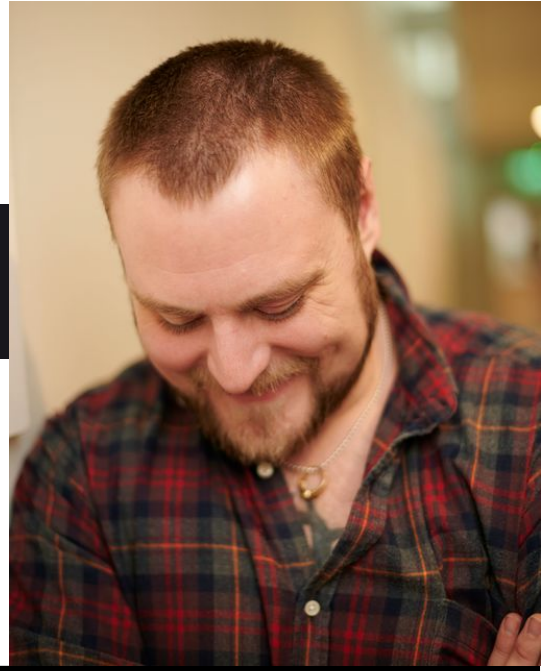


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PROFILE

Project Title

Violent Desire: embodied epistemic violence in actor training

Supervisors

Dr Broderick Chow & Dr Tom Cornford

Qualifications

2019-2020 The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, MA Actor Training & Coaching

2010-2013 The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, BA (Hons) Acting

Profile

I am a PhD candidate at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, which I also attended for my Master's in Actor Training and Coaching, and my Bachelor's in Acting. Before training as an actor, I worked in special educational needs and the care industry as both a teaching assistant and night-shift carer. My journey from care work to acting was driven by a desire and passion for the creative process and a drive to understand its complex idiosyncrasies.

I have ten years experience as a professional actor playing many roles across screen, stage and site-specific, including (but not limited to) Hubert the Scrap-dealer (the bad guy) from the children's show Little Fergie, which is currently enjoying worldwide coverage and over half a billion hits on YouTube and Amazon Prime; A 2 year run as the face of Vodafone in the Netherlands; Coronation Street, and more. I have directed and assisted with several theatrical productions over the last decade or so and I have coached dialect and acting to large classes, small groups, and on a one-to-one basis. I have also worked in bars, as security on doors, and in a dark and dusty IT department below a call centre. The political, social, and economic realities of training and work in the industry, what I have seen and I have felt, play a significant role in the research that I am now conducting into the nature of violence in actor training and the political economy.

Abstract

This thesis argues that actor training forms a contributing factor in the construction and maintenance of those structures of violence which operate within and sustain the late capitalist epoch. Recent years have seen significant instances of violence in drama schools, from sexual assault to racial misconduct, but research in these areas rarely steps beyond the interpersonal and subjective realms. This research utilises an affective methodology, based in auto theory and affect theory, to blend autobiographical data from my own training as an actor with observation and conversation under the theoretical frameworks offered by those such as Erin Manning, Brian Massumi, and Giles Deleuze. It is the position of this research that arts training is not exceptional but is as dependent upon the structuring forces of the political economy as any other sector. As such, this research demonstrates a journey from the interpersonal politics of the pedagogical encounter, through the bureaucratic structures of organisation and institution, to the political economy, and back, in which said organisational structures are based in originating and ongoing material processes of violence with epistemic consequences. I conceive of training in this fashion as epistemic violence, drawing on Gayatri Spivak and Claudia Bruner, within conceptualizations of political economy and its intersection with theatre and training (Marx, Harvey, Boyle). Through this research I argue that actor training enacts an embodied form of epistemic violence which corresponds with the violent demands of the political economy and ask what education's ethical mandate might be in the face of its contribution to such structures.

Teaching

Since beginning my PhD at CSSD I have worked across multiple courses, including: MA Acting (classical), MA Acting (contemporary), MA Actor Training & Coaching, MA Voice Studies: Teaching & Coaching, and MA Creative Producing. Duties in these roles have mostly consisted of marking, supervising final dissertations, delivering research seminars, and covering absences for core teaching staff. I have also delivered a workshop on my own developing practice for CollOut (a collaborative BA project involving applied theatre and writing students), and I have designed and taught a Devising unit for the Acting Diploma course.

Awards

Governor's Award 2022
IFTR New Scholar's Essay Prize 2023, special mention

Conference Papers

IFTR 2023; Actor Training, Political Economy: the embodied realm of epistemic violence