

## **Craft Remodelling Labour? The Craft Metaphor in Actor Training and the Actor's Future Labour**

A case study of foundational training at *Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts* in Berlin

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### **Abstract**

Within the institutional ecologies of actor training the metaphor that *acting is craft* is ubiquitous while in theatre studies it has—probably due to its studiously vague nature—hardly been addressed at all. In the wider context of performative arts Jen Harvie adapts Richard Sennett's conceptual craftsmanship as a means to redefine labour within neoliberal capitalism. Calvin Taylor rethinks performer training as a place to resist the instrumentalization of education as vocational training for the social factory. With those two trains of thought in mind, I argue that actor training's unique craft metaphor might transform the student-actors' future labour in a way that they will potentially resist neoliberal capitalism's monopolization of labour. This essay's argument is built upon my 2018 and 2019 field research at the *Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts* in Berlin in correspondence with relevant training literature. I observed that the academy's foundational training (*Grundlagenunterricht*), in particular, is a place of holistic education within actor training. It equips student-actors with a craftful resistance against the exploitation of their future labour. This essay concludes that the craft metaphor in foundational training is a promising basis to start a strategic rethinking of actor labour critical of neoliberal capitalism.

A conundrum for starters: '45 percent diligence', '45 percent discipline', '10 percent talent'<sup>1</sup>—which field would match this distribution of labour? As a field that emphasizes a nuanced willingness and deems predisposition negligible, one might think of skilled trades rather than of creative industries. Idiosyncrasies left aside, the arts are even less likely to be associated with negligible talent or excessive discipline. Still, this percentage distribution stressed like a mantra by former actor trainer

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1 '45 Prozent Fleiß, 45 Prozent Disziplin und 10 Prozent Talent.' All translations from German sources were done by the author.

Veronika Drogi refers to acting (Schuler and Harrer 21). Her students and successors, Margarete Schuler and Stephanie Harrer, at the *Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts* in Berlin, depict the student-actor like an apprentice carpenter who has to focus on the same procedures over and over again. They most familiarize themselves with the material and tools in a lengthy process so that ‘with each newly learned procedure, the apprentice’s labour [is] professionalized’ (12). Therefore, is acting more like carpentry than art?

*Acting is (a) craft* might be the most frequently employed metaphor in actor training.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly true for *Ernst Busch*. Most authors who invest in this theatre academy as a case study stumble upon the frequent usage of the word ‘craft’ there. Writing from an English-speaking perspective, Steve Earnest includes its German translation:

‘[w]hile theoretical viewpoints do occasionally creep in, the focus of the training is clearly on *Handwerk* or the craft elements in acting. Therefore, acting, movement, and voice classes constitute the bulk of the training program’ (38).

The word *Handwerk* became a common refrain during Earnest’s stay at *Ernst Busch* from 1992-1994. Almost 30 years later, during my fieldwork at the academy from 2018-2019, I found the same. Earnest saw the teachers’ opposition to theory and their focus on the technical aspects of acting as the reason for this emphasis on craft. For Anja Klöck, the focus on craft is indicative of an ideological division between East and West German acting schools, especially in the years after the

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2 In German publications that include anthologies of interviews with actor trainers all sooner or later drop the word *Handwerk* no matter whether it is addressed in the question (such as in Schuler and Harrer) or whether the word is absent from the catalogue of questions (such as in Klöck). In *Anatomy of Performance Training*, John Matthews views performance training through the lens of woodcutting, which further stresses my argument of craft as a dominant metaphor also outside of German-speaking actor training contexts. While Matthews consciously employs *anatomy* as a metaphor (26), he does not investigate why *craft* is frequently referred to within training contexts.

fall of the Berlin Wall. This division pitched the technically skilled East German actor against the West German actor guided by emotionality; this myth naturalises the difference between technical (cool) East and emotional (hot) West German actors (49). Yet, the authors of both exemplary studies do not focus on the usage of the word ‘craft’, but rather employ an intuitive understanding of it. Earnest understands *Handwerk* tautologically as ‘craft elements in acting’ and Klöck uses it as a term synonymous to technique. Based on my research at *Ernst Busch*, I suggest an alternative reading of ‘craft’ in actor training not as a term but as a *metaphor*.

In contrast to carpentry, acting does not belong to the realm of material culture. Although Helmuth Plessner<sup>3</sup> argues that actors operate in the ‘material of their own existence’ (53),<sup>4</sup> a material that works with itself (acting) differs from the human hand’s work with external material (carpentry). But my question is not so much *if* and *to what extent* acting can be called a craft but *why* it is used in the first place. Why do actor trainers employ the craft metaphor? What is the new meaning that is generated by depicting acting as craft and what does it aim at? In order to better understand the connection between both metaphors—and thus actor training’s approach to actor labour—I argue that to call ‘acting a craft’ should irritate just like ‘acting is carpentry’ would.

The metaphor *acting is craft*, I argue, puts a focus on the dimension and quality of labour in material culture and takes it as a paragon for an envisioned actor labour. In this essay, I argue that the craft metaphor can have a transformative impact on the student-actors’ understanding of artistic labour. Drawing on Jen Harvie’s notion of the artepreneur, I show that the craft metaphor—and the understanding of labour that it generates—cannot suit neoliberal capitalism’s needs. Acting craft, as totally out of fashion within institutions that follow artepreneurialism,

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<sup>3</sup> Plessner’s essay is a central source for student-actors and instructors at *Ernst Busch*. Even without referencing Plessner, the thought is found in many *Ernst Busch* publications.

<sup>4</sup> ‘[...] doch verrät die Darstellung im Material der eigenen Existenz eine Abständigkeit des Menschen zu sich’.

could contrarily *become* a place to resort to within neoliberal capitalism's embracive instrumentalization of (artistic) labour.

Harvie defines 1) 'self-interest and individualism', 2) 'creative destruction as an apparently inevitable by-product of innovation', and 3) 'productivity, permanent growth and profit' as the risks artists face in their 'implicit requirement to model entrepreneurialism' (63). Instead of 'capitulating to neoliberal capitalist risks' (ibid), Harvie urges artists 'to explore how art might better support social democracy's commitment to collective good' (64). As a strategy to counter this conflation of art and neoliberal capitalism, she explicitly suggests 'exploring the value of craftsmanship' (ibid). *Craftsmanship*, which Harvie suggests as an artistic strategy to counter the risks of becoming 'tools of neoliberal capitalist skills training and ideological modelling' (63), is precisely the figure of thought that actor training has long been employing to address actor labour. I found all three risks the artepreneur poses to acting addressed as facets of the craft metaphor, which therefore harbours strategical potential against neoliberal capitalism's appropriation.

While embracing Harvie's urge to employ *craftsmanship* as a strategy, I stress the distinctness of the craft metaphor in actor training. In this essay I trace the interwoven layers of the craft metaphor via a case study of actor training at *Ernst Busch*. I will focus on *Ernst Busch's Grundlagenunterricht*, a first year *acting foundations course* (referred to as *foundational training* in the following) in which the craft metaphor is particularly prominent. Foundational training offers a thorough insight into basic ideologies and methods that the *Ernst Busch* approach to actor training is built upon and shows the central relevance of the craft metaphor within this framework.

### **An Actor Prepares ... for Work**

To understand the interwoven layers of the acting as craft metaphor, it is first crucial to clarify the notion of neoliberal capitalism and actor training's entanglements in it. Harvie states that neoliberal capitalism is synonymous with Sennett's idea of 'new capitalism' (*New Capitalism*). For the worker, new capitalism manifests through 'job insecurity,

unfamiliarity with tasks and colleagues, and deskilling' (*New Capitalism* 46). According to Sennett those economic developments run counter to human nature: '[m]ost people [...] take pride in being good at something specific, and they value the experiences they've lived through' (*New Capitalism* 5; also qtd. Harvie 46). Labour in new capitalism is thus depicted in opposition to human nature whilst also dominating it.

For Calvin Taylor,

[p]erformer training may be a place in which [a critical alternative to the iniquitous conditions of creative work] could be developed by being both *within* the social factory and through performance knowledge being able to critique its routines (193).

This unique potential Taylor assigns to performer training follows an investigation that sees ecologies of the labour market—as well as that of higher education—'drawn ever further into the global mesh of knowledge capitalism' (183); thereby universities emphasise their eagerness to forge students for the neoliberal labour market. Artistic training is at the core of this dilemma with 'the stereotypically non-conformist figure of the avantgarde artistic subjectivity' employed as the forerunner for 'a bohemianised neo-liberal capitalism' (Taylor 182). As Bojana Kunst formulates, 'with the rise of new ways of working (non-material work, affective work, cognitive work), the primary capital sources of value became human language, imagination and creativity' (86). Kunst establishes 'proximity' as a figure of thought that describes art's relationship to capitalism based on 'visible work (labour), performed before the eyes of other people' as the 'core of contemporary work' (140).

With those qualities at the core of their actor training, students are affected by neoliberal capitalism's sourcing in an immediate way. Student-actors might be the champions of *soft skills*, becoming fully fledged emotional labourers perfectly suited for a neoliberal capitalist labour market. Imagine a better desk clerk at a Berlin start-up than a trained actor! Acting alumni as champions of emotional labour could become integral to and exploited in cultural institutions, as well.

My critique is not that student-actors are poached by an external

labour market, but rather they are confronted with a labour market in which public art institutions have embraced the (self-)exploitation of its content-providers. Actor training is deeply immersed in the industry whilst being equipped with an institutionalized distance to be critical of it. Answering Harvie's urge to obstruct the *artrepreneur* through an embracing of craftsmanship and Taylor's thought of performer training as a place of critique within society, I have observed that foundational training at *Ernst Busch* has been—prior to Sennettian craftsmanship (*The Craftsman*)— semi-consciously confronting those issues, especially Harvie's three risks (self-interest, creative destruction, and quantitatively measured productivity) and the exploitation of emotional labour.

### **Acting Foundations at *Ernst Busch***

My explorations of the acting foundations course are based on Schuler and Harrer's actor training monograph *Grundlagen der Schauspielkunst* (*Foundations in the Art of Acting*) in which they communicate the development of foundational training at *Ernst Busch*. My reading of this training literature is grounded in a three-month fieldwork at the end of 2018 when I observed coursework at *Ernst Busch* taught by Schuler.

Like other acting academies in Germany, *Ernst Busch* is a public institution that primarily trains students for a labour market shaped substantially by another set of institutions: publicly funded municipal theatres. Ever since *Ernst Busch's* establishment, they have offered vocational training for the latter. Founded in 1905 by Max Reinhardt as a private acting school (Völker 7), *Ernst Busch* was, along with schools in Weimar and Leipzig, transformed into a public acting school in 1951 (11). In its own image cultivation, the acting academy tries to delineate a tradition that incorporates Reinhardt's legacy which stressed wholesome actor education over actor training (7). His educational goal was to develop 'the human warmth of an actor',<sup>5</sup> stressing 'individual distinctiveness and personality awareness'<sup>6</sup> instead of the 'formally

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<sup>5</sup> 'die menschliche Wärme eines Schauspielers'

<sup>6</sup> 'Eigenart und Persönlichkeitsbewußtsein'

acquired skills<sup>7</sup> (9) of ‘artistic virtuosity [which] can, if necessary, be acquired by the actor in self-study<sup>8</sup> (7). With the school located in East Berlin, the decades of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) were formative for its actor training methodology. A *synthesis* between Stanislavski and Brecht came into being which is nowadays perceived as *Ernst Busch’s* own exceptional training system within the variety of methods taught in acting academies worldwide.

Foundational training and its history touch the core of those guiding principles. Initially called *études*, foundational training was developed by Rudolf Penka both as a place for initial experimentations as well as a nucleus of future structured training as it can be observed today (Drogi, qtd. in Klöck 147). The title ‘*Études*’ that had existed at the school before Penka were abandoned because the actor trainers had realized that what they taught was different from the perfection of playing technique in instrumental training (143). While *études* stress technique, foundational training embraces craft. Sticking to Penka’s methodological core, Drogi amended the foundations course continuously from the 1980s to the early 2000s, emphasising the integration of findings from psychology and sociology (Drogi, qtd. in Klöck 144). Schuler and Harrer’s contemporary approach to foundational training is similar to Drogi’s work and therefore maintains an embodied tradition of the Penka-method in *Ernst Busch’s* training practices today.

Before going into performance, the student-actors have to focus on the quality of their labour. Schuler and Harrer outline ‘four stages of development’<sup>9</sup> in actor training which are ‘*unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence and unconscious competence*’<sup>10</sup> (40) in consecutive order. The opening stage of actor training

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7 ‘formal erarbeiteten Fertigkeiten und Fixigkeiten’

8 ‘künstlerische Virtuosität [...] kann sich der Schauspieler notfalls auch allein aneignen’

9 ‘vier Entwicklungsstadien’

10 ‘*unbewusste Inkompetenz, bewusste Inkompetenz, bewusste Kompetenz und unbewusste Kompetenz*’

when ‘unconscious incompetence’ gradually turns into ‘conscious incompetence’, is described as when the ‘hobby evolves into craft, the structure becomes apparent and leads to the ‘workshop’ in which effects are produced’<sup>11</sup> (57). At this stage, a long list of skills that apply to the ‘pure occupation of acting’<sup>12</sup> (12) are trained. The list summarizes 18 basic skills cultivated in foundational training which are e.g. ‘observation’<sup>13</sup>, ‘imagination’<sup>14</sup>, ‘relationship to the [acting] partner’<sup>15</sup>, and ‘recognizing and establishing pivots’<sup>16</sup> (18). These skills do not include movement and speech training or other specialised training elements. The wording for these skills might seem vague but each of them is conceptualised and trained with specific exercises.<sup>17</sup> Consciously employing several of these skills at once—as I have experienced myself in field research—is a highly demanding task of embodied cognition that continuously tests one’s abilities. Actor-students are entrenched in the ‘complexity of the occupation that is acting’<sup>18</sup> (12), so they are increasingly focused on the quality of their labour.

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11 ‘Das Hobby wird zum Handwerk, die Struktur wird sichtbar und führt in die Werkstatt, in der Wirkungen hergestellt werden.’

12 ‘Auseinandersetzung mit der reinen Tätigkeit Schauspielen’

13 ‘Beobachtung: den Blick nach außen zu wenden und die Umwelt genau zu beobachten’

14 ‘Vorstellungskraft’

15 ‘Partnerbeziehung und Partnerspiel’

16 ‘Drehpunkte erkennen bzw. setzen’

17 Many of the terms used in the academy’s actor training until the end of the 1960s were vague and every teacher used them differently. For instance, ‘Stanislawski- and Brecht-vocabulary was wildly jumbled together’ [‘Stanislawski- und Brecht-Vokabeln waren wild gemixt’] (Drogi qtd. in Klöck 144). This problem was solved by theatre scholar Gerhard Piens through a glossary of terms at the end of the 1960s. While one of the craft building methods taught in foundational training used acting terminologies such as *Haltung* (posture in the sense of attitude) with utmost precision, craft itself has kept its studiously vague nature. Because craft was approached as a metaphor instead of a term or terminology, constantly shifting connotations of the word were avoided.

18 ‘Komplexität der Tätigkeit Schauspielen’

Why do actor trainers perceive the word *craft* as an adequate description for this list of 18 competences and skills? For the context of *Ernst Busch*, I would like to stress one element of the craft metaphor that I found strikingly consistent as a guiding thread through foundational training. Schuler and Harrer simply describe an actor's labour in a way that distinguishes it from practices like carpentry whilst putting the two processes of both professions in kinship: in an everyday process, such as crossing a street, many human decisions are made simultaneously, within the fraction of seconds, and mainly go unnoticed. Before a character can cross a street on stage, those many decisions must be analysed and acted out by the actor separately and one after the other (39). Intellectual challenge thus always prefigures feeling in the acting process, even if feeling and thought occur simultaneously or in the opposite order in everyday life. If asked for the gist of acting craft within foundational training, I would refer to an *embodied analytical process* running through all action on stage that has to be learned in its principles, trained with utmost rigor, but continuously evolved throughout the actor's professional career. While the craftsman explores *material* in a process that merges haptics and intellectual challenge, the actor explores *action* merging with emotions and intellect in their body.

What do 90 percent of diligence and discipline have to be invested in? What does the actor apprentice do? One of the very first exercises in foundational training demands the students to observe a passenger on public transport. In class, another student had to enact those observations only following the descriptions given. Usually the enacting student would request more details as the observations were presented in a rather interpretative manner. Interpretative sentences like 'I observed a beggar' helped very little in this process as they reproduce clichés. Precise observations, on the contrary—like the very distinct way in which the person held a bag—were much more convincing. In the following exercise, the students had to speculate on the passenger with equally precise questions addressing living situation, income, last visit to the doctor, etc. It is not hard to see the Brechtian legacy in this stressing of observation with a focus on social realities. Each foundational

training exercise still only trains some aspects of the embodied analytical process. None of the exercises cover all 18 basics skills that are elements of a *well-crafted* action on stage. Such an intense crafting subverts all three risks Harvie mentions: the precision in observation, preparation, and mimesis puts a decided focus on quality rather than on quantity. Students further learn that they have to serve a character and the group through complexity instead of choosing the most innovative character as a means of self-promotion. Instead of seeking innovation, the students must develop an interest for the social reality in everyday life. Quality, therefore, does not refer to conservative aesthetics—an emphasis on technique and skill for its own sake—but a precise location of a character in its materiality.

Championing an autotelic working mode with little profit to be generated from time spent, it becomes obvious that the craftful actor is an endangered species. Acting students do not only have to address social contexts artistically, they are themselves, as much as the training institutions, at the mercy of neoliberal capitalism. With the historical list of prejudices towards the actor's labour long ranging from devil's work to prostitution, from loafing to welfare parasitism, actor training at *Ernst Busch* chooses its own enemy in deciding to use the metaphor of *acting as craft*, and refraining from opposing metaphors like *acting as entrepreneurship*. Yet, this might seem like a counter-intuitive strategy for an acting conservatory to present acting as a learnable skill to groups of students, who were selected via an audition process and arguably scanned for potential (or talent).<sup>19</sup> As the audition process

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19 The audition process at *Ernst Busch*, similar to other acting academies in Germany, requires students to be healthy, between 18 and 25 years of age, have German language skills, and a pay fee of 30 Euros. The first selection rounds are in October to January, on a random Thursday without an alternative date. The second round usually takes place in February (Stegemann 258-262). Whilst the craft of acting can potentially be learned by anyone with the right mindset, the academies only *allow* a small section of the population to learn it. In Germany, it is perfectly possible to study mathematics, philosophy, or theatre studies after retirement for instance, while to learn the craft of acting is only granted for a very short period of one's life, for those with the further prerequisites of near perfect health, language skills, financial liquidity, and availability.

scouts students who have already proven their eagerness and discipline in approaching acting and would follow their passion no matter the cost, the acting conservatory's logic might be closer to the logics of the entrepreneur's internalised self-exploitation. In this sense, the acting as craft metaphor also works to obscure other institutional logics at play, like that of the audition. Self-criticism of *Ernst Busch* as an institution was frequent—not only addressed to me as a researcher but also among colleagues. Most of the actor trainers seemed to be in a love-hate relationship with their institution, its GDR-legacy, and traditionalism. More astonishingly, they all seemed to be convinced of and at peace with its general teaching approach, its craft. This might be due to craft transcending aesthetics (including socially informed aesthetics such as Brecht's) and the preparation of (a well-chosen, small body of) students for an often hostile and exploitative working environment<sup>20</sup>—as I show in the following.

In foundational training, students learn the 'essential acting craft'<sup>21</sup>, which means they are not trained to 'meet fashionable acting styles or the different aesthetic positions which students will encounter in their professional practice'<sup>22</sup>. This 'pure occupation of acting'<sup>23</sup> (Schuler and Harrer 12) students engage with in foundational training is 'a complex, consciously executed occupation, action, activity; the actor's future work occupation and working activity'<sup>24</sup> (11). Craft is 'of more vital significance than any fashion, it transcends tastes and currently

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20 An exhaustive empirical study on the manifold abuses of power in German theatres was presented by Thomas Schmidt in 2019. See works cited for further information.

21 'grundsätzlichen schauspielerischen Handwerk'

22 'Hier geht es erst einmal nicht darum, gerade aktuelle Spielweisen bedienen zu können oder die verschiedenen ästhetischen Positionen, die den Studierenden in ihrer Berufspraxis begegnen werden'

23 'reinen Tätigkeit Schauspielen'

24 'eine komplexe, bewusst auszuführende Tätigkeit, Handlung, Aktivität; die zukünftige Arbeitstätigkeit und Arbeitshandlung des Schauspielers'

fashionable acting styles'<sup>25</sup> (13).

While actor training trains for the labour market, it shows resistance to its demands. Acting craft is not directly applicable to the industry standards—or its current fashions and working style—and may even subvert it. What might appear reactionary to the values of 'creative destruction' (Harvie 63) is a holistic approach to actor labour resisting innovation through the means of destruction alone. On manifold occasions, students were encouraged to stick to their craft and defend their labour in the rehearsal processes, especially in order to resist acting approaches that demand the exploitation of the actor's privacy. Foundational training installs acting craft as an emotional support for their future labour. Students are encouraged to keep a private working diary of their foundational training experience with the purpose to resort to it in particularly difficult working situations and rediscover their craft as a means of self-assurance. Warm-up training also primarily aims at establishing a psycho-physical resort for the acting students' future labour. Warm-up is done collectively in a ritualized form at the start of every foundational training session. Like their diary, the students can come back to their warm-up to establish a distance and new perspective to their everyday labour in professional contexts. For the learned craft to fulfil such a purpose, foundational training must aim to be an empowering experience. In short, craft generates less flexible but more professionalised and resilient actors, even if that means relying on cold technique rather than burn-out.

Annemarie Matzke has pointed out that calling acting labour is joke material in Germany, indicating that acting still lacks legitimation (10-12). This missing legitimation as *honest workers* makes aspiring actors insecure, and thus vulnerable. Having gone through foundational training exercises, the students are instead aware of their work's complexity and its social legitimacy. Although playful exercises form the core of foundational training, a lot of room is given to different forms of

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25 'Hier wird den Studierenden die Grundlage, das Handwerk beigebracht. Die Grundlage ist existenzieller als jede Mode, sie geht über Geschmäcker und gerade aktuelle Spielweisen hinaus.'

discussion that address insecurities. When meta-institutional criticism aiming at foundational training, the academy in general, or the acting industry came up, the discussion continued within the session—at the cost of the exercises. Critical observation, therefore, was not only a tool for the exercises but given precedence. Additionally, professional actors were frequently invited to discuss work realities with the students. One young actor very much stressed his hope that actors might become less ‘thankful’. Being thankful for the chance to do acting at all misses legitimization and forms a close union with manifested self-exploitation. Foundational training aims at perceiving acting as one profession among many—instead of a passion, a dream, a destiny. This helps in building a more resilient working attitude while legitimising acting as a profession, *just like a craft* is instrumental to establishing ‘self-respect and satisfaction for the worker’ (Harvie 97). Accordingly, actors do not only have responsibility for a character, but can also make demands that address their own well-being and that of their colleagues.

Craft, as I was told in foundational training, is also employed as a rhetoric by the actor trainers to invoke professional pride among the students. This makes craft an egalitarianising element for their future labour: ‘[a] self-confident and autonomous acting personality can, through learned craft and constructive communication, meet their colleagues (directors, stage designers, costume designers, dramaturgs, etc.) on the same level and resist them’<sup>26</sup> (Schuler and Harrer 53). Acting craft trains actors to make their voices heard not out of ‘self-interest and individualism’ (Harvie 63) but rather as a ‘constructive and thrusting handling of conflicts’<sup>27</sup> that aims at values like ‘collegiality, respectful interaction with each other, attentive listening and suchlike’<sup>28</sup> (Schuler and Harrer 54). The handling of conflict is practiced in foundational

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26 ‘Eine selbstbewusste und selbstständige schauspielerische Persönlichkeit kann durch erlerntes Handwerk und konstruktive Kommunikation ihren Kollegen (Regisseuren, Bühnenbildnern, Kostümbildnern, Dramaturgen ...) auf Augenhöhe begegnen und ihnen standhalten.’

27 ‘Erlernen eines konstruktiven und offensive Umgangs mit Konflikten.’

28 ‘Kollegialität, respektvoller Umgang miteinander, gegenseitiges Zuhören u.ä.’

training when every single exercise is reflected and criticised by the fellow student-actors. The actor trainer primarily addresses the quality of the student criticism, which should never aim at the person and their privacy, but at the character and the social role.

Instead of a means to forge actors for the industry, acting craft is supposed to be a tower of strength in the student-actors' future labour that does not only enable them to act according to precise observations of their surroundings and allow them to protect themselves from a hostile working environment, but should also empower them to speak up in a 'commitment to collective good' (Harvie 64). This commitment, however, has not yet transcended the boundaries of the institutions.

### **Conclusion**

The holistic concept of actor labour established through the craft metaphor in foundational training transforms the actor into a more resilient craftsperson. Actor training has not yet reached the degree of outward engagement inherent in artwork that 'actively engages qualities of craftsmanship in ways that highlight, variously, its inefficiency, social engagement, social reflexivity and potential egalitarianism' (Harvie 100). Foundational training might nevertheless be the starting point of a more conscious, strategic, and proactive re-thinking of actor labour as a critical epicentre for shaking the neoliberal capitalist mindset materialised in *artepreneurialism* and unleash the full creative potential of the craft metaphor in strengthening civil society.

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