

Heuristics and Maieutics as Central Procedures in the Art of Acting

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Abstract: *The article proposes understanding the art of acting as a heuristic–maieutic process of discovering scenic truth, rather than the application of interpretative formulas. Drawing on Greek philosophy, it analyzes characters’ modes of reasoning (syllogism, paralogism, sophism) and their role in motivating actions and emotions. Heuristics is defined as a method of exploration through hypothesis, testing, and correction, while maieutics is presented as the art of questioning that generates meaning. The actor is conceived as a thinking subject and researcher of the scenic situation, not as an emotional executor. The teacher or director becomes a facilitator of inquiry, not a provider of meaning. Emotion emerges as the effect of an internally coherent logic, not as a direct goal.*

Keywords: *Heuristics; Maieutics; The Art of Acting; Pedagogy; Philosophy;*

Introduction

With each classroom exercise, every project in the creative lab, and every performance gradually taking shape on its trajectory toward the stage, I have become increasingly aware of the paramount importance of one seemingly simple aspect: the manner in which knowledge is discovered and the indispensable role that questioning plays in uncovering the essential truths to the creative act. In the discipline of acting, particularly at the outset of an actor’s journey, research – seen as part of the learning process – requires strong theoretical foundations, clear logical structures, and disciplined working methods. These constitute the tools that cultivate a typical mode of thinking essential to the creative process on stage — a mode that enables actors to reflect critically on their own artistic practice and to develop gradually into independent, creative individuals.

Interdisciplinary studies and complementary disciplines such as Philosophy, Scenic Process Analysis, and select areas of Psychology, Cultural Anthropology, and Sociology could bring substantial theoretical and practical value if incorporated into theatre and performance training curricula. Such integration could broaden students’ perspectives and deepen their understanding and interpretation of the world and phenomena centered on human experience, including modes of living, behaviors, relationships, symbols, and traditions that transcend historical and cultural contexts. For the purpose of this study, the focus will remain on the contribution of philosophy, particularly that of Ancient Greece, and the ways its ideas continued to resonate through subsequent intellectual movements, directly shaping the art of acting.

The study of philosophy should not be regarded as merely an optional supplement to actor education. When employed wisely, it functions as an epistemological, ethical, and ontological instrument that deepens understanding of human nature, refines interpretative abilities, develops moral and intellectual sensitivity, and supports creativity. It further serves to clarify the actor’s relationship with the self, with the text, and with the ultimate recipient of the artistic act: the audience. Philosophy has been intimately linked with theatrical art since

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antiquity, beginning with the origins of Greek tragedy, when Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's writings on art explored the nature of human beings, human action, and the very foundations of emotion.

1. Objectives and methods

This article falls under the category of conceptual-applied studies and possesses a dual nature: it constitutes both an interdisciplinary theoretical analysis of the concepts of heuristics and maieutics as derived from Greek philosophy, and a pedagogical proposal grounded in the author's practical experience in actor training. The methodology integrates conceptual analysis, analogical application to the art of acting, reflective insights grounded in teaching practice, and illustration through case studies.

While my academic background does not align with that of a theoretician, I endeavor to offer a personal — and, I hope, contemporary — approach to the application of philosophy within the performing arts. My interest centers on a certain type of conceptual rigor and methodological clarity, while simultaneously ensuring that its practical translation into actor training remains intuitive and functional. From the vantage point of the practitioner and twenty-first-century educator, philosophy ceases to be merely a corpus of doctrines, emerging instead as a set of well-defined intellectual practices characterized by problematization, conceptualization, analysis, clarification, and critical reflection. Its relevance to the art of acting transcends the mere accumulation of knowledge or shaping of general information; it lies in its capacity to provide cognitive tools that can be directly integrated into the creative process on stage. Therefore, the aim is neither abstract theorization for its own sake nor the compilation of an abstract inventory of ideas, but rather the development of a heuristic mode of thinking — a practical cognitive toolkit, an inquiry mode capable of generating useful, applicable insights through philosophical concepts. I have sought to understand what characters think, the reasons behind their thought processes, the genesis of emotion, and the justification of scenic action; additionally, I have investigated the reflective process inherent in an actor's work on a role. To this end, I propose a conceptual framework structured around essential philosophical nodes, each defined in terms of its nature, function, and direct applicability to character analysis, subtext construction, the articulation of intentions, and the emotional grounding of actions. To comprehend a character, an actor must explore three levels: the character's thoughts, the rationale underpinning these thoughts, and the manner in which these cognitive processes evoke emotion and stage action. In response, this study proposes a conceptual model based on philosophical tools that are directly applicable to role analysis.

Before proceeding to investigate these concepts, I wish to clarify the motivation underpinning this study. It is important to emphasize that this is not merely an abstract intellectual exercise, but rather a strategic investment in fostering the intellectual autonomy of the contemporary actor and a responsible pedagogical contribution to their training.

The contemporary context underscores the need for individuals capable of critical thinking. Information overload, media manipulation, polarized discourse, increasingly aggressive emotional persuasion, and the constant torrent of media sophistry have evolved into algorithms that prioritize rapid reactions over reflection. Without the guidance of the classical modes of thought, artists risk relegating themselves to the role of passive recipients, thereby forfeiting their potential as careful observers and critical agents. In this context, philosophical tools are indispensable for cultivating artistic and intellectual discernment.

More than ever, adapting to the challenges posed by information overload and modern manipulative practices is imperative. The increasingly aggressive nature of emotional persuasion, the proliferation of media sophistry, and the continuous flow of misinformation collectively function as algorithms that favor impulsive responses rather than reflective engagement. Artists who lack guidance provided by classical intellectual frameworks risk

becoming passive recipients, losing their role as attentive observers and critical agents. The professional, ethical, political or technological decisions they must navigate are occurring with growing frequency, complexity, and interdisciplinarity, often carrying long-term and uncertain consequences. Consequently, the actor's profession is no longer ephemeral in nature. The emergence, multiplication, and diversification of multimedia platforms and social networks have transformed art into a public sphere that favors polarization, slogans, and exchanges marked by sterile conflict, all of which erode authentic dialogue. Nevertheless, the actor's identity should not be confined to functional roles but should encompass the capacity to think critically, make informed decisions, engage in dialogue, and act lucidly within this competitive and complex environment. Such demands require exceptional cognitive and ethical orientation. In this light, the architectural training model presented herein should not be understood as a mere compilation of disparate skills but rather as a structured set of key competences.

2. Heuristics and maieutics - investigation models

In the actor's work, reasoning (i.e., how the character thinks) is as important as the stimulation of emotion. A character's motivations, intentions, goals, and strategies are activated by internal logical mechanisms of thought. These mechanisms are not necessarily logical in an objective sense, but they are coherent within the character's personal perspective. This framework introduces three essential tools for stage analysis: the syllogism (coherent, necessary, structural thinking), the paralogism (sincere error, self-deception, naivety, prejudice), and the sophism (manipulative reasoning, strategy, consciously false justification).

The syllogism, as defined by Aristotle in the *First Analytics* of the *Organon*², is a form of mediated deductive reasoning in which "from a universal judgment, a new judgment necessarily derives by means of a third judgment"³. This can be understood as a conclusion (middle term) necessarily following from two premises (a major premise concerning the subject and a minor premise concerning the predicate), which share a common term. Aristotle clarifies that: "Every demonstration is a syllogism, but not every syllogism is a demonstration. The syllogism always implies the necessary deduction of a conclusion from premises, but neither the premises nor the conclusion is necessarily true; they do not always reflect the essence of things"⁴.

For many critics, the syllogism forms the foundation of formal logic, enabling the analysis of arguments and illuminating the structure of a character's reasoning. These principles underlie King Creon's logic in Sophocles' *Antigone*, where the moral-political syllogism is structured as follows: the major premise - state laws take precedence over the individual; the minor premise - Antigone has transgressed state laws; therefore, the conclusion - Antigone must be punished as a deterrent. A similar structure shapes Brutus's ethical syllogism in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: major premise - tyranny destroys freedom; minor premise - Julius Caesar has become a tyrant; therefore, the conclusion - Caesar must be eliminated.

Paralogism can be defined as a pseudo-syllogism, or a form of sophism in which, without intent to deceive, a person arrives at false or misleading reasoning that, nonetheless, appears convincing or true. It is an argumentation error resulting from a flaw in thinking – an illusion of reason itself. An example of paralogistic thinking is found in Nina Mihailnova Zarechinaia from Chekhov's "The Seagull", whose judgment is shaped by exaggerated idealism. This leads her to deceive herself into equating artistic value with love, meaning in life, and the belief that suffering grants personal value, thereby justifying failure.

² Aristotel, 1958, *Organon*, vol. II, București: Editura Științifică

³ *** 1973. *Mic dicționar filozofic, ediția a II-a* ["A Concise Dictionary of Philosophy, 2nd Edition"]. București: Editura Politică: București, pp.507

⁴ Aristotel. 1957. *Organon*, vol. I. București: Editura Științifică, București, p. 61.

Sophism, on the other hand, resembles valid reasoning but functions as a form of deception, involving persuasive strategies that equivocate on non-essential matters to create confusion. "A sophism is an error in reasoning, committed by omitting or distorting the essential meaning of the middle term within a given context. Because of this distortion (the substitution of the non-essential for the essential), the conclusion becomes false"⁵. An example of sophism is Iago's persuasive yet deliberately false rhetoric in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Iago manipulates truth, using insinuation, generalization, and controlled ambiguity to achieve his desired effect.

These tools are among the most frequently employed for identifying the coherent and logical mechanisms of reasoning essential to constructing a character's logical framework. Yet, beyond understanding what a character thinks and how they think, a deeper challenge remains: discovering the most important forms or means by which the actor detects, accesses, decodes, and utilizes this information in shaping a role. At this point, a series of intellectual procedures – tools of thought or methods of inquiry and truth communication – become relevant, many of which are historically rooted in Greek philosophy. Mastery of these methods from the earliest stages of study is extremely important, as each plays a distinct yet complementary role within a broader system of judgment. This system is generally recognized as dialectics, or the art of argumentation, i.e., the oldest form of truth discovery grounded in argument analysis, discussion, questioning, and interpretation of ideas. For reasoning to achieve full dialectical status, it may be supported by *heuristics*, *maieutics*, *logic*, and *rhetoric*. However, for the purpose of this study, attention will be confined to heuristics and maieutics, with logic and rhetoric reserved for future exploration.

Heuristics, as understood today, emerges "as an *ars inveniendi*, shaped through the works of Pascal, Descartes, Leibniz, Bolzano, etc."⁶. It originates from the old Socratic method of truth-seeking based discussion and dialogue, namely maieutics, which will be examined subsequently. Currently, learning methods are classified according to several criteria. One such classification, from theoretical pedagogical literature,⁷ distinguishes methods based on how experience is managed, identifying "heuristic methods based on self-discovery and problem-solving"⁸. Another criterion depends on the axis of mechanical learning (reception-based) and conscious learning (discovery-based). Within this framework, methods include those centered on reception (e.g., exposition, expository demonstration), guided discovery (e.g., heuristic conversation, guided observation, programmed training, case study, etc.), and autonomous discovery (e.g., independent observation, heuristic exercise, problem solving, brainstorming)⁹. Therefore, heuristic conversation constitutes a form of teacher-student dialogue wherein the teacher, through effective guidance, positions the student to explore their cognitive universe independently, arriving at solutions by drawing on logic, creativity, intuition, and intellectual autonomy.

The heuristic qualities of discovery and orientation include the ability to find possible directions within unknown contexts, to formulate problems and questions rather than merely solve them, and to engage in abductive, analogical and exploratory thinking. These qualities also involve tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, reliance on informed intuition and provisional hypothesis formation, the capacity to discover multiple interpretative frames for the same stage situation, the avoidance of premature conclusions, and the generation of testable ideas rather than formal certainties. Collectively, these qualities protect the actor from rigid thinking, creative stagnation, and deficiencies in inventive capacity.

⁵ *** 1973. *Mic dicționar filozofic, ediția a II-a* ["A Concise Dictionary of Philosophy, 2nd Edition"], Editura Politică: București, p. 528.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 188.

⁷ Constantin Cucuș. 1999. *Pedagogie [Pedagogy]*. Iași: Editura Polirom.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

Maieutics is the method employed by Socrates, which advocates the idea of revelation through a permanent process of questioning. Although Socrates left no written works, he is considered one of the most influential philosophers in the world, known primarily through the writings of his disciples Plato (*Socratic Dialogues*)¹⁰ and Xenophon (*Memorabilia of Socrates*)¹¹. Through persistent questioning, the activation of thought, and the Socratic principle "I know that I know nothing", the actor is compelled – much like giving birth to meaning itself – to reach motivation, intention, and necessity. This process requires the actor to reformulate, rearticulate, and continuously reconstruct an internally coherent logic. It also demands the development of a particular mode of investigation – a specialized curiosity grounded in probing and uncovering even the most hidden or unexpected layers, methods, and details; this professional pedantry is essential for accessing scenic truth and subsequent interpretation.

Maieutic skills, linked to clarification and self-reflection, facilitate the emergence of meaning through dialogue and what may be termed creative brainstorming. Within this process, fertile questions are formulated, active listening is nurtured, and prejudices are suspended; questions serve as learning tools; the ability to identify contradictions and uncover hidden assumptions is developed; and critical self-reflexivity is enhanced, including the capacity to revise personal beliefs. This approach is vital to the actor's collaboration with the director and the creative team, helping avoid sterile polemics, dogmatism, and mere simulations of dialogue.

Although not examined in detail here, it is important to acknowledge the role of logic and rhetoric. Logic's properties (i.e. judgment and validation) assist in forming coherent reasoning and argumentative structures. Logic is especially useful in detecting sophisms and cognitive errors, distinguishing actions from opinions and values, and evaluating the rational consequences of decisions. Within this framework, arguments are constructed without reliance solely on a certain form of authority or primary emotion; divergent opinions can be logically reconstructed; decisions can be justified even under pressure, thereby avoiding manipulation, confusion between validity and invalidity, and blurring the boundaries between truth, fiction and falsehood.

Rhetoric's fundamental function is to make truth intelligible and convincing within the public sphere. It involves adapting discourse to context and audience, cultivating clarity, expressiveness, and narrative structure, and integrating logos, ethos and pathos responsibly. Rhetoric also develops the ability to build consensus without erasing possible differences. This entails responsibility for the effects of discourse, a refusal to conflate persuasion with manipulation, and communication of complex ideas without resorting to abusive simplifications.

Returning to the primary focus of this study – i.e., the application of heuristics and maieutics in the art of acting – these are not abstract methods but living mechanisms through which the actor attains truth, authenticity, and presence. The actor's work can be understood as a heuristic cycle. Beginning with the premise of ignorance as a necessary condition – stemming from rational difficulty, interpretative impasse, or lack of information concerning the stage situation and character – the actor formulates hypotheses and engages in practical exploration. In this process, assumptions may be refuted by the text, contradicted by scene partners, or revealed as ineffective on stage, resulting in what may be termed contradictory reasoning.

The heuristic method comprises procedures that neither guarantee truth in advance nor depend on fixed formulas. Instead, it generates knowledge through exploration, testing, error, and correction. It does not deduce or demonstrate but discovers. The type of truth the actor uncovers is phenomenological (i.e., how something is experienced), relational (i.e., what

¹⁰ Platon. 2019. *Dialoguri socratice [Socratic Dialogues]*. București: Editura Humanitas.

¹¹ Xenofon. 1987. *Amintiri despre Socrate [Memorabilia of Socrates]*. București: Editura Univers.

transpires between beings), and situational (constituted in the immediacy of the present moment). In rehearsal practice, heuristics manifests through free or guided improvisation, multiple attempts at actions (i.e., "what happens if...?"), work with stimuli (e.g., objects, sounds, space, partners), unexpected actions, and even stage accidents. Accordingly, emphasis is placed on the process itself rather than arriving at an *a priori* correct solution. Within this framework, the teacher or director's role is to create problem situations, encourage active search and abandonment of clichés, accept partial or imperfect solutions, and maintain an atmosphere of freedom and creative risk in which experimentation is never sanctioned.

Based on maieutic methods, new scenic meanings may be uncovered through generative questioning, guiding the actor from a state of ignorance to the autonomous formulation of the character's internal logic (i.e., thoughts, intentions, emotions, actions), without the direct transmission of solutions or interpretative models. This approach stems from the understanding that scenic meaning cannot be conveyed; it must be born. Neither teacher nor director imparts meaning or explains the character; rather, they create conditions conducive to the revelation of meaning to the actor, facilitating a process of inquiry wherein understanding emerges from within. Consequently, uncertainty ceases to be perceived as incompetence or confusion and is instead recognized as a fertile space of scenic truth, inherently provisional and context-dependent.

In all prominent pedagogical approaches to acting, maieutic and heuristic elements are present in various forms of manifestation, even if not explicitly articulated. Points of convergence with the Stanislavskian system include an emphasis on process over product, the pursuit of truth through systematic self-exploration¹², justification of actions, employment of the magic "if... then..." principle. The major difference lies in Stanislavski's inclination towards constructing a method – a stable psychological model that, once established, is applied consistently to new challenges. By contrast, the heuristic model insists on continuous questioning and the maintenance of a productive state of in-betweenness. Jerzy Grotowski, reflecting on this perspective, stated: "Stanislavski's supreme value is the science of asking fundamental questions about the actor's profession, as well as the systematic, long-term effort to achieve mastery of the actor's training process in the field of art, toward creative consciousness, therefore toward method"¹³.

Grotowski further approaches the heuristic model through his pedagogy of risk (i.e., "he cultivated this tension of opposites, this alternation between asceticism and excess, which led to a paradoxical apotheosis and derision that has marked his theater forever"¹⁴). In this framework, the pedagogical and scenic environment functions as a laboratory where the search for truth proceeds via elimination and denial ("*via negativa*", i.e., the definition of a concept through critical controversy). Grotowski privileges an anthropological, pre-cultural notion of truth oriented toward universal essences, aspiring to ontological reduction. His quest resembles that of Brâncuși in seeking primordial structure, whereas the heuristic method investigates situational and relational truths accessed through contextual cognitive-affective inquiry.

Eugenio Barba develops Grotowski's laboratory model, transforming it into a space of discovery wherein validation arises from practice and the actor assumes the role of authorized researcher. Barba's focus lies on transcultural principles of energy and presence rather than on character thinking or internal logic; instead of heuristics of meaning, he proposes heuristics of form.

Peter Brook, another admirer of Grotowski, upholds faith as a form of internal combustion and the question as its engine, promoting simplicity and the elimination of

¹² Stanislavski K.S. 2013. *Munca actorului cu sine însuși [The Actor's Work on Himself]*, vol. I-II. București: Editura Nemira.

¹³ Jerzy Grotowski. 2014. *Teatru și ritual [Theatre and Ritual]*. București: Editura Nemira, p. 95.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

theatrical falsehood. His approach remains non-systemic, open, and almost poetic, embodying a practice of free heuristics.

3. Practical Examples

The proposed heuristic-maieutic model functions primarily as an operational tool rather than a purely theoretical construct. It requires a clear structuring of work phases and the constant integration of cognitive reflection into practice. The actor begins not with pre-established solutions, but with a state of uncertainty, transforming rehearsal into a process of investigation. Applying this model involves several stages: identifying the unknown, formulating questions, generating hypotheses, stage testing, and making any necessary corrections. In other words, in the first stage, the actor recognizes gaps in understanding and knowledge, such as the character's motivations, internal contradictions, relationships with other characters, or implicit textual meanings. In the second stage, through active inquiry, the actor generates open-ended questions that stimulate thought and imagination, for example: What does the character want? What is holding them back? What are they hiding? What remains unspoken? In the third stage, based on these questions, the actor formulates provisional hypotheses regarding the character's inner logic, which may take the form of syllogistic, paralogical, or sophistical reasoning. Hypotheses are tested through action in the fourth stage. Here, the theatrical truth is no longer assumed; it is tested through improvisation, variations in rhythm, and shifts in objective or relationship. In the fifth stage, results from testing either validate or necessitate the reformulation of hypotheses, maintaining a cyclical, open-ended process that avoids fixation on definitive solutions.

Heuristic exercise: "What if...?"

Given a simple scenario, (e.g., a breakup), the student experiments by altering objectives, relationships, or contexts to explore multiple variations rather than seeking a singular "correct" answer.

Maieutic exercise: Analysis through questions

The student refrains from making statements and instead asks questions: What does the character want? What is holding them back? What are they not saying? What are they afraid to admit? The goal is to generate meaning from within rather than from external explanations.

Heuristic tools are grounded in free or guided improvisation, the variation and exploration of alternative situations, experimentation, and the acceptance of error as a mechanism for discovery. Maieutic tools manifest through the dialogue between teacher/director and student/actor, characterized by the systematic formulation of questions, the suspension of categorical answers, and the clarification of meaning via reflection.

The character of Astrov in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* serves as a pertinent case study for the application of this model, owing to his psychological complexity and internal contradictions.

1. Identifying problem areas: Why does Astrov oscillate between idealism and cynicism? What is the relationship between his vocation and his moral exhaustion? What is the nature of his relationship with Elena Andreevna—genuine desire or escapism?

2. Formulating questions (maieutics): The actor develops a set of productive questions such as: What does work signify for Astrov? Why does he invest energy in protecting the forests? What role does Elena Andreevna play in his life? What constitutes the real conflict—the external or the internal? What does he express openly, and what does he avoid saying? These questions, among others depending on the focus of inquiry, do not demand immediate answers but invite sustained exploration.

3. Formulating hypotheses (heuristics).

a) syllogism (coherent logic): major premise—a person must leave a useful legacy; minor premise—the destruction of nature endangers the future; conclusion—my work is meaningful only if I protect the forests. This reasoning justifies Astrov's activism.

b) paralogism (self-delusion): premise – intense work confers meaning on life; implicit false premise – exhaustion is proof of valuable work; conclusion – the more I wear myself out and suffer, the more justified my existence.

c) sophistry (self-justification): apparent premise—life is meaningless; manipulated conclusion—any moral lapse is justified. This logic permits emotional lapses in his relationships with Elena Andreevna and Sonia.

4. Stage testing, or the process of verifying hypotheses through exercises.

Exercise 1: Utilize the monologue from Act III where Astrov presents his work, observing how shifting objectives alter meaning. Variation a – Astrov fights for his environmentalist ideals; variation b – Astrov seeks emotional validation; variation c – Astrov avoids internal emptiness and emotional vulnerability.

Exercise 2: Modify the relationship with Elena, who may function as an object of desire, an emotional refuge, or a survival mechanism. Here, the relationship serves as an instrument of discovery rather than a fixed outcome.

Exercise 3: Improvise an extratextual scene, retaining only the essential situation: a nocturnal meeting with Elena at the forest ranger station marked by mental exhaustion and latent emotional tension, to observe unexpected reactions that elucidate impulses.

5. Correction and refinement. Evaluate whether certain assumptions are excessively abstract, identify which actions fail to generate dramatic effect, and determine where conflicts and tensions require adjustment. The actor reframes Astrov not as an idealist but as a figure torn between meaning and exhaustion; emotion is recast not as an end in itself but as the product of cognitive tension.

This model illustrates that the character construction is not a static aggregation of traits but a dynamic iterative process of hypothesis testing concerning actions, meanings, and objectives. In Astrov's case, this model reveals the coexistence of coherent logic and self-delusion, the tension between idealism and quotidian weariness, and the relational interplay of aspirations and desires.

4. Conclusions

Analyzing the heuristic and maieutic implications within theatrical pedagogy reveals that these approaches position the actor at the center of the creative process. They stimulate scenic thinking and autonomy, reject mechanical performance and authoritarian direction, and pursue a living truth, avoiding externally imposed forms. In doing so, they contribute to the development of a responsible and conscious actor. Heuristics facilitates the actor's discovery of the character, the situation, and the scenic action, through practical exploration involving free or guided improvisation, multiple iterations of action, and the pursuit of alternative pathways by altering objectives, rhythm, impulses, and perspectives. This process cultivates the courage to explore. Maieutics clarifies these explorations through dialogue and internal inquiry, imparting meaning, consciousness, and precision. The continuous interplay of these two approaches shapes an actor who thinks, feels, decides, and acts creatively. When understood as a heuristic-maieutic method, the art of acting becomes a form of stage research wherein the character's truths are not merely performed but discovered; not simply asserted but verified; and not transmitted but birthed through a pedagogy grounded in questioning, embraced errors, and cognitive responsibility. Within this framework, the teacher refrains from imposing or correcting meanings, instead guiding the logic and pertinence of the questions that

facilitate discovery. Interpretation no longer precedes understanding; emotion emerges as a verifiable consequence, and the body validates what the mind comprehends.

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