

5-2019

Changing internal identity through physical crafting in performance.

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<https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/3149>

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CHANGING INTERNAL IDENTITY THROUGH PHYSICAL CRAFTING IN
PERFORMANCE

By

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B.A. Juniata College, 2016

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

In Theatre Arts

Department of Theatre Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2019

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A Thesis Approved on

April 8, 2018

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

Achilles and Athena

For being the perfect stress relief and
reminding me when to take a break from writing.

ABSTRACT

CHANGING INTERNAL IDENTITY THROUGH PHYSICAL CRAFTING IN PERFORMANCE

Lauren Elizabeth Dobbs

April 16, 2019

This thesis is an analysis of my process in my thesis performance of Tronina in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, adapted by Dr. J. Ariadne Calvano and Dr. Janna Segal. I break the process down into contextual, historical, and textual considerations, as well as my physical, vocal, and emotional process crafting Tronina. I analyzed my process as a means to achieving an end. My goal with this performance was to find and show how changing the body changes the mind. The main tools I used to achieve this goal were Laban Movement Analysis, action, and contextual and historical factors. Throughout my process I crafted my body as an actor to create the mental changes I wanted to see in Tronina as a character. This thesis looks at successes and failures of the process in pursuit of my goal.

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INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in performative expressions of gender and sexuality. Much of my interest comes from my own identity as a queer person who likes to play with stereotypical masculinity and femininity in my own presentation, i.e. clothes, hair, mannerisms. As a queer performer, I want to experiment with the spectrum of gender and how traditional or non-traditional portrayals of gender fit in to a culture and into relationships. Over my past three years of graduate study, I have explored tools to physically craft gender and I had the opportunity to implement those tools in my thesis performance of Tronina from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

While Shakespeare's plays are around 400 years old and do not show a modern perspective on gender, they are well known in the western zeitgeist even today. Because they are so well known and because they have been produced so many times in the past 400 years, they are a great opportunity for theatrical exploration within an established form. For my purposes, this theatrical exploration appears in the form of gender swapping.

Gender swapping is a tradition that has been a part of Shakespearean plays since their inception and comes in two forms. The first, more traditional form, sees actors play characters different from their own gender. This first

occurred in Shakespeare's time with young boys playing all the female characters in Shakespeare's plays. Acting and theatre were not considered respectable during the Renaissance and this meant that women were outlawed from performing on the stage, so young boys took their place. This convention changed with King Charles II in the 1640s. King Charles attended the theatre often and was said to be frustrated by the interruptions that sometimes occurred due to boys playing female roles. There was also some concern that having men perform as women would encourage homosexuality (Spencer 315).

Eventually King Charles' concerns led to women playing female characters and men playing male characters. However, once women were on stage, gender swapping appeared in the form of breeches roles where women would perform as male characters, or simply in men's clothing. Sarah Bernhardt is a notable actress who sometimes played male characters. She is most famous for being the first woman to play the role of Hamlet in 1899. Some critics found Bernhardt's Hamlet wonderful while others felt that a woman couldn't play such a strong role well (Jones). Whether or not Bernhardt's performance was good or not, her performance as Hamlet was incredibly impactful for the theatre.

The second form of gender swapping occurs when the character's gender within the play is changed. In modern productions of Shakespeare's plays, gender swapping is often done to give more opportunities to female actors. Because Shakespeare's plays tend to have few roles for women, and because these roles are often stereotypical or one dimensional, gender swapping can create more opportunities for women. It can also create a more nuanced and

contemporary perspective for Shakespeare's plays, one where the women are more equal contributors to the story, as is present in contemporary life.

This second form of gender swapping was used in the University of Louisville's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. This production of *The Taming of the Shrew* set the induction of the play with Christopher Sly in 2018. The induction is a scene that occurs before the main play, which tells the story of Katharine and Petruchio, begins. In the scene a drunken tinker, Christopher Sly, is thrown out of a tavern and passes out. A rich lord finds Sly and decides to bring the drunkard back to his manor and play a trick on him. At the Lord's home Sly wakes up to concerned servants. The servants and the Lord all work to convince Sly that he is the Lord, and not a drunken tinker. At first Sly resists the prank but eventually becomes confident in the story that he is a rich lord, and he changes his behavior to fit that role.

Once Sly is convinced he is a rich lord in the original script, and a top strategist for "Patriots of Padua" in the University of Louisville adaptation, the actual rich lord/strategist puts on a play for Sly. The play that is performed is the story of Katharine and Petruchio and in the University of Louisville's production, it was set in the 1960s.

In UofL's production, the male servant characters of the 1960s play within the play were switched to female characters. These female characters helped establish the gendered power difference between men and women that was present and changing in the 1960s. These now female roles were translated into secretaries and maids, traditional female roles. My role was the gender swapped

Tranio, now Tronia, Lucentio's trusted servant. The gender swapping of Tranio further establishes the power difference between master and servant and further confines Tronia within a social role. One of the most important aspects of this gender swapping I wanted to explore in my performance was Tronia's disguise and performance as her male master. Because Tronia was now a woman, her disguise not only required her to change from low-class to high-class but also from female to male, further raising the stakes and taking Tronia out of her comfort zone. Now, if Tronia were caught in her disguise she would not only be seen as a disrespectful servant, but an indecent woman, one that could be punished by the men in power. This change in class and gender and the effect it has on Tronia was the focus of my process and performance.

Before the process began, I spoke with my director Dr. J. Ariadne Calvano about her expectations for the character and she communicated to me that she wanted the crafting of Tronia's masculinity to come from a non-habitual place that didn't rely on stereotypes of masculinity. In the past, I have executed masculine roles or male disguises from a place of personal comfort and stereotypes. In my portrayal of Oswald from *King Lear* I played the character as a woman in disguise as a man. This disguise was not crafted carefully, but instead relied on my instincts and habits. Oswald took long strides and walked with her chest out, stood with a wide stance and spoke in a lower vocal tone, more stereotypical masculine traits. This portrayal of masculinity is what I wanted to move away from in my portrayal of Tronia. Dr. Calvano and I discussed approaching the masculinity from a place of mimicry, and using the actor playing Lucentio as the

source material for the masculinity. In addition, she told me she had plans for me to work with a Drag King so that the masculinity was more integrated. One of the main concerns when putting together the disguise of Lucentio was that, while the disguise should be convincing and honestly attempted by Tronia, she should still be evident in the disguise, and the audience should be able to see glimpses of Tronia within the disguise. This meant that the two presentations of Tronia, Tronia as Tronia and Tronia in disguise, could not be crafted independently of each other, as if they were separate characters, but instead must be clearly intertwined and related.

The way I view these two presentations of Tronia are heavily influenced by Irving Goffman's *Presentation of Self*. Goffman's book looks at how behavior and identity is rooted in social pressures and requirements, and that our identity is tied to our expression and behavior. According to Goffman "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact than does his behavior as a whole" (Goffman 23). We change how we behave to fit the social setting even if it is not how we usually behave (Goffman 1).

Gender theorist Judith Butler also looks at the performance of self, specifically the performance of gender. Butler challenges the idea that gender is created and expressed naturally and instead states that it is socially dictated (Butler 519). Gender is not inherent in people, "gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure"

(Butler 531). This means that given the social pressures and constraints, or the freedom from them, gender expression may change.

For Tronia, this expression of gendered identity manifests in two ways. First, Tronia tailors her behavior to be non-threatening yet helpful to her master, Lucentio. In the University of Louisville's production Tronia is a low-class woman of the 1960s and she must adhere to this setting's social rules. Secondly, Tronia drastically changes her behavior when she disguises herself as Lucentio, she is adopting the socially expected look and actions of a man. It is not only a change in physical and vocal presentation, Tronia also changes how she behaves so that she fulfills the social expectations that men like Hortensio, Gremio, and Baptista have of her when she's in disguise.

This change in performance based on social situation makes some uneasy; "when we think of those who present a false front or 'only' a front, of those who dissemble, deceive, and defraud, we think of a discrepancy between fostered appearances and reality" (Goffman 38). However, even with these social forces guiding behavior, none of the behavior or expression is untrue, it all is an honest expression of identity, as opposed to a mask we use for social settings.

This concept led me to approach Tronia's behavior as a low-class woman and a high-class man with the same attention to them as an honest expression of identity. The high-class male Tronia is not just a disguise, although the disguise is present, but also an honest expression of character. My intention with this philosophy was to create a nuanced and layered performance that progresses

and changes throughout the play. If Tronia's Lucentio disguise was nothing more than a disguise, she would remain stagnant throughout the play. Instead, Tronia is affected and changed by her new expression of identity. With this understanding, I wanted to approach Tronia through a physical lens to create stark physical differences that resulted in emotional and behavioral changes that are independent of Lucentio's orders. Tronia's newfound freedom in her disguise of a high-class man, and the context of second-wave feminism and expanding expressions of femininity, creates a change in Tronia. She becomes confident in her self-identity as opposed to identifying herself through Lucentio.

CHAPTER ONE: UNPACKING THE CHARACTER

When I was thinking about what I wanted to perform for my thesis role I immediately gravitated towards Shakespearean work. Since my last performance in a Shakespeare play, Oswald in *King Lear*, I had learned an enormous amount of information about performing Shakespeare and I wanted to put it into practice. Originally, I was interested in the role of Viola in *Twelfth Night* because of the opportunity to perform as a woman in disguise, as Viola does. However, instead of *Twelfth Night* the University of Louisville decided to produce a production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. I was happy with this decision because it meant I would be able to explore Shakespeare more. I originally wanted to play the role of Katharine because of her problematic journey within the play. Katharine starts out as a defiant young woman who is labeled a “shrew” because of her sometimes rude nature and lack of traditional feminine demureness and submission. Over the course of the play Kate is “tamed” by Petruchio and his emotional and sometimes physical abuse. By the end of the play Kate is apparently tamed, although interpretations vary, and she gives a speech that tells women to obey their husbands and be grateful to them. In early productions of *The Taming of the Shrew*, this final speech was presented as comedic, but as time has gone on many modern audiences do not find the final speech comedic, instead viewing it as sexist and uncomfortable.

One of the many discomforts for modern audiences of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the physical and emotional abuse Petruchio enacts towards Kate. An example of this physical abuse occurs when Petruchio refuses to give Kate food once they arrive at Petruchio's home after the wedding, and later in the play when he does not allow her to sleep. Both of these abuses are carried out over multiple days as a way to tame Kate. Petruchio states

“She ate not meat today, nor none shall eat.
Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not...
And if she chance to nod, I'll rail and brawl,
And with the clamor keep her still awake (56).

Petruchio attempts to hide his abuse toward Katharine by blaming other factors, like the servants' incompetence, or an inadequate bed. He does not starve her or keep her from sleeping in outright anger or violence. Instead Petruchio's abuse is calculated and hidden. Because the abuse occurs within a comedic world, audiences can accept it as it was intended, or it can or be very unpleasant, depending on the audience member.

Many modern directors attempt to navigate the discomfort of this abuse, often by getting rid of the more aggressive abuse, changing the genre to a drama or tragedy, or excusing it by saying “it was a different time.” However, literature of Shakespeare's time shows that wife-beating was becoming less and less acceptable (Detmer 273). At the time, the concept of civility was becoming more and more important to those of upper classes. Because of this, husbands were encouraged to find non-violent more “civil” ways of controlling their wives (Detmer 273). Therefore, Petruchio's abuse of Kate is not intended as just an upsetting and uncouth act but is instead intended to show a non-traditional way

to exert control over a wife (Detmer 274). Since the play's first production, the interpretations and approaches to the play have changed. Three main interpretations are a farcical one that loses the character's empathetic qualities (Haring-Smith 4), the pure comedy one which attempts to soften the violence of Petruchio and portray a love story, and a play within a play interpretation, which highlights Sly's role in the induction, but can distance the audience from the characters (Haring-Smith 5).

The farcical interpretation "presents the world of the play as joyful, exuberant, and full – sometimes too full – of life. The settings and costumes are bright and rich, and the character's feel no pain" (Haring-Smith 149). As theatre became more accessible to all social classes, farces became popular as they were more relatable to working class people (Haring-Smith 24). The focus of the farcical interpretation is to make the audience laugh, not to create a unified story (Haring-Smith 149). A famous example of this interpretation is David Garrick's 1754 adaptation, *Catharine and Petruchio*. In this adaptation, much of the comedy is physical and comes from violence or exaggerated emotions (Garrick). "The mock quarrel, indeed seems almost to have ended in a real rumpus" (Knight 166). These humorous fights were achieved through overacting and dramatics (Knight 342).

One of the effects of the farcical interpretation is that the audience is distanced from the characters. Because the characters are one dimensional, and because the farcical interpretation doesn't seriously address the abuse Katharine faces, the audience doesn't have anything serious to empathize with. The farcical

interpretation was popular from shortly after the play's first productions up until the 1800s.

In the 19th century, the farcical interpretation was seen as crude and unrefined (Haring-Smith 43). While the farce changed Shakespeare's original play until it was a collection of slapstick jokes, the 19th century attempted to restore Shakespeare's original play (Haring-Smith 43). With the text restored, the characterization of Kate and Petruchio drove the emotional aspects of the interpretation. The Victorians responded negatively to the crudeness of the original text, and tried to make up for this fact by portraying Kate and Petruchio as a true love story (Haring-Smith 60). One famous example of this interpretation is Augustin Daly's 1887 production featuring Ada Rehan as Katharine and John Drew as Petruchio (McGhee 2).

This new production was described as "a dashing young professional man who, after a series complications, won the hand of the vivacious young lady" (Haring-Smith 60). The production portrayed Katharine as only superficially shrewish and more obviously womanly (McGhee 80). The conflict between Katharine and Petruchio comes from Kate's strong will and resistance to love, not from any shrewish nature (McGhee 80). The comedy of this interpretation didn't come from the violence Petruchio perpetrated upon his servants and Katharine. Instead the humor came from more harmless sources, such as servants tripping or characters imitating other characters (Haring-Smith 61).

The play within a play interpretation focuses on the induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The induction brings the audience's attention to the fact

that Kate and Petruchio are simply characters within a larger story (Haring-Smith 150). Recognizing that Kate and Petruchio are not real people, and instead stressing the induction meant that the theme of deception is clear throughout the play (Haring-Smith 150). The audience sees the deception of Sly, the deception of Kate and Petruchio, and the deception of Baptista with Bianca's suitors all in disguise. Some productions extended the induction to further highlight the play within a play structure.

John Barton's 1960 production had the actors enter "pushing their cart and carrying bundles" (Haring-Smith 153) to show them as actors. Barton's production also added dialogue for Sly to keep the play within a play structure more present throughout the whole production (Schafer 38). In addition to focusing on the induction, many of these play within a play productions presented Kate and Petruchio's relationship as "pretending to be more belligerent than they really were" with the result being real love (Haring-Smith 155). This choice was controversial, and some critics found Katharine's sincere shift to a tamed woman to be anti-feminist (Schafer 38).

As women's rights became more of a topic of interest in the early twentieth century, some directors leaned farther into the farcical interpretation to make the violence of *Taming of the Shrew* more palatable, while others attempted to highlight the softness of Katharine and the gentlemanliness of Petruchio (Haring-Smith 73). In modern productions it is more popular to make Katharine's ending speech serious and victorious, as opposed to comedic and broken (Haring-Smith 90). For the University of Louisville's production the interpretation focused on the

play within the play and highlighted Sly's role. However, different from the John Barton production, the problematic nature of Kate and Petruchio's relationship was not played for laughs but instead approached very seriously. While I did not end up playing Kate and instead was given the role of Tronia, I believe that knowing the history of the play's production, and recognizing the problematic aspects of it encouraged me to make stronger choices that served the production as a whole, as opposed to only serving my own character creation.

Our production was an adaptation written by the director Dr. J. Ariadne Calvano and the dramaturg Dr. Janna Segal. The play's time period switches between a modern Trump era in the induction and 1963 in the play within a play. Genders also changed within the adaptation. The genders of the servants Tranio, Grumio, Biondello, and all the servants in Petruchio's home; Peter, and Nicholas are changed to women. Their names change to Tronia, Guilia, Biondella, Petra, and Nicolette, respectively. This shift from male servants to female servants makes sense with the change of the 1960s setting because it reinforces the power difference between men and women. It also broadens the roles that the servants can play, instead of simply being servants, Tronia and Guilia can be identified as secretaries, a traditionally female but more powerful role, whereas Petruchio's home servants are identified as maids, a traditionally female but less powerful role. The identification of Tronia as a secretary is important because secretaries are a fairly iconic role for women in the 1960s, and they can conjure up specific images in the audience's mind. In the 1960s, women continued to work more, but they did not normally work in the same positions as men did.

Instead women took jobs that were deemed socially acceptable such as department store workers, secretaries, typists, and maids.

The secretary became one of the most iconic and often sexy roles that is still romanticized in pop culture today. Famous secretaries include Miss Moneypenny from the James Bond series who, especially in the earlier films, flirts shamelessly with Bond. Miss Moneypenny's role in the Bond films is designed to make him more appealing to the audience, giving the character of Bond power by continually fawning over him, but never becoming angry when he doesn't return the love seriously. Doralee Rhodes in *9 to 5*, on the other hand, consciously works to take power away from her boss, and she does so competently. She pushes her boss into a chair and threatens him with a gun in response to his sexual advances. She also more discreetly attempts to take away his power with the other women in the film, Violet and Judy. Doralee Rhodes is a wonderful example of the competent yet feminine secretary. Often times this character is the competent compliment to a bumbling boss, such as Pam Beesly and Michael Scott in *The Office*. Another popular secretary role are the secretaries of the TV show *Mad Men*. In *Mad Men*, the head secretary Joan uses her sexuality to help herself survive in her masculine work place. At the same time, she exceeds expectations and is far more intelligent and competent than many of her coworkers believe her to be. This balance between femininity and competency is an important marker for popular culture's view of secretaries. In my crafting of Tronia, I used the images associated with these iconic

secretaries to help understand how Tronia presents herself to succeed within a male dominated world.

When approaching the internal life of Tronia I first established her motivations, goals, and background. I identified these goals and motivations through the text and I identified her background through text and 1960s context. Looking at the text I not only looked at the information in the words but also the information in the structure of the words, through iambic pentameter.

Iambic pentameter is a form of verse that uses 10 syllables that alternate between stressed and unstressed. Iambic pentameter is an important verse because it is similar to a heartbeat and therefore is easier to memorize text written in iambic pentameter (Jamieson). When iambic pentameter varies from its regular structure, it tells the actor that something important is going on with the character. A line of iambic pentameter becomes irregular when it has more or less than the regular 10 syllables (Jamieson). Less than 10 syllables could mean that the character doesn't want to speak, that they're being cut off, that it's a shared line, or that there is an action occurring during the other beats. More than 10 syllables could mean that the character has a lot on their mind and is trying to figure out a problem so much that their thoughts cannot fit in 10 syllables. There is no definite answer concerning what an irregular line of verse means, what's important is that the actor recognizes the irregularities, and makes a choice.

In the beginning of the play Tronia identifies herself through Lucentio and his needs are her sole motivation for agreeing to disguise herself as Lucentio. This power dynamic is first established when Lucentio calls Tronia his "trusty

servant” (4) and throughout the whole of the first scene. In Act I Scene I Tronia uses indirect language to simultaneously appease Lucentio’s high powered whims and also to subtly suggest solutions to his problems.

I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible
That love should of a sudden take such hold? (9)

And

Master, you looked so longly on the maid,
Perhaps you marked not what’s the pith of all. (9)

In both of these passages Tronia uses indirect language such as “is it possible” and “perhaps” to gently coax Lucentio to the conclusion she has come to. These lines are also regular, 10 syllables each, showing that Tronia is comfortable with this interaction. Tronia later becomes more direct with Lucentio telling him:

Her elder sister is so curst and shrewd
That till the father rid his hands of her,
Master, your love must live a maid at home,
And therefore has he closely caged her up,
Because she will not be annoyed with suitors (9).

Here, Tronia directly tells Lucentio the problem that she’s trying to get him to see, but even when being direct she is still using respectful language such as “master” to reinforce their power roles. These lines are also regular which shows that she is not totally uncomfortable with being more direct with Lucentio. This balance between smart advice and respectful conciliatory language established Tronia’s overarching goal in the play, which was to impress and be of invaluable use to Lucentio. This goal is solidified when Tronia agrees to disguise herself as Lucentio so that he can woo Bianca.

So had you need.
In brief, sir, sith it your pleasure is,
And I am tied to be obedient
(For so your father charged me at our parting:
"Be serviceable to my son," quoth he,
Although I think 'twas in another sense),
I am content to be Lucentio,
Because so well I love Lucentio (10).

In this excerpt, Troncia agrees to disguise herself as Lucentio. At the same time, communicates some slight discomfort and qualifies her agreement. At the end of the speech she makes it clear that she is only doing this for Lucentio as she is "content to be Lucentio because so well I love Lucentio" (10).

When I decided on Troncia's main goal to impress and be of invaluable use to Lucentio, I felt as though I had proper textual support, but I also wanted to incorporate a character background that supported this goal. In the second act of the play, Lucentio's father Vincentio reveals the most information on Troncia's background that we receive throughout the play. He states that:

His name? As if I knew not her name! I have
brought her up ever since she was three years old,
and her name is Troncia (76).

This establishes that Troncia is not only Lucentio's servant, but a servant of the whole family, and while Lucentio may be the master she is closest with, Vincentio holds even more power since he has raised her and given her a home since she was three. Once it was established that Troncia was a permanent servant in the household, myself, the director, and the actor playing Lucentio established what has happened in the years before the play.

Because we changed the setting to the 1960s we decided that Lucentio's family would be similar in status to the Kennedy's and therefore Lucentio would have been at boarding school for much of his life. The ultimate context that emerged was the idea that Tronia and Lucentio had been close as children, but that they have not seen each other as much since Lucentio went to boarding school. Lucentio's trip to Padua to study is the first time that Tronia and Lucentio have really been together in a while, and it is the first time they have had the freedom to be together away from the Lucentio's father Vincentio. This idea of excitement and new experiences is supported by Tronia, telling Lucentio to not only study but enjoy his time in Padua. She says:

Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue and this moral discipline,
Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray,
Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,
And practice rhetoric in your common talk;
Music and poesy use to quicken you;
The mathematics and the metaphysics—
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.
No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en.
In brief, sir, study what you most affect (4).

Tronia acknowledges Lucentio's love and interest in learning, but she encourages him to break away from his serious studies, and instead have fun. This encouragement supports the idea that Tronia wants to connect with Lucentio, she wants him to like her and value her company.

I established another aspect of Tronia's background through the context of the 1960s. When researching the 1960s I looked mainly at the physicality of upper middle class white women, secretaries, and upper class white men. For this research I focused on videos of people from the 1960s, not recreations.

Many of the videos and information on 1960s physicality came from the Period Movement class taught by Dr. Calvano. In one lecture, Dr. Calvano broke down the basic qualities of 1960s female movement. She articulated and demonstrated the trend for women to step toe heel, for their hips to have slight, controlled movement, and for their chest to be open and inviting, but not jutting out in a masculine way (Calvano). This physicality served to portray a traditionally feminine, but not overtly sexual, woman. In addition, for professional women such as secretaries or even wives of important business men, the social expectations for how a woman should present herself were even higher.

The video *Finishing School for Executives Wives* from 1971 depicts an etiquette and appearance class geared towards middle class women whose husbands were important businessmen. This video gives insight into the expectations of women at a higher social class. It gives specific instructions as to how to be acceptable to higher-class men, men like Lucentio. The film shows the extreme adherence to gender expectations for women, which further raises the stakes for Tronia. In a society with such strict gender roles, being caught in disguise as a man would be incredibly detrimental to Tronia's social standing. The school not only looks at physical attributes, but also looks to train entertaining and conversation skills. This shows that the women are not only expected to look socially appropriate, but to behave in a way that is acceptable and gives something to their male counterparts. This context of the 1960s and the acceptable social roles was important to my process because it created parameters for Tronia to exist within. While sexism and power differences

between men and women are still present in the modern world, the rules that governed these relationships have changed.

After establishing Tronia's goals for the play, motivation, and background when performing as herself, I then researched and explored Tronia disguised as Lucentio. The complexity of this character and her performance comes from how she changes throughout her time in disguise as Lucentio. Going into the process, I knew that I wanted Tronia to develop and change over the course of the play, and I wanted that development to occur because of the changes in her behavior. When Tronia begins to disguise herself as Lucentio, not only does her appearance and behavior change, but her overarching goals change as well. At the beginning of the play, Tronia defines herself through Lucentio, but as she performs as a higher-class male and physically adopts that confidence and presence, her goals change.

The first time we see Tronia's priorities begin to change is after her first meeting with Baptista. Throughout the scene, Tronia performs as Lucentio and successfully outbids Gremio for Bianca's hand in marriage. Here we begin to see Tronia's motivation shift from external to internal. Instead of being motivated by her dependence on Lucentio, she is motivated by her own fulfillment and desire to succeed. After Gremio leaves, Tronia is allowed to drop her masculine disguise and we hear her honest response:

A vengeance on your crafty withered hide!—
'Tis in my head to do my master good.
I see no reason but supposed Lucentio
Must get a father, called "supposed Vincentio"—
And that's a wonder. Fathers commonly
Do get their children. But in this case of wooing,

A child shall get a sire, if I fail not of my cunning (37).

With no one there to see her mask drop, and with Lucentio not there for her to impress, Troncia is able to speak directly and openly. While Troncia still actively works to help Lucentio, she makes it mostly about herself and what she can do. She openly expresses her ideas here, whereas in Act 1 Scene 1 she needed to use more indirect language so that she stayed respectful to Lucentio.

As Troncia continues to disguise herself as Lucentio, she becomes confident with her own worth and identifies herself through her internal self and skills, not through her worth to Lucentio. She is now Troncia, a hard and intelligent worker, as opposed to Troncia, Lucentio's trusted servant. We first see this with Troncia's ownership of her intelligence, citing "my cunning" (37). The next time we see Troncia drop her disguise she is with Lucentio, and we see how her interactions with him have become more equal and confident since the first scene.

TRONCIA

But, sir, to love concerneth us to add
Her father's liking, which to bring to pass,
As I before imparted to your Worship,
I am to get a man (whate'er he be)
And he shall be "Vincentio of Pisa,"
And make assurance here in Padua
Of greater sums than I have promised.
So shall you quietly enjoy your hope
And marry sweet Bianca with consent.

LUCENTIO

Were it not that my fellow schoolmaster
Doth watch Bianca's steps so narrowly,
'Twere good, methinks, to steal our marriage.

TRONCIA

That by degrees we mean to look into,

And watch our vantage in this business.
We'll overreach the graybeard, Gremio,
The narrow prying father, Baptista,
The quaint musician, amorous Lutio,
All for my master's sake, Lucentio.

Here we see Tronia's confidence has grown even more. Whereas earlier in the text she worries about failing, in this section she confidently tells Lucentio what the plan is. The only job Lucentio has is to stay in the background and "quietly" wait until he marries Bianca. In contrast, Tronia is far more active and this shows through her use of verbs. She uses verbs like "add, bring, impart, get, assure, and promise" to describe what she has done or will do. Lucentio on the other hand uses verbs to describe what his "fellow schoolmaster" is doing, and not his own actions.

This use of active and direct language is indicative of Tronia's growth in confidence. As her confidence grows so does her joy at planning and implementing her plans. This joy is most evident when Tronia encounters and bribes the Merchant and, in my process, is the moment when Tronia's goal becomes focused on herself as opposed to Lucentio. Through the physical disguise and change in behavior, Tronia's goal changes to; get the job done, and get it done well. While this goal is still connected to Lucentio, as he is the one who has given her the job, it is much more connected to her skills and abilities.

He is my father, sir, and sooth to say,
In count'nance somewhat doth resemble you.

Takes out a large stack of bills

(And think it not the worst of all your fortunes
That you are like to Sir Vincentio):
His name and credit shall you undertake,
And in my house you shall be friendly lodged.

Merchant grabs for the money.

Tronia pulls it back.

Look that you take upon you as you should.
You understand me, sir. So shall you stay
Till you have done your business in the city.
If this be court'sy, sir, accept of it.

In this monologue, Tronia proposes to the Merchant that he disguise himself as Vincetio for money. Looking at the text, at no point does she ask him if he is willing to disguise himself, she simply tells him will do it. "His name and credit shall you undertake" is not a question or a suggestion, it is a command. Her command is softened and effective mainly because of the money she offers the Merchant. However, the directness of her language and power with which it is delivered shows Tronia to be in power. The offering and denying of money suggests a playfulness and joy that is dependent on this new power.

Understanding Tronia's background and motivations gave me the information to craft goals and actions that made Tronia an active character. This activeness means that Tronia's change from dependent to independent is supported by her actions. Creating a basis for Tronia's trajectory throughout the play gave me a clear purpose during the rehearsal process and created opportunities for me to assess my crafting of Tronia. While all of this internal and textual work is important to the character, if the audience doesn't see it, it doesn't matter. To achieve this, I explored an outside to in acting method.

CHAPTER TWO: USING THE BODY TO CRAFT THE MIND

Social psychologists and neurologists have long studied how the body and behavior changes the brain. One example of the body shaping the mind is social psychologist Amy Cuddy's theory of power posing. Power Posing became popular in 2012 thanks to Amy Cuddy's TED Talk on the subject, and her subsequent book *Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges* in 2015. Amy Cuddy discovered the benefits of power posing through a 2010 study, *Power posing: Brief non-verbal displays affect neuroendocrine levels and risk tolerance* (Cuddy, Carney, Yap). In her TED Talk, Cuddy explains how by adopting wide and solid shapes, participants in the study had lower cortisol members. In layman's terms, adopting a confident posture created more confident people. The body shape and behavior created an observable change in brain chemistry. Amy Cuddy has come under scrutiny for this theory since 2012, an attempted recreation of Cuddy's study did not yield the same results, and some labeled the theory as pseudoscience (Elsesser).

Since 2012, Cuddy has released a new paper that looks at a more comprehensive body of research and solidifies the Power Posing theory as viable. I utilize Power Posing outside of my acting work. I Power Pose before job interviews and auditions, any time I need to calm my nerves and increase my confidence. This "outside in" approach to life has inspired me in my acting. In my

process, I approach the work from the “outside in”, I create a physical life and behavior for the character and allow that change in my own body to create a response in the mind that I can then take and specify to create a character’s internal life and characterization. The “outside in” approach creates an emotional response and an internal impulse that occurs because of the physical stimulus of changing the body.

Amy Cuddy is not the only researcher to study how the body connects to emotions. At the intersection of theatre and psychiatry, researchers Tal Shafir and Rachelle P. Tsachor studied how movements communicated emotions through the language of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA). LMA includes “a system of symbols describing its motor elements, which gives a written instruction for the execution of a movement or movement-sequence over time” (Shafir and Tsachor). Shafir and Tsachor showed LMA experts clips of various movements meant to express an emotion, either anger, fear, happiness, or sadness. The LMA experts would then identify the emotion they felt in response to the movements and say which aspects of the movement created that emotion. Often times the LMA experts were correct in identifying the intended emotion, although sometimes they weren’t. These identifying aspects of the emotional movements are important in understanding both how we express emotions, and how our bodies are perceived emotionally. While Amy Cuddy focused on how your body changes your brain, Shafir and Tsachor looked at how your body can affect your, and other’s emotions. This idea of affecting others is important in my physical crafting of Tronia because my goal is not to necessarily create emotions

or a response in myself, but to create a response in the audience or in my scene partner. Much of acting is about connecting with your scene partner. Often the scene partner is another actor while other times it is the audience, sometimes it is both. But no matter who the actor is connecting with, they are connecting and communicating something with intent.

While the famous director Stanislavski is most associated with the modern acting method in the United States and internal psychological realism, he also looked extensively into physically crafting a character. Later in life Stanislavski developed the *Method of Physical Action*. This method minimized the table work and instead focused on improvisation within the given circumstances and a strong focus on action (Benedetti 325). According to Stanislavski “if you do not use your body, your voice, a manner of speaking, walking, moving, if you do not find a form of characterization which corresponds to the image, you probably cannot convey to others its inner, living spirit” (Stanislavski 5). To me, this means that the actor cannot only focus on the outside or the inside of a character. If an actor cannot portray a character’s “inner, living spirit,” then the audience will not respond, and the actor will not have connected. It is the actor’s job to create the stimulus externally, to share the internal life with the audience. All of the work I’ve done with *Unpacking the Character* would be mostly useless if I did not connect it to the character’s physical and vocal expression, and vice a versa. The main way I worked to combine inner life with physical and vocal expression was through LMA.

LMA and its language, Labannotation, was first published by Rudolph Laban in 1928 (Laban and Lawrence xiv). The purpose of Laban’s system is to identify and utilize the efforts of movement (Laban 1). *Efforts* are “the inner impulses from which movement originates” (Laban 9). In addition to *efforts*, there are also *motion factors* weight, space, time, and flow (Laban 69). *Laban’s* concept of *effort* led him to identify eight *basic effort actions* (Laban 31) and those *basic effort actions* are created by the four *motion factors* (Laban 71). Different names have been used for these terms but for the purposes of my work I will be using those identified above. The *motion factors* work as spectrums, when using and identifying the, *basic effort actions*. Each *motion factor* has two identified ends that contribute to each *basic effort action*.

	Space	Time	Weight	Flow
Punch	Direct	Quick	Heavy	Bound
Slash	Indirect	Quick	Heavy	Free
Dab	Direct	Quick	Light	Bound
Flick	Indirect	Quick	Light	Free
Press	Direct	Sustained	Heavy	Bound
Wring	Indirect	Sustained	Heavy	Bound
Glide	Direct	Sustained	Light	Free
Float	Indirect	Sustained	Light	Free

The above chart shows the eight *basic effort actions*; punch, slash, dab, flick, press, wring, glide, and float. It also shows how those *effort actions* are created by the combinations of *motion factors*, space, time, weight, and flow (Laban 116-117). Knowing how the *motion factors* combine is helpful because it creates clear identifications and guidelines. With clear guidelines, a performer can use Laban with more specificity. However, it is important to not become overly invested in the *motion factors*. One of the benefits of the *effort actions* is the emotional or semantic connections a performer makes with the words. Each *effort action* connects to something within the performer that they innately know how to explore.

Laban's system has been utilized by performers, therapists, and educators. It is especially helpful to actors because Laban views movement as a means "to satisfy a need" (Laban 1). The connection to "need" in LMA is similar to the importance of a goal or objective in acting. I believe that using LMA in tandem with my character's goals create a character that is balanced and connected emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Hopefully, this balanced and connected Tronia can achieve the link between inner life and external expression that Stanislavski found so important.

The cornerstone of LMA and my way into the work comes in the form of the eight *basic effort actions*. Through the *effort actions*, a performer can physically explore on a large, emotionally evocative scale that can then be sized down and internalized within the character. When I first started approaching Tronia through LMA, I made sure I was aware of my habitual choices. In the past

when I have worked with LMA, I had a habit of using *slash*, *wring* and *glide*. When first starting my exploration, I allowed myself to indulge in these habits. I wanted to allow myself to use the habitual at first so that I didn't obsess over avoiding it. From these three habits, I found that *glide*, which is direct, sustained, light, and free, was the most relevant to the character of Tronia. I felt as though the combination of light and direct fit Tronia's combination of traditional feminine constraints, light, and her own competence and confidence, direct. From here, I began to combine the tool of LMA with imagery from the 1960s.

I chose eight images from the 1960s to help encourage my physical character exploration. These images work as representations of Tronia at different places in the play and at different places in her journey. The images I chose play with gender expression and expectations. My response to these images is my interpretation. My interpretations are based on impulses and reactions that occurred in the moment of looking at the images. As Tronia plays an upper-class man, as opposed to her lower-class female self, she must experience some dissonance. However, over the course of the play, Tronia embraces this mix of masculine power, and her intelligent femininity. These images look at the intersection of the two. The first image is a photograph of Marilyn Monroe taken by Bert Stern.



While Tronia's sexuality is not discussed in the play, because of the 1960s setting and the objectification of women, I found it relevant. In this image, Marilyn

participates in her own objectification by looking at the camera. Her mostly covered form, and the hand over her mouth also references control. Marilyn is using the male gaze and patriarchal structures to promote herself. I believe Tronia is also acknowledging and using the patriarchy to get what she wants and succeed within the confines of a male dominated world. From this image of Marilyn Monroe, I started to physically explore the basic efforts of *dab* and *flick*. Both of these basic efforts are quick and light, but *dab* is bound and direct, while *flick* is free and indirect. In this exploration I moved between dab and flick, starting by simply embodying the basic efforts, and then allowing the image and 1960s time period to affect the movement. Through this exploration I found light traditionally feminine gestures that initiated from the elbows. Additionally, I found a heel to toe style of walking that was fairly quick and used small steps. Both of these discoveries felt appropriate to the time period of the 1960s and created a tension, for me, between a bound and free flow. This tension between bound and free created a connection to the dissonance Tronia experiences between her own personal expression and societal expectations.

The next image I used to spark Laban exploration was *Man in Grey Suit Greeted by Wife* by Coby Whitmore (1955). I chose this image because of its portrayal of power dynamics between men and women, the man is portrayed as in power. Different from the image of Marilyn Monroe, the woman is not looking at us, but instead directing our attention to the



man. In addition, this image is relevant to how Tronia adopts and becomes enveloped by her master, Lucentio's identity. Even before she literally adopts his manner, she identifies herself through him. The joy in this image is interesting because, to my eye, it is unclear who the grey belongs to, even though it is evident in the title. Tronia, as well as who the grey belongs to, is a matter of perspective. In the Laban exploration that was inspired by this image, I played with the basic efforts of *slash*, *flick*, and a little bit of *dab*. Within these efforts, I found the indirectness of *slash* and *flick* created a sense of openness in my body. This translated into a type of body roll that initiated at the chest and ended at the tail bone. The body roll wasn't consistent in pace or duration, but it did create a feeling of earnestness in my body. In addition to that earnestness, when I played longer with *flick* and *dab*, there was a sense of uncertainty and nervousness, whereas *slash* create a feeling of power and confidence.

The next image I chose was *Honey It's a Joke*, created by Mary Beth Edelson. I chose this piece because it brings attention to what women can say, and what women can think. This image is significant not only because of its literal message



of "honey it's a joke" but also because of its use of Mae West. Mae West was a famous actress and sex symbol who had regular conflicts with censorship. Mae West spoke her mind, and while those who found her indecent attempted to censor her, she still spoke out ("Actress Mae West Sentenced For 'Sex'"). Tronia regularly uses asides to speak her mind, and this image of Mae West smiling outwardly, but thinking harshly, sums up Tronia's conflict of what she wants to

say and is socially acceptable or situationally acceptable for her to say. When using Laban with this image, I played mainly with *slash*, *wring*, and *punch*. In all of the efforts, the weight is strong, but every other effort factor varies from effort to effort. This consistent strength but varying flow, time, and direction gave me a feeling of internal conflict and fight. While this Laban exploration didn't create specific physicalities to incorporate into my performance, it did create an internal conflict and energy that Tronia experiences as she navigates her shifting roles of low-class woman and high-class man. Like with Amy Cuddy's power posing, the physical change that a person or actor uses to create change does not have to be constantly used to create an internal or emotional effect.

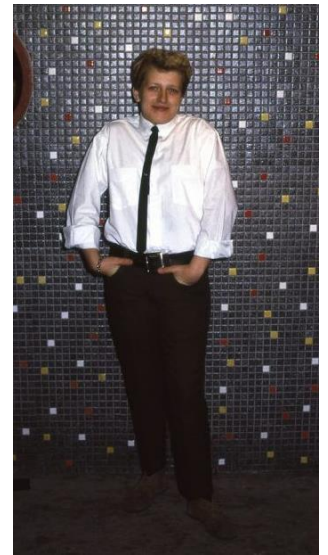
In my Laban exploration process, there was a distinct shift from just exploring Tronia as Tronia, and Tronia disguised as Lucentio. Within the images, the shift occurs with an image of Katharine Hepburn riding a skateboard, taken by Jack Grant. I chose this image in part because of how it looked and also because of Katharine Hepburn's significance. Katharine Hepburn was, in part, famous for her pants. Her pants gave other women the permission to experiment with masculine style. In this image, we see Hepburn experimenting with another stereotypically masculine activity, skateboarding.



Tronia must learn masculinity as she performs Lucentio. This asks the question, how does she do this, and after she has learned it, how does it affect

her expression of self? The image itself communicates a sense of uncertainty, with Hepburn looking down at her feet, and joy, with the implied forward movement and newfound freedom. In exploring this image through Laban, I played with the efforts of *glide* and *flick*. Both of these efforts are light and free, but vary in their use of time and direction. I played with a slight hunch in the chest and shoulders but allowed the head to lead and look out. In addition, I had the impulse to use more open gestures initiating from the shoulders. One important discovery I made, is the regular switching of physicalities and impulses prompted by this image felt internally like “figuring it all out,” it felt like a transitional period. This transitional period was Tronia learning how to perform as Lucentio, and how to perform as masculine, the same way Hepburn learned to skateboard and wear traditionally masculine clothing.

The next image I used was a picture of an unknown Drag King from the 1960s. I was first drawn to this image because it was the only image of a Drag King from the 1960s that I could find. I began looking for images of Drag Kings because of my work with a Drag King during rehearsal. In addition, because I am a self-identified queer performer, I like looking at and exploring non-traditional or stereotypically queer presentations of gender and performance. The art of the Drag Queens has, in recent years, become more mainstream, yet Drag Kings are still in the shadows. Shows like *RuPaul’s Drag Race* show Drag Queens of a high



caliber and polish. As the show has become more mainstream, Drag Queens have become more accepted, but Drag Kings have not had the same exposure.

Besides my own emotional connections to this image, I found that the nervous masculine energy resonated with me. Once Tronia adopts the role of Lucentio, her verse becomes extremely irregular, with 12 and even 14 syllable lines becoming expected for her, rather than the usual 10. This signifies Tronia trying to respond to this new physical stimulus and figure out how to exist with the possibility of being caught. In the same way, this Drag King, embodies the knowledge that they are not what they appear to be, but wish they were. He seems to be desperate for acceptance, because if he is not then, like Tronia, he could be hurt, beaten, or killed, for his male mask.

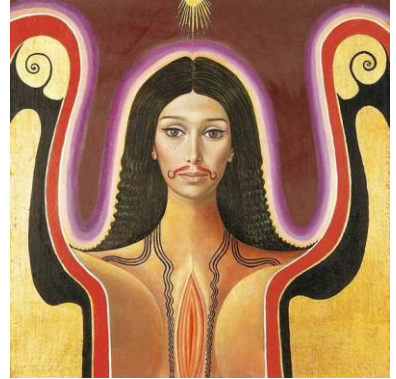
In this Laban exploration I played with *wring* and *press*. Both of these efforts are bound, sustained, and strong, but they vary in direction. This to me felt like a forcing of masculinity, something that has been habitual to me in my past presentations of masculinity, and it created a sense of anxiety and adrenaline within my body. But instead of being a destination for Tronia, this forced masculinity felt appropriate for Tronia's journey, at some point in Tronia's disguise, she is attempting to force the masculinity, but at the same time she's afraid and shrunken in, something that is not stereotypically masculine. This non-traditional masculinity led me to play with more forward shoulders and leading with the head. Combined with the imitation of the actor playing Lucentio, the crafting of masculinity starts to be informed from many different, not always stereotypical places, making the result less forced and more integrated.

As Tronia continues to disguise herself as Lucentio, she becomes more confident in her mask. The next image plays with an ownership and joy in pretending to be a man, or a woman. This image of Divine the drag queen as Jackie Kennedy and Jon Waters as JFK from *Eat Your Makeup* by Jon Waters (1986) speaks to the grotesqueness of gender and politics. Divine has been hailed the Drag Queen of the Century (Souza 2015) and was daring and trendsetting even within the drag community (Souza 2015). In *Eat Your Makeup*, Divine portrays Jackie Kennedy after JFK died. The confidence, yet dissonance of Divine's presentation is evident in Tronia's ownership yet fallibility of Lucentio. Both portrayals are exciting and "wrong". The "wrongness" of these portrayals is what makes them joyous and looking at this image, I was inspired to explore joy and fearlessness.



With this image, I utilized the Laban efforts of *press*, *punch*, and *slash*. All of these efforts with strong and other than press are sustained. When exploring these efforts with this image, I felt angry joy and triumph. These effort explorations resulted in quick and semi-violent opening and closing of arms and a quick and strong moving forward. A surprise product of this exploration was the joy, the joy in being different and free.

The last image I worked with was a painting by Mati Klarwein entitled *Brazilian Angel*. This image is an integration of male and female and communicates harmony and relaxation. I chose this image because of the contrasting, yet integrating, male and female imagery.



The feminine imagery is more realistic than the male imagery. The yonic shape on the chest, and the facial features of the figure, are more naturalistic than the abstract phallic images to the side and the moustache. This to me, is relevant to Tronia's masculinity as a mask with it, at the same time, being a part of her. In this Laban exploration I played with *press* and *glide*. Both of these efforts are strong and that strength created a confidence in my exploration. Also both of these efforts are direct, and this directness continues to portray confidence, but the speed and flow vary between the two. This variation between sustained and quick and bound and free, coupled with the strength and directness created a sense of groundedness and confidence. When exploring, I found stillness that was broken by moments of strong and purposeful movement that varied from impulse to impulse. This combination of stillness and impulse resulted in an interesting combination of peace and energy. I think this unexpected combination is representational of where Tronia's expression ends in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

After Tronia has presented as a high-class male throughout the course of the play, she goes back to performing as a low-class female. As with power posing, she is still affected by her previous behavior. It's this melding and

influencing of physical behaviors on internal character life that brought depth to my final presentation of Tronia. Through the Laban work and my own understanding of how the body affects the mind, I chose to make Tronia a combination of her behaviors at the beginning of the play, and when she is performing as Lucentio. This combination created a whole new characterization and expression of the character of Tronia that came together at the end of the play once she drops the disguise.

While the Laban and image work most directly created physical impulses and internal response, in my exploration of Tronia, it also allowed me to make more supported vocal choices as well. The main vocal choice that was influenced by my Laban exploration came in my differentiation of Tronia as herself and Tronia in disguise as Lucentio. I made the choice for Tronia's non-disguised voice to be indirect, to portray the requirement of the time period for women to not be direct with their wants or thoughts. This indirectness is reflected in the text at the beginning of the play.

Mi perdonato, gentle master mine.
I am in all affected as yourself,
Glad that you thus continue your resolve
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.
Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue and this moral discipline,
Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray,
Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,
practice rhetoric in your common talk;
Music and poesy use to quicken you;
The mathematics and the metaphysics'
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.
No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en.
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

This passage shows Tronia giving Lucentio advice and leading him to the conclusions she has made. However, her leading is gentle and conciliatory towards Lucentio, allowing her to portray both her status as a servant, and in the case of this specific production, as a woman. In addition, after my Laban exploration I found that Tronia presenting as a woman had a tendency towards indirectness. This indirectness translated itself into variation in pitch and a variation in speed of speech. This combination of pitch and speed variation combines to communicate regularly changing tactics and a smooth appealing nature.

As the process went on, I also incorporated breathiness into Tronia's voice. When crafting Tronia's in-disguise voice, I did not want to purposefully deepen my voice or "put on" the idea of a male voice. Instead I decided to focus on the directness that is traditionally masculine and translate it into the voice. When first working with this direct voice, it lacked pitch variation and speed variation, with the speed tending towards quicker. As the rehearsal process went on, I received notes that asked me to vary my pitch more. I worked on allowing more pitch variation and found that pitch variation occurred most naturally when Tronia was convincing someone or lying to someone. Overall, I did not change my voice drastically to portray Tronia in disguise. However, these small vocal changes created strong internal changes in me as the actor and the character. The quickness of Tronia's in-disguise speech created a feeling of nervousness but the lack of pitch variation created a feeling of purpose and action, while the lack of breathiness created a feeling of presence and power. This outside in

approach to voice, influenced by my Laban exploration, created a more integrated emotional life to the character. Instead of a forced masculine or feminine presentation.

I used the idea that the body affects and changes the mind to explore and craft Tronia's internal journey throughout the play. This use of the body to create authentic internal experiences is something I believe strongly in. In my opinion, the fact that Tronia performs as a man so long, means that she must be affected by this change in her behavior. The same way non-actors are affected by power-posing or other physical changes. The body crafting the mind as well as identity has influenced both my process as an actor in all of my performances, and also influenced me in this specific crafting of Tronia.

CHAPTER THREE: MIMICRY AND PHYSICAL BUILDING

When crafting most characters, the actor has the power to collaborate with the director and respond to their scene partner. However, the building of the character is mainly the responsibility of actor playing that character. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Tronina must disguise herself as Lucentio and so the job of crafting the character of Tronina in disguise as Lucentio, must be influenced by the actor playing Lucentio. When beginning to mimic the actor of Lucentio I focused on where he carries his weight, the momentum and movement of his feet, and the sense of control throughout his body. In addition to mimicking the actor playing Lucentio, I built Tronina disguised as Lucentio by working with a Drag King to tackle some of the main identifiers of masculine physicality.

When beginning to observe the actor playing Lucentio in depth, I started by simply following him around the rehearsal space. As I followed him, I took note of the way he walked and moved. Specifically, I noticed a heavier weight in his feet and hips, and an easiness in the torso. Because of my experience with the Suzuki Method, I associate a strong base and an easy upper body with discipline and focus. While this association is more specific to the actor and not the character, it gave me a good starting place and understanding of weight and tension within the actor playing Lucentio's body and how I could create it in my

own body. In addition to this Suzuki like quality, I noticed that the actor did not articulate all the way through the foot and ankles, and instead propelled himself using the heel of his foot. At the same time, he did not bang his feet into the ground, everything was very controlled. This control translated into some tension I observed in the actor playing Lucentio's feet and ankles and instead of the articulation happening through the feet and ankles, I observed more motion and ease in the knees.

Moving up in the body, I saw that the actor's hips were in what I would consider a neutral position, not pushed forward or back, and they did not move from side to side or significantly forward when the actor walked. This lack of movement in the hips is typical of many men and could signify a holding in the hips. However, because the actor playing Lucentio showed an ease in the movement of his legs from the hips, I feel as though this lack of movement in the hips can be more connected to control than tension, although some tension may be present.

Moving up in the body, the actor playing Lucentio's chest was in a stereotypically neutral position, not pushed forward or back. But instead of communicating control, the chest had a sense of ease to it. The chest felt supported by the control of the lower body. When the actor playing Lucentio was walking, I also observed the movement of his arms. The arms moved slightly but not in any exaggerated way, and the swing of the arms came from the shoulder, as opposed to the elbow. The shoulders were back and open, but again felt at ease and not forced into place. The head I observed to be released up and

forward from the atlas and have an easy but small consistent movement to it. Overall, my impression of the actor playing Lucentio's physicality was that he was highly controlled and forward in the lower body, with some tension in the feet and ankles. The upper body is far more relaxed than the lower body but still controlled. This is evident in the ease but isolated movement of the arms, initiating from the shoulders. An important aspect of this observation to note is that I never touched or spoke with the actor playing Lucentio about how his body felt when in motion. My observation was purely visual. Because of this it is entirely possible that my understanding of the actor's body is not the same as the reality, however my understanding, regardless of truth, is helpful in my mimicry and recreation within my own body.

In addition to observing the actor playing Lucentio's body, I also observed his voice. The first thing I noticed about the actor playing Lucentio's voice was that it was at a slightly higher pitch than considered neutral for a male. The voice also mainly resonated in the mask, the mask is the nasal and sinus resonator. In addition to the mask I noticed some throat resonance especially present on lower pitches. The actor's changes in pitch were also often accompanied by scooping, as opposed to sudden switching in pitch. I noticed a slight breathiness that was used on more important or stressed words. In the context of Shakespeare, this was especially evident in the use of iambic pentameter. Because *The Taming of the Shrew* is written in iambic pentameter and because iambic pentameter denotes stressed and unstressed syllables, I can use iambic pentameter to decide when to implement a slightly breathy quality in my imitation. In addition to these general

vocal qualities, I also observed the actor playing Lucentio stressing *tf* and *dʒ* sounds, and there was some extra attention on the *t* sound, making it dentalized around half of the time.

From my observations I started working with a very controlled forward facing lower body, with special attention put on the ankles and feet, and allowing the legs to swing beneath the hips. I held tension in my feet and ankles, making them maintain tension and control when lifted from the floor and when not bearing weight. This way of moving with control in the ankles reminded me of military walking and that image helped me maintain the tension in the lower body and a supported ease in the upper body. In implementing my vocal observations, I did not change as significantly. Because the actor playing Lucentio is male and I am female, the imitating of his voice became much more difficult. Because I did not want to force masculinity or craft a voice that felt purposefully disguised, I instead focused on a couple general qualities of the actor's voice that I had learned. I practiced slight mask resonance and purposefully stressed words, especially when using the *t* sound. I also made the choice to incorporate the directness from his physicality into his voice. This choice was appropriate because I had been using breathiness in my portrayal of Tronia as Tronia, and dropping that breathiness for Tronia as Lucentio helped me portray a more direct stereotypically masculine character. While I did observe the actor playing Lucentio using breathiness occasionally, I think I made a smart choice in not using that in my portrayal of Tronia as Lucentio, because it makes my differentiation of Tronia in and out of disguise stronger.

After observing and mimicking the actor playing Lucentio and rehearsing with these observations in mind, I video called with a Drag King to learn more about how to craft masculinity. Working with the Drag King, we talked first about the work I had done so far and what type of man Lucentio is and therefore what type of man I would craft. The Drag King laid out some stereotypical markers of masculinity that I could use such as pushed back shoulders, a wider stance, and hips moved forward. While these markers of masculinity would help me portray masculinity to the audience, they fell into a habit I have of forcing masculinity and using strong stereotypes. Instead of using these markers I wanted to craft my masculinity in a non-habitual, less stereotypical way. In addition, I wanted to first craft a character that just happens to be masculine, as opposed to simply presenting masculinity. This returns to my idea, inspired by Goffman and Butler, that Troncia's performance of self is not either true or false, but instead an honest expression of self in the given situation.

Moving on from the more stereotypical aspects of masculinity, the Drag King and I started to break down what type of man Lucentio is and therefore what type of man I needed to craft. We looked at Lucentio's love of learning and scholarship, evidenced by this passage:

And therefore, Troncia, for the time I study,
Virtue, and that part of philosophy
Will I apply that treats of happiness
By virtue specially to be achieved.
Tell me thy mind, for I have Pisa left
And am to Padua come, as he that leaves
A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep
And with satiety seeks to quench his thirst (4).

Here, Lucentio uses colorful and powerful language such as, “seeks to quench” and “by virtue specially to be achieved” in reference to his studies and his passion for learning. The language that Lucentio uses also creates the impression of a learned person and the iambic pentameter in this monologue is regular, 10 syllables in each line, which shows Lucentio in a confident and stable state. Once it had been established that Lucentio was a more brain motivated and scholarly character, before his love for Bianca that is, we started playing with how to portray that in the body.

I started moving by leading from the head and finding different ways to allow this leading to affect the rest of my body. Playing with leading from the head and really isolating the head and the neck created a feeling of lack of power and defensiveness. When the chest was allowed to be affected as well, the chest opened up and conveyed a more earnest and eager character.

After collaborating with the Drag King, I started working on crafting masculinity in a new way. Specifically, I started dealing with props that would help change the way I felt in my own body. The props suggested to me were a binder for my chest, a sock to simulate a penis, and baggy pants to get me used to a more masculine silhouette and ease of movement in my lower body. While I started incorporating the masculine physicality enhancers, I was surprised by how uncomfortable and upsetting the process was to me. I started experimenting with the props mainly in the form of a sports bra. I was unwilling to use ACE bandages due to their reputation as an extremely dangerous way to bind due to the possibility of scarring and I didn't ask for a legitimate binder. The sports bra

didn't create a change in my thinking or a significant change in my body. I think this is because I wear a sports bra on a regular basis and therefore the added stimulus didn't create a new experience.

When I did not feel as though wearing a sports bra was effective, I tried going without a bra all together. I decided to do this to try and feel the freedom that a male person feels around their chest. As a female who has been wearing a bra for about half of my life, I don't think about how it feels on my body or how it affects my movement and presentation and so I wanted to see how it felt to present masculinity without the hindrance of a bra. The first thing I noticed was that I became far more aware of my breasts. I was aware of how they moved when I moved and how visible they were to other people. This increased awareness gave me an impulse to lean forward and use a more concave posture. I interpreted this as my body trying to hide my breasts from other's view. This impulse made sense with my role of Tronia in disguise given Tronia's fear that she may be discovered at any moment. Throughout the rehearsal process I regularly received the note to find moments where Tronia's disguise could slip and to increase the sense of urgency concerning being caught by the other characters. I thought the impulse to hide my breasts would help instill this urgency in my body and create more opportunities for the mask to naturally drop. However, I believed that not wearing a bra for the performance would not be practical and I didn't continue to explore this option.

I did not discuss my discoveries with my director or try to work with her on my frustrations. On one hand, I was scared I would get in trouble and that my

discomfort would be called an excuse or selfish. On the other hand I think I was also scared that, when I shared my fears, I would actually have to confront the binder and wear it, I wouldn't be able to avoid it anymore. I never actually bound my chest as was asked of me by my director and instead of discussing my concerns about binding with my director, I just avoided the problem.

In addition to binding my chest, the Drag King and my director both suggested I use a sock in my pants to simulate a penis. This added stimulus would hopefully give me more insight into the male body and help me craft a more realistic presentation of masculinity. Working with the sock in my pants did create a new experience and was an interesting stimulus in my initial exploration. When using the sock, I walked wider and stood wider. But in my brief exploration with the sock, about three rehearsals, I found the sock to be distracting as I was constantly readjusting it. One thing to note about this distraction is that I didn't work hard to overcome it. I allowed the distraction to affect me so that I wouldn't have to continue working with the sock, I used it as an excuse. As with the binding I did not talk to my director about my brief exploration and did not work with her towards more discoveries within the discomfort.

Looking back on the process, I recognize how my personal journey mirrored Tronia's journey. Or how I could have used my own discomfort as physical stimulus to inspire Tronia. Tronia was going through discomfort just like me when adopting her Lucentio disguise. However, Tronia did not have the option to avoid the problem. I have been viewing and arguing for Tronia in disguise as being a true expression of Tronia, not something separate, yet I was

trying to distance myself from binding and make it not “my fault” or “my problem” when I could’ve used it to inform Tronia’s journey. Part of my discomfort and stress came from the stimulus, and another stressor came from my fear that I was not performing up to my director’s expectations.

This stress and discomfort that came from altering myself physically continued throughout the process until it came to a fairly emotional point during the dress rehearsals. I had been given an ACE bandage to bind with and was incredibly uncomfortable binding with that. I told costume personnel that I was not comfortable binding with ACE bandages but that I brought my sports bra. I was instructed to wear the sport bra for first dress and that we’d change based on notes from the director.

The first day of dress rehearsal I personally received no notes concerning my chest and was not made aware of any notes during the next day’s dress rehearsal. However, after the rehearsal I was given a note by the dramaturg that brought me back to my discomfort in a new way that I could not ignore. I asked the dramaturg about a note concerning my urgency and the disguise dropping and she responded saying “I honestly didn’t notice, because I was so distracted by you being unbound.” This comment caught me off-guard and made me so emotional and ashamed. I felt attacked and immediately became withdrawn and defensive. This note was the worst moment of my process in crafting Tronia. I had very consciously been trying to present Tronia as masculine. I had used the mimicry work, the work with the drag queen, and my own physical exploration to create Tronia as Lucentio. The fact that this work didn’t seem to be paying off

was frustrating and emotional. In addition to binding, I was asked to use a sock in my pants, however, this idea was abandoned because members of the production team thought that it was too evident and distracting.

The day after I received the note concerning my binding from the dramaturg, I spoke with the costume shop more in-depth about my discomfort with ace bandages and the request that I not use a sports bra. The costume shop gave me emotional support and worked on finding me an alternative. Eventually the costume shop found that one of their costume crew members had a binder of her own that would fit me, and that is what I used during the run of the show. In the moment, I was frustrated that a student had to give their personal binder for the performance. I felt as though I should have been provided with more than ACE bandages from the beginning of the process.

Even though I had not taken ownership of my journey and asked for an alternate binder, I was frustrated with the situation. Working with the binder I felt more comfortable than I was with the idea of the ACE bandages, however, I was still filled with emotional discomfort. My emotional distress continued while wearing the binder for a couple of days. I felt as though all of the stress and discomfort I had been feeling during the rehearsal was thrust to the forefront of my focus. Because I had a physical barrier on my body, I think my mind forced me to respond to the stimulus emotionally, instead of just avoiding the problem. The result was a more acute emotional discomfort than I had experienced throughout rehearsal.

My discomfort waned after a couple of wears of the binder and I accepted it as a part of my costume. Once I accepted it I was able to grow and progress as Tronia. There was still the physical stimulus of the binder, but once I accepted it as a part of my costume I know longer felt frozen by discomfort. I instead listened to how my body reacted to the binder and how that affected my emotions. Sometimes my body felt tight and closed off and so I wanted to close myself off to people around me, I found this feeling was most present when Tronia's disguise was in danger of dropping. Other times the binder made my body feel secure and muscular. This translated into a more open and playful Tronia, such as when Tronia is convincing the Merchant to work with her. These different impulses that were brought on by the physical binder show how the physical shaped my internal impulses and by extension Tronia's character.

The biggest issue with my discomfort and feelings concerning binding was not the fact that I had these feelings, it was the fact that I did not discuss my discomfort with my director, stage manager, or costume designer and I did not try to use the discomfort to grow my performance. If I had spoken with my director about my concerns with adopting masculine physical markers, like the binder, we could've approached it more collaboratively. Gender and gender identity is an emotional topic and looking back on the process, I wish we as a creative team had viewed it that way from the start. I think going into the process no one anticipated me having such a strong reaction to being asked to bind and the actual binding. I certainly didn't anticipate this masculine marker to throw me off so much but it can be a lesson for the future. Actors are asked to engage

emotionally with the material. With that in mind, playing another gender should be approached with the same care and safety as theatrical fight and intimacy work so that the actor feels safe to emotionally explore a not-so-safe world. If I were to advise another production that needed gender swapping, I would suggest more table work concerning gender. I would suggest that the actor have the opportunity to express where their comfort level is, so that they and the production team were prepared if the actor needed to push beyond that comfort zone.

If I could do it over, I would not avoid my discomfort and the possibility of conflict and instead discuss my concerns with those in power. I also would've tried to use my own discomfort to better understand Tronia's feelings when in disguise. I am unsure why I experienced such an intense reaction to binding. I think it may have to do with my involvement and protection for the transgender community. I associate binding with a transgender person's way to present, look or behave, in a way that eases emotional discomfort or allows an individual to pass as the gender they identify with. While I know people bind for many reasons, the idea of binding for a play did not feel like a good enough reason to appropriate this culture. In addition, I think the binding created an awareness of my own body that made me uncomfortable. Some association in my brain told me that if I was skinny enough, I wouldn't need to bind because I would look more traditionally androgynous. I am unsure if these are the only factors that created the discomfort but I think they are strong contributing factors.

I hope that in the future I do not avoid my problems especially if they are related to my performance work. Communication is a key part of creating a role and a play. The lack of communication and ownership of my process meant that I struggled in creating a performance I was proud of. One of the struggles of performing is the openness that is required of the performer. Over the course of the rehearsals I focused on being open on stage, but I closed myself off when receiving critique and collaborating with Dr. Calvano. This lack of openness led to more struggles during the performance of the show.

CHAPTER FOUR: IT ALL LEADS BACK TO ACTION

The performance of Tronia in *The Taming of the Shrew* was the culmination of my thesis performance. Going into the actual performance I was nervous and upset because of my emotional and discomforting response to binding my chest for Tronia's disguise as Lucentio. I received many different suggestions from friends, crew members, and my director about how to use the binder to help me portray Tronia in disguise, but I was still resistant to the binder. I wanted to be able to create a convincing illusion of Lucentio without the help of a binder. Yet because binding is connected to Tronia's disguise and the presentation of masculinity, I attempted to rid myself of discomfort by fine-tuning my masculine disguise and attempting to, technically perfect it. I also attempted to better craft how the undisguised Tronia crept in during moments of panic.

Throughout the process I continued to receive the note to allow the panic of Tronia's disguise to creep in. Specifically, I was told that the audience needed to see moments where the mask, the disguise, dropped. The challenge of creating a character that is in disguise, is balancing how convincing the disguise is and how much of their true identity shows through. The main way I was encouraged to find this balance was by determining when the disguise was threatened and how the subsequent panic or fear showed in performance. Throughout the rehearsal

process I tried to craft these moments of the mask dropping by allowing the non-disguised Tronia to creep in physically and vocally. This physical and vocal change created an emotional urgency and anxiety that helped maintain the character's panic.

These moments where the disguise could drop were frequent when Tronia was first in disguise and became less frequent as the play goes on. This is consistent with the idea that Tronia's identity and confidence grow as she stays in the disguise. The first time I thought about allowing the mask the drop is when we first see Tronia in disguise as Lucentio.

TRONIA
(*As Lucentio*)
Gentlemen, God save you. If I may be bold,
Tell me, I beseech you, which is the readiest way
To the house of Signior Baptista Minola?

BIONDELLA
He that has the two fair daughters—is 't
he you mean?

TRONIA
Even he, Biondella.

When we first see Tronia in disguise, she is uncomfortable with her new physical appearance. In her first section of text she uses indirect language and is overly conciliatory. She flatters the men, giving them power by calling them "gentlemen" and then beseeching them to give her directions. In addition, her line "If I may be bold" is almost apologetic and asks permission from the other men, showing her to be less powerful. Biondella's addition also creates a moment of panic for Tronia that causes the mask to drop. First, when Biondella questions who Tronia

is looking for she takes power from Tronia. The act of a servant interrupting her master and questioning them, especially in front of new acquaintances, is odd and shocking, and communicates that the servant may have power over the master. Second, Biondella brings attention to Tronia's purpose in meeting Baptista, being a suitor for Bianca. Instead of allowing Tronia to introduce herself as a suitor on her own terms, Biondella references "the two fair daughters" and puts Gremio and Hortensio on high alert, creating panic for Tronia. This is the first moment of panic that I identified, and to communicate it, I tried to show fear on my face and show some of the non-disguised Tronia characteristics.

Hortensio and Gremio both verbally jump on Tronia after this weakening of power. They question her motives and, in our production, they physically encroach on her space. Tronia, in response, strengthens and uses her intelligence to verbally spar with these men. With her experience as a female secretary, she understands the need to flatter these men. She appeals to the social constraints of them being "gentlemen" and asks them to "do me this right, hear me with patience" (19). By appealing to their status as gentlemen she is able to establish a cordial relationship with them where she is not physically threatened. This initial shift to a more cordial relationship means that Tronia regains her mask and can establish her role as a benevolent presence by using Petruchio's goal to woo Katharine as a common interest.

TRONIA

If it be so, sir, that you are the man
Must stead us all, and me amongst the rest,
And if you break the ice and do this feat,
Achieve the elder, set the younger free

For our access, whose hap shall be to have her
Will not so graceless be to be ingrate.

HORTENSIO

Sir, you say well, and well you do conceive.
And since you do profess to be a suitor,
You must, as we do, gratify this gentleman,
To whom we all rest generally beholding.

TRONIA

Sir, I shall not be slack; in sign whereof,
Please you we may contrive this afternoon
And quaff carouses to our mistress' health (20-21).

Once Tronia has established herself as an intelligent gentleman Hortensio tests her again by making sure that she is financially strong as well. Tronia responds gracefully, keeping the mask intact, and then further entices the true gentleman with the promise of alcohol.

The next time Tronia's mask drops is when she meets Baptista for the first time. When they meet Tronia gives a long monologue about why Baptista should accept her, Lucentio, as a suitor.

TRONIA

Pardon me, sir, the boldness is mine own,
That being a stranger in this city here
Do make myself a suitor to your daughter,
Unto Bianca, fair and virtuous.
Nor is your firm resolve unknown to me,
In the preferment of the eldest sister.
This liberty is all that I request,
That, upon knowledge of my parentage,
I may have welcome 'mongst the rest that woo
And free access and favor as the rest.
And toward the education of your daughters
I here bestow a simple instrument
And this small packet of Greek and Latin books.

In this monologue, Tronia is not panicking as outwardly as she is in her first scene in disguise, while there is that same internal urgency and anxiety, her physical presentation isn't stressed. She uses formal language that is somewhat indirect, and she gives Baptista a fair amount of power with phrases like "pardon me, sir" and, "this liberty is all that I request." However, these concession of power are appropriate for Tronia, or even Lucentio, to give to a man like Baptista. The text itself doesn't show the panic that would cause the mask to drop, instead I made the decision to let the mask to drop because this is the first time Tronia meets Baptista, the man who could cause the plan to succeed or fail.

After this scene, Tronia's mask drops decrease and become less about her fear of presenting as a man and more about her fear of the plan not working. For example, in the wedding scene Petruchio's inappropriate behavior and lateness cause Tronia to panic and her mask to drop.

TRONIA

And tell us what occasion of import
Hath all so long detained you from your wife
And sent you hither so unlike yourself.

PETRUCHIO

Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to hear.
Sufficeth I am come to keep my word,
But where is Kate? I stay too long from her.
The morning wears. 'Tis time we were at church.

TRONIA

See not your bride in these unreverent robes.
Go to my chamber, put on clothes of mine.

PETRUCHIO

Not I, believe me. Thus I'll visit her (44).

In this section of text, Tronina works very hard to fix Petruchio's behavior. She asks him "what occasion of import" has made him arrive so inappropriately, hoping that he has an acceptable excuse. Later in the text she attempts to remedy the situation by offering him more appropriate clothes. Tronina's urgency and panic allow the mask of the intelligent gentleman to drop slightly. Tronina is pursuing a solution without as much attention on her own disguise. However, the panic itself does not come from her disguise, it comes from her fear that she will fail at her job.

All of the moments where I allowed Tronina's mask to drop and the panic to creep in were carefully crafted. Most of this work was done during the tech and dress rehearsal process, leading right up to opening night. However, even with this textual analysis and an attempt to let the fear creep in physically, I was still getting the same note. I was putting my energy into making specific choices about where and how Tronina as Tronina was expressed physically in moments of panic. This work was very technical and yet it did not seem to be effective or evident to the audience. As I focused more and more on technically crafting the masculinity, the more forced it seemed and the less purposeful Tronina was.

After the last dress rehearsal, I felt unsatisfied with my performance. I had gotten the note that my masculinity wasn't quite landing, and overall my performance felt forced. I believe that I was over-thinking my performance and not trusting the work I had put in. I had been given some notes that the lines didn't feel active and eventually I decided that the more I forced the masculinity,

and the acting, the worse it would be. With that established, I decided to simply play my action.

Modern acting theory relies heavily on the idea of the action. The modern understanding of action came from Stanislavski and his idea of the super-objective. Stanislavski describe the super-objective as “the inner essence, the all-embracing goal, the objective of all objectives, the concentration of the entire score of the roll” (Stanislavski 78). However, along with the super-objective Stanislavski says that the actor must use action to show “the progression of his super-objective” (Stanislavski 78). The action is the physical expression of the super-objective or objective. As referenced in *Chapter Two: How the Body Affects the Mind*, Stanislavski says that an actor needs to connect the inner life to the physical expression. For the inner super-objective of a character, action is that physical expression.

In my acting process, I use action as defined by the *Practical Handbook for the Actor*, otherwise known as Practical Aesthetics, which states that an “action is the main building block of an actor’s technique because it is the one thing that you, the actor, can consistently *do* on-stage” (Bruder et. al 13). Having an action means that you, as the actor, are always doing something (Bruder et. al 13) it keeps the scene moving and it keeps you, the actor, active and in the moment.

For my personal process, I combine the Practical Aesthetics definition of actions, with Robert Cohen’s definition of tactic. A tactic, as defined by Robert Cohen, is the means by which a character pursues a goal (Cohen 45), a goal is

very similar to Stanislavski's super-objective. A tactic is a verb, and there should be many tactics that a character uses within a scene or play (Cohen 49). The key from the Cohen theory that I incorporate into my understanding of action, is the connection to goal. Practical Aesthetics focuses heavily on responding appropriately within the moment, and while Practical Aesthetics requires the actor to analyze the scene ahead of time to find the actions, I find that Robert Cohen's method uses more ahead of time planning that allows for a stronger grounding in the text.

During the course of the rehearsal process I had established actions and tactics for each scene. At the beginning of the play, before Tronia is changed by her disguise, the majority of my actions were connected to impressing Lucentio. The core action/goal was to impress Lucentio, but as the play progresses Tronia becomes more internally motivated and confident with her skills. This transformation created Tronia's action: to prove myself. This action can be achieved through professional success and also through achieving respect from those around her. It is a combination of professional and personal. The first point in this play becomes clear is when Tronia tells her plan to Lucentio. She states:

TRONIA
If he be credulous, and trust my tale,
I'll make him glad to seem Vincentio
And give assurance to Baptista Minola
As if he were the right Vincentio.
Take in your love, and then let me alone.

In this section, Tronia references her own abilities. She says she'll "make" the Merchant interested in being Vincentio and even trick Baptista into believing her

story. Tronia becomes so bold that she even tells Lucentio to leave so that she can carry out her plan. Throughout the scene with the Merchant Tronia does not show any anxiety. She is confident and purposeful and asserts her power almost immediately in the scene.

TRONIA

He is my father, sir, and sooth to say,
In count'nance somewhat doth resemble you.

Takes out a large stack of bills

(And think it not the worst of all your fortunes
That you are like to Sir Vincentio):
His name and credit shall you undertake,
And in my house you shall be friendly lodged.

Merchant grabs for the money.

Tronia pulls it back.

Look that you take upon you as you should.
You understand me, sir. So shall you stay
Till you have done your business in the city.
If this be court'sy, sir, accept of it (60).

In convincing the Merchant to disguise himself as Vincentio, Lucentio's father, Tronia uses a combination of bribing and dominating to make the task seem worthwhile and to make herself seem impressive. Both of these tactics serve the greater action of to prove herself because they are the most appropriate to completing the task. The bribing tactic is an approach that helps promote the professional success and the dominating helps Tronia achieve the personal respect. Together, both of these tactics help Tronia to achieve her action of "to prove myself".

These actions were established during the rehearsal process, so when I decided to simply play my action after my frustration in rehearsal, I just trusted

the work I had already done. This “playing the action” means reacting physically and in the moment to internal impulses. The tactics I chose were all verbs and all were evocative to me. These emotionally powerful tactics and trust in my preparation allowed me to simply “play the action”. In performance, I didn’t think “what’s my action?” or “what’s my tactic?” Instead, I focused on being present, responding to my scene partners, and trusting that my action was embedded in my performance. The majority of my rehearsal process was very technical. The masculinity work and Laban work created emotional responses in me, but were approached from a more technical standpoint. All of the work was there, but I wasn’t letting it do its job, I was micro-managing my performance.

One of the main benefits of focusing on the action was that my discomfort from binding lessened. When focusing on action, the binder functioned as extra stimulus for the character, as opposed as a distraction for me, the actor. The note to allow the binder to be stimulus for Tronia had been given to me earlier in the process, but my stubbornness and discomfort meant that I did not implement the note. Focusing on the action also meant that my focus as an actor was on one thing during the performance. In rehearsal I had been focused on physical and vocal choices, as well as when to let the mask drop. This dispersed focused meant that my performance wasn’t honed in. A clear focus as an actor meant that Tronia was dynamic, active, and motivated.

After opening night of *The Taming of the Shrew* I felt incredibly happy with the work I had done. I felt present in all of my scenes and that Tronia moved purposefully throughout the play. I received good feedback from my director

which reinforced my feelings and made me feel confident moving forward. I believe that another aspect that could've helped my performance was the presence of an audience, their energy and eyes keeping me focused and energized. However, I believe that the majority of my growth came from focusing on my action. One of my main takeaways from the performances of the show was that I can trust my process. Throughout the rehearsal I was putting in the work through research, action, and physical and vocal crafting. I had focused so much on this work that I became "in my head" about the performance. Focusing on the action freed me from obsessing and meant that I saw how the work I had done throughout the rehearsal came through in performance, without me forcing it.

CONCLUSION

Theatre is a public act, it requires an audience to respond to, critique, enjoy, and question it. Theatre is a shared experience where audiences go through a story together. An actor's process, on the other hand, is private. It is individualized work that is hard to assess as strong or weak. In the moment of a rehearsal, it's all a work in progress so it's hard to say sometimes if that process is working.

I've spent the majority of my career as a performer trying out new ideas and techniques in the rehearsal room. I've been in an educational setting for the majority of these performances and because of this my directors have often imposed an acting ideology onto the process. When a director did not have a clear agenda for the process, I sometimes became complacent. I did not own my process.

Many times in my life as a performer my process as an actor has felt like guess work. It has felt driven by the play, the director, and the ensemble, not by my own wants or perspective. For my role as Tronia in the *Taming of the Shrew*, I came into the process with a clear goal and theory. I believed that if Tronia

performed as a high-class man throughout the majority of the play, she should be changed because of it. So often we see disguises in plays and film as a black and white, on or off situation. I wanted to challenge that norm and show how Tronina changes because she is required to disguise herself as a high-class man.

I started with contextual, historical, and character analysis. This work helped me create a picture of the world Tronina was living in. I established that she was a low-class servant of a high-class family. Through textual evidence in the script I established she had been with Lucentio's family her whole life, and that she is of higher status compared to the other servants. I also established that Tronina likes Lucentio and that she wants to do a good job, she is not bitter or resentful towards Lucentio.

I also found support for my idea that Tronina changes because of her time in disguise through textual research. In the last scene of the play Tronina has two short lines where she is openly out of disguise.

PETRUCHIO

She hath prevented me. Here, false Lucentio,
This bird you aimed at, though you hit her not.—
Therefore a health to all that shot and missed.

TRONIA

The real Lucentio slipped me like his greyhound,
Which runs herself and catches for her master.

PETRUCHIO

A good swift simile, but something currish.

TRONIA

'Tis well, sir, that you hunted for yourself.
'Tis thought your deer does hold you at a bay.

BAPTISTA
O, O, Petruchio! Troncia hits you now.

This moment is brief but it shows Troncia as a confident servant who is smart enough to tease a man of much higher status, to his face, and get away with it. This is so different from the beginning of the play where Troncia used indirect language to appease Lucentio. This moment shows that Troncia has grown throughout the course of the play. With this textual evidence gathered I then supplemented it with historical research.

Historically, I researched the production history of *The Taming of the Shrew* and the added historical context of the 1960s. Looking at the production history meant that I understood how problematic aspects of the play were viewed and tackled throughout history. Knowing the history of the play as a farce, a romantic comedy, and the discomfort that comes with the abuse in the play meant that I approached the process with new ideas that were inspired by the old ones.

My research of the 1960s told me about the social pressures put on women and other members of society. These social pressures created rules for behavior and meant that Troncia had to strictly adhere to the appropriate rules when in disguise, which raised the stakes. My 1960s research on counter culture inspired me to put a little bit of myself into Troncia. The original Tranio, on the page, is not rebellious. He is a trusted servant who intelligently helps his master woo the woman he loves. When Tranio was changed to Troncia and when the 1400s was changed to the 1960s, I saw an opportunity for Troncia. I saw Troncia

as a woman in the 1960s who could benefit from the rise of the feminist movement, but who came to that movement in an unconventional way. This choice to make Tronia's transformation inspired by feminism was a sign of me trusting myself. I was allowing myself to take risks in the process, not play it safe.

With my research done I needed to bring Tronia to life. My training has been rooted in the physical and I wanted my body and voice to be crafted so that they told the story of Tronia. I trusted my actor training and instead of trying out a new acting technique, I used LMA, a technique that I enjoy and am passionate about. I played with imagery, text, and LMA until I found a physical and vocal base for Tronia that felt right to me. I took notes from my director and listened to how she thought my performance could be improved. Sometimes I took these notes well, sometimes I struggled with not taking them personally. I balanced taking notes and help concerning how to craft Tronia physically and being confident in my own process.

By the end of the rehearsal process I had done so much research and thought so hard about how to perform Tronia, that my brain was fried. I cried about my frustrations with binding. I felt inadequate and even a little like a failure. I wondered if my work had been fruitless. In the last day before the show opened, I chose to trust the work and the training and just be in the moment. I focused on being active and listening in my scenes and trusted that all the work I had put into the process would do its job.

Performance is about the moment; it's about the experience of watching a story unfold. The audience was unaware of all the work I put into this show. My

director and fellow actors don't know about all the work and research I did, though they are aware of some of it. Anyone reading this thesis doesn't know about all the different routes I went down in my research. I myself have probably forgotten some things I did to prepare for Tronia. It is very hard to objectively say whether or not the work I put into Tronia was successful. Art is subjective and anyone watching my performance would have had any number of thoughts, good and bad, on how I did. It is easier to say whether this rehearsal process was successful for me, the actor. I say it was. I took the aspects of performance and character that I thought were most important and I put my time into them. I established my process and became confident in my work.

My journey is similar to Tronia's. We both started comfortably following those in positions of power and we both were competent in our work. We were both presented with a challenge from those in power, mine was performing and writing my thesis, Tronia's was disguising herself as her master Lucentio. We both experienced discomfort with our tasks, Tronia's discomfort occurred when she first disguised herself and slowly dissipated as she gained confidence. My discomfort was more surprising, and it built as the binder became more and more required for the show. My discomfort only improved once I confronted the binder and embraced then situation. Once I had performed my last show, and once Tronia has taken off her disguise we were both more confident in our own abilities. I now can reflect on this process and see how discomfort and frustration forced me to grow.

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EDUCATION

MFA, Theatre Arts, University of Louisville, 2016-2019

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RELATED EMPLOYMENT:

Graduate Teaching Assistant—August 2016-Present, University of Louisville

- Acted as the TA of Theatre 207 (Appreciation of Theatre). Duties included leading own section of class, creating lesson plans, monitoring lecture sessions, grading assignments and tests and Blackboard maintenance.
- Acted as the lecturer for TA 224 (Introduction to Acting as Communication). Created syllabus and daily lesson plans. Led exercises focused on creation of work and sending messages effectively. Graded all student work produced (performance work, papers, participation).
- Acted as the lecturer for TA 324 (Acting for non-majors). Created syllabus and daily lesson plans. Led lectures and exercises on reading material and basic acting techniques. Evaluated and graded all students and material produced (performance work, participation, tests and essays).

Teaching Artist; Drama Specialist— June 2018-August 2018, The Jewish Community Center, Louisville, KY

- Employed as the Drama Specialist within the Jewish Community Center's summer camp. Worked with children ages 3 to 15. The camp was broken into

cabins, determined by age and led by a counselor. Over the course of one day, each group would circle through the various specialty programs for a 45 minute class. Responsible for designing curriculum specifically geared towards each age group. Themes covered for all age groups include: Character, ensemble, risk taking, imagination, improv. Created lesson plans for each class; roughly taught 5 classes a day.

- Other duties included assisting with the leading of morning and afternoon circle, arrival and dismissal carpool and assisting with the organization of camp-wide assemblies, talent shows and other events.

Assistant Residential Director - Duke Youth Programs, Durham NC, June-August 2017

- Supervised and organized a team of 24 residential counselors and organized schedules through the summer. Helped create a disciplinary plan for counselors when needed.
- Dealt with serious problems and obstacles concerning youth mental health, sexual assault, sexual and gender identity, and bullying. Communicated with parents and teachers about obstacles concerning campers.

RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Creative Development Teacher - Jewish Community Center, Louisville KY, September 2018-Present

- Taught basic drama and creativity skills to preschoolers. Was responsible for all of the curriculum as well as for supervising and running the class.

Traveling Children's Shows – Raleigh Little Theatre, Raleigh NC, Spring 2011

- Traveled to various libraries and performed for children aged 6 months to 8 years old. Acted out stories with important morals and lessons. Adapted to different performance spaces and answered questions posed by audience.