Spatiotemporal Management of Stand-Up Performance:
Narration and Gestures

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Abstract
Providing an in-depth reading of an introductory routine by English stand-up comic Josie Long off of her comedy special Trying is Good *(2008), this paper is concerned with the interrelations between verbal narration and co-temporal gestures in stand-up comedy as embodied verbal art and semiotic interaction. In particular, the paper outlines a conceptual framework of narrative orientations with which to highlight how gestures and movement participate in juxtaposing and mediating various conceptual spaces and narrative perspectives to precise communicative and artistic effect. In the process, it attends in detail to how perceptions, affects, and evaluations of immediacy and authentic self-presence are semiotically construed in a markedly mediated and reflexive context of stand-up comedy.*

Keywords: stand-up comedy, performance, narration, gestures, indexicality, immediacy

Two constants seen in narrative studies relate to the spatial and temporal aspects of narrative events. In invoking narrated storyworlds and making sense of experiences more or less separated from the present moment of narration, narrators, by necessity, coordinate multiplicities of both spatial and temporal dimensions—here and there, now and then. Accordingly, an apparent requisite of a competent narrator is the ability to successfully manage the relations and communicate movements between various spatiotemporal frames (Haviland 2004, 15)—not to speak of competence in cultural and generic knowledge, linguistic skills, etc. While true for narration in all communicative media, the said problem has to be formulated anew with a keen eye on varying modes and contexts; for instance, by taking into account the constraints and affordances of co-present oral performance in which the storyworlds invoked are frequently drawn into the immediate here-and-now through the visual signposts of gesture and movement.

My intention is to transport aspects of this problem onto the study of stand-up comedy, a contemporary form of oral performance characterized by its twin emphases on 1) *immediacy* of being together in place and time by way of direct interaction, and 2) *authentic self-presence* of performers who "play themselves". Although stand-up originally emerged in the Anglo-American popular cultures of the mid-20th century, it is currently gaining ground in most parts of the world, including parts of Asia

and Africa. Elusive as an object of definitive criteria (see Brodie 2014), the genre can be characterized as a type of performance in which the (primary) aim of the solo performer lies in cultivating personal (or rather *persona*-derived) relatability by making her audience laugh. Indeed, most stand-up comics would emphasize that successful stand-up requires that something "connects", resonates, and relates across performer and audience, where this "something" can be designated as equally affective and moral as it is epistemic and cognitive. In the main, such intersubjective connections and affective resonances are achieved through various forms of metonymic exemplification or allegorization of personal experience, whether through conversational narrative, topical anecdote, small talk, diatribe, etc. In this regard, stand-up centers on the crafting and fashioning of oneself into a unique personality who is also widely relatable; that is, into an *individual type character* (Lindfors 2016; also 2017a; 2017b; forthcoming).

To highlight stand-up comedy as exclusively verbal art is, however, largely inadequate. We are, after all, speaking of a genre of embodied performance of self-presentation in which the bodily and visual co-presence of performers and audiences is paramount. Indeed, in a questionnaire organized for my dissertation (in possession of the author), the Finnish stand-up comic Joni Koivuniemi posits that the best comics "know how to *breathe* funny", suggesting furthermore that breathing can be even more important for stand-up comics than "material" itself. However, while certainly taken up as an object of academic interest within the past few decades (some recent monographs including Brodie 2014; Krefting 2014; Quirk 2015; Thomas 2015), closer work on stand-up performances from the perspective of embodied semiotic interaction still requires attention.

Drawing for the most part from linguistic anthropology, narrative and gesture studies, as well as my own disciplinary territory, performance-bent folklore studies, this article will aim at shedding light on the areas of interest outlined above. It will do this by developing a methodological framework adaptable for the study of stand-up interaction through the double-lens of narration and gestures—and for any co-present embodied interaction verging toward conversational narrative for that matter. I will argue that an adequate take on the narrative and spatiotemporal management of stand-up comedy is accomplished only via recourse to the semiotic modalities of gesture, bodily presence, and movement (see also Enfield 2009). It is in large part through visual signposts such as gestures, posture, and choreographic movement that comics manage their stage space and interaction, convey viewpoints into the storyworlds narrated, and so on—all the while enhancing the expressive impact of their narratives (Caracciolo 2014).

In particular, the article lays out a conceptual framework with which to highlight how gestures and movement participate in juxtaposing and mediating conceptual spaces and narrative perspectives in oral performance to precise communicative and artistic effect. While the general observation of creative play between perspectives, contexts, and frames as a central technique and aesthetic of stand-up comedy certainly resurfaces time and again in the literature dealing with this genre (e.g. Glick 2007; Brodie 2014; Lindfors 2016; 2017b; forthcoming; Keisalo 2016; 2018), this article

demonstrates that a careful look at the interplay between verbal and non-verbal sign modalities provides an analytically sophisticated entrance into the same terrain.

The empirical section of the article, then, attempts a detailed application of this framework through an analysis of a sequence adopted from the full-length stand-up special *Trying is Good* (2008) by Josie Long. Long is a contemporary English comic working within the "alternative" strand of stand-up comedy, which is an integrative (as well as highly oppositional) category that subsumes various "indie" forms of the genre that are seen (or promoted by the advertisers and comics themselves) as deviating from mainstream norms of stand-up. The alternative qualities of her comedy are perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, in the present show *Trying is Good*, her props include hand-drawn diagrams on a big notebook, photos of various people and objects projected onto an onstage screen, a poster of the 14th Dalai Llama Tenzin Gyatso, and her own painted belly (on this particular bit, see also Quirk 2015, 30–35). Thematically, she uses much of her stage time discussing her craft, her ideas and insecurities about comedy, about performing, and about herself—on seemingly stagnant self-reflection rather than on emanating a sense of pushing the show steadily forward with successive, clear-cut gags and routines. Further still, her performance style is poignantly conversational and structurally loose even by the standards of stand-up, meaning that she constantly engages with her audience one way or another—e.g. by rewarding "big laughers" and people "with a nice face" in the audience with satsumas—launches unexpectedly into brief narrative enactments, jumps whimsically from topic to another; basically, she digresses without end. One could say that she does not orient so much toward resolution or closure (in the form of set-ups leading to punchlines, most obviously), or plot for that matter. Indeed, one could describe her performance aesthetics through "anti-narrative digression" (see Frederick 2011), which, of course, only elevates her general sense of enthusiasm and spontaneity.

As also implicated by the above sketch of Long's style, the problematic of embodied narrative world-building is highly compelling with regard stand-up as a genre that constitutively plays with the porous boundaries of its form. Stand-up is strikingly characterized by its seemingly unmediated interactional form, where (prototypically speaking) the nodes of the author, narrator, and character are conflated onto a visibly present performer in the here-and-now (Peterson 1997; see also Genette 1980). As known, however, stand-up routines are typically scripted and (at least) mentally choreographed, honed in successions of previous performances. More broadly, stand-up performances are mediated and framed by the spatial and temporal boundaries and the textual and participatory organization of the event—whether taking place on a raised platform or in the corner of a bar (see Brodie 2014). Roughly put, 1) the spatial organization of participation that accords the performer her autonomy in the spotlights, 2) the continuous, extended holding of the floor afforded by electric amplification, as well as 3) temporal delimitation, are all material–discursive practices that participate in keying the event as a recognizable type of performance (Bauman 2012; Barad 2003).

Importantly, while explicitly marked by the infamous Western ideals labeled by

Jacques Derrida (1976; also Nakassis 2018, 286; Taylor 1989) as "metaphysics of presence" and "desire for immediacy," stand-up also trades on their playful reappropriation and manipulation. Indeed, I suggest a fundamental trope of the genre can be identified in the playful thematization and reappropriation of precisely such self-mediation, where stand-up comics *talk about themselves talking about themselves*. How are perceptions, affects, and evaluations of immediacy and self-presence semiotically construed, then, in a markedly mediated and reflexive context such as stand-up comedy? And how does this all play out in interactional, narrative, and gestural detail?

Spatiotemporal Aspects of Narration and Gestures in Oral Performance

Stand-up shows commonly start from the shared interactional space of direct second-person contact, in the form of generic greetings, unsurprisingly. Although relatively open from the outset, alternative worlds begin to emerge the moment that comics opt for narrative speech genres: the shared interactional space becomes layered with separate storyworlds.[1] Even though subject to endless redefinition, narratives are here elementarily understood as representational artifacts that provide "cues to imagine a set of existents (characters, objects, and places) arranged in a temporal sequence of events and actions" (Caracciolo 2014, 23). These artifacts can be imaginary and fictitious, or nonfictional and subject to falsification. In practice, the relationship between the narrated storyworlds and the interactional event of narration is seen as reciprocal and two-directional. On the one hand, the recipients of narratives are oriented or even transported to the events in the diegetic storyworld, insofar as it is true that narration, in its general impression of transparency, "is designed so as to effect inattention to itself" (Young 1987, 17). On the other hand, storyworlds are, by necessity, influenced by the interactional context in which their narration is embedded—the level conventionally labeled extradiegetic insofar as it is logically exterior to the diegetic storyworld. This implies that narratives are not at all immune to the physical, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which we produce them, but on the contrary, are highly porous at every instance of interaction (see Latour 2005, 199–204). Moreover, implications are often more or less explicitly drawn from narrated storyworlds so as to explain or contrast the event and act of narration. For instance, the temporally anterior experiencing-I in prototypical narratives of personal experience typically leaks into the ongoing event of narration because of the iconic quality between identities in the two spatiotemporal frames. Such might be the case when one has to give an account of one's morally suspect past deeds, making it difficult for the narrating-I—the person giving the account in the present—to fully disclaim its relations to the temporally distinct experiencing-I in the storyworld (Young 1987, 156; also Butler 2005).

These spatiotemporal aspects of narration are usefully captured by David Herman's (2013, 109; cf. Briggs 1988; Seizer 1997, 69) distinction between what he terms endophoric and exophoric strategies for narrative world-building. He borrows the two contrasting terms from linguistics in which exophora and endophora denote references to the speech event and the textual construction itself. Accordingly, exophoric narration is understood as orienting to the ongoing narrating event, so that

the narrated storyworld (e.g. the temporally distant experiencing-I) is presented in a mutually reciprocal relationship with features of the environment (e.g. the narrating-I) in which the current communicative interaction is taking place (Herman 2013, 109; also Lindfors 2017b). The events in the storyworld are thus "contextually anchored" to a higher degree vis-à-vis the ongoing narrating event, which is not to say that the two events would have to be *normatively* aligned with each other. In this regard, one of the central questions relates to whether the narrated and the narrating events support or rather contrast each other, inscribe similar or rather dissimilar discursive and social norms (also Seizer 1997, 83). Such anchoring is located on the metanarrative level, that I here understand as including comments on the narrated events themselves as well as on the present narrative process (cf. Cassell and McNeill 2004). Coincidentally, focus on the metanarrative level also often corresponds with those moments when the stand-up comic speaks as *herself*, in the *here-and-now*.

By contrast, following the endophoric strategy, the listeners are transported into the storyworld distinct from the current communicative surroundings. The narrative event is thus entextualized to a higher degree; for instance, James M. Wilce (2009b) explains that there might be a particular coherence to the cross-modal patterning of gesture, movement, and verbal narration that is repeatable across shifting contexts. This issue, then, is of particular interest with respect to stand-up comedy that is structured around an emulation of spontaneous conversation while simultaneously reiterating (often highly finalized) texts across socially, spatially, and temporally distinct or distant performance events (see also Lindfors 2016).

Ultimately, of course, the audience must be understood as attending *both* to the events in the narrated storyworld, *and* the act of narration itself. Correspondingly, the narrator has a triple-focus on the storyworld, the act of narration, as well as on her co-present (or technologically mediated and merely virtual) audiences and surroundings—perhaps foregrounding one or the other depending on aesthetic, pragmatic, and other aims. The relations between these levels are mediated and managed by narrators verbally, but also in large measure by gestures accompanying speech (Haviland 2004, 201).

Indeed, the primary purpose for this introduction into the notions of exophoric and endophoric narration is to convey a sense of the framework that will appear subsequently. I understand Herman's axis of exophoric/endophoric narration as a heuristic tool that can be deployed in merely orienting our analytic interests. In particular, it needs to be supplemented by related and more specific analytic terms, which are provided in what follows from the field of gesture studies and linguistic anthropology.

Gestures in Stand-Up Performances
There exists a tradition in Western cultural history for associating persuasive rhetoric with proficient gestural language. Similarly, as a "communication ecology" (Kendon 1997, 120) stand-up comedy favors foregrounded gestures in interaction, presumably also adapting to variable physical and social settings, e.g. in large-scale stadium gigs. For

example, theatrical use of pictorially oriented depictive gestures and visual movement are common practices within the genre, not least in part due to the minimal set up of stand-up, in which the "stage is marked most by its unmarked quality" (Seizer 2011, 215; cf. Hall, Goldstein and Ingram 2016, 74). It is an integral aspect of any analysis of stand-up to pay attention to the (implications of the) measure that different stand-up comics appropriate "gestural spaces" for themselves, i.e. personal spaces in their execution of gesturing (see Sweetser and Sizemore 2008). How does gestural excess (wherever the thresholds of such "excess" are perceived as being located for different people) and the performance of large gestural spaces, or the inverse tactics for that matter, map onto different performance orientations and styles, comedic aesthetics and comic personas, as well as identity categories enacted by and attributed onto various comics?

I am here drawing from work in linguistic anthropology (from John Haviland, in particular) and gesture studies (from David McNeill, in particular), where gestures, and especially those of the "pointing" variety (to be defined below), are reckoned amongst the devices that reflect and interactively constitute representations of the spaces speakers inhabit, know, and talk about (Haviland 2000, 47). The category of gestures that these disciplines generally adopt refers broadly to those bodily actions that are "regarded as part of a person's willing expression" (Kendon 2000, 49). The four types of gestures often distinguished are constituted by 1) iconic and 2) metaphoric gestures, 3) rhythmic "beats", and 4) deictic gestures or "points" (e.g. Cassell and McNeill 2004). Whereas *iconic* gestures resemble and thus depict their objects—as when Donald Trump deploys his trademark "pistol hand gesture" to fire contestants in the reality-TV game show *The Apprentice* (as well as metaphorically and comically during his presidential campaign, see Hall, Goldstein and Ingram 2016) —*metaphoric* gestures depict abstract ideas in concrete, visual forms. A typical metaphorical gesture would reproduce a mental representation, such as an affect of anger in the form of a physical object, a clenched fist for example.[2] Rhythmic "*beats*," for their part, are constituted by minimalistic hand movements and generally employed for underlining the relevance of concurrent discourse with respect to larger narrative or discourse-pragmatic purpose (*ibid*.).

An especially revealing typological class of gestures is established by deictic gestures, sometimes termed "*points*". According to Kita (2003, 1), prototypical deictic gesture is a "communicative body movement that projects a vector from a body part," indicating a certain direction, location, or a target object. While obviously also bound to the immediate physical and communicative environment, deictic gestures are often used to refer to objects located in multiple sets of space-time coordinates characteristic of narrative events.[3] That is, while objectively empty—like the paradigmatic stand-up stage comprising of a microphone, a chair, a refreshment—the gesture space of the narrator can be filled by various discourse entities (Cassell and McNeill 2004, 119–120). Such imaginary and unreal discourse entities might also come to carry very real effects—or what narratologists would refer to as "metaleptic" boundary crossings across narrative levels—in interlocutors' perception and short-term memory, even more

so if they are gesturally visualized for extended periods of time. During a bit revolving around "fancy dress parties," for instance, Josie Long enacts a narrative episode in which she, as a person dressed up as "Marie Antoinette," orders two drinks at a party. Having finished the "transaction" with an imagined salesperson, she lays down the two imagined glasses on a table. Finally, after explaining how the "imaginary drinks" are now "fine" resting on the table, she suddenly hits the "glasses" off the table in the direction of audience members, causing some of the front row members to flinch as if the glasses were actually spilled and crashed, or better yet, rocketing towards them (at around 33:00 into the show on the DVD).

The conceptual spaces to which deictic gestures refer can, then, include 1) the local gesture space in which the communication unfolds (in this case, the stand-up venue and stage), 2) the narrated storyworld constructed discursively by the narrator, 3) the interactional space consisting of the respective positions of the present interlocutors (the performer and her audience), and 4) the narrated interactional space, which is a combination of the latter two, for instance consisting of imaginary interlocutors in the storyworld (Haviland 1993; Herman 2013). Each of these spaces are relevant in stand-up, for not only do comics regularly invoke narrated storyworlds (2) populated with characters in interaction (4) and draw these worlds in local gesture spaces (1), they are simultaneously expected to orient toward their immediate interlocutors (3), the audience. Empirically, the analyst's primary task is to identify the gesture spaces actualized and coordinated by various gestures, and more specifically to determine the scope, the reach, and the details of their projections (Haviland 2000, 18).

Not only do gestures implicate different conceptual spaces actualized in narrative activity, they also mark and mediate movements between these spaces. In this regard, Herman (2013, 288–290) separates movements or "transpositions" between, and laminations of two or more distinct spaces or coordinate systems. Whereas a transposition marks a shift between conceptual spaces (and thus of deictic centers), a proper *mediation* of separate ontological levels is provided by laminations. Laminations take place when a deictic pointing gesture is used "to project one gesture space into another, creating a layering or blending of spaces calibrated in different ways with the current communicative event" (ibid.). In laminations, a local deictic gesture that is anchored in the gesture space associated with the here-and-now—that is a local (1) or interactional (3) space in the typology provided above—gets superimposed on a narrative or metanarrative deictic. Such an instance occurs when the comic-as-narrator points at an invisible object situated in the narrated storyworld while objectively gesturing towards a spot on stage, in her immediate physical surrounding. On a preliminary theoretical level, then, laminations should be most interesting in terms of the ideals and affects of immediacy and self-presence in stand-up, for they participate in bringing the stand-up narratives *alive* in the here-and-now.

To finally address the issue of narrative viewpoints (i.e. focalization) conveyed by gestures, I will borrow from McNeill (2005, 34) who distinguishes between the two basic alternatives as 1) observer viewpoints, and 2) character viewpoints. Observer viewpoints, where the narrator postures as onlooker, lay out the conceptual spaces in

front of the performer as a kind of a screen on which the action takes place. Character viewpoint, by contrast, is conveyed through mimetic gestures that are iconic of certain aspects of a character (typically of her hands) and the performer is accordingly situated *inside* the conceptual space or storyworld (also Cassell and McNeill 2004, 120–121). The precise dichotomy is ultimately complicated by the fact that while gestures might convey the perspective of a character situated amidst the events in the storyworld, the perspective conveyed by verbal narration might simultaneously represent an outside observer's viewpoint. The result is, again, yet another type of lamination or combination of separate conceptual and ontological spaces that is especially effective in bringing together events and experiences from a multiplicty of spatiotemporal dimensions.

It should also be noted that gestures and actions from both character and observer viewpoint are typically executed in a way that simultaneously "respects the needs and enlists the co-operation of its audience", as is true for all narration, including certain experimental literature and performance art that, while perhaps not *respecting* the needs of audiences per se, precisely plays with their expectations (Jahn 2007, 94). In a live situation, this entails the use of stage space so that most audience members can see what is happening, feel engaged with the performer, and so on.

At the Swimming Hall with Josie Long

The following excerpt is captured from Josie Long's full-length stand-up special *Trying is Good* (2008), as previously mentioned. The sequence reproduced in the transcript is situated in the beginning of the performance, in the context of Long introducing her audience to the incipient show. It relates a realistically inflected story of Long's second-hand experience at the gym, which, we learn, becomes broadly iconic, or "allegorical" (Shuman 2005), of her performance on the whole. At the end of the narrative (and during various points in the show) we hear how "this is a show about effort," presumably about how "trying is good". The narrative sequence is thus framed at the outset as inherently reflecting the proverbial title of the show, as a thematic *mise en abyme* of sorts.[4]

Symptomatic of the tendencies of stand-ups for arguing through exemplification, the narrative sequence is organically embedded in conversation and appropriated in the mode of explicatory or exemplifying discourse (see Noyes 2016; Højer and Bandak 2015; Bennett 1986). The outcome could be described as a replaying conversational narrative, characterized by high degree of detail, imitative enactments, as well as prominent evaluative cues by the narrator. Gülich and Quasthoff (1986, 226) describe replaying conversational narrative as an intrinsically intimate mode of narration, suitable for an "involving" and thus exophoric narrative strategy, to revisit Herman's (2013) terminology.

At the start of the bit, Long explains how she wrote her show *Trying is Good* for Edinburgh Festival, the latter being a one-month event in which "you do a show every night". The day she originally came to Edinburgh for the said festival, we hear, she decided to join a gym. After all, her physical "figure doesn't maintain itself", as she

jokingly explains, thus thematically framing the incipient narrative as dealing with body issues.

(1)   a) I went to, the… I was waiting in the Letter center, for them to fill up my membership card
                        [a horizontal line segment with index finger and thumb of left hand][5]

          b) and I was waiting in their office
             [holds left hand in front of her, fingers extended downward]

          c) which is in this gallery, that looked down on a swimming pool
                        [slides the open left palm forward downwards]
                              [the slide ends in a circular horizontal motion of left palm]

What she noticed down at the swimming pool were children playing:

(2)   a) what they've got, was they've constructed a kids' play scheme
             [looks downwards to the left, left palm open in the air]
                              [rotates left hand, rhythmically to the words]

          b) and what it was, was a sort of floating, obstacle course
                        [bends downward to the left, rotates left hand]

          c) going from one side of the pool to the other
             [walks to left, simultaneously marking sections in the air with left hand]

          d) made up of all these interconnected, inflatable rafts
             [turns over to the right, gesturally tracing the contours of separate objects]

          e) and on each one… there was a different thing, like a palm tree, or a crab, or a slide, and…
                              [raises straight up, left hand extended
                              upward at the elbow, then crouches
                              downwards, walks to the right]

          f) there were lots of, very little children, very tentatively, trying to navigate their way across it
             [addresses the audience by eye gaze]
                              [starts moving slowly to the left, left hand feeling the way]

          g) and then at the side of the pool, there was a man
             [walks over to the left side of the stage]

          h) whose job it was… was to stand there
             [advances slightly to right, looking alternatively at the "pool" on the right and the audience]

i) WITH A POWERFUL HOSE
   [swiftly raises her left hand as if holding a hose in front of her, looking to the right]

j) just picking 'em off!
   [moves the imaginary hose to-and-fro as if to direct the spray of water, quickly
    addresses the audience by eye gaze]

k) getting rid of the weak!
   [addresses the audience by direct eye contact]

It will be beneficial to differentiate between the operative narrative levels of the sequence at once (see Pier 2014). First, we have the extradiegetic level, on which the flesh-and-blood producer of discourse—Josie Long as herself, as the present narrating-I recounting a story from her past—is performing in front of other people. This level is founded by the shared interactional space occupied, quite intimately it seems based on the video recording, by both the performer and her audience. Second, the diegetic level is constituted by the narrated storyworld, in this case located in more or less recent past of the narrator herself, i.e. at the time she was preparing the show for Edinburgh Festival, in Edinburgh. The diegetic level is mediated for us by Long as the experiencing-I, from whose perspective the unfolding chain of events is introduced ("I was waiting…"). The viewpoint is thus anchored to a specific character in a localized position in the storyworld, even though this character will not *physically* involve herself in the events of the storyworld. In any case, as we will see, this neutral anchoring gets disturbed in various strategic ways during the performance, bringing into relief the engaged and involving character of the genre.

The sequence starts off with what can be described as an orientation of the audience to the spatial surroundings of the storyworld. Long's gestures accompanying her narration (1a–1c) help the retrieval of these spatial coordinates. Primarily, the forwardly outstretched hand with downward extended fingers depicts interiority, the office space (1b), and the iconic gesture demonstrating a downward slide gives us a rough idea of the spatial relations between the office and the swimming pool situated diagonally at its side, as scenery of sorts. The recurrent dual-perspective of the performance is actually already apparent in this brief combination of iconic gesture and narration, insofar as it mixes the perspectives of 1) an experiencing-I in the storyworld, and of 2) the narrator as an outside observer, and thus able to reify the situation. That is, the downward slide gesture demonstrates Long's own (visual) viewpoint from inside the office, while her simultaneous verbal *description* as a narrator relates these spatial aspects from an outside perspective (1c).

The spatial coordinates inside the swimming hall are elaborated further as Long carefully delineates the focal physical objects and actors in the storyworld, the obstacle course comprising of interconnected inflatable rafts and populated by children. The narration opts for a sequentially scanned scene, in which surroundings, entities, actors, and actions are introduced in linear fashion. She accomplishes this by three sideways

transitions from right to left and back, during which she 1) lays out the rough segments of the obstacle course (transition to the left), 2) depicts individual rafts by gesturally tracing their outer shapes (transition to the right), and finally 3) populates the obstacle course by mimicking children's movements on it (another transition to the left).[6] These gestures are all creatively entailing: they bring fresh aspects of context into relief by pointing to entities that are "baptismally" introduced into the storyworld (Silverstein 1976). Gestures from inside the storyworld—as here—are all predominantly iconic in nature; for instance, as Long depicts the shape of a palm tree by resembling its form with her posture and upwardly outstretched arm.[7]

Insofar as the entities comprising of the obstacle course are presented through iconic gestures at a very close range, the initially medial narrative distance simultaneously moves in at a proximal distance. The degree of detail accorded to the floating obstacle course is thus in somewhat contrastive relation to the medium-scope representation of the events at the outset. However, while the performer's gestures and movements which trace the shapes of physical objects imply an insider's perspective situated in the middle of the events, her simultaneous verbal narration reproduces the more distanced impression of viewing the events from an outside observer's perspective – from the office.

Having thus established the locations of the focal objects and actors, jointly in the virtual narrated space and on the immediate physical stage, Long repositions herself to the left of the stage (2g–2h). Reaching a suitable spot while verbally introducing for us the main protagonist of her story (2g), she turns around and looks to the right from her new location, presumably at the said rafts in the storyworld. Importantly, two cardinal spots are now established on the stage: 1) on the right, an obstacle course populated by children, and 2) on the left, corresponding to the side of the pool in the storyworld, a man with the hose, the villain of the story as is to be correctly guessed. These acts can be termed interactional "placings," referring to gestural or corporeal enactments of putting an "object in a position within an interactive space," thus establishing a new focus space (Kendon 1997). That is, it is now possible for the interlocutors, sharing a place and a moment, to subsequently orient to these physical spots as indexical markers in the narrated storyworld. Moreover, associated as these spots are with the main figures of the narrative, they are also accorded strong moral valences.

Insofar as Long's largely kinesic performance has now brought the spatial and the agential context of the storyworld into relief, she now has enough discursive and imaginary "material"—i.e. spatially locatable discourse entities in the short-term memories of both herself and her audience—to start further supplying this context with actions and other narrative events. In other words, the balance on the semiotically presupposing/entailing axis is beginning to move over to the presupposing side.

The action of spraying water is swiftly introduced onto the scene by Long's adoption of an outstretched arm. The features of the hosing man are characterized primarily by non-verbal cues, so that Long's iconic gestures and posture enact, display, and demonstrate what is only implicitly conveyed through verbal means: the fact that the hose was held by the man in one hand, the hand extended in front of him,

oriented toward the children. Gestures thus allow the interlocutors to infer both the location of the target of the hose and the relative height difference between the two parties (cf. Liddell 1998, 295). In a word, not only do gestures visualize that which is verbally communicated, but make the expression more precise—or, whereas speech seems to convey action, gestures convey the manner or mode of action (Kendon 2000, 51; McNeill 2005, 26).[8] Further still, mimetic gestures such as bodily impersonations are by definition metonymic reductions (Mittelberg and Waugh 2014): they selectively deconstruct their referents into parts (that come to stand for wholes), all the while purportedly capturing some essential truths of the same target objects. Such operations, highly popular amongst comics, draw their performative and ritual efficacy from the binary logic of a widespread language ideology according to which embodied or gestural signs are understood as speaking their "own truth beyond the ephemerality of words" (Hall, Goldstein and Ingram 2016, 82–86; see also Dolar 2017).

Gestural demonstration is concurrent with Long's scant verbal description of the man. The amplified, even jubilant, shout which names the man's tool (2i) can be regarded as the first properly evaluative cue by Long-the-narrator, compromising the presumed transparency of the narrative event and the narrated storyworld. The perception must have struck the experiencing-Long in the storyworld forcibly, and she replays this effect for the current audience by raising her voice. In this regard, Wilce (2009a, 68, 101; Merleau-Ponty 1964, 89) has cautioned against rigid distinctions between verbal and non-verbal communication, insofar as there also exist *verbal gestures*, such as interjections and other modulations of voice, pitch, etc.

In short, Long's evaluation here is more closely connected to her status as narrator than the otherwise neutral expository discourse (see also Herman 2013, 175). In this regard, the portrayal of the man can be designated as an instance of illustrated narration (Liddell 1998, 309–310), in which the narrator's discourse is simultaneously complimented by gestural signs from the perspective of a character in the storyworld. That is, gestures of the performer (directing the hose, the posture) are situated in the (grounded blend of the) storyworld, while the verbal narration is situated in the storyworld only partially. Only her hands and body are part of the storyworld space, while her head and eye gaze addressing the audience are not.

The ambiguity of the configuration is brought into relief by the fact that the verbal lines (2j, 2k) are simultaneously issued *as if* from the character's point of view. Two linguistic features can be mentioned that reduce the distance from the storyworld and invoke the character's subjectivity: 1) the construction of the sentences as simple-clause units that use active, transitive verbs (Cassell and McNeill 2004, 124), and 2) the foregrounded voicing contrast that indexes an American English accent – markedly distinct with respect to Long's standard voice. Both the linguistic features and accompanying gestures thus suggest that the brief verbal lines would represent the man's perspective, even though delivered by the narrator. Most prominently, the last line in the excerpt (2k) constitutes an attribution of intention, projected onto and refracted from the man's perspective as an intentional mindset, as something he presumably might have malevolently intended while hosing the children.

Importantly, Long's sporadic eye contact with the audience explicitly signals her recognition that she is, indeed, performing in front of an audience. Symptomatically, the eye contact is situated at the end of the narrative sequence (2k), thus resuming the focus to the shared interactional space (see also Sidnell 2006, 382; Thompson and Suzuki 2014). By involving her audience, Long aligns herself with them while foregrounding her double role as both demonstrator of actions in the storyworld and subjective narrator of the events (see Clark and Gerrig 1990). In the subtly ironic layering of points of view, the narrator's perspective, here occupying the moral high ground, contains and contrasts the character's perspective as the target of her irony (see also Cassell and McNeill 2004, 125–126). By grounding her argumentative point within the narrated storyworld and by inviting her audience to draw their own conclusions from the (partly) enacted sequence, the implications of such drama are also rendered relatively inaccessible to challenge (Hill and Zepeda 1992, 212).

To capture this mixture of several perspectives, we might refer to Herman's (2013, 185) notion of distributed focalization, which designates a "network of viewpoints, with emergent cognitive properties that cannot be reduced to those associated with any one position or node". In other words, the shifts of viewpoint cannot be construed as sequential or as simply additive, but concurrent in the sense of allowing separate positions to contrast each other syncronically (cf. Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Both gestural and verbal cues thus afford the construal of the events as ultimately focalized from the triple viewpoint of Long the experiencing-I *and* the hosing man *and* Long the narrating-I. However, the nodes are not equal but hierarchical, for distributed focalization also entails diffusely distributed responsibility and power (cf. Hill and Zepeda 1992). In short, two of these nodes function as foregrounded texts—i.e. Long the experiencing-I and the hosing man—while one of them functions as their dominating *context*: Long the narrating-I, or in other words, Long *as herself* in the present moment with her co-present audience (cf. Keisalo 2018).

As a brief metanarrative aside (3a), Long repositions herself to the center of the stage and addresses her audience directly:

(3)   a) which is one thing until you realize: that's his job
          [addresses the audience directly, moves to the center]
                                        [points to left, to the spot of where the man was
                                        standing]

        b) like at dinner parties, people might go, "Oh, I'm sorry, you, what do you do for a
        living?"
                        [turns over to the left, index finger pointing to the left]

        c) "Me, oh, I hose children off a floating assault course. That's what I do."
          [index finger turns and points at herself, turns to the front and walk slightly to left]
                              [fingers stroking her chest]
                                        [looks to right]

d) "How long have I've been doing it? – 25 years, I'm the best in the business."
   [addresses the audience, then turns over to right again]

e) "Why do you do that?"
   [moves slightly to right and turns over to left]

f) "(…) ..to upset them – I don't know. I don't enjoy my work!" (Scottish accent)
   [looks ponderous, turns to right again, fingers stroking her chest]
                              [briefly addresses the audience, then turns over to right]

g) but the thing is, he was, REALLY enjoying it
   [normal voice, addresses the audience directly]
                              [open palm at the side of her face, clenches it into a fist]

h) like… and he was focusing pretty much, all of his energy, on one boy
   [walks over to left to the spot where she was hosing before, left hand resumes the
    hosing position, outstretched to right, slightly downward]

i) and the boy that he was chosen was a proper tubby, like a properly obese boy
   [walks quickly over to right again, left hand opens up to her front]
                                          [left hand open palm in
                                          front of her, feeling her outer
                                          contours]

j) and what he was trying to do was to get on, and stay on, an inflatable slide, right?
   [open palm, fingers outstretched downward, rhythmically moves up and down]

k) and he had this absolute look of abject terror on his face
   [squints her eyes, open palm raised to the side of her face]
                                          (audience reaction: "awww…")

l) like, at that minute he'd been let down by the entire adult world, and he would
never forget
   [left hand flat in front of her]   [index finger and
                                                        thumb touching]

m) it was now just a countdown till he got a big gun collection, that's all that it was
   [fingers flat, pointing upward, makes a line segment in the air in front of her]

n) and I was really feeling for him, 'cause I was an obese child and if I'm honest I'm
   somewhere in the ballpark at the moment
   [takes a step back, left open palm touches her chest]

o) so, I was like… (voice reduces into a whisper)
   [clenched fist, slightly crouching and bending forward, as if rooting for the boy]

p) and he… he looked like at that minute he'd realized something about life, and what he'd realized was:
   [takes a few steps forward, left hand in front of her as if holding something]

q) whenever you have a nice thing in this life, like a nice inflatable slide
   [left hand stretched downward in front of her, open palm facing the audience]

r) there'll always be some prick, in a polo shirt, wanting to sluice you off of it
   [turns and points to left, addressing the audience, then walks over to left]
                   [reaches the spot of the hosing man, turns to right and resumes the hosing hand position, while briefly addressing the audience by eye gaze]

To start from beginning, the forward movement (3a), through which Long indicates a shift in narrative orientation, could be construed as a metaphorical gesture, as far as it reveals the performer's conceptualization of the storyworld as a 'container', as a delimited spatial zone on the physical stage from which it would be possible to "step out" in a very concrete fashion (also 3p). Along with the shift from the level of storyworld to the metanarrative level, it is also possible to observe a shift from iconic to deictic gestures. Picking on the realization of the man's profession, Long points at the spot where she was standing a second ago with the imaginary hose in her hand. In particular, the pointing gesture directed at her right laminates two conceptual frames: the gesture points to her previous location on the physical stage, while at the same time referring to the course of action accomplished by the man in the temporally and spatially distant storyworld.

Introduced with a hasty preamble ("people might go"), what follows this moment is a stand-up trope *par excellence*. Rightful authorities of what Walter Benjamin (2006, 142) termed the "mimetic faculty", stand-up comics excel in "instant characters", defined by stand-up scholar Oliver Double (2014) as enactments and impersonations of people, animals, or objects, and often semiotically marked by shifts in vocal inflection, intonation, and posture. That is to say, we are suddenly at an imaginary dinner party in which the hosing man is being addressed by a fellow interlocutor, Long-the-character (the second token of this particular type, this time in an imaginary frame). The refocusing of the referential space is accomplished both verbally and by differentially valued pointing gestures. First, Long's characterization of the man derives from a linguistic mixture of a recognizably "upper-class" register and stereotypically Scottish dialect. For indeed, we hear his voice for the first time, although fully as an invention of Long herself. Second, the same metanarrative pointing gesture that we witnessed a moment earlier (3a) is suddenly transformed into a narrative interactional gesture (3b).

Instant characters in stand-up comedy constitute fundamental shifts in footing (Goffman 1981), in that the status of the speaker becomes foregrounded as a figure or an animator of (other's) discourse.[9] From the perspective of performance dynamics, such shifts implicitly highlight the dual-nature of stand-up comedy as simultaneous self-

presentation and self-*representation* where performers variously (re)figure themselves as both subject and object. In other words, in enacting narratives, the status of stand-up comics as objects for others' uptake and immersion is briefly emphasized.[10] However, such objectification is here buffered by the fact that instant characters are reflexively calibrated as laminating and embedding at least two perspectives into each other. In short, this dramatic form is inherently ironic in that it contains the actions it depicts in an embedding frame of narration. Here, the satirical irony targets the ethical constitution of the man (see also Lindfors 2017a) who takes pleasure and pride in his job description of "hosing children off a floating assault course" (cf. Lee 2004, 118). Importantly, this satire is only sharpened by distributed focalization that foregrounds the experiences and intentions of the character while simultaneously containing them.

The spatial and bodily orientations of the interlocutors are communicated to the audience by Long's physical movement and alternating turns to the left and right. Interestingly, Long-as-the-man also registers her audience by directly addressing them by eye gaze in a manner of (metaleptically) breaking from the imaginary frame onto the actual surroundings (3c, 3d, 3f). The dialogue is ultimately and abruptly cut short by Long-the-narrator swiftly commenting on the self-description of the instant character. Three conceptual and spatiotemporal frames can be seen as intertwined at this moment (3g): 1) the narrating-I in the extradiegetic world denounces what 2) the instant character says in the imaginary frame, while simultaneously the narrator is referring to 3) the temporally anterior, factual event of the diegetic storyworld (in the swimming hall). Long thus indirectly foregrounds and lambasts the man's complacency in the primary storyworld by enacting this complacency in a separate imaginary frame and, finally, by commenting on this imaginary statement as a narrator.

The imaginary frame is soon pierced and the focus returned to the primary storyworld by Long's repositioning of herself in the second cardinal spot on stage and by resuming the act of hosing with an outstretched left hand (3h).[11] At this point, however, another protagonist is introduced onto the scene: a boy on the raft, in a helpless position of being hosed by the man, on the spot where the performer had earlier established the location of the floating obstacle course. The focalization is sequentially alternated between the two very much voiceless characters so as to dramatize the confrontation between an inept boy and a grown man who enacts mindless subservience to an institutional order ("the boy that he was trying to", "and what *he* was trying to do was get on"). The boy's physical features as an obese child are displayed in a sympathetic manner, his anguished mindset brought home by Long's elaborate gestures and an evocative description of "absolute look of abject terror" on his face. This depiction also receives the strongest reaction of affection from audience members ("awww…", 3k), indicating heightened involvement in the scene (Tannen 2007; also Hill and Zepeda 1992, 220–221). In particular, compassion is explicitly performed by an act of adequation (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 383–385) in which Long juxtaposes her own past experience of being an obese child with the boy's ordeal (3n).

I would read the sequence as a ironically bittersweet dramatization of the pleasure of an un-self-aware privileged subject in relation to his subordinated counterpart, the younger boy, where the older man entertains himself by constraining the endeavours of the boy (and by implication, the space of the swimming hall) for his physical markedness. Interestingly, performance theorist Rachel Lee (2004, 123) has juxtaposed this sort of "practice of surrounding [and controlling] the marked body" with the role of the audience in the stand-up setting, in the sense that the audience surrounds the performer and controls the performance event by legitimizing and enabling its procession by ritualized evaluative response—laughter. The juxtaposition is here rendered even more plausible given that the sequence was set up with reference to Long's own struggles with her body weight, thus mapping Long herself as a potentially analogic counterpart for the boy.

While most of the gestures we have identified can be described as idiosyncratic, this sequence is also characterized by gestures regimented by social convention. The clenched fist (3o) is a standard metaphorical gesture for an intensified affect (here, for empathy) by way of portraying physical tension. Similarly, touching one's chest with an open palm (3n) is a conventionalized gesture signaling affective, personal involvement. These gestures, both situated on the metanarrative level, thus bear both semantic and *metapragmatic* functions, as far as they "serve as markers of the speaker's attitude toward what he is saying" (Kendon 2000, 56). However, none of the metanarrative comments in the sequence foreground metafictional aspects of narration—storytelling as artifice—but rather enhance its realist appeal (Nünning 2004). We believe the story to have happened as told.

In particular, Long dramatizes the affective disillusionment of the boy—his intentional mindset at this particular moment—in the form of two brief micro-narratives (3l–3m; 3p–3r). The second micro-narrative is also enacted in the form of another instance of illustrated narration, in which gestures deliver us the perspectives of both the boy and the man. Separate conceptual spaces are again laminated onto each other as we bear witness to the "prick" in the storyworld through visual modality while simultaneously grasping this *text* through its *context*, i.e. Long-the-narrator, performing as herself for and with her co-present audience. In this regard, texts tell us as much about their contexts as about themselves.

The narrative whole comes to an end in a somewhat more positive fashion:

(4)　　a) but, luckily for him, right, he was that big, that…
　　　　　[walks to the right to the position of the boy, starts to repeatedly stroke her side with the backside of the open right palm]

　　　　b) all the water was doing, was just kind of bruising him
　　　　　[continues stroking her side with an open palm]

　　　　c) making him look momentarily slimmer on one side

Long describes how the man lost interest in spraying the boy and how a look came over the latter's face as if thinking to himself: "Today I've won a victory! …of sorts." He has maintained his position on the raft, and the power dynamic is switched, even if somewhat ironically, over to the boy's side. Long closes the sequence on a reflectively explicatory note, with a coda that resumes the full circle of the narrative sequence back to where it started:

(5)   a) and I thought that is a great start for the show, umm…
          [walk to center stage, open hand pointing at the spot where the boy would be]

        b) because this is a show about effort
          [addresses the audience from the center stage, hand rhythmically marking the accentuations]

        c) and it's a show about how much I love people who put in the effort
          [points downwards to right, to the spot where the boy would be]

        d) regardless of how misplaced that effort is
          [glances over to right where the boy would have been]

The fourth excerpt, in which the boy's physical features are positively reappropriated, is of interest in that here, Long subjects her own physical body as the surface on which her gestures are directed and performed (see also Haviland 2004, 206). The body of the obese boy, situated amidst the events recounted, is thus transposed onto her corporeal self, while the concurrent verbal track continues to describe the events from the perspective of an outside observer. Only the performer's torso and her repetitively moving hand that iconically depicts the spray of water become part of the (grounded blend of the) storyworld, while her head, gaze, and verbal narration do not. The temporal coordination of the separate spaces and the separate signals invites the desired, correct interpretation. (Cf. Liddell 1998, 296.)

In a narratively satisfying manner (if a bit morally dubiously for the same reason), the reflective coda sees the performer explicitly contextualizing and aligning her show with the spatially and temporally distant event in the swimming hall for the second time. Gesturally, the coda marks a shift to deictic gestures and beats, both situated on the metanarrative level. During the final lamination in which Long describes her love for "people who put in the effort", she looks slightly downwards to her left and points with her left hand to the spot where presumably the boy would be located or rather meant to be imagined. The deictic gestures and her gaze at the boy are again indexically presupposing of the contextual field, because the narrated storyworld is by now familiar and taken for granted by interlocutors in the new speech context.

Importantly, the narrated universe is not resumed. Rather, the performer draws an indexical inference out of this ephemerally constituted and now objectified *mise en abyme* onto the ongoing performance event. In particular, she explicates how the resilient or stoic attitude and affect of the boy—which, it should be recalled, is narrator's

selective attribution—bears an analogical relation to what the incipient show, already in full speed in the here-and-now, should ideally convey. The function of the boy in the performance is thus revealed to act as an iconic metonymical index—directly pointing in the current context by way of essentialized resemblance—for an abstract idea. Not only is the gesturally impersonated boy metonymically reduced to a representation of valiant stoicism and (misplaced) "effort," but the abstract idea and affect of effort is indexically mobilized by this selective representation in order to invoke and drive home a moral code suitable for the performer herself. In a word, the boy's personal experience is shared as an allegory that Long, and her audience, can appropriate as an inspiration (Shuman 2005; also Noyes 2016).

This final lamination forms a blend between the shared interactional space and a metanarrative deictic referring to the narrative as a whole: we are collectively witnessing her story as it has now been completed. Stories-as-wholes are typically contained as objects by metaphoric gestures such as "in" a cupped hand (also Cassell and McNeill 2004, 130). In an analogical fashion, it is the flexible use of the stage space, including placings of certain focal objects within the interactional space, which allows the performer to reduce the proposed "essence" of the narrative to a character in the story, to which deictic gestural reference is then made.

In an indirectly modest fashion, Long's incipient show is now contextualized and framed by an event that transcends the boundaries of the current performance event (see Bauman 2012, 108). In particular, the show is analogically paralleled by an everyday encounter in a public space in which a subordinated agent has been struggling for his personal space. Interactional events are never hermetically sealed nor have an intrinsic scale, as Latour (2005, 199–204) reminds us with copious illustrations; however, it is also up to the performers and narrators to decide what kinds of shades of interdiscursivity or spatiotemporally distant domains and activities they want to articulate with given events (cf. Lempert 2013, 379). Indeed, the practice of such creative articulation is a craft unto itself, within stand-up but also beyond.

Conclusion: The Trajectory of Becoming-Character

Stand-up comedy might be strikingly verbal but it is also equally gestural and visual. To be certain, Josie Long's personal style of performance can be described a fairly *expressive* to begin with (in relation to some other more verbally oriented comics). Indeed, it is interesting to take note of the fact that her routine above recounts an event and an action sequence she merely *saw* from a distance as an outsider—meaning that what she saw were primarily *visual gestures* and *movement*—and then reconstructed in intricate verbal *and* gestural detail so as to grant these actions an exemplary or allegorical status. In particular, none of the main characters in the story are voiced as themselves (if anything, they are parodied), but are certainly attributed with various (moral) qualities and intentions.

In this regard, gestures, movement, bodily orientation, and facial expression form an essential part of what would be called the *expressive* and *experiential* qualities of narratives. Marco Caracciolo (2014, 36) argues how in order for us to consider the

experience of stories, how they elicit emotional responses, engage the imagination, and transport us to (imaginary) places, we need a conceptual transposition from representation to expression. Narratives in various transmedial environments have several expressive devices at their disposal through which they produce experiential responses in recipients despite the fact that in linguistically mediated contexts, representation and expression are often closely bound up. Discursive qualities such as high level of (visual) detail, mimetic techniques such as direct reported speech, focalization inside the storyworld, or evaluative cues of the narrator certainly rank high in enhancing audience's involvement in narratives (Caracciolo 2014; Tannen 2007), but so do gesture, movement, and other embodied sensory modalities. In a semiotic sense, we could rephrase Caracciolo's experientiality by saying that as a form of Peircean Secondness, gestures and embodied movement *impress upon* receivers as an unmediated force or "brute action" to be reckoned with (cit. in Wilce 2009a, 101–102).

In this article, I charted how gesture and movement participate in juxtaposing, superimposing, and laminating various conceptual spaces and narrative perspectives with regard another to precise communicative effect, foregrounding other spaces and perspectives while steering attention away from others (cf. Haviland 2004, 210). As Cassell and McNeill (2004, 124) point out, shifts between spaces and perspectives are rarely just "random wobblings but apparently motivated movements to and from the narrative line to encode the degree of centrality of the event at each moment". In particular, close-ups delivered from the character viewpoint are typically coordinated with events that are the causes (the hosing) and effects (the boy's victory) in the chain of events leading to the finale of the storyline.

In this regard, there is an apparent *textual* quality to the embodied actions of the performer. This means that there is a particular coherence to the patterning of gesture and movement that is potentially repeatable and even portable across shifting contexts, just as there is for the concurrent verbal signal (Wilce 2009b, 32–35). Moreover, such high degree of textuality in both verbal and non-verbal modalities can be regarded as symptomatic also with respect to the scripted and intensely repetitive character of stand-up comedy, given that what we have been analyzing is a sequence from the very beginning of the show, its seemingly casual if largely iconic introduction so to speak.

Insofar as many stand-ups rely heavily on reductive gestural depictions of the characters, settings, and objects, their performances are often laden with iconic, depictive gestures and embodied impersonations. In this regard, my analysis also warrants Cassell and McNeill's (2004) suggestion that the diegetic storyworld level is characteristically accompanied by iconic gestures depicting objects, posture and hand movement, facial expression, etc. Metaphoric gestures, for their part, primarily participate in metanarrative discourse conveying (narrator's) evaluations, summaries, and other pragmatic functions. Deictic gestures are likewise typically metanarrative and didactic in nature; they bring spatial relations into relief, mark transpositions between and laminations of the storyworld and the shared interactional space, as well as organize the interactional space in both the storyworld as well on the extradiegetic level.[12] An important distinction is that during implementation of diegetic character

viewpoints, deictic gestures often shift to the character's *origo*, along with the general refocusing of the referential space.

In particular, it is a staple feature of stand-up that the comic as a narrator of herself and her performance moves back and forth between 1) narration performed "as themselves" in the shared interactional space with an audience, 2) illustrated narration (Liddell 1998) that combines both (meta)narration and simultaneous gestures enacted from a character viewpoint in chosen storyworlds, and 3) brief enactments of narratives or so-called instant characters (Double 2014) that are often situated in hypothetical or completely imaginary spatiotemporal frames. I suggest calling this gradient continuum as the *trajectory of becoming-character* in stand-up comedy (I have borrowed the notion of "becoming-character" from Nozawa 2013). Whereas one end of this continuum is constituted by the stand-up "performing as herself", the other end can be said as leaning toward generally more mediated forms of self-presentation (toward something that I would rather refer to as "animation of voice"). On this other end, stand-up comics evoke before us situations populated by characters, figures, and social types—some of them biographically identifiable and anthropomorphic, others non-human or even abstract concepts—or otherwise foreground aspects of their own stage personae *as personae*. This continuum then serves as a heuristic tool for exploring aspects of stand-up on a scale from (mimetic) embodiment to relatively more mediated forms of personation and impersonation.

Notes

1   No doubt, one can imagine scenes in which the comic narrates her own actions whilst simultaneously performing them. In this case, it would be debatable whether a narrated storyworld, or indeed a story, would have been produced. In fact, folklorist and anthropologist Tok Thompson (2010, 399) has distinguished between narratives and stories precisely thus, defining a "story" as implying "a narrative referring to a time *other than its own*." Now, while I will not spend time discussing Thompson's terminological binary per se (which he proposes as the evolutionary watershed between hominid and non-hominid communication: humans tell stories, animals do not, even though they might narrate), his problematic of temporal coordination related to narration is what also concerns me here.

2   However, as Parrill and Sweetser (2004, 216; also Young 2011) point out, gestural metaphor can only exist by being layered upon foundational iconicity, meaning that gestures rarely manifest as "pure" types. Rather, the four categories are preferably understood as concurrent dimensions of gestural communication.

3   In cognitive studies, a person's mental representation of their immediate surroundings, such as the physical stage and the stand-up venue for a comic, is labeled the Real Space. The Real Space is called a *grounded* mental space because it is immediate, and can be deictically referred to by pointing gestures (as well as by verbal deictic reference, of course). Grounded blends, on the other hand, result from the blending of elements from a mental, conceptual space with elements of one's immediate physical environment. As Liddell notes, they often incorporate the conceptual scene (setting and time) from a non-grounded space and project that onto the current physical setting, the Real Space. (Liddell 1998, 290–291.) Narratives recounted on-site are prototypical grounded blends, but various grounded blends can also be invoked off-site.

4   *Mise en abyme* is understood as a mirroring technique or a condensation device, in which an "inner mirror" is said to reflect the complete work of art by replication. This "mirroring" part typically functions as a "hermeneutical key", which highlights essential aspects of the whole: its object can be either 1) the theme, 2) the process, or 3) the code of the work (Dällenbach 1989). A more operative and narratologically suitable account of the device is provided by Mieke Bal (1978, 123), who designates *mise en abyme* as a sign that refers to "an essential or prominent aspect of the text, narration or story", which it signifies by resemblance, i.e. by similarity or difference, once or repeatedly. *Mise en abyme* is thus essentially iconic by nature.

5   I have visually synchronized the gestural descriptions with the verbal track by locating the respective starting points of verbal and gestural signs at corresponding places in relation to each other.

6   Throughout the analysis, the coordinates of the 'left' and 'right' refer to the audience's viewpoint, not to the performer's bodily orientation or visual perspective, unless specifically noted otherwise.

7   It is also possible to observe how gestures are typically prepared in advance of their correlation with words. When introducing the triad of objects consisting of "a palm tree, or a crab, or a slide", Long simultaneously positions herself at corresponding sequential spatial spots, so that the pronunciation of the nouns is precisely synchronized with the gestures.

8   Also obscured in my transcription is the gesturally conveyed information regarding the man's facial expression as well as his unexcited or reluctant posture, (presumably) functioning as negative metonymic reductions of his personality traits.

9   Instant characters thus correspond with what sociolinguist Deborah Tannen (2007) has conceptualized as constructed dialogue. In contrast with illustrated narration (Liddell 1998) that we saw earlier, in constructed dialogue both gestures and verbal signs are projected through the characters being portrayed. Constructed dialogue is an especially efficient involvement strategy because of its immediacy and its "ability to portray action and dialogue as if it were occurring in the telling time", while also forcing the hearers to participate in the sense making.

10   Folklorists might be more familiar with analytically separating presentation and representation through the concept of *ostension*, but this notion does not translate well from legend studies, where it is typically applied (see e.g. Ellis 1989), onto staged oral performance.

11   It is possible to note here that while reference is characteristically anchored in the speech event by verbal indexicals (pronouns, tense, demonstratives), it is possible for deictic gestures and bodily orientation to replace these verbal signposts altogether (Haviland 2000, 18).

12   It also appears a generic feature of stand-up comedy that distinct spots on the physical stage are creatively operationalized as indexical icons of aspects of narrated storyworlds. On stage it is possible for the narrator to visually portray the spatial relations of characters and objects in the storyworld. Consequently, movements across such spots on the physical stage can be designated as a crucial component of (embodied) metanarration insofar as these repositionings illustrate the spatial relations of objects in the storyworld.

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Responses

"I don't enjoy my work":
A Response to Lindfors

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Antti Lindfors makes a significant contribution not only to stand-up scholarship but to the folkloristic study of performance in his piece, "Spatiotemporal Management of Stand-Up Performances: Narration and Gestures." Stand-up comedy begins in the verbal art-as-play contexts of small group, ludic interaction: small talk, bull-shitting, talking shit, *skitsprat* (Bauman 1972; Mukerji 1979; Bell 1978; Klein 2006). Within those vernacular frames, one of the participants will often take (or be given) temporary focus and become the 'performer,' and will subsequently control the flow of talk by meeting the operative expectations of verbal fluency and topical relevance. The professionalization of stand-up comedy brings that form of small talk (vernacular bullshit) to a larger group context, and the stand-up comedian's success is contingent in recognizing the operative expectations in group's different from his or her own.

Fortunately for the comedian, there are also expectations for the genre "stand-up comedy" that include a certain eclecticism, and mechanics of the stand-up comedy industry, such as an introduction by an established interlocutor, that serve to frame that eclecticism, so that the stage transforms into an area where two socioculturally distinguishable sets of expectations are negotiated and—if only lasting for the duration of the performance—a syncretic set emerges.[1] All of this is to say that, taking provisos about the differences of professional and vernacular bullshit into consideration, Lindfors' analysis of gesture in stand-up comedy can provide further insight into the use of gesture in vernacular verbal art. I am endeavoring, however, to keep it to a study of stand-up, and I am limiting myself to a few areas of contemplation.

Lindfors makes the observation that stand-up is a "genre of embodied performance of self-presentation in which the bodily and visual co-presence of performers and audiences is paramount" (p. 46). I agree with this position, and also affirm that "Stand-up comedy is the only mass-mediated cultural performance activity whose normative consumable product is a recording of a live event" (Brodie 2014, 34). The Josie Long performance under analysis is such an example. But we should also remember that it is a *recording* that culminated after significant touring and a month at the Edinburgh Festival, filmed at The Comedy Box in Bristol, using three cameras (Long 2008). The home viewing audience is experiencing the same created storyworld as the audience at The Comedy Box, not from the more-or-less fixed viewpoint at the venue, but through a sequence of camera shots taken from different angles framing Long at different magnifications: close-up; medium; full-body.

For example, the sequence Lindfors has labelled 2 f) through k) begins with a back of house shot where the audience is in silhouette at the bottom half of the screen and where Long is visible from the waist up. She walks to the left and then, after "tentatively," the screen cuts to a three-quarter shot positioned at the left so that she is now walking towards

the viewer. At g) the back of house shot returns, and halfway through h), after "whose job it was," a close-up from a similar angle. Finally, at j), the camera returns to the back of house shot. As viewers we have a grammar for cinematography and editing; we can therefore easily read the performance as one continuous thing and will not be thrown by a change in perspective. The six gestural moments are accentuated by five different shots comprising three perspectives, and the viewer's attention is drawn towards different movements without losing the sense of continuity.

Whereas filmmakers can employ editing to mask just as much as to accentuate—whether because an ever-panning camera would eventually bring attention to itself, or when two or more performances are selectively edited into one—what is finally presented on the DVD is taken as a good faith effort at representing and mediating the quintessentially live, intimate, and homeostatic performance at The Comedy Box. Mediated comedy performances are how audiences receive most comedy: certainly, they are what scholars have as texts for exegesis, save for what they can document themselves, and they are what stand-up comedians study when developing their craft, as is attested in almost every comedian's biography or memoir. The intersection of live performances and their mediation invokes Philip Auslander's discussion of "liveness" (1999); how stand-up comedy was not merely popularized but also shaped by its means of mediation—the television variety show, the LP, the cable television special, the home video, the streaming special, etc.—to the point where we must question the argument of live perform-

ance being any more "authentic" than the mediated.

Despite the normalcy of mediation in performances, there is still work to be done regarding the editing of stand-up comedy. The emphasis on a raw performance being captured without artifice is given lie to by performances that expressly address that conceit, such as Chris Rock's *Kill the Messenger* (2006, dir. Marty Callner), which weaves together performances in New York, London, and Johannesburg; Chelsea Peretti's *One of the Greats* (2014, dir. Lance Bangs) where Peretti can be seen in the audience during reaction shots (and whose presence throws off the Peretti onstage); and Tony Hinchcliffe's *One Shot* (2016, dir. Ben Wolfinsohn) which, as the title suggests, was done in one continuous take. The only concerted attention given to comedy cinematography is Alison Kibler (1999) on the framing of audience reaction shots on *An Evening at the Improv*, which further emphasises liveness by underscoring (perhaps disingenuously, as Kibler suggests) the presence of a responsive audience with their express visual representation on the screen.

Reflecting further on Lindfors, two further areas for inquiry on the use of gesture emerge. First, when Long, or any comedian, is gesticulating, who is it for? Irrespective of whether the performance is being recorded or not, does the grammar of stand-up gesture—informed by and often intending multi-camera recording and the possibility of always being framed at the optimal angle—irrevocably condition the repertoire of gestures? How does the comedian balance movement for camera vs. movement for an audience? There is perhaps an emancipatory ele-

ment in play, that something parallel to how a microphone, allowing for a voice in its natural register, changed comedy from snappy one-liners to something more reminiscent of vernacular bullshit; so too did the audience's collective familiarity with the form encourage the expectation of the comedian's "natural" use of gestures, even when their employ is of little communicative benefit to the people co-present. Multi-camera video-projection in large-scale (and, increasingly, in medium-scale) venues further this naturalism. Eighty years ago, Konstantin Stanislavsky noted how "life on the stage is shown in small compass, as in the lens of a camera. People look at it with opera glasses, the way they examine a miniature with a magnifying glass" (2003 [1936], 117), so the intrusion of technology into the mediated space is nothing new; it is just in different form.

The second area is perhaps the inverse: how *necessary* is any gesture? As much as it adds to the performance, Long's embodiment is not integral to understanding her narrative. As an experiment bordering perilously close to fieldwork, I asked a colleague to listen to the routine (with the screen of my laptop turned from her), providing her only with the information that it was a British female stand-up comedian named Josie Long, not even letting on that it was a video clip. She laughed at the introduction of the man with the hose (2i) and at "best in the business" (3d), winced sympathetically at the boy in abject terror (3k), and had the smile of recognizing the narrative resolution of misplaced effort (5d). My rather blunt follow-up of "did that make sense / did you understand that?" was answered honestly but with some confusion, until

I explained Lindfors' project. Stand-up comedy is something she listens to and watches often and, although unfamiliar with Long specifically, she is conversant with the expectations of the form.

As a professional stand-up comedian, Long would not only have experience being filmed, but also of being only recorded with audio: her performances need to work independent of her being seen. Long appears frequently on podcasts, on terrestrial and digital radio, and on other audio media, and her performances need to work in those elements. Moreover, much like what was said above with respect to film, stand-up comedy itself has been mediated through audio recordings and the form has adapted to that mediation. The inclusion of the co-present audience's reactions are additional elements for the recording's interpretation by a listener, and so there may be reactions that indicate that something physical is going on that is facilitating the co-present audience's appreciation but must be taken on trust by the listener—Rumsfeldian known unknowns of funny business—but it is the verbal art that takes center stage. I raise this as another asterisk for the distinctions between stand-up and vernacular bullshit: the former has been informed by mediation since its inception and we must be cautious about a direct transposition of our insights from our studies of the one to our studies of the other.

We should also be cautious about the onus of honesty we place on the shoulders of the stand-up comedian. For most of the routine, Long-the-narrating-I is "reporting" something from the diegetic world of Long-the-experiencing-I. She places it at the beginning of the show because "it's a show about how much I love

people who put in the effort regardless of how misplaced that effort is" (sequence 5 c) and d)). It segues from the very straightforward descriptions of the show's origin and what an Edinburgh Festival show involves, and her evocation through word and gesture of the particular setting combines with her given rationale for being there. Even her subjective interpretations of the events—when she speaks of the man's clear enjoyment of the spraying at 3g), or when she interprets the large boy's face as at best a pyrrhic victory (in an untranscribed section between sequences 4 and 5)—are based on Long-the-experiencing-I having been present to them. It is experience honestly and artfully rendered and interpreted: as such, it verges on ethnography, or what I call "vernacular ethnography:"

> The comedian in his or her vernacular ethnography is not subject to the same constraints and set of expectations as the academic ethnographer: he or she is subject, however, to a parallel set of expectations, that of ongoing relevance to the audience. "Verisimilitude" is the order of the day: the account is expressly subjective but implies a recognizable truthfulness therein. The comedian is judged relevant by the audience in part by the accuracy of the worldview presented: it needs to be credible. Even though they are trying for laughter, comedians often honestly render representations of a particular moment and place in time. (Brodie 2014, 143)

Not all stand-up comedy centers around "real" experiences, as flights of fancy and pure fabrication are all part of the comedian's art. But these flights and fabrications tend to be grounded in some semblance of a real experience. Long makes claims to the veracity of her account, that it is an actual event being reported honestly yet artfully, including the mundane details of the membership card being filled out and the shapes of the play structure, that are not there as concepts to inspire laughter, but as recognizable and relatable motifs of a shared quotidian world. A stage is set for the actions of the man with the hose and the reactions of the boy on the slide, actions emerging from everyday experience that are storyworthy. As she relates the experience she interprets the characters' emotional states, even inventing internal monologues. Yet these interpretations are based upon her experience of their embodied selves, which she communicates to her audience through physical mimesis.

Sequence 3 b) through f) is distinct from the rest of the routine as it is entirely imagined: "We are suddenly at a dinner party in which the hosing man is being addressed by a fellow interlocutor" (Lindfors, p. 59). As much as the scene at the pool may have been polished to make for an increasingly compelling narrative, we are meant to believe that the story-world and ontological reality are coterminous: at least, we accept the conceit because we are willingly in a play frame that builds on conceits being accepted. But for the hypothetical dinner party, at which Long was not present, we are now hearing and seeing a conversation between two characters—one of whom is only brought into existence as an "instant character," acting as Long's surrogate to ask the man his motivations—that also serves to provide the theme for the following hour of her performance: "I love people who put in the effort regardless of how misplaced that effort is" (Long 5c-d).

This imagined conversation also involves an imagined gesture: Lindfors describes it as "fingers stroking her chest" but it could equally be framed as "polishing/buffing nails on her lapel," a stock gesture indicating satisfaction with a job well done (p. 57).[2] The gesture encapsulates so much of her overall point: energy and effort expended at doing something well, even if that something is of questionable merit: when pressed, he reassures the instant character "I don't enjoy my job!" and his accent switches from a "recognizably 'upper-class'" register [to] stereotypically Scottish" (Lindfors, p. 59).

I am captivated by this moment, and grateful that Lindfors' questions about gesture gravitated my attention thereto. Long made something up, creating a scenario that she cannot justify, but the audience is quite comfortable with the intrusion of fabrication into the proto-ethnographic because, unlike the folklorist and ethnographer, honesty is at the service of the narrative. It is a sterling example of how much we must refrain from timeworn clichés about the stand-up comedian as some form of inveterate truth-teller. Whatever ethnography, sociology, psychology, political science the stand-up comedian brings to performance is ever at the service of performance, and we should remember such when we see efforts at "explaining away" stand-up comedy's value.

Notes

1   This is of course an oversimplification as it treats the audience as a homogenous unity, and the conceit of communitas within the ludic sphere of the comedy performance is not only sociologically false but undermines performance strategies wherein conflicting interpretations of the comedian's speech act by different members of the same audience are actively pursued.

2   Both folklorists and students of stand-up comedy might recognize the gesture from Gershon Legman's version of "The Aristocrats" in his *Rationale of the Dirty Joke*: "Agent, thunderstruck: 'What kind of act do you call that?' Vaudevillian, polishing his nails on his lapel: 'We call it—The Aristocrats'" (1975, 987).

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Navigating Realities

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Acts of narration animate two realities, the storyworld and the performance occasion. When the narrator is present in the flesh, this animation is both verbal and gestural. As the story unfolds, the reality the story creates flares up intermittently into the space of the storytelling. The agents of these flare-ups are gestures. In David McNeill's terminology, iconic gestures represent characters, acts, objects, and spaces in the storyworld and deictic gestures point these out. At the same time, metaphoric gestures give concrete representation to abstract effects like ideas, emotions, dialogue, or narrative discourse as if they were characters, acts, objects, and spaces, which deictic gestures again point out (1992: 12-14). In his exquisitely controlled analysis, Antti Lindfors details this animation in Josie Long's stand-up comedy performance. My undertaking here is to bring out how Lindfors' study unfolds into multiple realities, split selves, alternative perspectives, perceptual modalities, and narrative anchors in story performances. An instance of this unfolding: when at the end of opening the narrative episode, Long steps out of the virtual space of the storyworld and closes it off behind her, she transforms it, as Lindfors writes, from an iconic storyworld into a metaphorical "storyworld as 'container'" (p. 59). Here, Long interpolates the most moving instance of metaphoricity in her performance. Though she has dismantled the storyworld space, a trace of the boy clinging to the raft remains as "an iconic metonymical index… for an abstract idea:" "valiant stoicism and (misplaced) 'effort'" (p. 63). The boy has become an allegorical figure in a tale that has become a parable. The parable raises "trying," the declared theme of Long's show, from the individual to the universal, surely one of the key devices of stand-up comedy in which the comedian is at once a singular quirky individual and Everyman.

Iconic gestures either materialize the storyworld around the body of the gesturer who is inside it or they materialize the storyworld outside her body inside the gesture space in front of her. The gesture space takes the shape of an oblong suspended in front of the body within which the person typically gestures (McNeill 1992: 86). If the storyrealm encloses the gesturer, she takes what Justine Cassell and McNeill call *character viewpoint*; if the gesturer encloses the storyrealm in the gesture space, she takes what they call the *observer viewpoint* (2004: 120-121). Long alternates between these perspectives on the storyworld over the course of her performance. As the "observer" in the swimming hall in the storyworld Long is, *pace* Lindfors (p. 62), perceiving and narrating events from a character's viewpoint, even though that character is herself and she is looking at something in her reality. The effect of the gesturer's proximity to the storyworld from this internal perspective is not precisely a "close-up," as Lindfors puts it (p. 64). The gestures do not depict detached inspections of phenomena as if they were pulled in under a microscope but tactile-kinaesthetic engagements with spaces and objects made forceful by proximity. From the character viewpoint, the audience is implicitly in-

side the storyworld along with the character so that members can recoil from the virtual glasses flying at them when one of Long's characters knocks them off the table (p. 51). Character viewpoint solicits the engagement the observer viewpoint restrains.

From the observer viewpoint, the audience is implicitly outside the storyworld along with the narrator, looking into a miniature reality she holds before her and about which she speaks rather than within which she acts. When Long extracts herself from the storyrealm as a character to turn back to it as an observer, she conjures up the rafts as a series of bumps she moves her hand over inside the gesture space. "[T]racing the shapes of the floating obstacle course" is neither an "insider's perspective" nor an "outside observer's perspective—from the office" (p. 55). Both gesturer and audience take the observer viewpoint, from which Long invites her fellow observers to participate in her humorous irony about the situation she discloses. When she becomes a character again, it is no longer herself but the guy who is plying the hose to pick off the children. The moment before, she had been demonstrating the storyworld for her audience from outside it; her perspective aligns with theirs, seeing in from without. Now their perspectives diverge; they see each other from within. But the ironic detachment she has constructed from the observer viewpoint now overlays the character's exultant cruelty to create the juxtaposition of conflicting affects that is again, as Lindfors recognizes (See p. 56), one of the hallmarks of humor.

Gestures do not *visualize* the storyworld for the audience, as Lindfors writes (p. 46); they *corporealize* aspects the spa-

tial reality of the storyworld in a way that makes it perceptible to their perceivers visually but it is not a visualization. Making a gesture is rarely like drawing a picture (though it can be); it is more like materializing a virtual reality by either being, handling, or moving through its space. Audiences do not just see storyworlds, they feel them. They enter into the storyworld as or alongside its characters; they attend to the storyworld along with its narrator. The spaces, acts, and objects in these realities tug at their attention, their senses, and their emotions. It is not that they imagine or envision the storyworld while perceiving and feeling the actual world. The virtual solicits them just as the actual does. Both realities flit into and out of the audience's attention at their own whim or the storyteller's direction. As William James writes, "Each world *whilst it is attended to* is real after its own fashion; only the reality lapses with the attention" (1890/1918: 293). This is as true of the real as of the imaginary. In the gesture, the body enters into a relationship with virtual presences.

The performer's job is to conduct her audience between realities. By turns, she draws them into a storyworld that opens up around her body and theirs and then draws them out of the storyworld that closes itself off into a into a separate space either contained in the gesture space in front of the narrator's body or suspended in one of the spaces around her. This neat alternation is complicated by the possibility of operating one reality verbally while operating the other gesturally, operating both realities gesturally at the same time, alternating between realities in the gestural system but not the verbal or the reverse. This complexity is the heart of

Lindfors' analysis. Initially, for instance, Long turns the audience's attention to the swimming pool by gesturing downward and to her left as the character who is herself in the storyworld perceived it. Keeping her gaze deictically on the pool, she relinquishes her iconic representation of herself inside the storyworld to represent the kids' "play scheme" metaphorically as an object she holds in her hand. Then she returns to iconic representation of the swimming hall but from outside the storyworld by representing the obstacle course as a series of bumps contained in miniature in the gesture space in front of her body. The same actual space can be colonized by different virtual spaces, each fleetingly materialized before her, beside her, or around her. When Long marks off the rafts in the pool while walking to her left and then her right, for instance, it is not clear whether she is walking along the edge of the pool inside the storyworld or walking along the edge of the storyworld the pool is in. Is she blurring boundaries or juggling multiple frames? Is there a difference between fuzziness and complexity?

The gesturer's body is itself split among realities, parts of it sustaining aspects of the storyworld as other parts of it sustain aspects of the performance situation. The narrator can embody different characters in the storyworld, including herself as a character, even as she is bodily present to her own act of narration. At the culmination of the opening episode, when Long steps forward into the body of the character in the storyworld who wields the hose, she alternates between looking at the pool on her right as the character and the audience in front of her as the narrator. As she turns and swings

the hose to her right to squirt the kids, she glances over her shoulder at the audience as if inviting them to look *at* as well as *with* her as she says, "Just picking 'em off." When she says, "Getting rid of the weak," she holds the audience's gaze while orienting her body and the hose to the kids in the pool, making the audience complicit in her appraisal of what is going on. A performer can orient to spaces of the storyworld and the objects in it, orient her audience to storyworld spaces, and orient to her audience and the space she is in with them.

How does anybody keep track of all this? Lindfors's study brings out three possibilities: temporal persistence, deictic anchors, and gaze engagement.

The virtual bodies, acts, objects, and spaces gestures conjure up have a brief perceptual afterlife so that the performer can, for a time, refer to them deictically. This is so even though the actual space the virtual space colonizes has been colonized by other virtual spaces in the course of the performance. The virtual cocktail party, for instance, takes over the space occupied by the virtual swimming hall. When she returns to the swimming hall story, Josie Long can still point to the place where the boy clung to his raft despite the interpolation into that space of the two people talking to each other at the party. This temporal persistence is one of the ways the performer directs the audience's attention to one reality or another without either she or her audience losing track of where they are.

Deictic gestures are anchored at one end in the body from which they issue and at the other in the object to which they point. Long's initial flurry of deictics or deictic-iconic blends at once orient

from the character's body in the story-world space and orient the audience to the storyworld. They are—and this is, I think, what Lindfors is after—shifters of sorts. Their object might be in the actual space around the gesturer, in the virtual space of the storyworld, or in a blended space that laminates a virtual space onto an actual space (p. 55). When she talks about the man's job, Long points to an actual spot to her left on stage, which is the virtual spot where the man stood with his hose and becomes the virtual spot where the man stands at the dinner party, into which Long moves her own body to become the man talking about himself at the dinner party, and to whom she now points by pointing at herself.

Gaze direction acts as a virtual deictic that points to the aspect of either the storyworld or the performance occasion to which the gesturer directs her own and the audience's attention. It arcs from its anchor in her body to its virtual or actual object, orienting to it as either character or observer. In either instance, the deictic arc hooks together the gesturer's body and an actual or virtual space as the focal reality. When the performer's gaze engages with the audience's, their mutually held gaze is anchored in both bodies, recentering space around the pair as co-anchors of a shared focal reality. These anchoring gestures can hold across shifting spaces just as stabilized spaces can hold across shifting gestures.

Affiliating gestures with words increases the possibilities for laminating realities exponentially. Lindfors' study brilliantly captures the sheer complexity required to navigate them. Its deep question is how we are moved by our movement within and among realities.

Works Cited

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