvement and personal freedom. As playing continues, games develop the personal techniques and skills needed for the game itself. A game needs to be highly social and have a problem to be solved in order to realize these purposes. The social nature of the game and the problem allows a cohesive group to be developed since all must agree on the rules of the game and play toward the same goal. The use of games to train actors is effective, Spolin feels, since the theatrical event is nothing more than a game in its most complex form. It is through games that an actor is trained for both formal and improvisational theatre (Spolen, p. 44).

Spolin sees the use of a focus, through a problem to be solved, as a method to create a process which allows the player to transcend himself. Emphasis on the problem to be

solved creates spontaneity, and spontaneity releases personal freedom. Once the player is free and participating, the total person is awakened causing "enough excitation for the player to transcend himself." By keeping the training as a process, the techniques come from the actor's personal core, and they appear to be accidental (Spolin, p. 6).

Important to Spolin is the use of competition, which acts as a cohesive force to bring the group together. Competition must be controlled, however, since it is such an integral part of games and play. Care must be taken to see that competition and winning do not replace simple participation. When the group becomes too competitive, compulsive actions result and artificial tensions are created. When this happens, competition becomes the end result and more important than the process of learning. Natural competition is organic to all group activities, giving tension and release while playing. The key to natural competition is a growing excitement as the problem is solved, and it is replaced by more challenging problems. In order to build more complex games, natural competition must exist.

Throughout Spolin's work is her insistence on communication; "the techniques of the theatre are the techniques of communicating" (Spolin, p. 14). She feels that the method of training actors is not as important as the actual communication which takes place, since techniques change to meet the needs of time and place. In order to communicate, the player must stretch his skills. As Spolin points out:

Because of the nature of the acting problems, it is imperative to sharpen one's whole sensory equipment, shake loose and free oneself of all preconceptions, interpretations, and assumptions so as to be able to make direct and fresh contact with the created environment and the objects and the people within it (p. 15).

Games bring the player into direct contact with his environment giving him fresh experiences and enabling him to communicate.

Once the player is involved in the game, he must communicate what is happening to the other players and the audience. To do this, the player must be skilled in physicalization. Spolin defines physicalization as the material presented to others by the player on a physical, non-verbal level, not an intellectual or a psychological level (Spolin, p. 15). Working on a physical level is necessary to the actor since the most effective way to communicate with the audience is through physical language. An advantage to physicalization is that it encourages the player's freedom of physical expression which opens the door to emotional insight. Being physically free, the actor remains open and perceptive. No method can be useful if the actor cannot physically present his material.

Games are of the present, they are created through meetings and actions on the changing, moving present. This spontaneity is required in games in order to keep the work a process of learning. When the players begin to plan their actions, spontaneity ends. When spontaneity ends, actor growth ends.

Spontaneity is tied to the use of problem solving.

By remaining on the problem, the player keeps the action in the present. The use of a problem to be solved, brings the group together as everyone is working toward the same goal. There is a problem inherent in every game. It is what marks the end of play. In most games, it either one team or an individual winning. In other games, it can be the completion of a sequence, as in a relay; the physicalization of an environment, as in a "where" game; or the building of relationships, as in a "conflict" game. In problem solving, the player uses all his resources, within the rules of the game, to solve the problem. The use of problem solving also aids the player by removing the approval/disapproval syndrome. Since in playing a game, there is no "right" or "wrong" method, the use of a problem keeps criticism on whether the problem was or was not solved, not how well it was solved. By placing the emphasis on solving problems, the actor's work is not evaluated on a personal level.

The theories of Viola Spolin and Clive Barker are on the whole completely different. There are, however, minor points on which they agree and other minor points on which they disagree. The comparison of the two sets of theories will not deal with these minor points. What will be compared are the major aspects of their theories.

Spolin and Barker disagree on the approach they take to the theories behind their use of games. Barker deals with the subconscious, while Spolin works on the conscious

level. Most of Barker's theories deal with how the brain processes stimuli subconsciously, and what happens when this processing is interfered with. Spolin presents specific aspects of games for actor training. These are areas the leader must understand and the players must learn to respect and facilitate. For example, both deal with the physicalization of thought to communicate with the other players and the audience. In Spolin's theories, she explains what physicalization and communication are. By explaining and applying Spolin's processes, the leader learns how to develop those qualities in an actor. Barker deals with the fact that the states of mind and thoughts are represented physically. The player needs to learn how to allow his natural processes to work without conscious interference. Where Spolin works on communication and physicalization consciously, Barker uses games to subconsciously instill automatic physicalization and communication of the thoughts.

The difference between the theories of Spolin and Barker arise from the quantity of information they provide the leader. Spolin gives the leader information she has found necessary and helpful in leading a group. Competition, spontaneity, and communication are aspects with which the leader will continually deal. Barker does not give information directly as Spolin does. He takes it, however, to a more fundamental level. Concepts on the actor's work and the brain functions provide a leader with the information to create and deal with any actor problem or crisis which may

arise. He gives the leader the theories to handle the same areas as Spolin does, plus much much more.

There is an agreement on one theory -- play. For both, play is a fundamental learning device which is an excellent tool for training actors.

Chapter 3

THE PROCESS

Introduction

This chapter deals with the actual use of games in actor training as implemented by Viola Spolin and Clive Barker. Each has built a system of games use, from which grew their intents, theories, and experiences with teaching actors. With each, the process is not a single session of work, but consists of games and play over a series of sessions, much like the rehearsal process.

No study of the games process can take place without first considering the group concept. The group is composed of the players and the leader.

Clive Barker sees the group as necessary to the development of the individual. Through the group, the player's best work happens when common and complementary needs are explored. The group, while working on common needs, becomes an ensemble. When this happens, the player becomes secure and relaxed. This provides the actor his greatest opportunity for development and growth. The leader must at all times remember that he is part of the group, and work should also facilitate his growth.

In order for the ensemble to grow, the atmosphere of the sessions must be carefully monitored by the whole group.

The environment must always be one of pleasure and relaxation. This allows each individual to be open to the techniques and methods.

For Viola Spolin, the group is also of primary importance. The group provides the player with the security needed to work. As Spolin explains, the need to develop group security is best seen through what happens when one player becomes insecure within the group. When this happens, the player becomes defensive toward the others and continually judges himself in comparison (Spolin, pp. 9-10). The security of the group is necessary, allowing the players to take chances and to grow. It is not a device to induce conformity. Every member of the group is an individual striving to develop his own abilities. The security of the group grows out of a mutual respect for individual capacities. It is this respect which allows every player to take chances.

It is often necessary to divide the group into smaller teams in order to play specific games. If they are needed, it is best to choose the teams at random. When the players choose their own teams they tend to remain with the same clique. The players must learn to relate to everyone. When players work with the same few people they become a "crutch." The leader should try to match players with as challenging a partner(s) as possible. If development is uneven, matching stronger with weaker players will help both players. Whenever teams are chosen, they should be selected to provide security and a challenge to all players.

The group requires a leader; without the leader the group could not function. It is the leader's responsibility to guide the development of the players. This is not, however, a matter of passing out information. The leader must be part of the ensemble, developing relationships and experiencing along with the players. Mutual growth and experience is necessary to keep the leader from becoming a teacher. A teacher presents information to his students colored by his own personality and interpretation. In the teacher/student relationship, the students learn through the experiences of the teacher. Spolin feels that when the players learn through another, personal difficulties and direct experience are not possible (p. 20). Since acting is a personal experience, it is best built on direct information and experiences. When the group is lead, as opposed to taught, all are involved in the experience and make their own interpretations. If the players and leader are not experiencing, the group becomes involved in approving or disapproving the individual's work. When judgment sets in, games are no longer being played, since in playing there is no "right" or "wrong" way. The player is trying to find what works best for him, not what others consider to be correct. This becomes extremely difficult for the leader who wants to give positive reinforcement to his players. Approval must be avoided as well as disapproval.

In Spolin's system, the leader and the players are two-thirds of the group. The third part is the audience.

The players need to understand that the audience is a concrete part of theatre training and that it provides responses which the actor can use to monitor his performance. Spolin also believes that complete understanding of the role of the audience causes release and freedom of the actor (p. 13). When the player understands that the audience is part of the performance and the experience, he no longer feels the need to prove himself to the audience.

For Spolin, the atmosphere of the session is the responsibility of every member of the group. The environment should be one where each, including the leader, can find his own nature and grow. If the environment is joyous and free of an authority figure, all will open up and play like young children.

Spolin believes that the actor must be kept alert, agile, and must continually find new material. This is best done in regular workshops. These workshops should be held in a well-equipped theatre. She also suggests that the players have at least one lighting dimmer at their disposal. Other technical equipment should include a simple sound system: amplifier, speaker, phonograph, and if possible, a microphone. Of course, basic set, costume, and prop pieces should also be handy. All technical equipment should be used spontaneously when needed. This may require a member of the group to become a technician (Spolin, p. 39).

Both Spolin and Barker agree upon the basic need for the group. In each case, their goal is the development of

the individual and his abilities. This is facilitated through the security developed by the trust and respect the players and leader have for each other. Such trust and respect bring the group together as an ensemble. When the group breaks apart, the development of each player suffers.

Within the structure of the group, Spolin and Barker stress the leader's participatory role. Under no circumstances can the leader become a teacher. When this happens, everyone is removed from the experiencing which is natural to play. In fact, when the leader teaches, the group is no longer playing and loses the advantages of subconscious response and a non-judgmental atmosphere. As part of the group, the leader has a stake in what happens.

The trust and respect inherent in the group is built through everyone's interaction. To facilitate interaction, both Spolin and Barker point out the need for a positive atmosphere. Both agree the environment must be open and relaxed. This reassures each player that his opinion and development is equally considered.

While there is no head to head disagreement with respect to the group, there are differences in their approach to the group concept. The biggest difference is in Spolin's inclusion of the audience in the group. Barker does include the actor's use of the audience. He does feel that the actor must learn how to handle and play the audience, but the group does not include the audience. For Spolin, the audience is

literally a member of the group and potentially of great influence.

Spolin is the only expert I have found who even suggests the need for light and sound equipment in addition to a few set and costume pieces. In most actor training set and costumes help to stimulate the imagination. Lights and sound can also serve this purpose as long as they remain part of the process and not become a plaything.

Barker

Barker provides very little information about how to structure his process. He suggests choosing games to work on specific problems which the group encounters. He does, however, categorize games by the areas which they explore. There are six areas--movement, sensory games, speed of reaction, control of reaction, and vertigo games--which study the emotions accompanying the loss of control over actions, and victim games (p. 81). An example of a movement game is "Grandmother's Footsteps." One player stands with his face to a wall. The others creep up on him and try to touch his back. At intervals, he turns and anyone seen moving is sent back to the beginning. Sensory games include "Blindman's Bluff" or "Kim's Game." In the latter, the players are shown a tray of objects. The tray is removed and the player tries to remember all the objects he can. Speed of reaction games also work on coordination. "Musical Chairs" and "Jacks" are classic games which work on reaction time.

Control of reaction is related to the speed of reaction. Games in this area can work on the physical, verbal, or both. "Simon Says" works on both levels. Vertigo games work on the loss of control. Barker suggests a game where two players join hands, keep their feet together, and swing violently round and round. Victim games explore the roles of tormentor and tormented. In "Keep Away," two players throw a ball to each other while a third player tries to intercept (pp. 81-87). These are just rough categories since the games overlap, and one game can serve to explore several areas. Barker's use of games is not tied to any sequence. The group may start work on movement, but to properly absorb more advanced movement games the players may need to have training in control of reaction. Not only should the group return to earlier areas of training, but it is also important that they return to individual games. The return provides new insights and a continuity to the work.

The games which Barker uses are children's games. As he explains, "I have never found a technical exercise for which I couldn't find a direct parallel in the world of children's games" (p. 63). It is these games which provide a mixture of elements and form a structured activity. The most basic element of these games is movement on the physical level. This is important to the actor since his work is so rooted in the physical. It is also easier to make subconscious changes in the body program by working physically.

Barker provides little information concerning the presentation of the game. His main concern is the purpose of the game. When the game is first played, the player should not know the reason it is being played. The reason is simply the skill or problem for which the leader has selected that particular game. The purpose can be body control, sensory contact, or other aspects of the actor's training. When the player knows the purpose, there is too great a temptation to do merely what he thinks the leader wants. When the player plays to please the leader, he interferes with the experience and sensations of the game. Only after the group has played the game for a while and become bored with it should the leader reveal the purpose to the players. This introduces technique and discipline. Barker points out that it is necessary to introduce the technical discipline (why the game is being played) because otherwise the group will get bored, the leader will lose their attention, and energy will drop. When this happens the group will find ways of cheating (getting around the difficult portions of the game). The gradual introduction of discipline requires the development of more skills. The game must first be played for its own sake and the release of energy. In fact, until a game becomes boring, it is hard to introduce technique. Barker stresses that the leader should not rush the development between the game and technical exercise (p. 80). The training potential cannot be extracted until the initial release of energy begins to dry up. By the time the players

have learned the reason behind the game, the skills and techniques have become part of the player's natural body/think.

For any games work, Barker stresses the use of a focus within the game. A focus directs the action and keeps all players playing the same game. More importantly, it takes pressure off the actor so that he does not consciously direct his action. By working subconsciously, the player is making changes or adding information to his body/think without intellectual interference.

A focus is not simply a trick which will distract the players. Barker outlines five focal points: aims and objectives, competition, external objects, other people, and imagination. Any game should incorporate one of these foci as part of the rules.

The use of aims and objectives within the game focuses the player's attention on playing the game and lets him forget the movements he is making. For example, a simple game of tag may be chosen to release energy, break down the reserves of the group, or to work on reaction time. All the players are concerned with, however, is keeping away from the player who is "it." In "Cat and Mouse," the person who is "it" runs after one opponent. The other players join hands forming several parallel lines. On a cue from the leader, the players drop hands, turn ninety degrees, and rejoin hands. While this is going on, the cat and mouse chase each other. Both of these games allow the players to

make violent off-center movements and return to their body center with a conscious intention. Barker points out that an added advantage to the release of energy inherent in the games is the improvement of concentration (p. 69).

Competition takes the pressure off the player through the use of a strong focus. Relays and team games utilize competition. Barker describes one he calls "Over and Under" as "a simple relay game in an extended line, where the running player has to go over the head of one of his teammates and under the legs of the next before returning to his place and touching off the next man" (p. 72). The use of competition as a focus is short lived and dependent upon the competitiveness of the individual.

The use of an external object, such as a ball, takes the pressure off the actor and places the focus on the object. With an object, the actor is no longer the center of attention but a facilitator of the action. The use of a tangible object over an imagined object is better for the player. With an external object, there is a better and more dynamic flow of energy. In an exercise, such as touching the toes while seated on the floor, the action involves reaching for the toes. The same movement can be developed when the player stretches to catch a ball lobbed between his feet (p. 74). By stretching to catch the ball, the player is making an automatic subconscious response as opposed to the conscious action of reaching for his toes.

As with the use of an external object, the addition of other people removes the center of attention from the actor thus taking the pressure off him. For example, two partners stand back to back. One player puts his arms under his partner's and the small of his back below his partner's. He then lifts his partner onto his back. In doing this the head, neck, spine, and pelvis relationship allows few tensions, and the center of gravity is worked on (pp. 73-74).

The final focus Barker suggests is the use of the imagination. For this work, the player creates a structure where the pressure is taken off him through the use of his imagination. This can be a complete world or simply an imagined object. For example, the object can be an imagined ball which is tossed between players standing in a circle. On command from the leader, the ball changes size and weight. An imagined world is found in the game "Climbing the Matterhorn." The floor of the playing area is imagined to be the face of the Matterhorn. The players then climb and pull each other up the mountain to the top. This game is suggested to explore light sustained movements (p. 79).

No matter what the focus, all games have several things in common. All use muscular activity and draw the attention away from the conscious. While doing this, they are making the proper action part of the subconscious. Care should be taken by the leader to insure that the players do not find short-cuts. As in all games, there are ways to cheat.

One of the first aspects Barker feels the group should work on is body control. Control is the basis for all movement. He cites the criteria of proper body control he adapted from M. Feldenkrais. The test begins by standing still. From that position, the player should be able to move in any direction with equal ease. This movement should be made with a minimum of work and a maximum of efficiency (p. 32). No one has ideal body control. Everyone is inhibited or contradicted in certain patterns of use. These patterns become habits. These habits, although technically abnormal, seem to be normal. The purpose of body control work is not to get normality. The patterns of use in each human are different and complex. "Normal" use is not as important as training the players to use their capabilities in the most efficient manner. The best way to work on movement and body control is through the isolation of specific body parts, as in mime training. The isolated parts are identified and studied. Too often, habits are connected, such as the inability to bend the knees without nodding the head. By isolating the body parts, the connection between movements can be solved. The key to body control work is that the player is not made conscious of his physical movements. When an actor is conscious of his limitations, he tries to prevent them. Conscious interference makes it more difficult to make changes, and causes frustration. Early games work helps to build better coordination through reinitiating natural processes. Barker points out that

coordination is centered on the relationship of head, neck, spine, pelvis, and the tension points along the way (p. 33). Tensions are a key to coordination because they restrict body movement. On stage, this appears as a general stiffness of movement and a tightening of the voice. The purpose of games work is to show the players how to identify and reduce their tensions. The goal of the work is not to remove tensions completely. If tension is removed in one area, it must increase in another. A complete removal of tension will cause a loss of balance.

In order to build better coordination, the movement must grow from the actor's center of gravity. The center of gravity is where a line drawn from an individual's ear through his body to his ankle bone passes the top edge of his pelvis. The key to a proper center of gravity is the actor's posture. The better his posture the better the center of gravity. Too often, the actor works from whatever shape he is in, unlike an athlete or dancer who's posture comes first. When posture is off, the individual works from peripheral actions, rather than the center actions from which they flow.

The center of gravity is the intersection of the line of balance and the pelvis. The pelvis is where the player has the greatest need of flexible movement with a maximum accessibility and a minimum pre-adjustment of posture. The pelvis is difficult for the actor to isolate. Barker

suggests the player tie a string at his pelvis to make him continually conscious of it while making violent movements.

Barker also suggests thinking of the center of gravity as the body center. As posture deteriorates, tensions accumulate in one part of the body. When this happens, the center of gravity moves closer to the area of tension. The greater the tension the further away from the pelvis the center of gravity moves. The greater the tension in the lower spine and legs the lower the center of gravity. This is seen as leading with the upper body. When an individual leads with the lower body, his tensions are greater in the lower body (p. 40).

Besides movement problems, the greatest effect of the center of gravity is that it causes "pushing." This happens when a repeated expending of energy takes place without recovering the center of gravity. "Pushing" is more likely to happen with a low center of gravity, since this is the most inhibiting position. Barker explains that this is why inexperienced actors have trouble sustaining verse. They push harder without taking the necessary recovery in-between. All that is possible is light, quick, staccato rhythms with decreasing strength (p. 41). The actor must recover his strength by returning to his center of gravity. The closer the actor's center of gravity is to the ideal, the stronger the recovery. "Pushing" directs the attention, spatially, away from the actor and toward the direction being "pushed." When he is pushing, the actor is no longer

the center of his own space. He is pushing towards the center and he becomes the periphery. He is always giving and not taking. As a result, there is no interaction on stage. There is also no interaction between the actor and the audience. They are being talked at and become more objective. The return to center is necessary for comprehension between the audience and the actor.

Devising a game to work the pelvis and the center of gravity posed a problem for Barker. The basic exercise for these areas is called a "Pelvis Whip." It is a very difficult move involving a circle movement of the pelvis from high front open, to high back closed, then down to low back closed, finally to low front open with a sudden thrust. According to Barker, this can be very traumatic to the actor because of his normal restricted use of the pelvis. In the game devised, the player stands with his legs apart and throws a ball through his legs and against a wall and catches it between his legs (p. 74). Since the player's attention is on the ball, he is not conscious of the movements his pelvis is making. The game increases the flexibility of the pelvis without traumatizing the player.

It is necessary for the leader to guard against group members playing the result and not doing the action. This happens when the player by-passes the natural processes of his body to recreate the final product. This interferes with his automatic responses. The harder the actor consciously tries for a result, the more his body is thrown off

its natural reactions, and the harder it is to get the conscious intention. For example, an actor playing a drunk tends to tighten his movements and his control instead of relaxing and losing body control. A game which points out the problem of playing the result is called "A Fight in the Dark" which Barker adapted from a traditional Peking Opera piece. The game is played twice, first with eyes open. One player is in a dark room as a guard of a valuable jewel, the second player enters with the intention of stealing the jewel. Neither knows where the jewel or the other player is because of the dark. The game ends when one player finds the jewel. The game is repeated, but this time both players are blindfolded. In the first instance, the players usually exert a large amount of energy not on the game but on convincing themselves and the audience that they cannot see. Their posture is generally humped over with their arms in front of them. When the game is played blindfolded however, the posture straightens up and both players move more efficiently (pp. 54-58).

Work on body coordination and the center of gravity may at first seem to be more an aspect of theory than a use of games. However, this work forms the basis for everything else. Body coordination can be dealt with through specific games or as an added advantage of other games.

The earliest work on coordination and body center is through games on horseplay and body relaxation. Barker defines horseplay as simple, violent games (p. 103). Their

chief use is to break down the inhibitions of the group and to release energy. These games provide a glimpse of the body working without interference. They can be first used as a diagnostic tool by the leader and later as a training game. Once the leader sees where the group needs work, he can structure games which allow the group to make subconscious changes.

While on the subject of horseplay, it is necessary to explain the other use of these games. Besides the release of energy, horseplay brings the group into contact with each other without the pressure of "doing" something. It allows the group to meet and start working toward becoming an ensemble. Once the group has started to accept each other, work can move into tactile and other more sensible activities.

The player's excess energy is drained through horseplay, and he can then begin work on relaxation. Barker points out that the effect of performance on the actor's nervous system is thought to be equivalent to the shock of a minor car accident (p. 111). The actor must be taught to relax and to ease tensions. The best way to work on relaxation is to isolate body parts and work with only one area. Once the body/think has been established in several areas individually, they can be put together for total relaxation. This process, especially when working on total relaxation, should take as long as the player feels is necessary.

The biggest problem facing the group in working with relaxation is one of individual inhibitions. An inhibition

is a refusal to commit to an action for fear of what might happen. In the extreme, it is a refusal to participate. A common inhibition in games work is the fear of consequences from an action or situation which might get out of hand. The player is not afraid of playing the game, but that he might not be able to physically accomplish the actions or that he might make a fool of himself. A fear is not an inhibition. What forms the inhibition is the body's automatic defense against the fear. The body's defenses are not always based upon practical experience. In fact, inhibitions are stronger when they are the result of repeated warnings, not practical experiences (p. 97). For example, a child repeatedly told, "You'll get hurt if you do that" will be more likely to be inhibited than one who was actually hurt. Barker calls inhibitions insurance policies (p. 91). Since the individual is fearful of the consequences, the insurance policy gives him a rational reason for not giving one hundred percent.

Barker has outlined a procedure for the leader to help the player overcome his inhibitions. The leader must establish a structure to which the players can refer. The first step is to discover where the inhibition lies. Once this is known, the player can explore different facets of his inhibition in a safe situation. Before this can happen, however, the group must stop being a collection of individuals and become an ensemble. This is necessary to give the player the security to take chances. Once he takes chances,

the player is likely to find that his fears are unfounded. The idea of inhibitions work is not to rein in the player's feelings but to release them in play situations. In this way, fears are controlled by the player instead of the player being controlled by his fears.

The key to controlling inhibitions and to all games work is the development of relationships. Relationships are vital to the actor because of their importance to the theatre. Barker defines the theatre as human relationships in action (p. 122). The problem for the actor is developing relationships while engaged in a performance. In order to do this, relationships need to become part of the player's body/think. Personal values and relationships off stage and out of the group are carried into the actor's work. If there is a conflict between what the player brings in and what is needed, the player's participation is influenced. The player must be taught to quickly develop working relationships of respect and trust. It is occasionally difficult to break down inhibitions, but it is harder and slower to build-up relationships.

In building relationships, the actor must come to accept his own personality and his present stage of development. An actor must respect and trust himself before he can ask the same of another. As the actor's relationships develop, the individual's self-understanding grows. As with all of Barker's work, the development of relationships should be done subconsciously. Barker suggests that the work be

physical to break down the reserve between players. For example, in "Log-Rolling," players lay side-by-side, head to feet. A player at one end levers himself on to the player next to him and rolls over the bodies of the players. Each player in turn takes his place rolling over the others (p. 104).

Tactile work is keyed to the development of relationships, the breaking down of inhibitions, and body relaxation. Tactile games are a continuation of the physical work of horseplay, however, the energy is channeled instead of released which requires additional discipline. Tactile work brings the players into contact with each other, continues previous work in relationships, and brings in sensory awareness. Barker suggests the games be set up where the players can make only one type of sense contact with another. In "Blindman's Bluff," one player is blindfolded and tries to catch another player from the group. If one is caught, the blindman tries to guess who he has caught (p. 82). "Blindman's Bluff" is played sightless. This not only counters man's natural dependence on sight, but it further frees the player since most people feel they are anonymous in the dark (p. 105). An added advantage is to restore sight in the open air as it emphasizes the experience of sight.

Tactile exploration must be returned to on several levels to continually increase the group's awareness. The better the contact work is going, the more chance for discovery and the discussion of relationship problems

without inhibitions. However, the leader must stress that the body is not the totality of the work. Nor must anyone forget that he has the right to evade, refuse, or break contact if he feels it is necessary.

The development of the group, through the breaking down of inhibitions and the building up of relationships, must have begun to solidify before work moves on to the areas of violence and tenderness. The development of the ensemble does not end with the beginning of violence work, but continues through all the work.

Violence and tenderness are opposite reactions to the same emotion. In both cases, the emotion is brought to life through a physical response. The negative response of violence is to reach out and hurt someone. Tenderness brings out the desire to comfort. As in all opposites, violence and tenderness are centered in different emotions, and in games work they must be handled differently.

Violence is not an inhibited emotion; generally it is very easy to release. The difficulty arises in trying to control it. Barker suggests that the best method for working with violence is through the use of an object to take the full force of the emotion. This object, like a pillow, is something the player knows will not hurt the player being attacked. One game starts with the players in a circle facing inwards. All players have their hands open behind their back. One player is outside the group with a rolled up newspaper. He circles the group until he finds a

victim who he hits on the hand with the paper. The victim chases him around the circle. If the player reaches his victim's space in the circle before the victim catches him, there is a new player outside the circle. Barker also suggests the use of a clown structure to study violence. The clown structure is a master-slave relationship where points are scored on the other. Generally, the slave is given a task to do; while the master is explaining the job to him, the slave pokes fun and makes faces at the master. If the master catches the slave, the slave faces a beating (p. 107).

Tenderness on the other hand, is difficult to release. The best games work in tenderness is a continuation of tactile games, working on the physical level. These games should be particularly sensitive. One such game begins in a circle. The first player says something nice to the player next to him. The second player says something nasty to the third player. This continues around the circle alternating nice with nasty. At the first playing, it might be more easy to begin with physical actions than with words. Barker notes that using actions avoids the tendency to use generalized statements. The above games and others like them rely on arbitrary attitudes and remove the danger of direct personality confrontation. They work to build from one chosen controlled reaction to another (p. 109).

Violence and tenderness not only explore emotions which the players must use, but they also study the hierarchy

of power. Violence and physical domination are part of the use and misuse of power. In a power situation, there is a victim, and it is through the role of the victim that the hierarchy is studied. Barker points out that the use of victim games is important to the actor since it is central to the concept of tragedy (p. 87). The tragic hero is a victim of society or himself. In these games, the first step is to play the game physically with a slapstick or the like. Once the players become comfortable with the game, the object is removed and the strategies are made more realistic by being restricted to work and facial and body gestures. All work in violence and tenderness begins on the physical level, and when the group is comfortable, expressions may become vocal. There are greater inhibitions vocally than physically when working in these areas. Working physically first helps to release the inhibitions and the vocal can then follow.

The development of the imagination and fantasy is tied to the concepts of prototype and cliché. Barker believes theatre centers on the ritual transformation of one human into another. An actor transforms his walk, gestures, thinking processes, etc. into those of another. The transformation is influenced by considerations of rhythms, space, and character which are not part of the actor. The techniques of transformation are built subconsciously through activities which remove the pressure from the actor. The best way is not to use realistic characters but fantasy

characters. All games begin with total relaxation from which the ritual transformation takes place. Barker outlines a game called "Frankenstein." The players awaken at a flash of lightening. They explore the parts of the bodies from which they have been constructed, how they are connected, and how they function. Advanced work can explore and attempt to understand where the brain came from, what sort of person owned it, and how the knowledge, thoughts, and experiences stored there came about (p. 112). If the player gets bogged down, the leader should enter into a direct touch relationship with him and show objective, rational ways of overcoming the problem.

The skills developed in transformation help the actor learn the fundamentals of character awareness and development. The player is taught to create prototypes rather than cliches. Transformation helps the player to develop his ability to be objective about the process of character creation. Work in this area also gives physicalization to the player's uncontrolled imagination. Barker points out that it is interesting and valuable to give the actor an opportunity to put daydreams and fantasies into practice (p. 114).

Drama is conflict. It is based in the meetings and encounters between human beings. Meetings and encounters are basic to not only drama but to human interaction. Conflict is dynamic and provides the easiest way to explore encounters. In conflict work, the actor cannot make contact when his

mind is directed elsewhere. This is why actors break character. Barker uses a game called "Touch Your Partner" to explore personality and learn why the actor behaves as he does. Two players face each other. Their objective is to score points by touching their partner in the small of the back. No other deliberate physical contact is allowed (p. 125). This game is not played efficiently at first because the players do not make contact. They watch hands not eyes, and they tend to be defensive not offensive.

Space awareness is a key to conflict work since the player must be aware of what is happening all around him. When the actors are subconsciously aware, there is no interference to direct contact between actors. The awareness should be 360 degrees all around the player. Since conflict work is concerned with development of relationships and social situations, it is useful in working within the world of play. This is especially true of period plays. Barker explains the use of games in conflict work with "Jacobean Street Scene." Each player has a coin which is held loosely behind his back. The object is to collect as many coins as possible. The player cannot run or use a wall to help protect his coin. Once his coin is stolen, the player retires from the game (pp. 128-129).

Conflict games need not be used with specific periods or plays. They are also effective when used to explore social relationships. For example in "Triangles," two players form a relationship while a third player attempts to

split them up (p. 131). The game is first played for instinctive reactions, evaluated, and played again. A strict framework should not be applied too early since the player learns better by trial and error. Barker explains that play can be stopped at a mistake or allowed to play through the mistake, correcting it after play.

Just as he deals with the player's use of space awareness, Barker also explores the actor's use of space and his position within it. Acting does not take place in a void, and so the actor must learn how to deal with the space around him. There are several reasons why the exploration and handling of space is vital to the actor. The actor does not perform in a theatre of only one size. He needs to understand the stage as a space in order to plan his movements. Finally, the actor acts on different stages and shapes of set.

The stage is a three-dimensional space with the actor at center. The actor has to deal with three different theatre spaces. The first space is the actual neutral space of the bare stage. The second is the virtual characterized space of the stage--the setting. These two spaces interrelate with the third space of the audience. The actor needs to learn to use all three spaces to carry out his work. He works in different theatres and with plays which were written for specific theatres. It is only occasionally that a play is played in the theatre for which it was intended.

Barker feels that the major factor affecting the actor's use of space is the architecture of the theatre (p. 143). The more physically aware actor uses more space and creates his own personal space to which everything and everyone must relate. This is because the body responds subconsciously to the space it is in. The player can be taught to develop his body's reactions to space. Barker suggests the following game. The player starts by standing in a room with his eyes closed. He is to listen to sound and imagine himself as the center of a three-dimensional volume of space using the perspective of sound. The reaction to being "on center" is that the body is pulled erect. Then, with his eyes open but not moving, the player explores the room with perspective remaining "on center." The final step involves the player continuing the sensation while moving around (pp. 138-139). Once the player has developed the "on center" ability, he can use it whenever it is needed.

A major problem facing the actor is the matter of "size." Barker defines size as emotional intensity (p. 141). Size is a spatial problem to be solved through physical means. Working on superficial activities such as projection, only ignores the true problem behind the lack of intensity. Barker suggests games which develop the player's use of space and being "on center." Size will develop naturally from gained security and self-confidence.

One way to help the players overcome the problems arising from changes in playing space and the development of

size is to train them in the use of a stage focus. Each theatre has its own point of focus, or the place on stage where the performer feels strong. For example, Barker points out that on a modern proscenium arch stage the point of focus is about eighteen inches up stage of the curtain or set line (p. 147). At that point, the actor feels strong, relaxed, and in total contact with the whole audience. Exploration of focus can be handled in the rehearsal room. Barker suggests taping "stage areas" and fake proscenium arches on the floor and having the players work on these instead of an actual stage (p. 152).

As he sees it, character is a re-creation of the prototype. During performance, the actor runs the subconscious "narrative" he has built up during study and rehearsal. This subconscious narrative triggers the physical activities in the body. The narrative is built from the action of the play and the characters and is run in the third person past tense. Barker gives an explanation based upon his work in Oh, What a Lovely War. In this play, he was cast as a soldier. Difficulties arose in building a character analysis because the use of other verb tenses and person combinations did not allow him the flexibility for character interaction. Barker finally hit upon a narrative which worked, "The soldier was on a route march in the First World War" (p. 160). Third person narrative allows the actor flexibility to modify the process. Without third person, the actor cannot interact with the others on stage. The past tense also gives depth

to the character. Without the past influences, the character would be a clown, with no past or future, everything only in the present tense.

A game which Barker developed to train players in the subconscious narrative involves a war situation. A hill has been overrun, the soldiers are to clear the area of debris and bodies and prepare for a counterattack. While playing, the actors are to run a silent narrative through their head in first person present--"clear the site." The game is repeated in first person past--"I told them to clear the site." Finally, the game is played in third person past--"the sergeant told them to clear the site." Barker found that during this sequential process the player's head-neck-spine-pelvis relationship altered. As playing moves through the stages, the back straightens, the head is held high, and the neck straightens. The player becomes the center of his own space. Finally, the range and mobility of the player's movement increases (p. 162).

Evident in the proceeding discussion of Clive Barker's approach to actor training is that games are used to work on problems which the group has encountered. Barker has provided little structure between areas. In fact, if building relationships were not necessary to the rest of the games work, then his use of games would have no structure. Viola Spolin however, has created a solid structure of games use which give the player understanding of the skills and drama itself.

Spolin

The first step in the games process created by Viola Spolin is the presentation of the problem. How the group will play the game depends on how they receive the presentation. The game should be presented quickly and simply. The leader must not give long detailed descriptions of what the players are to do. Instead, the players are to be given only the rules of the game. Demonstrations should be avoided if possible since the players have a tendency to copy. The group must then agree on all rules and other details of playing. If the group has any questions, they are generally answered by the group's preparation. Any remaining confusion will be cleared up through evaluation.

Any game used for actor training has a purpose, a "why." However, Spolin does not believe this purpose should be told to the players. Knowledge of the purpose may place the players on the defensive, or they will focus on giving the leader what they think he wants.

The key to the Spolin system is the Point of Concentration or the POC (Spolin, pp. 21-26). The POC is the object on which the players concentrate their attention while playing the game. In a relay game, the POC would be to complete the particular sequence of events before any other team. The POC is not the reason for the selection of the game. In the above game, the reason for playing could be to explore the specific movements made or to develop team-work. The POC takes the

player's attention off the outside reason and focuses it within the game.

The POC helps to isolate segments of theatre technique and thoughtfully explore them. This focus is within the game and it heightens the player's capacity for involvement. As a result, the POC acts as a catalyst and a control to keep the work from becoming self-destructive. Since the player is moving toward a clear goal, he need not plan his every move to feel secure. By not planning his moves, the player's actions are spontaneous and organic. They perceive what is actually going on, rather than acting on a preconception. The POC emphasizes the study of detail which makes the task of performing less frightening.

Each game has a set of rules. The Point of Concentration is just another rule. It marks the end of play and keeps the group playing the same game. The POC brings the group together to solve a problem while at the same time interrelating. Without the POC, the players become involved with themselves or another player, causing the danger of reflecting on their actions or becoming too absorbed in the play. When this happens, the players cannot develop relationships. An added advantage of the POC is that it will pull the players through if they get lost or worried about what they are doing.

A game does not have a single purpose. The same game can be used to solve varied problems. Repeating the game at different times gives perspective to the work. By repeating

games played in earlier sessions, the player adds the knowledge he has gained from advanced games to create new insights for the repeated game. Spolin points out that in solving problems, the player realizes he has been acted upon, and the creative process gives him insight (p. 37).

The game ends when the problem is solved. By continuing after this point, the group is creating a story, not playing the game. The final outcome is not known until the game is over. When the outcome is known before the game is over, the players have been preplanning and not playing the game.

Early games in the total process and in a given session should be energy release or warmups. These games release excess energy through physical activity. Warmups become important to prepare the players physically or mentally for later games. They also help when the players become restless and static to redirect the players' attention and build energy. Physical release games also help to bring the sessions together by summing up the thrust of the session. For example, a session which has dealt with body relaxation and release of tensions could be summed up through a game of tag which allows high energy release and abandon. A physical release can be a game of tag or a simple relay. The POC would be to catch (or to avoid being caught by) another person or to beat another person or team in the relay.

The early sessions deal with orientation of the players to the games process. Orientation deals with more

than a "get acquainted" process. As Spolin explains, it is the first step in building a creative reality (p. 49). Orientation is needed to help prevent later problems. It establishes the approach the leader will use. Orientation establishes the use of the POC, overcomes the player's dependence on a teacher telling him how to do things, and shows him how to learn for himself with the leader's guidance. It also establishes the rights of the group and sets the tone. Finally, orientation introduces the responsibility of the audience.

The orientation sessions work on several levels. They break down stage tensions, and develop awareness on both a physical and sensory level. They begin training in the art of observation. Finally, orientation games develop skills in physicalization and initiate awareness of the physical world.

The orientation process is best illustrated through three games Spolin calls "Orientation #1, #2, #3." In the first game, one player goes on stage, picks a simple activity, such as making mud pies, and begins doing it. Other players come in one at a time and join him in that activity. The second game differs because the incoming players each do a related activity--build a sand castle, play on the swings, or play catch. In the final game, the incoming player must be related to by the original player on the basis of the activity they chose; they talk about the best way to make sand castles, or the ball gets into the sand box. The original player does not know in advance who they are. In all three games, the

POC is to show the activity, but each game is more complex and requires additional skills (pp. 62-72).

Sensory work as Spolin uses it, is an integral part of orientation. Her work centers on strengthening the player's perception rather than on mechanical accuracy. Spolin also feels that the players should take their sensory work home since opportunities for observation are limited in workshops. However, the games should not be done outside the workshop (p. 87).

Physicalization is concerned with the creation of a physical environment. The player creates the world of the game. He controls the action and makes all decisions concerning the outcome. This work begins by giving life to imaginary objects. The player creates an object all can see, from an idea inside his head. This focuses his attention outside his "self," and it prevents him from mirroring himself. In fact, the key to proper playing of physicalization games is each player being intent on the other players and the object, not on himself. Spolin places the emphasis on other players not on the character each might be playing. The players are creating an objective, physical situation in which they interact. Introduction of characters or any outside device is an avoidance of the problem (p. 42).

Physicalization is not invention. Physicalization is spontaneously giving life to an imagined object and making the group see it. Invention involves the thinking up of the object. It is an intellectual activity and is limited by

that frame of reference. Physicalization gives the life to the thought. A simple physicalization game starts with the group seated in a circle. The leader produces an imaginary lump of clay. He then forms it into some object of his choosing and passes that object to the next player. The player must receive the object, relate to it, form something new, and pass it on. The clay continues around the circle until all players have created something.

Physicalization is immediate; it is taking place right now. As Spolin points out, "It [how to solve the problem] must happen at the actual moment of stage life and not through any pre-planning" (p. 35). Pre-planning throws the players into performance rather than playing the game. Little is learned when this happens as some players grow awkward and fearful when given direction. In these players, pre-planning reinforces bad habits, and stops direct communication as the players are no longer showing the audience but telling them. This forces everyone to work harder. The only pre-planning Spolin allows is what is necessary to structure the problem.

The development of environments through physicalization is realized in games concerning "Where." Spolin simplified the idea of environment into the physical idea of where the action is taking place. There are three levels of "Where." The first is the immediate area around the player, within his reach. This could be the table at which he is sitting. The room the table is in would constitute the

general environment. The area beyond the room is the larger environment (p. 89). "Where" games can work on one or all three levels. For example, a single player enters the stage area and shows what just happened off stage. During early work of this type, it is best to deal only with physical activity. As the player's skills develop, the leader brings in relationships and emotions (p. 103).

"Where" games also include other aspects of the environment besides location. Spolin includes games in which the player must show the time, the weather, or a relationship based on the environment.

Since the actor must work with his whole body, he must be taught to control his movements. Spolin points out that body control is a misnomer. What the player needs to do is to release his body from the tensions which have been built over the years. For specific parts of the body, Spolin suggests isolating only one area and working on it visually. To do this, a curtain the player could work behind or a puppet theatre where only one aspect is visible would be helpful. As the individual parts of the body are released, the player comes to control his body as a whole unit (p. 146).

Spolin also makes use of gibberish. She defines gibberish as a substitution of shaped sounds for recognizable words (p. 120). It releases the actor from the technical details of a script, and frees him for natural and spontaneous movement within his role. Gibberish is not a translation of an English phrase but a vocal utterance accompanying an action.

The meaning of gibberish should not be understood unless the action conveys it. According to Spolin, "Gibberish develops the expressive physical language vital to stage life, by removing the dependency on words alone to express meaning" (p. 120). However, she warns that the actor is not to be told that the action is to convey the meaning; let him get the experience and learn for himself. Gibberish forces the actor to show rather than tell. Since he cannot avoid action if he wants to communicate, the actor must then physicalize and the process becomes organic.

Pantomime will not take the place of gibberish. Dialogue and action are interdependent, and gibberish is a form of dialogue. Gibberish also points out unnecessary verbalizing. This idea is vital to the players since adlibbing and wordiness are a withdrawal from the problem.

As the player masters the physical skills and develops a theatrical sense, Spolin moves onto non-directional blocking. With non-directional blocking, the player learns the give-and-take necessary in more advanced movement. According to Spolin, the mark of a seasoned actor is his natural, purposeful stage movement: "The teacher-director should not influence exactly where an actor stands or how he gets on or off the stage except where positions strengthen or weaken relationships, mood, or characterization" (p. 165). Spolin defines blocking as mass balancing mass, mass balancing action, and mass balancing design. The actor must consider the demands of the scene, be alert to the immediate

action, know where his fellow actors are, be able to keep the stage picture interesting, and keep sightlines clear (p. 156). Non-directional blocking forms the give and take relationship between actor and director. The director's opinions are necessary since he represents the audience's point of view. This ability is passed on to the actor and he learns to visualize the stage from the audience's point of view.

Closely tied to blocking is stage business. Stage business must grow out of the stage relationships and is not created to keep the actor occupied. Every actor on stage is responsible for everything that happens. To do this, the actor must listen to his fellow actors and hear everything. By really speaking, listening, and hearing, the actor will be more natural. To develop the player's skills in stage business and non-directional blocking, Spolin suggests the game "Converge and Re-divide." The group is divided into teams of at least four. Each team agrees on "Where," who they are, and the situation, and is then divided into sub-teams. The sub-teams begin a scene giving and taking the focus. Once the scene is going, the leader calls "converge." The sub-teams come together and interact. The leader then calls "re-divide." The group must then split, and each player continues his scene with a new partner, again using the give-and-take techniques. The leader may call "converge" and "re-divide" as often as he wishes as long as the players are with their original partner at the end (p. 163).

Throughout the sessions, the leader should continue to work on foci begun in earlier sessions. In all games, there should be a POC on which the players can focus.

The player must be taught to handle emotion. As an actor, he deals with emotions on stage. Spolin believes, however, that "real" emotion should not be used on stage (p. 237). Real emotion involves the actor actually feeling the emotion. This is too private and not suitable for public viewing. Emotion for the theatre must come from fresh experiences and organic responses. As a result, the player must be taught to create emotion from what is happening on stage. Care must be taken in the selection of games so that the player is not working from his personal feelings. Spolin suggests physicalizing the problem with emotion. In this way the emotion is more organic and less abstracted. A game which works on physicalizing emotion is "Silent Scream." The whole group is involved, seated, and relaxed. The leader coaches them: scream with your toes, scream with your eyes, your back, your stomach, scream with your legs. When the group is finally allowed to vocalize the scream, it will be deafening (p. 239).

Once the players have begun to master the use of emotion, they are ready to begin work on relationships through conflict. Besides emotion, Spolin believes that the players must understand the use of the POC to create relationships. If conflict is introduced too early, the scenes become subjective, tending to be emotional or verbal

battles. Players should use physical objects to show conflict. This helps to prevent the subjective battles. In conflict games, the freeing of tension and the releasing of energy are always generated between players. In order to achieve tension and release, the players must remain focused on the POC and not preplan or playwright. If the players are not involved with the POC but with the other players, the result is mutual pushing around. When the POC is in charge, the conflict moves from the emotional to the intuitive. This is needed to further the action. Spolin suggests the use of any orientation or "Where" game to which conflict has been added. For example, the games mentioned under orientation can be easily adapted. Instead of one player starting an action, two players start a conflict, and others join in. The players come in as characters and become involved in the conflict (p. 252).

Character work is the final stage of Spolin's process. It requires a mastery of what has gone before. Too early attention to character on a verbal level tends to throw the actor into role playing. When this happens, the player is no longer involved with the POC and relationships with others. To prevent this, Spolin suggests looking on characters as the "Who" in the relationship. This gets away from acting (p. 254). By getting away from acting, the players need to be involved with the POC, relate to each other, solve the group problem, and trust in the scheme. This is done through

games which build the physical qualities of a character. As Spolin explains:

The actor is surrounded by a circle of characteristics--voice, mannerisms, physical movement--all of which are given life by his energy and by full contact with his stage environment. If he is taught to think this way, then the mystery of acting and characterization will be replaced by a more workman like, teachable concept (p. 256).

When the actor develops himself he will be himself, the actor, on stage playing the game of the character he has chosen to communicate. Analysis and character histories are only helpful when the information is communicated physically. Games such as "Costume Piece" work by showing the player how to develop a character physically. Beginning with at least two players, each selects a costume piece and assumes the character qualities suggested by his costume. A scene is developed between the characters. The group must be watched to be sure each player lets the costume piece determine his character and does not impose a character on the piece (p. 266).

Spolin calls the assumption of a character's physical qualities "transformation" (p. 39). Transformation is the creation of a new reality from the actor's physical and emotional characteristics.

Comparison

On the surface, it appears that the systems which Clive Barker and Viola Spolin have developed have little in

common except the use of games to train actors. However, they do have more in common.

Each has developed a structure within a group of sessions. On the surface, it might appear that Barker has no true structure to his work. While he does not describe a step-by-step involvement, there is an order to his system. The order is imposed because of the necessity for the player to master certain skills, such as relaxation, before moving on to more difficult work, like ritual transformation. Barker starts with body control then moves through character and conflict to the use of space. Spolin, however, has a more strictly imposed structure. She begins with outer sensory work, then moves into some body work, then to "Where" games and finally moves into character and conflict. In either case, the process is not absolute but based on the games becoming more difficult. Also, both authors suggest a return to early work. This develops new skills and allows the players to gain new insights.

Each author uses a focus within each game to take the player's attention off what he is doing. Spolin has developed the Point of Concentration. Her emphasis on this goes as far as making it part of the game description. Barker uses a focus--competition, external object, etc., to take the pressure off the player and place his work on the subconscious level.

The work of both Spolin and Barker relative to character concerns the idea of transformation. It is the

actor's assumption of the character's physical traits. For Spolin, it is a creation of a theatrical reality. Barker treats it as a ritual.

The final major agreement between the two is the work on body control. Each sees the focus of this work to be the release of body tensions. Both begin with isolating individual body parts. Once the player has mastered these, the work turns to putting it all together.

The only disagreement between Spolin and Barker begins as an agreement. In presenting a game to the player, both agree that they should not be told the reason the game is being played. If they are told the reason, there is a tendency to force the player into playing for the result he thinks the leader wants. Barker, however, believes that once the energy has dropped the players need to be told the technical reason behind the game. This allows the entrance of the necessary discipline. Spolin does not believe the players should ever be told the technical reason behind the game. If they become bored, the leader should go to an energy release and a change of direction.

Viola Spolin and Clive Barker differ in the specifics of their processes. Barker is concerned with a more skilled group. He assumes the players have a basic training in acting. Without a basic understanding of dramatic structure and acting skills, a player might have difficulty in understanding violence-tenderness or conflict. Spolin is concerned with the acquisition of basic skills. The players

are taught sensory awareness, physicalization, and environment. The skill she deals with are the building blocks for further development. Spolin and Barker also differ in their approach to stage movement. Spolin attacks the problem through games which work on blocking. Barker works on training the player to control the space around him and to use the stage efficiently. The difference is one of approach. Both are working to train the players to communicate the onstage action most efficiently.

A final point of difference: Spolin introduces the idea of orientation as an introduction to the games process. Through orientation, the player learns the POC and works to develop an ensemble. Barker mentions no provision for training the players to accept and use games. His earliest games deal with complicated areas such as body relaxation and inhibition. The orientation process may be inherent in Barker's use of games, but he describes no specific procedure.

Chapter 4

THE LEADER AND THE EVALUATION

The Leader

In games training, the leader is vital to the development of the individuals within the group. He is the one responsible for bringing the experience and introducing the training into the session. While the leader is always part of the group and participating along with the players, he also has specific responsibilities to the group. Because of his high visibility and fundamental role, the leader presents a model for the players. Besides setting the tone and atmosphere, his purpose is to train the actors within his group. This section will explore the responsibility and requirements Viola Spolin and Clive Barker have outlined for their respective leaders.

Barker

In Barker's view, the leader's basic responsibility is to teach. He defines the teaching situation as the removal of the obstacles to the actor fully utilizing the potential of his mind, voice, and body (Barker, p. 7). Leading through games is not done according to the standard teaching situation where the teacher stands in front of his class and lectures. Nor is it a rehearsal situation. Games

require the leader to build a situation in which the actor can work and create. This begins by leaving consideration of the audience until the last possible moment. The situations are games in which the players can take risks to overcome inhibitions, develop relationships, and create new skills. In planning games, the leader deals not only with overcoming inhibitions but also with providing opportunities for the players to produce a wide range of movements. This is best accomplished by taking the pressure off the player and letting him work.

The second responsibility of the leader is to watch the group to ensure the quality of their work. Barker believes that quality is a true test of the group's progress (p. 106). This is especially true in contact and relationship work, since it is very easy for the players to fake the contact or to engage in superficial work in order to appease the leader or to fit into the group.

The final responsibility of the leader as Barker sees it, is to let the player learn for himself. The leader provides the environment, the knowledge, and the guidance. The player must take these factors and create his own techniques based upon the choices he makes. The leader must never force the player in his choices. This can happen when the leader has preconceived ideas of the effects he wants. He may then set up the games, lead the group, and evaluate the work with prejudice. This need not be done intentionally. The leader may go into the game with the best of intentions,

but if he has preconceived ideas, he is doing the player a disservice. This forces the leader to be extremely careful about his personal ideas and habits. As a result, he has the responsibility to keep his leadership impartial.

The best way for the leader to meet his responsibility to the group is to participate and behave as a member of the group. The leader's participation was discussed in the previous chapter, but at this time it is necessary to go into greater depth. Barker believes that, "One teaches best what one is learning oneself" (p. 67). When the leader is learning, he is most involved in the action taking place. He can make instinctive responses to what the players are doing or what they need to do. The only way these responses can be trusted is for the leader to participate in the session. There will, of course, be times when the leader cannot be physically active in the game. This is especially true when the group is exploring contact and tactile work. During these games, someone must remain outside the group to ensure that the work does not get out of hand. If the leader cannot physically participate in the game, he must be physically aware of what the group is doing. In this way, he can experience and grow with the players. As long as he is learning, the leader is less likely to be lecturing and imposing his views on the players.

A problem which can arise within a games session is for the group, the leader, or both to "get lost." This happens when the players are not responding well to the game,

perhaps because it is too advance, not fully explained, or simply inappropriate to their needs. When the group gets lost, Barker suggests two alternatives. The first is to end the game, go to an energy release, and start over. The second alternative is to throw the session open to the group. The better choice depends upon the group and the situation. When the leader is a participant, he can more easily realize when the group is lost and which alternative will work best. The leader is in charge of the session, but he is not the decision maker. Barker believes the most successful sessions are those where the group "takes" the session away (p. 68). The leader should start with only one game in mind as an energy release. From that point, the session should be built on what the players suggest or what the leader sees is needed from the quality of the warm-up. If the chosen method does not work, the leader should try another approach.

The leader's flexibility in planning the session is based on his skill as a diagnostician. The leader must learn to "read" the group and the individuals for problems on which to target future games. The best way for the leader to develop the player's skills is to work from the player's position and technical understanding. In this way, the leader knows where the group needs work, and he can target games to meet these needs.

The leader's role can best be described as the facilitator of the games session and its purpose. In the earlier chapter on theory, I outlined Barker's five objects of a

games session and will review them here. First, the leader should reveal some of the player's movement problems and possibilities. Secondly, he should lead the players to experiences and sensations which they could not find directly. The third purpose of the leader is to initiate players into the process of self-discovery. His fourth purpose is to create a shared body of experience to build relationships and to develop the ensemble. The leader's final purpose is to create a common vocabulary to aid in evaluation (pp. 65-66).

Spolin

According to Viola Spolin, the leader must act as a diagnostician, and he must have an in-depth knowledge of both acting and games work. He begins by finding where the actor needs work. Once it is decided what is needed, the leader must then find or create a game to solve the problem. As the group is playing, the leader must diagnose how the players are handling the material. For example, if they are involved with the Point of Concentration, is their attention elsewhere. Finally, the leader must see that the material is absorbed and techniques have become intuitive. The final step is tricky for the leader. It may not become apparent until later in the work that the players have not properly absorbed earlier material. At this time, the leader must return to previous work.

It takes time for the leader to develop skills in diagnosing the player's problems and to find solutions for those problems. It is always difficult for the novice leader to realize exactly what is happening. Spolin suggests that if the leader does not know how the players are handling the material, he should question them (p. 41).

In most games work, there is someone who takes control. It is necessary for an individual to direct the actions and ensure that everyone is participating freely. While the leader is in charge, Spolin stresses that his control must be flexible (p. 38). There is a tendency for the leader to enter into a games session with a definite idea of what he wants to do. When this happens, he removes himself from his main function as guide. With a definite schedule of games, the leader cannot seize the opportunities which present themselves. Often, the group will hit on a problem or reveal an aspect on which immediate work is advisable. For example, when playing "Orientation #1," the leader may find that the players cannot properly physicalize their actions. Instead of following a course of work into "Orientation #2," the leader might do better to go into a game involving object physicalization. The leader must be flexible enough to change plans on a moment's notice.

Not only should the leader not plan a session too tightly, he should also not hurry the structure of the workshops. Spolin stresses that the leader should not be impatient and rush the player's development. Every step is

essential for the actor's growth. She cautions that the leader must wait until the players are ready for advanced exercises. Such exercises should not be used as a bribe (p. 41). This is necessary because each player progresses at his own speed. Since the work is to become intuitive, pacing is the key to actual skill development. The leader needs to be aware of what level the players are on and work from there, rather than where he thinks they should be. If the leader is in tune with the players, he is not only able to pace the work to the player's growth but he can also ensure that each player is participating every moment.

The necessity of monitoring the group's participation and pacing is based on the cumulative effect of theatre games. Each new game should build upon the knowledge and the skills developed in earlier games. When advanced games are not rooted in sound development, they cannot be fully accepted. This is like a house without a proper foundation. A failure to integrate old and new games can result from the leader moving too fast, the players not making the work intuitive, or someone not freely participating in the game. The last is important, because the more blocked and opinionated the participant is, the longer the process takes (p. 41). The troublemaker not only interferes with his own development, but also with the participation of the rest of the group. Anything which interferes with the player's absorption of the material is to be avoided. It is the leader who is in the position to control these factors.

The leader is not simply a disciplinarian and teacher for the group, he is also a member. Spolin suggests that after he presents the game, the leader should step back and become part of the problem. In this function, he should circulate among the teams to answer questions and to clarify the work (p. 32). As part of the group, he can use himself as a judge of the work. Spolin explains that if the leader is drained and exhausted at the end of the session, something is wrong; "A fresh experience can only create refreshment" (p. 38). As part of the group, the leader can best sense what the players have absorbed. This includes how well the players are communicating to the audience.

The leader does not function within the games session as a director does within a rehearsal situation. The director focuses on the play and the problems involved in bringing it to life. The leader focuses on the individual and problems to help the group experience. The director would use games to solve specific problems which appear during rehearsal. The leader uses games to develop the player's skill as an actor and to instill a sense of the theatrical. The leader must remember at all times that his purpose is to train actors in their craft and self-development. Any deviation from this is an end of play.

As a teacher, the leader must watch the group for the quality of their work. Haphazard participation will not help any participant, and it is a waste of everyone's time. Spolin suggests that the leader watch the players for the

fine line between "emoting" and "perceiving." He should also insist on concise physicalization and discourage stale feeling (p. 40). When the player actively participates through physicalizing, he makes the learned skills intuitive, which is the goal of games work.

Ideally, the leader should function as an instigator of the work and see that things do not get out of hand. Spolin suggests that the players be allowed to find their own material (p. 40). This may be unrealistic when work first begins. However, as the sessions continue, the players can contribute more material and accept more. When the players choose their own material, they begin to respond with their total organisms. As the players gain control, the leader becomes a watchdog to ensure that no one player or group of players take control. A player who manipulates the group is no longer playing the game and focusing on the POC, but is playwriting. Spolin believes that playwriting arises from a failure to believe that a scene will develop out of the game (p. 388). In short, the player does not trust the scheme.

In all games work, Spolin stresses the importance of side-coaching by the leader. She defines side-coaching as an immediate response to what the players are doing during play (p. 28). Side-coaching acts as a guide while the group is involved in a problem, keeping the work immediate. The response is an organic reaction to what the players are doing. Since it is part of the process, side-coaching centers in

remaining on focus, thus keeping the actor in touch with the game and not with what he is doing. For example, Spolin describes a game of "Tug of War." Two players grasp an imaginary rope and each tries to pull his opponent across a line. The POC is to give the rope reality--"Feel the rope! Feel it's texture! It's thickness! Make it real" (p. 61)! By helping them remain focused on the rope, the leader takes the players' emphasis off themselves and the movements they are making. As a result, these movements are more likely to become automatic responses.

The key to side-coaching is that it remains objective. The leader needs to watch what the players are doing on the basis of the POC. Any departure from the focus brings about either approval or disapproval. The use of "labels" also removes objectivity. Spolin defines these as technical terms such as "blocking." A "label" is static and has a preconceived image. This may not be what the leader wants to have happen. For example, "share the stage picture" is better for the inexperienced player than "blocking." "Sharing" is something most anyone can understand, while "blocking" may require an explanation (p. 32). When the leader is forced to explain a term, attention is drawn to the action. It is better for the players to automatically understand what it means to "share the stage" and then introduce "blocking" than to go the other way around. They can do the action (sharing) before they can understand the term (blocking).

Related to the use of "labels," is the use of side-coaching to set a time limit on play. It is often hard for inexperienced players to realize when the game is over. The leader can help to develop this ability and instill an intuitive sense by calling "one minute." This prompts the players to end their scenes. As the players learn to use the POC, the need for calling time is diminished.

Comparison

Barker and Spolin strongly agree on the function of the leader within the games session. This agreement is reflected in four aspects of the leader's role.

The first is that the leader is a member of the group. This bears repeating. When the leader is not participating and experiencing with the players, he becomes subjective in his evaluation of play. Since the leader is not responding instinctively to the action, he cannot judge accurately what is happening. The further removed his involvement, the less objective his response. The leader needs to be objective in his evaluation and involvement, as anything less introduces approval and disapproval.

The second area of agreement between Barker and Spolin is in their insistence on the player's control of the session. The leader must act as the instigator; the player then takes the game and makes it his own. The player is in the group to develop his talents, and all work must move to this end. The leader cannot forget this. When he does, the

leader becomes a lecturer presenting facts and exercises to a collection of actors. They are then no longer playing, and lose the advantages of games. The games should come from the group, including the leader.

The leader acts as a diagnostician for the group. Each player enters into the work with problems he must overcome. Both Spolin and Barker agree that it is the leader's responsibility to recognize and develop games which will help to solve problems. The necessity arises from the player's inability to be objective about his performance. The leader has this objectivity and the experience to understand what needs to be done.

Along these lines, the fourth agreement between Spolin and Barker is that the leader is responsible for the quality of the work. Many games can be difficult to execute or are simply unenjoyable to play. When this happens, the players tend to "cheat" and get around the difficulty. If they are to work together, the players cannot cheat. This has a negative effect not only on themselves but on others in the group. The leader provides the discipline for the players who attempt to cheat.

There are no serious disagreements between Spolin and Barker relative to the treatment of the leader. There are several areas, however, in which they differ. The differences arise from items on which one author deals and the other does not.

The most important difference relates to the use of side-coaching. In the system Spolin has created, side-coaching is the immediate response by the leader to the players' action. The response takes the form of directions to the players. Spolin believes this is essential to keep the group on focus. In fact, in many games she presents examples of side-coaching which the leader may need to employ. In Barker's work however, I have found no comparable system for guiding the group during play. A typical game explanation for Barker involves a description of the game. This might be followed by an outline of possible uses for that game or problems he has discovered, but there is no mention of directing the game in progress. The closest he comes to a mention of side-coaching appears in his discussion of conflict work. Barker states that play can be stopped at a mistake, the problem discussed, and play resumed. The leader can also ignore the mistake and bring it up in the evaluation (Barker, p. 134).

Barker also stresses the importance of the leader being thoroughly familiar with theatre, performance, and games work. Without this, he cannot fulfill his other functions. Spolin does not emphasize the leader's training. In fact, she is very specific in describing what the leader is to do or not to do. This is documented in her elaborate games presentations and eleven pages of "Reminders and Pointers" (Spolin, pp. 36-46).

Evaluation

Inherent in playing games is the realization of problems which arise during play. A child makes this realization subconsciously. He plays, he subconsciously reviews his play, and then he plays again, modifying the play based upon his review. Periods of play may come back to back or be separated by a long period of time. A child's subconscious modifications are based upon not only his play but any information he has picked-up during the interval. When working with a group, it is ineffective to let a player make the transition on his own. This is mainly due to the fact that the process is subconscious. Games specialize in subconscious modification. There are times, however, when the process must be brought to the conscious level. This is especially important when working with a group, in order to share different interpretations of the same actions.

Barker

For Clive Barker, the evaluation is part of an alternating process of doing, watching, and discussing (p. 57). First, evaluation reveals the reasons the game was played. As explained earlier, this step is vital to increase the discipline and technical difficulty of the game. The second function of evaluation is to clarify and bring about an objective experience. Since they are involved with the action, players may find it difficult to realize what they did. Evaluation discusses what happened and why. In this

way, the player learns what he is transmitting to others. The final function is that evaluation helps the player articulate the experience he is having. As with any games work, the changes are made subconsciously. The player needs to understand the changes and how they came about. In order to do this, it is necessary to bring the work to the conscious level temporarily. At this point, it is crucial that the leader use all his experiences, objective and subjective, to help the player articulate his experiences. The player is then given not only subconscious abilities but conscious knowledge.

An ability which is tied to the evaluation process is observation. The player must be taught to see--not only in his work but in others--aspects important to the work. Barker suggests that the player be taught to watch the action rather than look for something. Watching is a less deliberate activity since the player does not reflect on it until he is surprised. Conscious looking restricts the observation and hampers the evaluation (p. 56).

Spolin

For Spolin, evaluation is a matter of communication. It takes place after each team completes its work. In an evaluation, the leader establishes an objective vocabulary so that the group can discuss the game in a non-judgmental way. Spolin believes that evaluation should be led by the leader who asks questions to which all must respond. The

response can be either vocal or mental. The leader should also be asking himself these questions. This will help him plan further work (pp. 26-27).

Again, the key to good evaluation is descriptive communication. It is based on what was seen, not what should have been seen. The leader must be careful to guard against the players interpreting what happened. That is, they watch a game being played and specific information is presented. The player should not fill in, "what he meant was," or "it seemed to me," etc. Evaluation is concerned only with what was or was not presented.

Since evaluation is focused on the communication of ideas, the process remains fixed on the POC. This frees the discussion from areas supplemental to the action such as characterization or scene work. Of course, there are times when these two factors are the POC, but their discussion will take place for that reason and not as a side-light.

The usefulness of evaluation is that it is a verbalization of the audience's reaction. The audience is formed of those players who are not playing the specific game. Spolin believes that audience response is spontaneous and almost always just (p. 39). Besides training the player in how to play the audience, evaluation presents the game as an audience would see the game. This helps the player build an understanding of what he is doing.

Comparison

Both Spolin and Barker agree on the importance of evaluation to the learning process in games. The difference between them is one of emphasis. Spolin continues to stress the POC and how it is communicated. This remains consistent with the previous work in her system. Barker, on the other hand, deals with the subconscious development of skills and the conscious understanding of those skills. His emphasis within the evaluation process is to bring new subconscious actions to the conscious level. It is within evaluation that the players learn the purpose of the game. They develop the skills subconsciously and learn the facts consciously.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

This thesis has explored the use of theatre games in actor training as proposed by Viola Spolin and Clive Barker. Each has created a system of training based upon personal beliefs and theories and rooted in the natural educational process of play. In this thesis, I have outlined the individual systems and compared the approaches each takes.

The use of games in actor training is based upon the play of children. When a child plays, he engages in an activity which is enjoyable to him. He focuses his attention on the rules of the game and the game itself. While he is doing this, the child is programming his actions in his subconscious. The subconscious is based in the back of the brain and deals with the individual's automatic response to various stimuli. These responses are accumulated over a period of time based upon what the individual has found to work. A child in his play attempts an action. The result is analyzed, and the information and skills become part of the subconscious body program. The child learns through continually modifying his actions.

Games in actor training work in much the same way. The actor plays the game. As he is playing, his actions become part of his subconscious. The knowledge gained is

brought to the conscious level through discussion. This step is necessary for the actor since it provides him with an understanding of what is happening. The skills he develops can be called upon when he needs them.

Clive Barker has developed a system of theatre games which provides the player with experiences from which he can draw. Barker believes that acting cannot be taught. The leader can only provide new experiences and insights. It is the player's responsibility to take the information and convert it into a personal technique. This happens through the automatic functions of the brain. The subconscious takes the player's physical actions and insights and processes them into the body program. Once in the body program, the skills can be drawn on as needed.

The skills are developed by using a game which deals with a specific problem. Barker's system has a hierarchy of difficulty, but it is designed to work on specific problems. The leader discovers where the group needs work and creates a game which will subconsciously develop skills to overcome the problem. Barker's system deals with areas of concern to more experienced actors. Instead of stressing environment and sensory awareness, Barker deals with relationships and inhibitions.

Because of the leader's responsibility to work on specific problems, his job becomes difficult. Barker stresses the leader's need for in-depth training in performance and games use. The leader then uses this knowledge to

build games with which to train the players and himself. While the leader is in control and responsible for the learning of the players, he is also a part of the group. He should be learning along with the players to ensure his objectivity.

Since the leader's responsibility is to train actors, he must use all techniques at his disposal. This includes evaluation. Evaluation is a discussion of what happened in the game. As Barker uses it, evaluation brings the work to a conscious level by revealing to the players the reason for the game. This provides greater discipline and further expands the possibility of skill development.

Viola Spolin's system of games training is based upon her belief that acting can be taught to the average person. Her system not only teaches the basic skills of performance, but it was developed to instill a theatrical sense in the player. All games work is based upon what the actor communicates to the audience. To Spolin, theatre is communication. When a player is taught to communicate his actions and feelings to an audience, he is acting. Spolin's process begins with the orientation games to indoctrinate the players in games use. Once the players are comfortable with the use of games, the process moves into aspects of theatre--environment, conflict, emotion, character, etc. While there is a definite structure to Spolin's use of games, it does not move in only one direction. Earlier games and problems should be returned to after more difficult work, giving the players different

outlooks on the games and providing the leader with insights into how well the players are handling the material.

Throughout games work, the leader is part of the group. Spolin believes the leader's function is to guide the players to their experiences. He acts as a diagnostician in deciding where the players need work and how best to solve their problems. If the leader remains an active part of the group, he can better understand the player's needs and how they are accepting the work. As part of the group, the leader can also control the group and ensure that everyone is participating freely at all times. The leader's function is to teach. This is done not only through targeting games to problems but through the use of side-coaching. Side-coaching is the leader's immediate response to what the players are doing. It takes the form of directions which will keep the players experiencing and developing.

The final step in Spolin's use of theatre games is evaluation. Evaluation takes the form of questions to the group about what they saw and what was communicated to them. This step clarifies any remaining problems with the game and trains the players in understanding what they are doing.

Taken as a whole, the works of Viola Spolin and Clive Barker form a complete understanding of the use of theatre games in actor training. They explain in depth why games work, how to target games, how to present games to the players, how to lead the group, and how to evaluate the work. Individually, however, there are problems with both systems.

Viola Spolin's work is the more simple presentation and use of games. Her system was developed to train the less experienced actor. It was also developed with less experienced leaders in mind. In this lies the major problem with her system. Most of her book is a collection of games. The surrounding text is a guide to what the leader is to do or not to do. Mentioned earlier were the ten pages of "Reminders and Pointers." Spolin's games continue this trend. Most games include not only the directions for playing, but sample side-coaching and questions for discussion and evaluation. It is my concern that by furnishing the leader with all the complete responses he needs, how likely is it that the leader will ignore the suggestions and develop his own ideas. It is human nature to take the easy way out. Spolin makes this point herself when she cautions against the inclusion of description and examples in the presentation of the game (Spolin, p. 38).

Clive Barker also has a problem in providing too much information. However, his information does not deal directly with theatre games but with the background information he provides. A large portion of Barker's text deals with the functions of the human brain and how the information it provides is interpreted by the body. This information can be very confusing to the reader, especially in the practical business of converting the information into games. Since Barker stresses the leader's development of games to fit the

immediate needs of the group, the leader must understand the brain functions which Barker describes.

Another problem in Barker's system could be seen as his lack of a unified process. Where Spolin has created an order of development, Barker has outlined areas where the player may need work. While there is an increasing complexity in the games, an inexperienced leader would find it difficult to create a process of actor development.

The important thing to recognize from the works of Spolin and Barker is their compatibility. Each has created a system of games training targeted at different groups of actors. However, there are few head-to-head disagreements on the practical applications of games use. The differences between the two arise from the individual intents and approaches each brings to their work. Their works compliment each other and the combination of the two provides a strong in-depth approach to the use of theatre games in actor training. Despite the compatibility of the systems of Spolin and Barker, there are aspects of each which I prefer. I base my preferences on training in performance and training and experience in games use through creative dramatics.

As an overall system I prefer Clive Barker's. This may stem from my previous experience with games, but I find the system Viola Spolin presents too complete in use and too incomplete in background information. As mentioned earlier, Spolin gives detailed instructions to the leader. Despite this, her presentation is lacking in background information

relative to either games or performance. Barker works the opposite way. He presents an ample explanation of the concepts and areas with which he deals. This is generally backed by a game as an example. As a leader, I find his ideas challenging. This is especially true of his approach to the use of his system by others. He points out that the system outlined in his book is his method, and it is best thought of as a starting point for individual use. In fact, he suggests that it might be more helpful if those planning games work start by attempting to disprove his theories rather than automatically accepting them (Barker, p. 80). This practical understanding of the purpose of his book I find more dynamic and helpful than Spolin's definite rules.

Barker also gets to the roots of acting--movement, relationships, building a character, etc. By targeting games to these areas and to easing inhibitions, he gives the players a handle on understanding themselves and their craft. With this information, the actor has the building blocks needed to create a role. This is the strong point of Barker's system--his ability to train the players not only in acting but also adapting games to personal needs.

Spolin deals with the superficial aspects of a performance, the areas she feels anyone can learn. Physicalization, characterization, and other areas are based in the communication of information to the actor. Communication is what theatre is and any games system must develop these skills. This superficiality could cause a problem. There

are going to be times when physicalization, and as a result communication, will be inhibited at a more basic level, for example, work requiring trust. When this happens, a leader trained in only Spolin's process may find it difficult to understand what is happening and how to solve the problem.

While I personally prefer Clive Barker's system, if I were asked to recommend a basic games book to a beginning leader, it would have to be Viola Spolin's. She has written a book which provides the reader with a thorough understanding of how to use games to train actors. She provides them with a basic collection of games from which to draw. The explanations of the use and purposes behind the games are not part of the explanatory text but are found within the individual game.

Central to the usability of Spolin's system is her development of Orientation and the Point of Concentration. Orientation allows everyone concerned the opportunity to become comfortable in playing. The games listed in the chapter on Orientation also begin the work to be emphasized in later games. The POC is Spolin's most important contribution to theatre games. It is a single aspect which ties the game together from presentation to evaluation. The POC allows everyone to use games effectively from the first. Barker does use a focus within the game, but it is not carried into the evaluation. Through the use of the POC, the leader can guide the players without approval or disapproval.

The final aspect of Spolin's system which is helpful to the novice leader is her structuring of the sessions. She follows the basic development of drama from the creation of an environment to the development of basic characterization. This teaches the leader how to plan sessions which will best train the players.

Theatre games are a viable alternative to traditional classroom training methods. By removing the pressure from the actor, they return development to the natural processes of the subconscious. Viola Spolin and Clive Barker have built systems of games training from their own experiences with play. Both systems are grounded in play theory and performance concepts. Each author has chosen a group at which to target the work, and then followed through with games which will solve that group's problems. The problems I have identified are based on the presentation of the material, and not in the development of the systems. In fact, the problems in the presentations stem from the same root, that of too much information. This may be a danger for the leader who does not take his work seriously. If a leader goes into games work intent on developing his own skills as a leader and an actor and to give the players the most honest training he can, either system will be helpful and games will become an important aspect of his personal training system.

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