

The Rhythm of Space and the Sound of Time

Michael Chekhov's
Acting Technique in
the 21st Century

CYNTHIA ASHPERGER

The Rhythm of Space and the Sound of Time

Consciousness Literature the & Arts

14

General Editor:
Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe

Editorial Board:
Anna Bonshek, Per Brask, John Danvers,
William S. Haney II, Amy Ione,
Michael Mangan, Arthur Versluis,
Christopher Webster, Ralph Yarrow

The Rhythm of Space and
the Sound of Time
Michael Chekhov's Acting
Technique in the 21st Century

CYNTHIA ASHPERGER



Amsterdam - New York, NY 2008

Cover Design:
Aart Jan Bergshoeff

The paper on which this book is printed meets the requirements of "ISO 9706:1994, Information and documentation - Paper for documents - Requirements for permanence".

ISBN: 978-90-420-2387-1

ISSN: 1573-2193

©Editions Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam - New York, NY 2008

Printed in the Netherlands

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii

Introduction	1
---------------------------	---

1. Philosophical and Spiritual Influences of Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique: A History

Introduction.....	13
The Influence of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	16
The Influence of Arthur Schopenhauer	22
Rudolf Steiner and the Influence of Anthroposophy.....	26
Theosophy and its Origins: “No” to the Body	29
Anthroposophy and its Origins: “Yes” to the Body	31
The Three-Fold Nature of Man	35
The Anthroposophist Impact and “Possession” in Chekhov’s Technique	38
The Influence of Leopold Sulerzhitsky	46
The Influence of Russian Symbolism.....	48
Eastern Traditional Theatre and its Influence on Chekhov.....	51
Conclusion	55

2. The Teaching Philosophy of the Michael Chekhov Association and its Contribution to Contemporary Pedagogy

The History of the Michael Chekhov Association	65
The Michael Chekhov Association	67
MICHA: The Super Objective	70

Teaching Philosophy: The Five Guiding Principles:.....	77
<i>The First Guiding Principle: Body and its Psychology</i>	78
<i>The Second Guiding Principle: Invisible to Visible</i>	80
<i>The Third Guiding Principle: Using the Higher Self to</i> <i>Synthesize</i>	84
<i>The Fourth Guiding Principle: Each Element Awakening</i> <i>All Other Element</i>	87
<i>The Fourth Guiding Principle: Polarities</i>	88
<i>The Fifth Guiding Principle: Freedom from Personal?</i>	91
Teaching Teachers	
<i>The Qualities Necessary for a Teacher</i>	95
<i>Holistic Approach to Teaching Teachers</i>	99
Recent Growth of the Association.....	101
The Learning structure.....	101
Current Hybrids with Chekhov's Technique: "Ludo Theatre"	103
Contemporary Fusion with Oriental Theatrical Forms	108
Other Contemporary Hybrids.....	110
Contemporary Scholarship	114
Conclusion	115

3. Current Pedagogy: MICHA Faculty

Joanna Merlin.....	125
The Actors' Ensemble	132
<i>Fern Sloan</i>	133
<i>Ted Pugh</i>	135
Slava Kokorin	138
Sarah Kane: Voice and Speech	140
Lenard Petit: Movement	146
The Intuitive Group	
<i>David Zinder</i>	151
<i>Per Brahe</i>	153

4. Current Pedagogy: Introductory Level

Current Pedagogy: Introductory Level	163
Spatial Exercises	165
Backspace/Forward	172
Sensations Exercises.....	177

Objective and Subjective Atmosphere.....	180
Centering	186
The Three Centres	187
Centering and Characterization.....	191
<i>The Rope Dance</i>	193
<i>Object/Image Dance I</i>	197
<i>Object/Image Dance II</i>	199
The Imaginary Body	201
Character: Thinking Feeling Willing, in Stick, Ball, and Veil.....	204
Body Parts with Qualities and Centers:	
The Door and the Imaginary Body.....	207
<i>Warm-up</i>	207
<i>The Door Exercise</i>	208
<i>The Imaginary Body</i>	211
<i>The Grotesque</i>	214
Introductory Voice and Speech Exercises: Sound as Gesture.....	216
Syllables as Independent Agents.....	218
From Sounds to Syllables: Three Sample Exercises	218

5. Current Pedagogy: Advanced Level

Current Pedagogy: Advanced Level.....	229
Sequencing.....	233
Imagination and Incorporation of Images.....	234
Characterization Exercises: New Developments	238
Colours Warm-Up	241
Archetypal Gestures	243
The Ghost Exercise or The Doppelganger Exercise.....	251
The Chekhov Clown.....	256
<i>Greeting the Clown God</i>	257
<i>Can You Show Me Something?</i>	257
<i>The Character Clown</i>	258
<i>Thinking, Feeling, Willing in Clown</i>	259
Gargoyle to Gesture Exercise	262
Action and Composition: New Developments.....	263
<i>Moment Gestures</i>	264
<i>Relationship Gestures</i>	265
<i>Relationship Gestures in Groups</i>	267
<i>Intention/Objective PGs</i>	269

Inner Objectives	278
Polarities Exercise	281
Energy Transformation Exercises: Energy Corridors	284
Advanced Voice and Speech Exercises Speaking the Text:	
Words and Phrases as Movement and Gesture	286
The Six Revelations of Speech	289
Working with Text	289
Change!	290
Conclusion	297
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Sense of Space	303
Appendix 2: Space Expands and Contracts	304
Appendix 3: Filling the Space/ Owning the Space	305
Appendix 4: My Disposition	306
Appendix 5: Waking up the Space	307
Appendix 6: Qualities of Movement: Curved and Straight	308
Appendix 7: Staccato/Legato	311
Appendix 8: Four Brothers Exercise	313
Appendix 9: Three Sisters Exercise	315
Appendix 10: Character: Stick, Ball, and Veil	318
Appendix 11: Basic Psychological Gestures	320
Appendix 12: The Objective Ball Game	323
Appendix 13: Desire/Justification	324
Appendix 14: Ball-throwing: Three Balls with Words	326
Appendix 15: Comedy/Tragedy = Styles	328
Appendix 16: Three-Word Variations	331
Appendix 17: Focus on Sound: Monologues with Inner Gesture and Qualities	333
Appendix 18: The Use of Personal Imagery	335
Bibliography	339
Index	359

For my father

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been published without the support of Professor Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe who is the editor of Edition Rodopi's series *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts* and who served as the external appraiser on my doctoral committee. Many thanks.

I am grateful to my good friend and colleague Suzana Nikolić for her enthusiastic recommendation of Chekhov's technique which led me to Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre in 2000 and for her subsequent generosity and consistent support. I am thankful to the McConnell Foundation which provided the grant moneys for that initial journey. I am also appreciative of all the subsequent travel grants which I received from Ryerson University and University of Toronto to participate in MICHA conferences as well as the Bali Conservatory.

I am indebted to all the MICHA faculty for their teaching as well as their support over the years: Joanna Merlin, Ted Pugh, Fern Sloan, Sarah Kane, David Zinder, Lenard Petit, Slava Kokorin, Marjolein Baars, Jobst Langhans, Phelim McDermott, Ragnar Freidank, Scott Fielding as well as to the managing director Jessica Cerullo for her valuable assistance. I am also grateful for the support of all my fellow students, Lionel Walsh in particular.

This book would not have been possible without the inspired class "Theories of Theatre" taught by Prof. Stephen Johnson at the Graduate Center for Studies in Drama at University of Toronto nor with the advice of my supervisor Prof. Paula Sperdakos. I am grateful to Prof. David Booth who served on my committee, and who provided guidance especially in regards to ideas about the contemporary arts pedagogy.

I am much obliged to my good friend and Chekhov practitioner Rena Polley and her family for kindly allowing me to use their farm during the crucial part of writing the book. Also I am

thankful to Allan Eastman for sharing his wonderful little house on the Croatian island of Lopud with me. Without this time spent in natural beauty and solitude I would likely still be writing. I am very grateful to Dan Diamond for his expert typesetting advice.



I am indebted to all my colleagues at Ryerson for their constant support during the long and intense periods of my research. Special thanks to Perry Schneiderman, Chair of Ryerson Theatre School for his sympathetic ear and patience during this process and to Nadia Potts, the Director of the Dance Program at Ryerson Theatre School for her constant support with my duties as the Director of the Acting Program.

I am especially thankful to the many of my students whom I taught Chekhov's technique. Their Creative Individualities, openness and willingness to explore helped me greatly in refining both my

teaching practice and the theoretical analysis of the Chekhov technique.

And as many thank-yous as there are drawings to Jerry Silverberg. I feel so lucky he wanted to come to my class to sketch the students in action!

Last but not least my deep gratitude goes to my mother Ana, daughter Sybil-Ana and my partner Jeff for their constant support, encouragement and love.

Preface

An Archetypal Journey

In the field of consciousness studies the study of archetypes is controversial but according to Derek Steinberg's recent book right now there is a confirmation of an equivalent mechanism in neuroscience and linguistics which suggests that archetypes are an abstraction. They are partly ideas, partly cultural, partly neural yet non-existent in any of these areas. They are thus "neither entirely natural or super-natural" concludes Steinberg (106-107). An archetype is an awareness of what is yet unknown. Not an image in the mind but an innate capacity to form an image in the mind. As such archetype is a prerequisite for curiosity and exploration according to Steinberg who brings together fields as varied as mathematics, the arts, psychology, biology, psychotherapy, linguistics, genetics, religion and neurology in his study of human consciousness published in 2006.

In retrospect I see the journey which led to writing this book as an archetypal journey which started as an awareness of what was yet unknown to me on an intellectual level. Appropriately, my influences on this journey parallel the diverse group that I will describe in this book; namely the philosophical influences on Michael Chekhov himself. If I analyzed this in the archetypal sense I could say that my mind had a template that it had to follow. A kind of an invisible structure and a *modus operandi* which organized the outward events of my studies from within. A highly influential abstraction, which was neither entirely natural nor super-natural.

My father who was a cardiologist and a lecturer at the medical faculty of Zagreb University had also a side-profession. He was a Goetheologist who went so far as to lecture in Weimar on Goethe and around the world on matters of cardiology. His lectures on Goethe's writing to medical students became legendary and the students knew that their oral exam in internal medicine might have a surprising question about Goethe. My father claimed that Goethe was his only real friend and would spend endless hours reading him in his study and occasionally would run out into the living room excited to read to us a bit of Goethe's poetry he found beautiful always with the disclaimer:



“If you could only read it in the original. This translation doesn't do it justice”. He talked about Goethe being a polymath with utmost admiration and sometimes pulled out reproductions of Goethe's paintings or spoke of his philosophy. Needless to say as a rebellious teenager I became annoyed by this Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who was raised to a Godlike position in our household

and as I grew older I started pursuing my own interests in literature and art which deliberately did not include him. In fact, I would steer clear of anything that had to do with Goethe.

Little did I know in year 2000 when I started to study Michael Chekhov's Acting technique, that five years later the first sub-chapter in Chapter One of my thesis would be titled: "The Influence of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe". At first I found this amusing but more I thought about it I found it in a way a confirmation of Goethe's "resistance to the absurdities of a reductionist philosophy of nature which explains phenomena by denying them independent existence and a logic of their own" (Steuer 176). The phenomenon in this case is my encounter with Chekhov's technique and my subsequent studies.

So this was the logic: About fifteen years ago a friend of mine became interested in Buddhism and embarked on several years of intense study. When I asked her to define for me the goal of Buddhism she replied that the aspiration is to be present fully in every moment. Being able to achieve this, she said, equals enlightenment which we can come to through different meditation practices. "But this is the goal in acting" I thought, and thus started the inquiry into Buddhist practices and their connection to acting. I found out that this connection is at least as old as Noh theatre. I also found out that the key words in Buddhist training such as relaxation, concentration, will, openness, quality of effort, starting from where you are, inner and outer journeys, absorption, fearlessness, compassion (to name but a few) are identical to the key words in many forms of acting training. I wanted to learn more so I started to learn Buddhist meditation practices and soon I engaged in them daily and this continues to the present day. This all happened as I began teaching acting, first independently and then at Ryerson Theatre School where I continue to teach at the present time.

Then in the year two-thousand I entered the University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies at the Drama Center and coincidentally that same year I started to study Michael Chekhov's acting technique within the Michael Chekhov International Association (MICHA). This meant that immediately upon learning the basic elements of the technique I could start to experiment with these in my acting classes. I could then seek out theory to analyze and write about those experiences as a part of my graduate studies. As well, I right away started to apply the technique in all of the projects which I undertook in the job of an actor. In short since 2000 Chekhov's technique has really been a part of the all aspects of my professional

and artistic life where I was an investigator and an observer, and an object and a subject. In Goethean sense of the anthropomorphic character of knowledge this voyage has enabled me to do what Goethe insisted on: namely to continuously reflect and revise theoretical premises.

A Journey of Doubt

When my good friend, actor and teacher Suzana Nikolić of University of Zagreb initially recommended Chekhov's technique in 2000 I decided to attend my first MICHA seminar with a great deal of resistance. Primarily I took the trip to Connecticut in order to prove to myself that the process that I was using at the time as an actor and teacher was better than the Chekhov technique. What I practiced could be described as a combination of elements of early Stanislavsky's System and Strasberg's Method¹. I found it very effective and thus believed that it was the most successful and valuable method in existence. Also at that time I did not have any doubt about the supremacy of the style of acting which came as a result of it, namely life-like naturalism.

In fact as I was on my way to Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre I remembered having a discussion with a student who attended one of my classes which I taught at Equity Showcase Studio in Toronto in the early nineteen- nineties. He suggested that using imagination and not personal memory was perhaps a more interesting approach to acting and mentioned that Chekhov's technique can provide the means and tools for such an approach. In a very long classroom discussion I tried to convince him that such an approach would without any doubt result in creating acting which would lack believability because it could not possibly touch the actor deeply, and by that I meant on a personal level. At that time it was believability which meant the most to me as an actor and a teacher and the use of personal memory in acting was the way to it as far as I was concerned. The way I used the word believability was in fact interchangeable with the word verisimilitude. In other words "believable" in my world-view was only "believable" if it were life-like. It follows that I equated life-like with the Truth with a capital T. Yet after only a day of exploring with Chekhov's technique, the Truth proved to be larger than life-like. A week later I couldn't deny how profoundly this work affected my whole being –

my body, voice and mind and more than that – how joyful I felt. Little did I know that once I started to learn more about the theory, I would be “re-discovering” the connection between Buddhism and acting and then linking all of this to my father’s best friend’s Goethe’s perception of a whole (an organism) derived from the relation of its parts.

Subsequently my research combined with my practical explorations of Chekhov’s technique has completely changed the above described naturalistic aesthetics. I now approached teaching acting and my own performance primarily as a search for truthfulness but I did not equate this with the life-like performance any longer. I began to relish the complexities of the technique. I was thrilled by the fact that the technique was suitable both for the beginner actor who needs to discover the basic psycho-physical connection and for an accomplished artist who wants to reach far beyond the limit of his/her own personality and comfort zone.

However, this was not the only profound change. As the journey progressed I realized that as a teacher and an actor I will always deal with the multitude of situations. That in the end nothing can be pre-programmed completely and that one has to look at the nature of any project and any individual’s process and then use the method appropriate within the circumstances. I attribute this realization to the holistic nature of Chekhov’s technique and the *five guiding principles*. It owed much to Chekhov’s *fifth guiding principle* which advocates artistic freedom and encourages the artist not to be bound by dogmatic thinking of any sort. In my practice I’ve found out that in a many a classroom situation Chekhov’s technique was the only means to a student’s growth. However, the tools given to us by early Stanislavsky, or Strasberg could be most helpful in some cases where Chekhov’s technique became too demanding. I realized that although in theory these might be cast in opposition to each other in practice they are not mutually exclusive. So if my first shift was a one-hundred and eighty degree one, it was still a shift that replaced one teaching with the other, one set of rules with another new set of rules. The second shift took me another one-hundred and eighty degrees so that I made a full turn. At the end of it all I came to the place I started from but with a fundamentally different perspective. By this I mean that I am currently back at the point which can be termed as “a need to investigate” and to relate it back to Goethe this is a confirmation of his idea of the process of ongoing meditation:

Man may elevate his mode of apprehension as high above the common one as he wishes, he may purify it as much as he likes, still, as a rule, it remains nothing but a mode of apprehension; that is: an attempt to comprehend several objects in terms of some intelligible relation, which strictly speaking, they do not possess. Hence our inclination towards hypotheses, theories, terminologies, and systems, all of which we cannot disapprove of because they are necessary products of the way our own nature is organized". (Steuer 162-63)

What is a natural need for Goethe is currently seen by some consciousness theorists as a function of archetypal structure of the mind, a "prerequisite for curiosity and exploration" (Steinberg 107).

My new starting point is a mode of apprehension characterized by a desire to continue to develop my knowledge of the actor's process (more hypotheses, theories, terminologies, and systems). It is not based upon only an academic or a theoretical consideration or only an empirical reality but as an integration of both of these. Thus, the greatest personal benefit for me as a theatre practitioner and theorist is that throughout the process of writing this book I have outgrown specific belief systems and their variations. I now know that it is very useful to remember that in every category of a system, the face of empirical evidence will show that there are instances in which the comprehensive framework of reference is the most useful "system" so to speak. Most satisfyingly the journey of writing this book has been an acquisition of such a comprehensive framework and this is what I hope the reader will take away as well.

And although I prefer to use Chekhov's technique, I can by no means lay a claim that this technique is better than others or more effective than other currently used techniques. Rather, the destination that my archetypal voyage has brought me to is one of tolerance towards apparently contradictory methods in theory and practice. It has in the end fostered my understanding of the fact that any acting training needs to experience and understand the most extreme aspects of an actor's personality and then develop the process which will be most suitable to help a person grow, change, transform, learn and perform. That being said we come to the crux of the matter or my main finding which is philosophical: the growth is not a negotiable quantity. It is to get away from the actor's ego into the universal, archetypal mind. It always assumes that stressing one aspect of ones personality over long periods of time impoverishes another aspect and

fragments the individual. Therefore, I have found that Chekhovian Sense of Whole, the notion of Transformation and the idea of the compassionate Higher Self, have asserted themselves as three main points of reference in my teaching and writing together as the all important concept of thinking as imagination. On a philosophical level, currently taught Chekhov's technique provides the answers that I believe no other western acting technique does as well. It assumes that without a holistic approach an actor will not be able to grow and integrate all the different aspects of his/her personality and offers a sound philosophical base to do so through the *five guiding principles*. Its essence is ethics and compassion.

If an actor is primarily a thinker s/he will not recognize her feelings. If an actor is intuitive s/he will not recognize the conscious thoughts. Thus the current Chekhov technique stresses the value of a total awareness and works with the boundary of an actors' personal ability by using its means to achieve growth. As a phenomenological approach it determines the existence of concepts whose exact nature can only be experienced and as such these concepts are best understood on a level other than rational. Thus a teacher of this technique has to listen carefully to sentence structure and meaning as well as to the sensations that the sounds of a sentence invoke, watch body signals and then contextualize these, use his/her imagination to explain his/her own responses and to help a student imagine. S/he understands that polarities of craving and compassion, the inner and the outer, the imagination and the expression, the thinking and the intuition, the truth and verisimilitude, the body symptoms and psychology (to name but a few) is what s/he has to bring together in order to create a Sense of Whole. And most importantly s/he must not fall into the trap of believing that matters will be under his/her control, if only the technique is applied correctly. The technique and the pupil both are a living thing and both have a logic of their own. Thus contemplative looking in Goethean sense is what needs to be applied. And in this way Chekhov's technique is very modern because such holistic approaches or comprehensive frameworks are currently entering mainstream not only in the acting training but in fields as diverse as consciousness studies quantum physics, religious studies and psycho-analysis.

A Journey into Emptiness

My theoretical findings have been concretized through the practical research I've done with Michael Chekhov Association and during the thousands of hours of teaching at the Ryerson Theatre School. This research has enabled me to identify the new processes in Chekhov training which are inclusive, experimental and open to change. The change has happened on two levels – within the technique proper and through hybridization or borrowing of main elements of Chekhov's technique for other methods. On the first level while contemporary Chekhov's technique proper still uses the same main elements it did in its inception, such as sensations, Imaginary Centres, Imaginary Body and Psychological Gestures (PGs), most of these have been re-examined or changed through the work of the contemporary master teachers.

On the level of hybridization, the main elements of the technique are applied in a wide variety of situations and systems. Chekhov says: "As modern actors we are easily led by action but if there is no atmosphere there is no soul". Chekhov also refers to this "soul" of the performance as the "how" or the "sense of truth" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* November 21, 1941). One of the most popular ways in which Chekhov's technique is incorporated into other methods is to use all the different ways of providing the "how," in the otherwise structured "why" and "what". In fact, merging Chekhov's technique with any other by using the "how" of Chekhov's technique has become common-place among Chekhov teachers in training. By the "how" I mean using Chekhov's exercises such as Objective and Personal Atmosphere, Imaginary Centre and PGs in a structure already proposed by another system. These other systems range from Viola Spolin's and Keith Johnstone's improvisation to the rehearsal technique of Jeremy Whelanⁱⁱ, Feldenkreis movement method and Fitzmaurice Voicework to name but a few.

Contemporary quantum physicist/Jungian therapist Arnold Mindell tells us: "In a post-Einsteinian universe, where telepathy, synchronicity, dreams and somatic body trips occur, the concept of process unifies events which move from psyche to matter, imaginations into the body. This concept allows psychology and physics to come together." (*River's Way* 70). I am by no means

equipped to speak about any specifics of the scientific aspect of changes that have occurred in physics since the collapse of the Newtonian paradigm but I am aware that the father of quantum physics and Nobel laureate Werner Heisenberg stated that there need be no conflict between accepting the findings of modern physics and “following Goethe’s way of contemplating nature”. For the two ways are less opposed than complementary (Naydler 23).

The post-Einsteinian world of non-local causes tells us



about tendencies, a “strange kind of physical reality just in the middle between possibility and reality” and it limits the potential of verbal communication (Mindell *River’s Way* 70). Language itself can no longer be used in describing our world because such a world can only be experienced. In Chekhovian training this translates to the idea of the words not only denoting a “what” but existing as a “how”. Better yet, before the words can be a

“what” they must be a “how” which is an intangible yet a physical reality. To become aware of this reality means to experience the space and time differently than before. This type of acting training then asks the same question that is posed in study of religion, philosophy and post-Einsteinian physics: what is prior to thought? Clearly, one can not think what is prior to thought. One can only experience it. This experience lives on a threshold of that strange kind of physical reality

which is just in the middle between possibility and reality. It speaks not only of an image but the innate capacity to form an image in the mind and thus it is archetypal and the archetype and the archetypal feature prominently in Chekhov's technique. The one-world experiences such as proposed by the post-Einsteinian world exist in Chekhov's technique from its inception. Chekhov uses the "Sense of Whole" to describe the world which reflects a one single base from which all else manifests. The philosophy on which such a world is based says that this world can be experienced but not grasped.

When Chekhov asks himself "Why did I become an actor?" he answers his own question with the following words: "I became an actor because I needed to express my 'Self – my own 'I' not the 'me', Michael Chekhov, who marries and has children, but the 'Me', Michael Chekhov about whom I shall think before I die, if I am in full consciousness, just before I die" (Powers 12). The process of finding ones own "I" seeks out the essence. This is a process in which the actor is looking for a way to use the craft so s/he'll become a vessel for artistic expression and shies away from using the craft in order to acquire something measurable. This process ought to help a serious practitioner awaken what Chekhov terms Creative Individuality. Instead of taking the "me" for granted, it teaches one to differentiate between the "me" and the "I".

The "I" belongs to a Whole as its intrinsic part. This "I" – if awakened and freed – enables one to become a creator of his/her own world. Because it is not separate from anybody or anything it contains an inherent ethics. In contrast the "me" identifies itself profoundly with a completely solid notion of self but paradoxically this solidity includes many fragments which can be labeled ("the husband", "the father", "the actor", "the teacher", "the ex-pat" in case of Chekhov). The "me" is not only fragmented in itself but also each fragment commonly finds itself in some way oppressed either by the outside world or by another fragment. Thus the need to label in order to identify in this context is seen as a mental construct and as such it is inherently without substance. Essentially, the border between the "I" and the "me" is what this technique grapples with both philosophically and practically.

In this approach to acting training the actor strives to dissolve the boundary between the "I" and the "me" so that the boundary between the NOW and the TIME is also dissolved. NOW is a moment

– so that as I’m writing this sentence a million of moments have gone by within the social construct called TIME. The NOW is missing in the construct of TIME just like the true “I” is missing from the construct of “me”. The present moment is the missing moment; the empty space between the “I” and “me” and the NOW and the TIME. The search for this empty space requires that we cross over a threshold, a line which both separates and unites. To cross the threshold in Chekhov’s technique is to do so in a search of a moment of total presence. Buddhist phenomenological fundament describes such total presence with: “Form is emptiness, emptiness is form”.

This eastern-sounding deduction, together with its western counterparts that invoke theoretical physics, points to the main value of Chekhov’s technique today, which could be summed up as an expanded and a compassionate sensitivity to the wisdom of one’s own body-mind process. Training body and mind to experience the Sense of Whole is in tune with most advanced findings of science in that it deals with the very nature of perception and its relationship to consciousness. It is truly contemporary in its aim to refine the psycho-physical impulses but also to open the eyes and the mind of the actor to what is at work within.

NOTES TO THE PREFACE:

ⁱ I developed this personal process through my many professional experiences, during my training at the Acting Academy at the University of Zagreb and through five years of intensive study within Actor’s Studio in Zagreb, Croatia led by brothers Janez and Andrej Vajavec. Janez Vajavec studied with Lee Strasberg in Los Angeles for a decade in the late seventies and the early eighties. His brother Andrei Vajavec studied at the Lee Strasberg Studio in New York City around the same time.

ⁱⁱ Jeremy Whelan invented the Whelan Tape Technique. The basic concept is simple: tape a reading of the scene, then immediately act it out to the playback without moving your lips. Then, when this is done, the scene is taped again, and acted out again to the new recording. This is done five times. Then the scene is played out. Whelan also suggests three basic moves an actor can initially make: Away From – Repelled, Toward – Impelled and To Remain – Compelled. See Jeremy Whelan, *Instant Acting*, 1st ed. (Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 1994).

Introduction



It is impossible to persuade an actor to live in the present unless one has shown him his – the actor's – path by which he can achieve this. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 127)

Actor Michael “Misha”¹ Chekhov (1891-1955), the nephew of playwright Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904) is remembered as one of Russia’s greatest theatre artists. Chekhov’s career began at the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT) with which he was associated for sixteen years. A student of Konstantin Stanislavsky² (1863-1938), he was considered to be a genius by his MAT contemporaries. This was not only because of his extraordinary acting, in roles such as Kobe (*Wreck of the Good Hope*, 1913), Frazer (*The Deluge*, 1915), Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*, 1920), Khlestakov (*The Government Inspector*, 1921), Erik XIV (*Erik XIV*, 1921), Hamlet (*Hamlet*, 1924), Muromsky (*The*

Case, 1927) to name but a few, but also because of his contributions to the understanding of the actor's process.

More specifically, Chekhov developed Stanislavsky's system of acting by shifting the emphasis in training from the development of Stanislavsky's "sense of truth" and achievement of verisimilitude to the development of body-mind connection through the use of imagination to foster theatricality, sense of style, and form in performance. What in Stanislavsky's *An Actor Prepares* is referred to as psycho-technique (226) became psychophysical technique. Chekhov maintained that he focused on the physical in order to shift the emphasis in the actor's artistic creation from "the actor's ego to the character's ego," thus freeing his Creative Individuality³ from the need to use personal memories in his work (Black 14).

Despite their differences, Chekhov and Stanislavsky respected and learned from one another. Stanislavsky once told a group of students, "Study the system of Misha Chekhov. Everything that I teach you is contained in his actor's individuality" (Black 14), while in one of his lectures Chekhov told his pupils, "Stanislavsky tortured all the actors around him, and he tortured himself even more than us. He was a very difficult and strange teacher, and perhaps a very heartless and merciless teacher, and he has perhaps not found the right way for teaching, but because he was merciless to himself and to us we have a marvellous example of what it means to be trained, really trained" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 4, 1938). Also in his autobiography, *The Path of the Actor*, Chekhov comments, "I have to confess – with all sincerity – that I was never one of Stanislavsky's best pupils, but I must say with equal sincerity that I made much of what Stanislavsky gave us my own forever and placed it at the foundation of my subsequent and, to some extent independent, experiments in the art of drama" (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 78).

Chekhov's search for Creative Individuality was prompted by a low point in his own life: a period of mental illness⁴ during his early successes at MAT resulted in thoughts of suicide, paranoia, and pessimism. Then, in 1918, at the height of his productivity, he had a nervous breakdown, for which he was treated by teams of psychiatrists. Chekhov blamed this breakdown on "his soul's silent protest against what he was becoming as a performer: 'a malevolent vessel of drunken egotism'" (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique*:

Russia 124). His equilibrium was finally restored after a course of hypnosis. Soon after, he discovered yoga and Anthroposophy; more specifically, the work of the esoteric Austrian philosopher, Rudolf Steiner. Chekhov also dealt with his “drunken egotism” by creating his own acting technique, one which treats the notion of *self* in acting differently by introducing the concept of the “Higher Self” (Higher Ego, Higher I, and Higher Intellect).

In his second autobiographical work, *Life and Encounters*, written after he left Russia, and published in English in 2006 as *The Path of the Actor*, Chekhov explains that the concept of Higher Self stemmed from his preoccupation “with the question of inspiration and how to gain access to it” (145). Though much has been said about it in Chekhov’s own writing and in the theory written by others that considers his work, the definition of Higher Self is always descriptive rather than concise. This lack of clear definition points to the difficulty of writing about the “higher” aspect of human personality. In fact, Chekhov often defines the Higher Ego by comparison: “The lower Ego [sic!], complete with its ambition, passions and egotistical agitation is the victor in everyday life. However, the other Ego is (or should be) the victor in the creative process” (146). In *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia, a Workbook for Actors*, Mel Gordon explains this concept:

The individual performer is always limited by his past experiences and habitual way of doing things. But the actor can learn to break out of his own private patterns and choices. Appealing to the *Higher Ego*, the source of all artistic energy, allows the actor to temporarily leave his personality behind and expand his range of theatrical ideas and physical activity. From the *Higher Ego* comes the inspiration to create new and surprising characters. (237) (emphasis added)

To leave “the habitual way of doing things” means to develop a need for a kind of embodiment of characters, which uses the interrelationship between physicality and sensations, images, space, and breath in acting training. Ideally, during such an embodiment, an actor can observe his own transformation and control the lower Ego’s destructive tendency: “[The *Higher Ego*] observes and directs the lower Ego from outside, guiding it and *empathizing* with the imagined sufferings and joys of the character. This finds expression in the fact that although the actor on stage suffers, weeps, rejoices and laughs, at

the same time he remains unaffected by these feelings on a *personal level*” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 147). Embracing this kind of view is idiosyncratic in Chekhov’s technique and makes for its distinguishing feature among the many valuable western schools of acting which grew out of Stanislavsky’s System⁵.

Chekhov’s acting technique is clearly rooted in the western theatrical tradition, in that the overall aim of learning the technique is the interpretation or re-interpretation of either classical or new works of western dramatic literature. That being said, he also incorporated an eastern⁶ approach in his acting and teaching philosophy. Chekhov’s approach was influenced by such varied sources as Buddhist and Hindu ancient philosophy, Hindu yoga practices, theories of Goethe and Schopenhauer, Anthroposophy (a wisdom-religion inspired by Buddhism and Romanticism), the Second Generation Russian Symbolist artistic movement, and theatrical experiments of MAT. All of these influences fused in a unique way, enabling the actor to free up his/her Creative Individuality.

In Chapter One I approach the eastern influences in Chekhov’s technique from a historical perspective, so that in Chapter Two I can show how this has affected and continues to shape contemporary pedagogy and practice. I begin Chapter One by analyzing the legacy of Romanticism in the technique, especially as it relates to the human will and imagination, before turning to the philosophical connection between Romantic theory, Anthroposophy, and Buddhism. More importantly, I also examine the influence of the eastern views of Leopold Sulerzhitsky, the Russian Symbolists’ phenomenological ideas and Eastern Traditional Theatre on Chekhov. While in *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting* (Routledge 2006) Jonathan Pitches⁷, traces a route back to Goethean Romantic science, the Oriental origins of Chekhov’s philosophical and religious influences have not yet been analyzed.

In the rest of this work, while comparing Chekhov’s original technique to its contemporary practice, I establish the theoretical basis of this discussion. In Chapters Two and Three, for example, I analyze the Michael Chekhov International Association (MICHA) and the work of the individual faculty members. MICHA is an organization founded in 1994. Currently, it is the most important group of pedagogues devoted to the promotion of Chekhov’s technique.

In Chapter Two I consider the history, scope, work, and structure of MICHA. I describe what I see as the most important aspect of this organization – teacher training – and introduce Chekhov's *five guiding principles*. In doing so, I demonstrate how eastern ideas and practices have been integrated into this western technique and how they have continued to develop on both theoretical and practical levels in contemporary pedagogy, therefore rendering it intercultural. To demonstrate the technique's intercultural nature, I treat the influences discussed in Chapter One as a paradigmatic group which uses a shared philosophy and vocabulary I identify the points of contact in this group, such as the interaction between religion and the theatre, particular instances of fusion, disculturalization, and appropriation, thereby positioning the elements of exchange between the current Chekhov technique and its original influences.

I also discuss the shared views of the paradigmatic group with respect to the following: the body/mind connection; the radiation of invisible energy and inner movement; the value placed on the freedom of universality, as opposed to the limits of personality; the striving for an ability to synthesize; the trust in intuitive knowledge; the dual consciousness in performance (the ability to straddle both sides of the footlights); and the Buddhist idea of emptiness.⁸ I discuss how both pedagogy and the practice of Chekhov's technique consider a sense of form and stylization to be necessary in every artistic work and how this stylization is achieved. I compare the technique to its eastern counterparts, such as the traditional forms of Noh, Kabuki, and Balinese dance, as well as to the contemporary form of Butoh. In addition, I examine how Chekhov's technique and eastern acting techniques work towards a larger goal: the notion that an actor should train to develop the ability to grow spiritually. I argue that this goal results in a need to overcome the use of personal memory in acting, and as a corollary, in a belief that actors should be trained to employ intuition and a capacity for synthesis in their work. In short, actors trained in the contemporary Chekhov technique strive for the ability to simultaneously integrate polarities within the human condition without rational analysis and present them to the audience in order to entertain, educate, and enlighten.

In current pedagogy and practice of the Chekhov technique, the interconnectedness of all elements (namely, acting, voice, and movement) is emphasized, and it is often suggested that this makes the

technique unique and contemporary. In 2006, two scholars traced this fairly subtle point, setting the Chekhov technique apart from other currently popular approaches which also grew out of Stanislavsky's system, such as those of Sanford Meisner, Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, and Lee Strasberg. And quoting Goethe, Jonathan Pitches says, "If you seek comfort in the whole, you must learn to discover whole in the smallest part," concluding that this makes the Chekhov technique current: "Despite its nineteenth-century roots; Chekhov's 'organic' system seems all the more contemporary for this holistic organization" (16). For his part, in a lecture comparing the work of Stanislavsky and Chekhov at the University of Toronto's Graduate Centre for Study of Drama, Charles Marowitz commented that a "New Age consciousness" makes the Chekhov technique current. Such a consciousness implies a holistic outlook and thus is in full agreement with Pitches' deduction:

[W]hat makes Chekhov particularly unique is that while virtually every theatre-artist from the '30s to the '50s was applying the principles of Psychological or Social realism, Chekhov was propagandizing for a dynamic alternative predicated, not on the insights of Sigmund Freud and the Naturalist movement of the late 19th century, but on a deeper and more elusive theatrical goal – and one which the *current* generation has much more sympathy with. The age of Joseph Campbell, Carl Gustav Jung, the Eastern philosophies – that's to say the New Age Consciousness – is the age that now embraces Michael Chekhov – and for very good reason – because he instinctively understood that art, like life, was not a matter of outer surface but of inner substance. (Marowitz, "Stanislavsky vs. Chekhov" 10) (emphasis added)

Generally speaking, in the vanguard of today's acting pedagogy, characterized by an interest in body-mind connection,⁹ a search for a holistic understanding is *en vogue*. Yet holistic explorations of the inner substance of the human being have always been a part of Chekhov's technique. Currently the arbitrary division between a voice class, a movement class, and an acting class is thought to be not as effective as when all three components use the same basic principles. In Chekhov's technique, one finds a gesture for a sound and an inner movement for an action. One speaks out of the inner movement and finds the action or a relationship through a large physical movement or gesture. The breath is not controlled, but ideally, one learns to breathe with all of the above, thus enabling an

intuitive response and an intuitive understanding of the *whole* character to arise out of concentrated examination of *one* of its parts. In Chapter Three I discuss how the teaching philosophy and individual influences of the master teachers associated with MICHA contribute to this process. I focus on the work of Joanna Merlin, Fern Sloan, Ted Pugh, Lenard Petit, Slava Kokorin, and Sarah Kane, as these teachers have greatly influenced current pedagogy. I also analyze the philosophy and practice of two teachers who have discovered Chekhov's technique intuitively: Per Brahe and David Zinder.

Contemporary practical experiments and exercises are presented in Chapters Four and Five, where I examine the elements of today's practice in both beginner and intermediate/advanced levels of training. I divide the beginner training into units titled Space, Sensations, Images, and Introductory Voice and Speech. Advanced training is divided into the following units: Characterization, The Chekhov Clown, Action and Composition, Energy Transformation, and Advanced Voice and Speech Exercises. In each section, I delineate the sequences in which units are taught and specify the exercises which differ from those in Chekhov's original writing.

The examples offered in the last two chapters are taken from student journals, master teachers' commentary, and my own experience as a student participating in a learning experience, an academic observing a teaching/learning experience, an acting teacher, and an actor. As any scholarly work strives for objectivity, I need to explain this latter course of action further. The Chekhov technique is concerned with intangibles such as inner sensation, inner movement, and radiation. In order to analyze these intangibles I must be able to use my own experience as an actor and a student, because this is the only inner sensation that I will ever be able to sense. However, first-hand experience in an academic context may be considered anecdotal, unreliable, and subjective. This poses a dilemma which I can only solve by combining the several points of view mentioned above to include the objective vision of myself as an academic and a teacher and other "subjective" experiences of students and "objective" experiences of master teachers.

Many acting teachers agree that acting training is training in self-awareness. As an actor, I have spent twenty-five years trying to become self-aware and able to articulate this self-awareness. Most classes in which I have participated have devoted time to "doing" and

then to talking about what was “done.” Thus, the terminology and theory needed for understanding the effects of an exercise and its purpose have become intellectually clear only after the experience has taken place. Actors who are devoted to process, including me, spend their professional lives participating actively in a commentary of their own experiences; I believe the validity of such commentary is at least equal if not superior to that of observers who view an actor’s work from the outside. Thus in Chapters Four and Five, I combine several viewpoints to achieve a balance between what could be categorized as a “subjective” experience (i.e. a student’s description of the inner sensation of an exercise) and that which could be categorized as an “objective” one (i.e. a teacher’s outside observation of the same exercise)¹⁰.

Acting and experience are qualitative, and there is no objective measure for sensation or the experience of inner movement. In Chekhov’s technique, students are trained to imagine space shrinking or expanding or time stretching or quickening its pace. The validity of this discussion, therefore, must rely on an agreed-upon convention between the reader and the writer. In final analysis, most discussions about moments in acting and training, such as the one to follow, depend on such a convention. Thus, my discussion is not restricted to the body as object, but treats the body as lived-in subject.

As a certified Chekhov teacher, I have extensive knowledge in the technique. Since 2000, I have spent approximately 350 hours each year in an undergraduate classroom teaching the Chekhov technique and another 100 hours teaching graduate classes and professional workshops, for a total of more than 3300 hours of teaching. I have directed fifteen student productions during this time; these allowed me to examine how a studio exercise translates into a characterization, and how a composition of a scene or an atmosphere of a play transfers to the stage. I have also used the technique as an actor in five theatre productions, some professional and others on a graduate-school level. I have used the technique while I played the lead in a film, a recurring role in a TV series in, in many smaller roles on TV, and in dozens of auditions. Finally, since 2000, I have attended six MICHA conferences and workshops (50 days), for a total of approximately 400 hours of training with master-level teachers. All this practical, hands-on experience establishes a firm basis for the following examination of Chekhov’s technique and how it works today.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION:

¹ Michael Chekhov's nickname, by which he was known to his friends and fellow artists.

² Russian actor, teacher, director and founder, with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko (1858-1943), of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898. Stanislavsky's work is usually associated with realism in both staging and acting, but he also experimented with different styles of theatre. Franc Chamberlain, *Michael Chekhov*, Routledge Performance Practitioners (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003) 6.

³ I will capitalize all technical terms used in Chekhov's technique e.g. Creative Individuality. Also I will italicize but not capitalize the *five guiding principles*. Chekhov's Creative Individuality depends on the actor's ability to use his/her Higher Ego and it is the reason "why different actors play the same role differently." Creative Individuality also helps the actor to go beyond the text in his/her creation. Chamberlain, *Michael Chekhov* 15.

⁴ Mel Gordon writes in his chronology of Chekhov's life:

1918. January–February: Chekhov is no longer able to perform Malvolio at the First Studio. Visiting American critic Oliver Sayler calls Chekhov "a gaunt, brooding soul, weighed down by Russia's sorrows.

Spring: Chekhov develops an acute paranoia, and believes he can hear and "see" faraway conversations. He thinks constantly of suicide and his mother. Chekhov's family life deteriorates: Olga divorces him, taking their newborn daughter, Ada. Stanislavsky sends four psychiatrists to diagnose Chekhov. Chekhov undergoes hypnotic treatments.

1919. Spring. Although Chekhov's condition improves, he is subject to uncontrollable fits of laughter. Chekhov begins reading books on Hindu philosophy and yoga for solace. [...]

1920. August: After a great spiritual crisis, Chekhov decides to return to the theatre.

1921. December: When critics say his acting techniques will cause him to lose his mind, Chekhov develops a stammer, which Stanislavsky corrects. [...]

1922. Winter: Reading *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* by Rudolf Steiner, Chekhov becomes intrigued by Anthroposophy, Steiner's spiritual science. [...]

October: In Stuttgart, Chekhov watches Steiner lecture on *Eurythmy*, "the science of visible speech." Following him to the Netherlands, Chekhov speaks with Steiner privately. Briefly, Chekhov considers becoming a priest in his Christian Community. Mel Gordon, "Michael Chekhov's Life and Work: A Descriptive Chronology." *The Drama Review* Vol. 27. Fall, 1983 (1983): 8–10.

⁵ These include the teaching of Richard Boleslavsky (1889- 1937) who brought the System to the United States and the later variations of Stella Adler (1901-1992), Uta Hagen (1919-2004), Sanford Meisner (1905-1982) and Lee Strasberg (1901-1982).

⁶ For the purpose of this book, the term “eastern” relates to Asian or Oriental theatre, culture and religion. It is a general term which is opposite to “western” or Occidental theatre, culture and religion. For example, western in religious terms, means Judeo-Christianity. A connection between Protestantism, Catholicism, Baptist, Russian-Orthodox religion, and Judaism is easily recognized through shared religious texts such as the Old Testament, although the specific religious practices and the beliefs are not the same. The parallel in the eastern context is a philosophical connection between three Buddhist religious teachings, *Hinayana*, *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana*, which are referred to as three vehicles for liberation. Zen, Teravadan, Dzokchen and Chen denominations developed from these three main Buddhist teachings (to name a few). Furthermore, Buddhism is philosophically similar to Hinduism in a degree comparable with Christianity and Judaism, in that Buddhism grew out of Hinduism as Christianity evolved from Judaism. The similarities between two main eastern religions are both practical and theoretical: for example several Buddhist lineages and Hinduism share Tantric practices such as work with *chakras* and visualization meditation. They also have a common purpose between their spiritual paths, namely to develop an attitude of consciousness which strives towards a spiritual liberation which is better known as *nirvana*, *moksha* or *samadhi*. For both Hindu and Buddhist practitioners, liberation occurs when the practitioner has completely transcended the causes and conditions of personal identity and identification. Ideally, all notions of self as agent or recipient of an experience will then come to an end and thus the practitioner will achieve the state of being Whole or “oneness”.

⁷ Jonathan Pitches is Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of Leeds and the author of *Vsevolod Meyerhold* (Routledge, 2003).

⁸ I will discuss the concept of *śūnyatā* or emptiness in relation to Chekhov further on. For now, it suffices to say that the discussions about emptiness within Buddhist studies attempt to understand great Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna’s equation of (co)dependent arising and the Buddhist concept of “emptiness”.

Co-dependent arising is the general philosophy of all Buddhist systems, even though there are many interpretations of it. Essentially it teaches that the phenomena that produce pleasure, pain, help and harm are essentially empty of any inherent existence because they arise in dependence upon conditions, in reliance upon conditions, through the focus of conditions. Similarly, with respect to a continuum, if the smallest moment of a continuum did not have earlier and later parts themselves, there would not be any possibility of their coming together to form a continuum. However, when the whole and the parts of any object appear in ordinary human perception, the whole appears to have its own separate entity and the parts appear to be parts. They appear to our conceptual thought in this manner and as such give one an illusion of possibility of an independent existence of phenomena.

It further states that for ordinary human perception grounded in duality, existence and nonexistence appear mutually exclusive and contradictory. The Buddhist concept of emptiness is introduced to avoid this contradiction. In Buddhism, the concept emptiness is defined in *Heart Sutra* as “Form is emptiness.” Since ordinary perception does not experience emptiness in form, we may imagine that emptiness is other than form, somewhere else, perhaps beyond form. When hearing this definition of emptiness, some tend to imagine that emptiness is accepted while form is rejected. This is not so. Emptiness is nowhere else than in the form. The two are inseparable. The emptiness completes the form and vice versa to create Buddhist conception of a non-dualistic world view.

There are several radically different views of the nature and function of emptiness in postmodern theology. One understands enlightenment or emptiness with phenomenology, pure experience and presencing, while emptiness in the second is associated with deconstruction, difference and the critique of presence. Finally the third reading of emptiness seems to understand emptiness as “essence” and it is the reading I agree with. See Newman Robert Glass, *Working Emptiness : Toward a Third Reading of Emptiness in Buddhism and Postmodern Thought*, Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion No. 01 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1995). and *mtsho Bstan @dzin rgya and Jinpa Thupten, Essence of the Heart Sutra : The Dalai Lama's Heart of Wisdom Teachings* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002).

⁹ This includes but is not limited to the work of Eugenio Barba, Viewpoints Technique, Butoh, Chekhov's Technique but also hybrids taught by Bella Merlin. The Changing Body Symposium organized by the University of Exeter in January of 2006 gathered many different practitioners and theorists interested in the holistic body-mind approaches.

¹⁰ The validity of a first person approach such as mine is closely related to the so called “hard problem” of consciousness studies namely: “[...] why in the physical universe there should be any such thing as consciousness experience at all” Anthony Freeman, *Consciousness : A Guide to the Debates* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003) 228. This is because of the fact that the numerous answers to the “hard question” probe the validity of the subjective experience in relation to consciousness. This includes the discussion of the views of the physical reality which in this context is relevant because of the primacy of relationship between the body and the mind, a crucial point when discussing Chekhov's technique. An analysis of all the different answers to the “hard problem” goes beyond the scope of this book. That being said it is important to note that I am aligned with the notion of embodied consciousness which embraces first-hand experience as the main ingredient in uncovering the mysteries of consciousness. The embodied consciousness uses phenomenology as its basis and is characterized by a style of thinking which adapts phenomenology to “neurophenomenology”. The representative for this style of thinking is Francisco Varela (1946-2001), who was senior researcher with the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, France. According to Anthony Freeman Varela defended the need to take the first-hand experience as the proper “field of phenomena, irreducible to anything else” 235. Freeman identifies spiritual and meditative techniques as a further example of the disciplined first-person

approach to consciousness studies and he stresses that those of Buddhism and the Hindu or Vedic traditions display common features with Varela's. I agree with Freeman that characteristic for both is to shift the attention from the storyline or the "what" to the "how". Freeman calls the "what" the "content of the experience" and the "how" to the "mental process" that is taking place. However, as this is embodied consciousness I believe that the "mental process" can be replaced with a simpler word "process" which encompasses the meditator's body and mind. He also stresses the importance of "specific training" and a "mediator" in applying these methods. As we will see in Chekhov's training the attention moves from the content of the experience to the process that is taking place as well. From the "what" to the "how". Chekhov also introduced the idea of the "dual consciousness" in performance where the actor can simultaneously be fully involved in the story-line and in also the psycho-physical process. Ideally, the technique trains the actor to be both the "mediator" and the "meditator" at the same time. Nevertheless, the role of the "mediator" also belongs to the teacher of the technique and the director, in the classroom and the rehearsal hall respectively. Freeman suggests that meticulous recording, discussing and validating of the first hand experience is also necessary and thus validates the first person approach. See Freeman, *Consciousness: A Guide to the Debates*.

Chapter One

Philosophical and Spiritual Influences of Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique: A History

"Artistic abilities are purely spiritual." (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre February 21, 1938)

In his autobiography, *The Path of an Actor*, Chekhov describes how, during a period of pessimism which followed his nervous breakdown, he stumbled upon a book that changed his life:

One day I came across one of the books from the literature which was then in vogue about the Indian yogis. I read it carefully, but without any particular interest. However, in reading it, I did not detect in myself that inner protest which would previously have arisen in me on reading books with a similar content. [. . .] I began to think calmly and coldly about what lay at the foundation of Hindu philosophy. I succeeded in understanding that the keynote of yoga is the *creativity of life*. The creativity of life! This was the new keynote which gradually imbued my soul. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 86; emphasis in original)

Chekhov attributes "outgrowing [his] pessimism" to this philosophy. The thoughts which tormented him became "without



substance, without weight, without self-sufficient truth. They were a ‘superstructure’ of the soul’s suffering and only this suffering itself was substantial, it alone bore truth” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 89). This, according to Chekhov, led him to experience his own self differently: “In this sense, the unity of my psyche began to disintegrate and I gained a certain access to myself” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 89). Chekhov further pin-points this moment as an awakening which led to his life-long search for a new theatre:

My nerves began to feel soothed. [...] My will, too, was slowly awakening. [...] My instinctive discontent with the theatre began to take on clearer outlines and translated itself into concrete thoughts. [...] I was gripped by the feeling for the *whole*, and in this whole lived the theatre of the future. As had always been the case, the *whole* seed began to grow, put down roots, sprout and send forth leaves. I worked on the question of the theatre in the widest sense of the word [...] until the *whole* had blossomed into a magnificent, beautiful flower. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 90; emphasis in original)

Although the influence of this book on Chekhov is clear, Chekhov’s main and best-known spiritual influence was Rudolf Steiner’s (1861-1925) Anthroposophy, “a theory that believed that God was realized in man by means of intuitions, contemplative illumination, or direct communion with unseen but palpable forces in the universe” (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 10). Anthroposophy’s *Weltanschauung* originates from Hinduism and Buddhism through its predecessor, Theosophy. The direct influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on Anthroposophy is most immediately reflected in the shared beliefs of reincarnation¹ and karma². The important influence in this context is in the view of the nature of existence, self, and reality, which I will discuss in due course³.

This eastern influence is complemented by Romantic philosophy, namely the philosophies of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Both Romantic philosophers were extremely influential on followers of Anthroposophy. More specifically, both had direct influence on Chekhov’s formulation of his theatrical technique. In this discussion, I will treat the eastern influence on Schopenhauer as a foregone conclusion⁴.

Besides Anthroposophy, there was another eastern influence on Chekhov's work, namely that of Leopold Sulerzhitsky (Suler), who came to work with Stanislavsky after "[Leo Tolstoy] put him in charge of a contingent of Doukhobors (members of a Christian sect that, rejecting all church and civil authority, obeyed only their 'inner light') as they emigrated from the Caucasus to Canada" (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 41). There Suler learned "their Easter-influenced religious practices" (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 31). It was Suler who introduced Hindu philosophy and yoga to the First Studio actors and who, according to Stanislavsky, tried to "create a sort of spiritual order for actors," who were to be "men and women of lofty views and ideas, of wide horizons, who understood the human soul and strove for noble artistic ideas, who were willing to sacrifice themselves for art" (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 43).

Ultimately, much of Chekhov's technique has roots in the East and eastern philosophies, largely through his association with Anthroposophy. Even the origins of the need for theatricality in Chekhov's technique can be traced to the East. The manner in which Buddhist meditation practices are incorporated into an eastern theatrical tradition such as Noh is comparable to the way in which Anthroposophy influenced western theatrical movements, such as the second generation of Russian Symbolists, who, in turn, influenced Chekhov. Like the father of Noh, Ze-ami Motokiyo (1363-1443), who never abandoned Zen ideals while writing the Noh manifesto, two influential members of the Russian Symbolist movement, Andrei Bely (1880-1934) and Vladimir Solovyev (1853-1900), remained true to their Anthroposophic ideals while formulating their views on Symbolism.

Another key figure who attempted to formulate the Symbolist theatrical aesthetic, Fyodor Sologub, was a follower of Schopenhauer's ideas about the will (also closely connected to eastern philosophy), which he reformulated to fit theatrical needs in *The Theatre of Single Will*. In this way, Schopenhauer's ideas worked together with Anthroposophy to influence Chekhov in his artistic formative years.

The philosophy of Russian Symbolism called for religious communion through art. Sologub suggests that theatre should become a "liturgical act" and a "mysterious rite" (Green 23). Even though western theatre is not without its own religious origins (which can be

traced to the worship of Dionysus in ancient Greece), the kind of spirituality that Symbolists called for was not that one. Rather, it was the ascendance of Buddhism through Anthroposophy and Schopenhauerian philosophy which prompted the Russian Symbolists' development of a spiritual wisdom concerned with the nature of reality in a way which was essentially eastern. The reflection of this can be seen in Sologub's suggestion that the whole of life and art is subordinate to Schopenhauer's "one Will," which is analogous to the Buddhist and Hindu concept of "oneness."⁵ This, in turn, is related to Goethe's ideas about wholeness, which will be examined in the following section.

The Influence of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

If an actor is acting Mephistopheles, in one month he is another man because he feels the character. Now imagine what must have happened to Goethe himself, who was so fine in his feelings and so receptive. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre October 8, 1936)

As it is commonly known, Goethe's scientific ideas stand outside the main tradition of modern science as it develops from the age of Galileo and Newton down to the present day. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe offers a Romantic scientist's relationship to nature, in that his numerous scientific writings are based on intensified, selfless observation of nature or "intuitive discernment" (Ahern 50). Such observation assumes organic inter-relationships; in other words, a unity with nature rather than a separation from nature. It also takes into account the character of the scientist so that "'method depends on character' as he noted in his Diary, 1 February 1831" (Stephenson 27)⁶. Throughout the nineteenth century Goethe's independent paths of scientific inquiry were by and large discredited because of its seeming subjectivity. However, in the twentieth century his scientific work has been rehabilitated⁷. Several factors have contributed to this newly found respect for Goethe's holistic view of nature. The most important being the increased knowledge in the scientific community itself of the limitation of Newtonian mechanistic models. Goethe's method and manner of inquiry which strives to bring together reasoning and perception goes beyond the Newtonian limitations. In *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition* H.B. Nisbet has described

Goethe's "scientific *oeuvre* as a striking blend of neo-Platonic and empirical attitudes" (4).



To understand Goethe's approach to science, one has to adopt an attitude which allows one to discern a *whole* from a *part* of an object. To this Goethe's theory of *Urphanomen* is central. *Urphanomen* is both the representative of the ideal of a phenomenon, the abstract generalization of it, and the individuality of the real and concrete instance. Thus it is simultaneously an idea and an empirical phenomenon and Goethe suggests that by contemplating a phenomenon the scientist exercises and harmonizes the sensory and rational faculties. The idea of *Urphanomen* "thereby confirms the unity of the human mind, which, for Goethe, is an indivisible unit. But it does more than this. It ministers also to belief of the unity of man

and nature” (Nisbet 42). This theory, according to Goethe was precisely what separated Goethe’s ideas from those of Schiller⁸.

For example, Goethe suggests observing a leaf and allowing oneself to draw conclusions about the plant (I will refer to this particular exercise as the “Leaf to Plant Exercise.”)⁹. One can perceive the leaf directly, and by using one’s intuition, together with the aid of the inexhaustible imagination, one can learn the inner workings of the entire plant:

Such a radical overhaul of scientific thinking as Goethe proposed needed a whole new attitude from the scientist. [...] Goethe would run his practical experiments twice, the first time in a conventional empirical manner but on the second occasion he would take his observations, garnered from the “real” experiment, and re-run them in the mind’s eye, transforming them in his imagination. (Pitches 138)

This same principle that Goethe used in scientific observation is evident in practices of Chekhov’s technique, where exercises are first done outwardly and then experienced internally. For example, an actor moves; then the actual movements are imagined so that they become inner movements and, as such, affect the actor’s body-mind. I will return to this whole process when discussing inner movement and Psychological Gesture (PG), but for now, it is important to note that Goethe’s experiments described above test the potential of the human creative imagination, something vital to Chekhov’s technique¹⁰.

According to Goethe “[a]esthetic experience is the indirect way by means of which Idea and Experience converge” (Stephenson 53). Goethe also holds that “aesthetic perception yields the most comprehensive knowledge humanly available” (Stephenson 54). A case in point is the quote from the top of this section where Chekhov imagines the effect of Goethe’s creation of Mephistopheles on Goethe himself. The quote is a verbatim transcript of a lesson given at the Dartington Hall titled “Four Stages of The Creative Process” where he lectured on the four steps to develop the imagination. Chekhov continues:

1. Understand and concentrate on the simple idea that imagination is the ability to see something invisible. Seeing something in our minds eye. So even the simple ability to close our eyes and see what is in this room exactly in our

mind's eye should fill us with wonder. Ordinary things should astonish us.

2. Not only to see the unseen things but also to be able to create in our imagination things which do not exist in reality. Creating a flower we have never seen and again that this fills us with wonder.
3. To be able to live and change with the creation so that it plays back on us. We create a strange and an interesting landscape in our mind and that it changes and influences us back. This is a great wonder to be able to be changed because our creation so that it is able to change our own being, our own moods.
4. Now the final last step. We also have to influence the image and change it. So not only our initial imaginary flower but then changing that flower. It can be changed in its appearance and in its soul. (*M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor is the Theatre*, October 8, 1936)

In Chekhov's exercise the actor will be changed by his/her image but such a change is controlled and done with full awareness. Here Chekhov aligns himself with Goethean mind-set so that through aesthetic perception his actor is taught to exercise and harmonize the sensory and rational faculties. Thus creating Mephistopheles through examining an image in the way described above will bring forth a comprehensive knowledge of this character but will also ensure that the artist's ethics never become compromised.

Goethe's synthetic approach to the study of nature deeply influenced Rudolf Steiner and became a source of inspiration for his work. For example, the concept of "intuitive discernment" affected Steiner's ideas about, and experiments with, the imagination. This concept was passed on to Chekhov, who also believed in allowing phenomena to speak for themselves. Lesson VI in *Lessons for Teachers* focuses on concentration; here, Chekhov asks teachers to use Goethe's "Leaf to Plant Exercise."

Even though throughout his opus, Chekhov suggests that the technique must be approached with a degree of freedom and creativity, here, he stresses that this and three others of Goethe's exercises for developing imagination cannot be changed: "There is an exercise that Goethe always used; the image of a plant growing. For instance, a tree must grow, and you start with a very little thing which appears from the earth, and so on. These exercises cannot be changed because they are very important and must be given only at the end"

(M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 37).¹¹ This adherence to Goethe's original exercises shows both Chekhov's esteem for Goethe's ideas about the best ways of developing imagination and Steiner's influence on his work. Notably, the same exercise is given by Steiner in *Education as an Art*.

According to Steiner, Goethe's life coincided with the height of the scientific age. After Goethe's time, scientific progress went into a decline, because advances became counterproductive to the betterment of human existence. Steiner's biographer, Henry Barnes, in *A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time*, suggests Steiner theorized that if there was to be any further progress, a totally new impulse – a spiritual impulse – was essential:

Further studies from a Goethean standpoint [...], in botany and anatomy, gradually led Steiner to the conviction that contemporary natural scientific thinking, denying as it did the Spirit, could necessarily only understand what was dead in Nature, and never living processes. Steiner studied Goethe's natural scientific writings, in the hope of finding a bridge between the world of science and the spiritual world in a holistic manner. From this Steiner developed his "reading" of phenomena and his principle of spiritual continuity. (134)

Steiner mentions the principle of spiritual continuity, in which "future forms arise through a living metamorphosis of past achievements" (Barnes 134). This is a basic learning principle in which the seeds of knowledge are thought to grow only if sown in a spiritually-ready soil. For Steiner, this was Goethe's legacy: the seeds of Goethe's ideas are a holistic and meditative understanding of natural phenomena. In this, Steiner recognizes the basis of his epistemology – the direct knowledge of knowing through what he termed "the organ of intuition." He describes this use of the channel of intuition as the "higher thinking of the Spirit-self" (Steiner, *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Spiritual Processes in Human Life and in the Cosmos* 39) and explains:

In what is red, green, light, dark, hard, soft, warm, cold, one recognizes the revelations of the corporeal world; in what is true and good, the revelations of the spiritual world. In the same sense in which the revelation of the corporeal world is called sensation, let the revelation of the spiritual be called *intuition*. (Steiner,

Theosophy: An Introduction to the Spiritual Processes in Human Life and in the Cosmos 39)

Barnes underlines the link between Goethe and Steiner when he says:

Because of Goethe's influence as his spiritual teacher, Steiner's need arose for individual freedom in the cultural-spiritual realm, community in economic life and equality in human rights. In Steiner's work, Goethe's idea of "intuitive discernment" metamorphosed and became the faculty for perceiving supersensible realities with which Steiner explored the complex and subtle interactions of the human organism. (Barnes 134-35)

Steiner also recognized similar patterns in his own student/teacher relationships, language, and invisible forms, to which he referred as soul and spirit. Such an understanding of patterns through "supersensible realities" made its way into Chekhov's technique.

Goethe's concept of "intuitive discernment" guided Steiner's ideas, but he was also influenced by "Goethe's belief in the redeeming sanity of action" (Ahern 50). Goethe's concept of action mirrors the traditional eastern philosophical idea of how reality is created: namely by performing actions (what) with specific qualities (how). The notion of "reality" in this view is not something that exists independently. Rather, it is a result of an action. In other words, the quality of an action dictates the nature of reality. Goethe's concept of action is often quoted by Steiner in his lectures: "Here I would like to remind you of Goethe's saying: 'Consider *what*, but consider *How* (sic!) even more'" (Steiner and Allen 35; emphasis in original). And in Steiner's *Art as Education*, the phrase "consider *what*, but consider *How* even more" is a *leitmotif*.

In Chekhov's technique today, as well, students are constantly reminded that they should concern themselves with the *how* of their performance and not the *what*. I will return to the question of "how vs. what" in the context of contemporary practice in the following chapters.

Overall, Goethe's philosophy points to a holistic understanding of the world. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, given Goethe's influence on Steiner, and through Steiner, on Chekhov, the Sense of the Whole is a basic concept in Chekhov's system. Before his death in 1955, Chekhov summarized the concept by stating: "The creative, inspired state of mind of an actor is an oneness,

psychological, spiritual oneness” (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*). According to Chekhov, the non-dualistic Sense of the Whole should ideally be contained in every artistic creation and on every level, from something as small as a gesture, to the character, the composition, and the entire performance. Consequently, the Sense of the Whole is a part of every aspect of Chekhov’s technique and is formulated in two of his *five guiding principles* which he postulated at the end of his life, and which I will examine in more detail in due course.¹²

The Influence of Arthur Schopenhauer

The deep sufferings of pessimism represent a path towards actually overcoming it, and the secret joy of pessimism is the suffering soul’s protection from catastrophe, from suicide. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 88)

In “The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer’s Doctrine on the Thing-In-Itself,” published in the *Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, Moira Nicholls identifies three shifts in Schopenhauer’s doctrine of the essence of “thing-in-itself”.¹³ “The first shift concerns what he says about the knowability of the ‘thing-in-itself;’ the second concerns what he says about the nature of the ‘thing-in-itself;’ and the third concerns *his explicit attempt to assimilate his own doctrines about what can be said of the ‘thing-in-itself’ with Eastern doctrines*” (Nicholls 171; emphasis added). Nicholls chronicles how Schopenhauer “increasingly sought to find parallels between his own and Eastern ideas on what can be said about the ‘thing-in-itself’” (175).

These ideas have not changed in Buddhism to date. Contemporary Buddhist spiritual leader, Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, teaches that “In order to experience *oneness* one must dismantle the object(s) that are the focus of grasping. In order to do this one has to deny the value of the individual desire and willful striving which is thought to create the illusion of human personality” (Bstan Ṛdzin rgya “Dharma Talk”¹⁴). In this world view, the individual personality can exist only in relation to something else, which in Buddhism is called the interdependent origination. The Dalai Lama teaches that as soon as one understands human existence on this

level, one understands that “there is no independent absolute reality called self.” To understand this is to abide in “emptiness,” “reach enlightenment,” and “become one with everything”.

According to Nicholls, through finding these parallels Schopenhauer arrived at his formulation of Absolute Truth, which is his “doctrine that it is the will which endures through endless rounds of birth and death;¹⁵ [but that] consciousness, by contrast, is but a fleeting manifestation of will, and it perishes with the physical death of being who possesses it” (Nicholls 190). Nichols contends that Schopenhauer’s increasing knowledge and admiration for Buddhism and in particular, his recognition that in Buddhism the realization of *nirvana* (enlightenment) does not mean the end of all possibility of value in existence was responsible for the shifts in his doctrine. More specifically, Schopenhauer concluded that to become enlightened is not to negate life. Rather, it represents a way of experiencing the world in a non-dualistic way, which is dependent on a shift in understanding of “willful striving” and “individual desire.” To deny the individual will is to deny that which is a source of dualism, making possible the experience of that which is non-dualistic and which arises out of the “one will.” Such “one will” is the same as the Buddhist idea of Emptiness or Goethe’s idea of The Whole. As we have seen, this was also the guiding idea in Chekhov’s concept of the Sense of the Whole and also the *raison d’être* of his first independent pedagogical period which lasted from 1918-1922.

Chekhov studied Schopenhauer from an early age. In *Michael Chekhov as Actor, Director, and Teacher*, Lendley C. Black says that Chekhov’s father, Alexander, told little Misha about the development of human consciousness:

Alexander’s explanations were so clear that Misha developed images of the people who were the most interesting to him. [...] As these tales of philosophers were developing Misha’s imagination, they were also developing an interest in philosophy, which he pursued intensely in later life, focusing particularly on Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. (5)

Also, according to Chekhov, when he was experiencing paranoia, depression and other mental health problems in his late twenties, he looked for solace in this philosophy: “For entire days, I lay on my bed with volumes of Schopenhauer’s works in my

hands”(M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 66). Stanislavsky and the First Studio initiated a visit of a group of distinguished doctors to visit his pupil during this time. Chekhov recalls:

“What do you read?” one of them asked me. Among the authors whom I listed was Schopenhauer. “But surely Schopenhauer did not even know physiology properly and none of his judgments have any particular value.” remarked the doctor. On hearing such an opinion about my favourite philosopher, I became very upset and obstinately resolved henceforth to carry on studying his philosophy. The consultation amused me and I suddenly rather liked being ill. Despite my constant oppressive fear and other feelings, I began to look at myself with certain objectivity. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 76)

Soon after this well-intentioned visit, Chekhov decided to “break with the theatre for ever,” and in order to secure steady income, he opened his studio in 1918 (77). He writes that, from the outset, his “ensuing pedagogical activity was given a true direction. That wonderful *intuitive feeling for the whole*, which [he] had almost lost in recent times, took hold of [him] again” (77; emphasis in original).

Schopenhauer’s last shift in doctrine regarding the “thing-in-itself” was a return to the basic Buddhist idea of experiencing life in a non-dualistic fashion. This aspect of Schopenhauer’s philosophy is implicit in the movement towards Chekhov’s search for the Sense of the Whole. As we have seen, the encounter with Hindu philosophy, just prior to opening his own studio, was crucial in Chekhov’s rejection of pessimism and in his definition of the main question which needed to be answered in his quest for a new theatre. The new question was how to nurture and achieve the “creativity of life” (86).

Chekhov realized that the capacity to achieve this state depended on the ability to employ the Higher Self to unify various elements of the actor’s performance. Thus, each element of Chekhov’s technique was designed to awaken all the aspects of the technique: “I was gripped by the feeling for the *whole*, and in this whole lived the theatre of the future” (86).

To sum up, Schopenhauer’s denial of the will requires first of all that a person sees through the *principium individuationis* constructed by space and time. This insight is reflected in a shift from egoistic to altruistic behaviour, and finally, to the practice of

meditation and a complete withdrawal from the world. To understand “one will” for Schopenhauer is to begin to transcend dualism. Such a Schopenhauerian “one will” *minus* the withdrawal from the world made its way into Chekhov’s work.

One cannot be an actor and withdraw from society completely, however, and Chekhov’s work is worldly by definition, as any theatrical endeavour must have points of contact with the audience. To abide in the Sense of the Whole is as much to reach a place of Schopenhauer’s “non action” inspired by the “one will” as it is a result of the Goethean concept of the “redeeming sanity of action.” Therefore, the Sense of the Whole and synthetic ability in acting in Chekhov’s technique *cannot* exist without a philosophical base which posits non-action as a logical counterpart to action. Chekhov tells us:

But if we look at it closely, we see that this *oneness* consists of so many parts and all the points of our method should be regarded as descriptions of these component parts, taken separately. [...] If we learn to use correctly every separate point [of the technique], we have a greater chance to invoke our inspiration and to get into a creative state of mind by our *own will*. (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*; emphasis added)

Therefore, the spiritual and the worldly ambitions of Chekhov’s technique spring from these combined influences.

Furthermore, the nature of Chekhov’s important concept of the Higher Self is such that it cannot come to existence without a firm belief that a thing, in and of itself, can be recognized and understood on the level of intuitive knowledge. This is a belief common to Hindu, Buddhist, and Schopenhauer’s philosophy. And here, Schopenhauer’s influence in Chekhov’s work is mainly theoretical, because even though he considers all physical activity as an immediate result of willful striving, Schopenhauer does not offer specific bodily practices which could be adopted in an acting technique. As will be shown, eastern bodily practices entered Chekhov’s technique through other sources, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, and Anthroposophy, the subject of the next section.

Rudolf Steiner and the Influence of Anthroposophy

Every spiritual movement such as Dr. Steiner's is open to criticism, and it is very, very easy to create enemies. We must try to stop and destroy these things about us which can be criticized. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre March 31, 1937)

There is no doubt that Schopenhauer's philosophy advocates the responsibility to the spirit, and that it does so by proposing a certain way of using the individual will impulse: one has to understand the egoistic will impulse; only then can one let go of it to become truly altruistic and eventually enlightened. Rudolf Steiner built on Schopenhauer's thought by contrasting the idea of a dualistic, active, egoistic individual will with the non-dualistic but *receptive rather than passive will*, thereby beginning his long quest of advocating the cultivation of spiritual, intuitive, artistic meditation, and creativity, which were to balance the destructive effects of the egoistic will. To this end, Steiner advocated bodily practices, voice and speech exercises, and eventually developed his Eurythmy, "a science of visible speech." This system "strongly influenced both actors and dancers in the early part of the 20th century" (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 75).

The disciples of Steiner's Eurythmy performed spiritual dances, which attempted to transform sound and colour into movement. According to Gordon, these made a "tremendous impression on Chekhov" (*The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 124). Chekhov was introduced to Eurythmy during his early years in Berlin (1928-1929) where he enrolled in the Rudolph Steiner School in order to find ways of applying the lessons of Eurythmy to dramatic speech. In his lesson of February 5th, 1940 Chekhov stated: "Your instrument is a little behind what you see in your imagination. First of all, this shows us the necessity to develop our bodies and voices and especially through Eurythmy. [...] Eurythmy catches the most creative impulses of your spirit. [...] Eurythmy exercises are spirit, and our body and our voice become more and more permeated with the spiritual impulses." (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 5, 1940)

Steiner continued to search for ways to conduct spiritual-scientific research and found that *an artist* was the most likely

candidate to conduct such research. Furthermore, according to Steiner, the *dramatic actor* was best equipped of all. In Steiner's terms, an actor was not a scientist of nature as Zola¹⁶ would have had it, but a spiritual scientist who is able to bridge the gap between the perception of the inner sensation and outer stimuli, on the one hand, and intuitive knowledge and rational thinking, on the other. Here Steiner's ideas are a precursor to what we discuss today in terms of practice as research. As described by Steiner, the actor accomplishes such holistic experience through the spiritual qualities, by "applying his/her imagination in the use of his/her body, voice and mind and his/her whole work has to be directed towards an understanding of not only the nature of knowledge itself but also of the ways that the soul with its thinking, feeling and willing takes hold of the physical body" (Wilkinson 56). The body, for Steiner, was the oldest, most wisdom-filled aspect of the human being on the earthly plane. A container for all other aspects of our humanity, the body not only holds sensory impressions but also intuitive discernment, which is purely spiritual and which can be best reached through the use of imagination.

Building on Goethe's thoughts and exercises such as the "Leaf to Plant Exercise" Steiner proposed a system of knowing which worked from imagination via intuition into inspiration. He called this system Anthroposophy (*anthropos-sophia* – wisdom of Man),¹⁷ and it is this system which had a great effect on Chekhov.

Chekhov was studying the writings of Schopenhauer and retained an "interest in yogis" (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 133), when, one day, while "passing the window of the 'Writers' Bookshop' in Moscow, [his] eye alighted upon a book entitled *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds, and its Attainment* by Rudolf Steiner". (133) Chekhov remembers how he responded to the unusual title:

I smiled and thought: "if it were indeed possible to know *how* to attain this knowledge, surely it would have been attained long ago and there would be no point in the author publishing his book." All the same, I bought the book with the intriguing title, read it and although I put it to one side, I did so without my initial irony (133) (emphasis in original).

Despite his initial skepticism, Chekhov's interest in this esoteric title was typical of his interest in the nature of consciousness.

Chekhov read this book on Anthroposophy in 1922, the same year Joseph Stalin became general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, following the death of Vladimir Lenin and a power struggle with Leon Trotsky. Stalin quickly revealed signs of despotism, intolerance, and paranoia, purging those who displayed “anti-Communist” tendencies, such as spirituality. Thus, spirituality quickly became anathema in Russia in the 1920s. Even so, Chekhov displayed “naïve indifference to this looming crisis” (Marowitz 13); he was caught unaware when the new political atmosphere caused his colleagues from the Second MAT (with whom he had artistic differences) to try and discredit him and thus remove him from his position of a leader.

In 1927, writer-director Alexander Diky and sixteen performers left the Second MAT, after denouncing Chekhov as an “idealist” and a “mystic” because of his Anthroposophic spirituality. Immediately following this, the leading Moscow newspaper branded Chekhov “a sick artist,” and his productions were condemned as “alien and reactionary” (Gordon, *A Descriptive Chronology* 31). In his memoirs, Chekhov wrote, “Circumstances were compelling me to renounce my [Anthroposophist] views with ever increasing urgency” (136). Instead of denying his spiritual path, Chekhov fled Russia and remained a refugee and an Anthroposophist for the rest of his life. His spiritual beliefs came with a price. Even after leaving Russia, Chekhov was often labeled as a mystic not only in his native Russia but also in the United States.

While much has been said about the problems that Anthroposophy caused Chekhov, not enough has been said about why and how Anthroposophy affected his theory and practice. To address this lack, the following section will identify points of contact between Buddhism and Anthroposophy, as well as the important points of difference between Buddhism and Theosophy. To date, Anthroposophy has been discussed as an independent religion which originated from Theosophy. However, it is important to track the origins back to Buddhism so that we can understand the paradigmatic cross-fertilization of contemporaneous ideas which are embedded in current practices.

Theosophy and its Origins: “No” to the Body

As actors our spirit wants to produce and create magnificent and beautiful things; but our bodies are like a plant lying before us, and everything we want to say with our spirits is in vain because the body does not understand the spirit. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre December 14, 1937)

While most scholarly works on Chekhov offer a very brief mention of Anthroposophy, they say almost nothing about its predecessor, Theosophy. Yet it is the link to Theosophy which is the most contentious and which might indicate that spiritualism rather than spirituality is occulted¹⁸ in Chekhov’s technique. The purpose of this section will be to understand the reasons for Chekhov’s rejection of Theosophy which, in turn, tie into his reasons for embracing Anthroposophy.

In *The Path of an Actor*, Chekhov writes:

Yoga led me gradually to the teachings of Theosophy and I got to know some of the members of the Theosophical Society. I made quite a thorough study of theosophical literature and was unsettled by its extreme orientalism. Although at the time I was still not familiar with the esoteric aspects of Christianity, it nevertheless seemed to me that Theosophy underestimates the significance of Christ and the Mystery of Golgotha. Was India the final and highest stage in the spiritual development of mankind? Was Christ, like the Buddha, Zarathustra and Hermes, merely one of the Teachers? I began to search for answers to the many questions that interested me with regard to Christianity. (133)

Theosophy became popular around the end of the nineteenth century, a time when the existence of God, as depicted in Christian iconography and myth, was subject to doubt, and the spiritually curious began exploring eastern religions. This exploration was particularly marked in Buddhism, the only major non-theistic¹⁹ religion characterized by a very strong adherence to ethics, which, in practice, translates to a focus on compassion.

This fascination with the East, however, quickly developed in an esoteric direction. Interested readers might pursue this further in a critical examination of the movement written by Peter Washington,

*Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru.*²⁰ Theosophy was the very first "wisdom knowledge" which came out of the West's fascination with eastern mysticism around the end of the nineteenth century.

Madam Blavatsky, who founded and led a Theosophical society, was the first person to transpose Zen doctrines to the West in *Secret Doctrine*, and there is a clear Buddhist influence in her work: "It was a favorite boast of Blavatsky's that she had travelled alone in Tibet and lived there for more than seven years" (Washington 33). She became a celebrity by claiming that, not only had she been "chosen" to reach the highest level of initiation in the occult hierarchy permitted to human beings, but she owed her advancement to certain "Himalayan Masters" (33) with whom she had studied in their mountain homes. Washington found historical documents suggesting that a white woman travelled by herself in Tibet during the time Blavatsky indicated, but as this evidence is inconclusive, he questions the truth behind Blavatsky's claim. However, there is ample evidence that Colonel Olcott, Blavatsky's partner in founding Theosophy, was extremely interested in and committed to all things Buddhist. Olcott and Blavatsky travelled extensively to Buddhist countries, and both espoused Buddhist causes. Olcott, in particular, supported Buddhist causes throughout his life.

References, connections, and influences of Buddhism on Theosophy are many and varied. For example, Blavatsky wrote an "exposition of Buddhism as the wisdom doctrine within which science and religion can be united" (Washington 52-66). However, the story of her personal and professional life indicates that, as her career advanced, like most of the gurus of her time, she became indifferent to all religions except her own personality cult. She even claimed to communicate with the other worlds in her spiritual séances.

However, in *The Key to Theosophy*²¹ Blavatsky clearly says that Theosophy is not Buddhism: "Theosophists are often spoken of as Esoteric Buddhists, yet they are not all followers of Gautama Buddha any more than musicians are all followers of Wagner" (15). In *The Secret Doctrine: the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, she explains that Theosophy is a "Wisdom-Religion" (6). Ultimately, Blavatsky abandoned the essence of Buddhist philosophy. Her spiritual séances and conferences with the "Masters," a group of spiritually enlightened beings to which she claimed she had the

exclusive access, gradually replaced Buddhist philosophy about the nature of reality. Thus, from being a popular version of Buddhism, Theosophy became a cult. Buddhism also has a strong tradition of spiritual pedagogy and practice, something that remains vague in Blavatsky's Theosophy.

Another key difference between Theosophy and Buddhism, especially in this context, is the understanding of the relationship between the body and the mind. In Buddhism, the adoption of the right view, the correct ethical practices, and the recommended ascetic and contemplative practices which *include bodily practices*, are employed to help the spiritual seeker let go of the individual desires and willful striving and thus attain enlightenment. Buddhism sees our mental operations as offering us only a *provisional* ordering of experience. In Buddhism, *bodily practices* (e.g. "just sitting" or "yoga") are thereby required in order to reach beyond this provisional level of understanding by uniting body with the mind.

While in Chekhov's technique, such requirement remains prominent in his psychophysical principle, in Theosophy, Madam Blavatsky makes the following connection between the spiritual life and our physical body: "The more the physical body is *paralyzed*, as to its own independent activity and consciousness, as in deep sleep or deep trance, or again, in illness, the more fully can the inner Self manifest on this plane" (Blavatsky 22; emphasis added). While this statement acknowledges the importance of the body, it separates body and spirit, and is therefore contrary to the body-mind philosophy of Chekhov's technique.

Anthroposophy and its Origins: "Yes" to the Body

If you describe my path to the theatre, it is impossible to miss the point where I met Dr. Rudolf Steiner. Stanislavsky was the beginning, then I passed on to Dr. Steiner's ideas, and the mixture of Dr. Steiner and Stanislavsky has given certain grounds for my Method. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre June 8, 1938).

The ninth century Buddhist Master Lin Chi is supposed to have said, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him" (Harris 7). This old *koan*²² makes a valuable point to illustrate how Buddhism figures in Anthroposophy. Buddhism strove to depart from religious

fetishism as early as the time this *koan* was created. The purpose of the *koan* is to show practitioners the necessity of reflecting on the idea of dogma so that it will not inhibit deep contemplation of the nature of reality. It reminds spiritual seekers that the non-theistic Buddhist religion is not about the worship of a deity; rather, it is about their own individual enlightenment. Therefore, even though Anthroposophy dispensed with the specifics of Buddhism, replacing them with its Christian God, the Buddhist idea of individual enlightenment remained the primary source of the kind of contemplative wisdom embraced by Anthroposophy. Because of its lack of dogma, Steiner could embrace this teaching and become a genuine contemplative without having to stay on the Buddhist path. He could “kill the Buddha,” and he did.

Washington suggests that by creating Anthroposophy, Steiner “had decided to swing the Theosophical focus westwards” by incorporating his own neo-Christian beliefs into Theosophy (154). For his part, Chekhov embraced Anthroposophy in a desire to stay in his own tradition: “Anthroposophy opened itself to me as a modern form of Christianity” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 135).

Steiner’s Christology has a complex iconography. This aspect of Anthroposophy deals with this religion’s cosmology, which has no relevance in this context. What is of relevance is the fact that Steiner’s westernization of Theosophy still did not mean rejecting its Buddhist philosophical roots. In *Sun at Midnight: The Rudolf Steiner Movement and the Western Esoteric Tradition*, Geoffrey Ahern suggests that “even though Anthroposophy is considered to be more western than its predecessor Theosophy, essentially it is more Buddhist than Theosophy because of the *philosophical* similarities between it and Buddhism” (163; emphasis added). Steiner’s ideas about knowledge and experience stayed true to the Buddhist original in that he, like Buddhists, continued to believe that “knowledge and experience *are one* and that they both originate in the supersensible” (163). This philosophical tenet is very important when we consider Chekhov’s technique, both philosophically and practically, because it is reflected in the technique’s concern with body-mind connection which considers intangibles.

Chekhov, who was put off by Theosophy’s “orientalism”, did not embrace Buddha. Yet he based his *Weltanschauung* and, consequently, his technique, on the Buddhist phenomenological

postulate which suggests that the “thing-in-itself” is within human reach through the practice of meditation and contemplation. Chekhov writes: “I became convinced of how *practical the principles of Anthroposophy* are, how firmly this science stands on the Earth, and how intimately it is connected with our culture. [...] The world of the spirit is only a ‘mystery’ to a person who *does not wish* to exert himself to gain access into it” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 134; emphasis in original). What Chekhov sees as the “practical principles of Anthroposophy” are the “philosophical similarities” between Buddhism and Anthroposophy pointed out by Ahearn.

The idea that “knowledge and experience are one” has influenced many exercises in Chekhov’s technique. Its relationship to the experiential aspects such as visualizations and centring will be supported in future chapters. For now, it is important to mention that, today, Chekhov’s technique uses an idea of a prescribed practical way to inspiration. It recognizes that via intuition we can tap into knowledge much deeper than that of any rational origin. To make concrete these ideas, it uses hands-on explorations where two people exchange invisible rays of energy.

Unlike Madam Blavatsky’s “wisdom-religion,” the relationship to the body in Steiner’s “wisdom about man” comes about through its relationship to pure thought arising from the body. Thus, it is a mirror image of the same Buddhist relationship. Furthermore, both Chekhov’s and Steiner’s teachings instruct the actors and spiritual seekers respectively to rise above personality into spirituality by achieving a deep knowledge of their own minds. Buddhist teachings instruct spiritual seekers in the same fashion. The mind in Buddhism has a much larger meaning than it does in the West. The mind is everything: body, thoughts, feelings, will, consciousness, and intuition. The mind does not merely exist in the brain. Rather, it envelops our whole self – it is both visible and invisible. In the following, Steiner includes the physical body as the important element in spiritual development towards pure thought:

A man who has the above-mentioned organ [the highly developed thinking organ] for seeing the sentient soul, knows it to be conditioned by the body. But the boundary of the sentient soul does not coincide with that of the physical body. From this one sees that it proves itself to be greater than the physical body. Nevertheless,

the force through which its limits are set proceeds from the physical body. (Steiner, *The Nature of Man* 30)

Unlike the soul and spirit, the body is perishable. This is not an obstacle for Steiner as it was for Blavatsky. One must not try to “paralyze” (immobilize) the body as Blavatsky suggested; instead, one must try to understand its conditions – in Anthroposophy as in Buddhism.

Underlying Steiner’s ideas about body and mind was the following thought: “Western humanity is losing the ability to see the inner and outer aspects of human experience, two sides as a single whole” (Barnes 11). In fact, as Barnes notes, Steiner pointed out the dangers of this “potentially fatal dualism”:

On one hand one finds that the thinkers and researchers who have sought recently to penetrate the field of psychological, or soul phenomena do not know where to begin when they approach the admirable achievements of natural science – especially in relation to knowledge of the human physical organism.[...] On the other hand, it must also be said that those who represent natural-scientific research are, as a rule, so estranged from the realm of soul phenomena, or observation of psychic experience, that they also cannot build a bridge from the truly awe-inspiring results of modern science to the field of soul phenomena. One finds that soul researchers, or psychologists, and natural scientists speak two different languages when they speak about the human soul and human body. (Barnes 12)

In his attempt to unify the two, Steiner saw the human being as the living integration of three basically autonomous yet interpenetrating and interacting organic systems: the *nerve/sense system*, centred primarily in the head; the *rhythmic system* of breathing and blood circulation, centred mainly in the chest; and the *metabolic/limb system*, seated primarily in the lower organs and legs. This triumvirate is referred to in Anthroposophy as the *Three-Fold Nature of Man*, and corresponds to three aspects of a human being: body, soul, and spirit. Steiner’s spiritual science where nerve/sense system is spirit, rhythmic system is soul and metabolic/limb system is body is based on this division and is of great importance when discussing Chekhov’s technique.

The Three-Fold Nature of Man



To be concentrated on something means not only to be able to think of it in a certain special way as we know it (thinking as imagining) but at the same time to feel the objective and the same time to wish, to desire to do it. Three main powers are coming together actively: thinking or imagining, feeling and willing. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre March 14, 1938)

Steiner formed his Anthroposophical society in 1912, partly as a reaction to the Theosophical society's recognition of spiritual leader Krishnamurti as a reincarnation of Christ. Washington suggests other reasons as well:

But if Krishnamurti was the immediate occasion of Steiner's break with Theosophy, there were deeper causes. [...] First there was the need for a sound conceptual scheme integrating theosophical doctrine with valuable elements of the European philosophical tradition. [...] The second problem was a matter of spiritual pedagogy. (Washington 156)

Put otherwise, Steiner wanted to combine eastern doctrines with a new method of learning from those doctrines. To this end, he divided the human self into three different parts – the body, the soul, and the spirit – and analyzed their function in the creation of an individual. The three-fold nature of man was something for each one of his students to contemplate: the body connected to the material world; the soul, which receives sensory impressions from the world; and the spirit, which is connected to the universal. All three parts co-exist and co-create in Steiner's idea of the human being's ultimate achievement – the Spirit Man. When a human being achieves this state akin to enlightenment, s/he inhabits his/her universal "I" which is different from his/her personality.

In Steiner's spiritual pedagogy, in order to achieve spiritualization, a person must use his/her imagination, inspiration, and intuition. Only then will s/he reach the Anthroposophical final stage of Spirit Man. Anthroposophy's imagination is connected to the head, inspiration is connected to the heart, and intuition is connected to the limbs. However the head, heart, and limbs are not just organs: they are centres of energy for three invisible bodies – the astral body, ether body, and spirit self, respectively.

To become a Spirit Man, an individual must use his/her *imagination* to transform the astral body into a Spirit Self; he must use his/her *inspiration* to transform the etheric body into the Life Spirit; at the end, *intuition* will transform the Spirit Self into the Spirit Man. These transformations are steps on the Anthroposophical spiritual path. This path can also be traced to Gnosticism, a religious belief which taught that at the beginning of time there was spirit that all shall be spirit again, and that spirit can materialize into whatever form it wishes. A profound understanding of this Gnostic teaching allows a spiritual seeker to exist on an otherworldly plane while still inhabiting the body. Steiner's Spirit Man is capable of bringing these two separate realities together – worldly and otherworldly.

According to this spiritual science, not only is the human body a trinity, but the soul and spirit are also trinities. The soul members and the spirit members correspond to the astral, etheric, and physical bodies. To better grasp the correspondences, consider the following table:

	<u>Body</u>	<u>Soul</u>	<u>Spirit</u>
Function	Willing	Feeling	Thinking
Human Activity	Imagination	Intuition	Inspiration
Corporeal members	Physical body	Life body	Astral Body
Soul members	Sentient soul	Intellectual soul	Consciousness-Soul
Spirit members	Spirit-Self	Life-Spirit	Spirit-Man

Rudolf Steiner claims to have used these terms in a purely technical sense: words of some sort have to be used. Their unfamiliarity is complicated by the fact that they often incorporate other words with which one is conceptually familiar (such as spirit or soul) but which in his system might have a different meaning than in common use. Consequently, Steiner simplified the above jargon in *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Spiritual Processes in Human Life and the Cosmos*, suggesting that the categories “interpenetrate one another” and that “one can divide man into *physical body, life-body, astral body and ‘I’*” (*Theosophy: An Introduction to the Spiritual Processes in Human Life and in the Cosmos* 43). The “I,” functioning as a kind of coordinating medium, is the element which *experiences* that which endures throughout one’s earthly existence. The “I” can, through participation in the spiritual world, become ruler in the world of bodily impulses, desires, and so on. The “I” lives in the body and the soul, but the spirit lives in the “I.”

Chekhov renamed Steiner’s notion of “I” as Higher I, Higher Ego, and/or Higher Self,²³ and in fact, Steiner’s concept of the three-fold nature of man made its way *directly* into Chekhov’s practice. In Chekhov’s technique, the understanding of character is defined as a combination of how a human being uses his/her functions of thinking, feeling and willing. This division is taught so that in a learning or a rehearsal process that is done in a psychophysical way, the actor is always concerned with bridging the difference between his/her

thinking, feeling, and willing aspects, and those of the character s/he is portraying. This is most obvious in such exercises as “The Three Centres Exercise,”²⁴ or “Stick, Ball and Veil,”²⁵ in which the actor familiarizes himself/herself with the concept of the Three-Fold Nature of Man.

The Three Centres Exercise is used to bridge the gap between the actor’s own thinking, feeling, and will centres and the imagined ones of an “ideal” actor’s body. “Stick, Ball and Veil” applies this to the characterization. Here, the actor uses imagery to psychophysically change his/her thinking, feeling, and willing body-mind perspective, and this eventually results in characterization. These exercises demand that the actor employ both imagination and intuition, which in Chekhov’s technique, are thought to be the gateways to inspired acting. If inspiration occurs, it is attributed to the actor’s ability to employ his/her Higher Self.

Therefore, by working with thinking, feeling, and will functions, the actor is participating in the spiritual science as categorized by Steiner. Nor is it uncommon to hear today’s master teachers of Chekhov’s technique suggest that the human “life-body” can move first and the physical body can follow. Their students are taught to recognize the “life-body” as the invisible life force or energy within them that keeps them moving and that experiences sensations. Thus, in Chekhov’s technique today, Steiner’s simple division *physical body, life-body, astral body and ‘I’*, minus the term “astral body” is still used, as are the three functions and three activities which correspond to the workings of the body, soul, and spirit in Steiner’s spiritual science (Steiner, *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Spiritual Processes in Human Life and in the Cosmos* 43). In this fashion, Anthroposophy is practically occulted into the technique.

The Anthroposophist Impact and “Possession” In Chekhov’s Technique

Spiritual values are more concrete than concrete things. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre January 25, 1940)

In the statutes of the Anthroposophical society, Steiner stressed that while anyone could join this organization, those who truly represented it must be willing “to nurture the life of the soul, both in the individual and in human society, on the basis of real

knowledge of the spiritual world” (Barnes 208). Chekhov’s biography and work offer evidence that he took his responsibilities as an Anthroposophist seriously. In 1922, a few years after embracing Anthroposophy, Chekhov even considered becoming a priest in Steiner’s spiritual community after watching Steiner lecturing on Eurythmy in Stuttgart (Gordon, *"A Descriptive Chronology"* 10). The idea of the Higher Self and the pursuit of the synthetic ability of an actor soon followed. In fact, Steiner’s ideas about intuitive knowledge and his spiritual science became the bedrock of Chekhov’s technique. Furthermore, they have continued relevance today in contemporary usage of the technique.

While Anthroposophy played an important part in Chekhov’s development as an artist and a teacher, it is important to note that Chekhov’s work was not about converting his students to Anthroposophy. Moreover, evidence on the extent of the Anthroposophy taught in Chekhov’s classroom varies greatly.

During his days at Dartington Hall, and later in Ridgefield, Connecticut, Chekhov’s generous patron was Dartington Hall’s owner Dorothy Elmhirst. Both she and her husband Leonard were “attuned to spiritual qualities” (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 157). Chekhov’s work during this period (April 1936 – April 1942) was meticulously recorded by his student and secretary Deirdre Hurst Du Prey in 3,200 pages of verbatim transcriptions of his lessons titled *The Actor is the Theatre*. This document is now property of University of Windsor in Canada. It offers ample evidence that, in this milieu, Chekhov did not hesitate to mention religious concepts in the classroom. For example, on July 1, 1938, he said: “If you give everything to the image it will be purely Luciferic, and will be weaker and weaker. You must take the Luciferic thing and put it into the real body.” The “Luciferic” here does not refer to the character of Lucifer from a play, but to the primary negative force in Anthroposophical cosmology.

After meeting with some disapproval from “the people who come to observe our Saturday morning classes and criticize us,” Chekhov warned students on March 31, 1937, that they should expect condemnation: “We cannot stop this, but if we give them more possibilities to speak about us in other ways, it will do us much harm. Every *spiritual movement* such as Dr. Steiner’s is open to criticism, and it is very, very easy to create enemies. We must try to stop and destroy these things about *us* which can be criticized” (M. Chekhov

and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*; emphasis added). Clearly, Chekhov refers to his whole group (“us”) as part of Steiner’s spiritual movement.



Furthermore, when it comes to references to *soul* and *spirit*, in Du Prey’s 3,200 page manuscript, there are literally *thousands* of them. There are numerous references to thinking as meditation and acting as meditation as well, as for example, the following: “[You] must mediate on [what you want to act] as if trying to find the answer which arises out of your whole being; standing before you as a vision” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* June 14, 1938). In fact, all of the techniques in this manuscript always refer to a spiritual quality which the actor is supposed to develop and from which he/she is to work. In a lesson on June 2, 1938, Chekhov says: “Some of you have more spiritual ability than others, but it is worth

while for all of you to work on these things by trying to direct your attention more to the inner than to the outer forms” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*).

This free attitude towards Anthroposophist spirituality in the classroom gradually changed. According to Joanna Merlin, a student who studied with Chekhov in the 1950s, the relationship to Anthroposophy was one that the Master did not share freely with his students, even though many of them “trained as Chekhov actors” (Merlin, Personal interview). Still, in private, Chekhov must have shared his spiritual beliefs because an actor whom Chekhov taught during this time, Mala Powers, became an Anthroposophist. Powers was also entrusted with Chekhov’s estate.

Today’s students of Chekhov’s technique of acting do not need a rational understanding of the spiritual, philosophical, phenomenological, Anthroposophist, Buddhist, Hindu, or Symbolist influences on this technique in order to train in it or to practice it. That being said, it is undeniable that this training provides its “own spiritual basis,” as argued by Franc Chamberlain in “Michael Chekhov: Pedagogy, Spirituality, and the Occult” (3). Moreover, while students do not have to have theistic beliefs, they must accept holistic beliefs, a specific relationship to the body-mind connection, and be willing to work with the intangibles such as radiation of energy, invisible atmosphere and the Three-Fold Nature of Man. The Michael Chekhov International Association has on occasion included group meditation as a way of forming questions which have to do with any aspect of learning the technique or teaching it as a part of its training. The nature of acting as meditation will be discussed in due course, but for now, it is important to note that in contemporary pedagogy, Anthroposophy continues to be occulted within the technique, and through it, the other influences mentioned above are occulted as well.

Franc Chamberlain is one of the rare Chekhov scholars to devote more than a few paragraphs to the influence of Anthroposophy on his own pedagogy and practice.²⁶ For example, he asks the following questions. Should the students of Chekhov’s technique have studied meditation prior to studying this kind of acting? Does an altered state take place when the technique is used? Chamberlain’s answer to the first question is that to study Chekhov’s technique, prior knowledge of meditation is not necessary. The contemporary master

teachers of Chekhov's technique all agree on this, and my experience as a student and a teacher confirms it as well.

Yet Chamberlain also suggests that such knowledge can be helpful, and he continues to affirm the general idea of the technique as being based on a certain kind of spirituality, which he defines by comparing it to Buddhism. He cites certain qualities about the technique, such as "harmony and a sense of responsibility" and "tolerance, patience, love and compassion" (4), equating them with what the Dalai Lama calls the "basic spiritual qualities." After establishing this, Chamberlain makes his main point, namely, a denial that in this kind of acting any altered state takes place: "The actor is not, however, like a spiritualist medium, because he or she is not possessed. Instead, he or she is engaged in a relationship with a [character as a] dream figure" (5).

Chamberlain acknowledges that some would differ with his analysis. For example, in a 2002 essay, he addresses Gerald Heard, whose 1938 correspondence with Dorothy Elmhirst suggests: "Chekhov should only work with students who have already studied meditation techniques and accepted a spiritual view of life"(4). Heard saw the essence of Steiner's Anthroposophy as "the basic teaching that is present in western mysticism and in Taoism, Buddhism, and Vedanta, but which is distorted in "ordinary" Christianity" (4). Chamberlain's reply to Heard some seventy years later says that:

[...] the training itself includes a spiritual dimension from which it is impossible to escape, but which does not demand the application of a particular construct on experience. If an individual finds Anthroposophy helpful as a means of furthering his/her understanding, that is acceptable, but any other construction that helped a person come to grips with the ideas contained in a work is also fine. That is, if there are fundamental spiritual values present, then they are present regardless of the tradition. (4)

It is easy to agree with Chamberlain, but the question remains – exactly what is occulted? Furthermore, why is this contentious?

Chamberlain denies the actor's "possession" when working with this technique. Yet at the "Stanislavsky and Directing: Theory, Practice, Influence" conference at University of Toronto's Graduate Centre for Study in Drama in January 2006, Charles Marowitz suggested otherwise. Marowitz argued that Chekhov's technique nurtures "actors who, in a sense, become possessed by their role so

completely that, like a sympathetic Dybbuk, the character actually invades the actor's body and takes up residence in his soul" (Marowitz, "Stanislavsky vs. Chekhov" 13). Marowitz first made this comment at a conference in late 2005, and according to Bella Merlin, he provoked a heated discussion. Merlin warned, "We should be careful of such terminology, and we shouldn't take as gospel everything Chekhov said, when not only was he a genius but he was also a depressive, a mystic and alcoholic." But Marowitz replied that all good actors were to some extent "ill" (B. Merlin, "*Marowitz Discussion*").

While these comments point to controversy, they do not offer concrete examples of what is it that would make an actor "possessed" and what kind of a possession is being discussed. Furthermore, there appears to be a fundamental misunderstanding on both sides of the effects of an altered state of consciousness. If such a state might occur as a result of these practices, it does not follow that this state would render an actor lost or "ill." Certainly this is true for Hindu and Buddhist practices, which aim at an altered state of consciousness while trying to achieve a full state of presence, and which consider this a *healing* rather than a dangerous state. Anthroposophical exercises grew out of this impetus and used it for the same purpose.

The altered state of consciousness in Chekhov's technique is a result of inspiration rather than possession. As Chekhov says in a lecture:

There are two possibilities for becoming the character. One way, which we deny, is that of really becoming as it were, mad, and losing oneself and becoming possessed by the character. This leads only to hysterics and psychological illness, although it is possible to become the character in this sense. [...] Our approach is a different one, and the whole group of exercises in our school is actually the guarantee that we will not go in this wrong way, because in imagining we are always objective. To imagine and create in our sense means to be always a little above our own being. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 5, 1940)

What is altered is the actor's perception of his/her own identity, such as Chekhov's reason for the turn in his mental health: "In this sense, the unity of my psyche began to disintegrate and I gained a certain access to myself" (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 89). As has been shown, this altered state led Chekhov to make further

inquiry into Hindu philosophy and resulted in his immersion in Anthroposophy. Chekhov goes on to suggest that to avoid hysterics, the actor must “look at [a part] in our spirit,” and that this means with “*two consciousnesses*” (emphasis in original). One of these is “creative, objective and inspiring; and the other is moving, and speaking at the same time.” Furthermore, one should “first concentrate,” and then “act with the whole being,” while “observing [the character’s] inner life at the moment.” Finally, he says that “if we try to imagine with our whole being, and if we will allow our heads to imagine with us, then the thief which is sitting in the brain will become weaker and weaker.”

The question remains, however: what is occulted in the technique that leads to this revised notion and use of the self? The answer is: the importance of the interrelation between physical form, senses, and consciousness which, in Anthroposophy, are respectively referred to as the body, soul, and spirit; in other words, Steiner’s spiritual science categorization of the Three-Fold Nature of Man. As has been noted, the ultimate achievement in Steiner’s spiritual science is the realization of the Spirit Man, which in Chekhov’s technique, becomes the realization of the Higher Self. Both realizations are dependent on an individual’s ability to rise above the conventions of personality and tap into the Sense of the Whole or Buddhist oneness, leading one to use intuitive knowledge to transmit and transform processes within and without.

Like Anthroposophy, the contemporary Chekhov technique teaches that a specific interrelation between form, senses, and consciousness enables the actor to tap into pure (intuitive) knowledge, and that an actor can always trust an intuitive response. Thus, in learning about the Higher Self and how it is used, the actor’s body and its senses must be involved. As in Anthroposophy, Chekhov’s technique demands that in order to develop the “organ” of intuition, the actor must develop his/her imagination, which, as has been shown, Chekhov equates with the ability to think in a way consistent with both Hindu and Buddhist eastern philosophy, and Steiner. More specifically, the actor must be able to meditate on an object or a group of objects with the senses involved: “When we are doing thinking exercises from the Hindu and Dr. Steiner, how do we do it? We take an object and we think about it, and then we start again with ‘what do I see before me?’” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the*

Theatre May 27, 1938). In doing so, the actor obviates the need for an opinion about objects of his/her attention but rather develops a “feeling of truth”. The purpose of this is to begin creating artistically without a rational judgment but rather by employing intuition.

In his lesson of July 21, 1938 Chekhov declares: “Real imagination is meditation.” His actors train their thinking in the following way:

The exercise is to take the most simple thing, a pencil for instance, and think it. What does that mean? I think that the pencil is so many inches long, it has six sides, it is yellow, there are small letters and signs on it, and it seems to be composed of two pieces, etc.

FEELING OF TRUTH: By doing this, what are you developing? You are developing a feeling of truth, because by thinking about the yellow pencil you have the feeling that it is true. You link the different things together with the feeling of truth. You will never do this by thinking on such subjects as “Is a human being free?” it is your opinion, not knowledge[...] By training your thoughts with objects which are simple enough, you will get another kind of thinking, which will always be in connection with the feeling of truth. It is both thinking and observation at the same time. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* April 27, 1937)

The contemporary Chekhov actor is not lost when “possessed,” but is brought to a heightened state of awareness where there is no room or need for personality. Freed from personality, the actor can use the tools of the technique to begin to work towards a genuine psychophysical transformation.

The Influence of Leopold Sulerzhitsky

“Misha, do you know what I want to paint?” “What?” I asked. “Those things that are not visible,” replied Sulerzhitsky, gravely and thoughtfully. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 63)

Even before embracing Anthroposophy, Chekhov’s engagement in eastern body-mind practices was evident. The origins of the eastern body-mind practices in Chekhov’s life are in MAT’s First Studio and the work of Leopold Sulerzhitsky-Suler (1872-1916). Chekhov’s endorsement of Sulerzhitsky’s ideas about theatre is unquestionable in *The Path of the Actor*. Chekhov gives equal credit to Sulerzhitsky, Stanislavsky, and Vakhtangov for his teaching

abilities: “The way that I understood and experienced what I had received from my teachers determined how I transmitted this to my students” (77).

Sulerzhitsky first introduced Chekhov to eastern practices such as yoga and meditation within the explorations conducted at the studio around 1912, a decade before Chekhov embraced Anthroposophy. Sulerzhitsky suggested that “the secret of great acting involves unearthing the mind’s creative potential; the development of affective physical and psychophysical exercises must be the first path to a consistent awakening of the Creative State of Mind” (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 31). In addition, Sulerzhitsky taught the actors in the First Studio to believe in their ability to communicate in an unspoken language. To this end, he introduced the Hindu concept of *prana*, the invisible life force that streams through all living things. Sulerzhitsky convinced Stanislavsky that “*prana* was another name for the Creative State of Mind” (*The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 32), persuaded him to work on Symbolist dramas, and “emphasized the performer’s use of his face and hands, the centres of *prana*” (34).

Unfortunately, Sulerzhitsky’s untimely death in 1916 put an end to an in-depth exploration of the nature of actor’s consciousness and opened “a huge personal and aesthetic void in the First Studio’s existence. [Vera] Soloviova declared that Stanislavsky gave the First Studio members knowledge. He also donated space and money. But Suler gave his heart to the First Studio and in doing so introduced new life and a more human dimension into acting” (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 46).

A few years after Sulerzhitsky’s death, Chekhov started his own explorations, partly as a result of his ideological differences with Stanislavsky. Marowitz’ description in *The Other Chekhov* of Chekhov’s beginnings as a teacher points to Chekhov’s incorporation of Sulerzhitsky’s “strong spiritual tendency.” He, like Sulerzhitsky, became concerned with the spiritual growth of the students: “Hundreds of young students auditioned for the studio, but only thirty were chosen. By the end of each session, many of these had fallen away – either confused by Misha’s theories or simply frightened off by his immersion in yoga and reincarnation” (51). Furthermore, in *The Stanislavsky Technique*, Gordon suggests “Suler believed more in



transforming life than improving art” (42), and in his studio, Chekhov attempted to do the same: “The four years (1918-1922) of existence of the Chekhov Studio, as the students called it, played a large part in my life. During these years my health gradually began to be restored” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 77).

Chekhov continued to develop the practical explorations of eastern body-mind techniques and the idea of intangibles in acting throughout his career; he ultimately formulated them as the *five guiding principles* of his technique. These principles are as much a categorization of his technique as a summary of his teaching philosophy and spirituality, and they will be discussed individually in the next chapter.

The Influence of Russian Symbolism

This man amazes me: He learns uninterruptedly, and he learns and searches mainly outside of the theatre. But everything he finds, he immediately and with the involuntary self-interest in the noble sense drags into the theatre. [...] For me, [Mikhail Alexandrovich Chekhov] more than anybody else embodies the two-legged idea of the human crisis incarnated in a man. (Bely, quoted in M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 212)

Chekhov's artistic philosophy owes much to the Second Generation Russian Symbolists, such as Andrei Bely (1880-1934), "one of his spiritual fathers" (Byckling 2) who also embraced Anthroposophy. Chekhov's serious research into Anthroposophy began in 1921 under the guidance of Bely. While this connection has been mentioned by many scholars, the particularities and what this means in a practical sense have not been examined. For one thing, leaning on the Symbolist's affirmation of the need of art to create its own reality, Chekhov's technique places a stronger emphasis on finding a style of a performance than on creating a naturalistic one.²⁷

Generally, the philosophy of the Second Generation Russian Symbolists was characterized by the idea that art was not a *vehicle* of knowledge but a *form* of knowledge and, as such, was able to create new knowledge and new reality. This idea stemmed from the Goethean sense of cognition through contemplation and drew on Goethe's statement that "all is transitory but a symbol" (Wachtel 182). This intuitive (as opposed to rational) relationship to the world was thought to be a higher form of cognition. According to Wachtel, some theorists went so far as to claim that symbolism and intuition were one and the same and that there was no difference between art and philosophy (182). Bely viewed Symbolism as the culmination of knowledge, since it operated with the premise of a teleological principle underlying the Kantian theory of knowledge. This meant that for Bely, in theatre in particular, but also in other art forms, the "thing-in-itself" was comprehensible on a phenomenological level. As Wachtel notes, "Bely's 'teleology' originated in the Solovyovian world process, the relation of individual phenomena to a *single principle* that is realized through Symbolism" (Wachtel 164).

Anthroposophist Vladimir Solovyov was one of the most prominent Second-Generation Russian Symbolist writers. In *The Path of the Actor*, Chekhov writes:

Vladimir Solovyov seemed to me to be a *believer*, but devoid of real knowledge. I demanded from him proofs of the existence of the world beyond and of good, but he could not give me these proofs. Subsequently, I understood that the proofs which I was demanding from him had to be proofs of a purely materialistic kind – proofs which, by their nature, cannot be *proofs* in the sphere to which the questions that were disturbing me at the time belonged. (72-73; emphasis in original)

According to Marowitz, Solovyov's mystic philosophy helped "to predispose Chekhov towards Steiner's brand of spirituality" (76). Here, another paradigmatic exchange with eastern philosophy emerges: the ability to comprehend the "thing-in-itself" on a phenomenological level and the idea of a single principle. This exchange with eastern philosophy likely emerged in Russian Symbolism through Bely and Solovyov.

According to Wachtel, the Second-Generation Symbolists' ideology adhered to the following basic principles: (1) art creates its own reality; (2) art reveals a "higher reality" or gives knowledge of aspects of the real world which are inaccessible to rational cognition; (3) art reveals the relatedness of phenomena to a higher entity; (4) art orders our human experience of the real world; and (5) art contributes to a process of transformation of the real world in the direction of an ideal (Wachtel 163). As this list makes clear, Second Generation Symbolists were conceptually united with Steiner's ideas, which predicated a form of knowledge which is intuitive and to which artists have the most ready access.

In terms of theatrical style Russian Symbolists and Steiner shared distaste for naturalism and the assumption that artistic reality manifests as a style. Verisimilitude was regarded as a lie in that it denies the fact that all reality is a creation of the human mind or consciousness. The special ability of an artist to tap into intuitive knowledge to deliberately create a new reality was considered an antidote to rationalism, which posits an objective reality. Like Steiner, Symbolists saw this as the cause of disintegration of the psyche in the modern man. Rationalism was considered to be a dangerous and destructive by-product of the mechanized age: "The cancer of our age

is that there are so many clever people today and so few artists” (Steiner Speech 111).

The influences of the Russian Symbolist movement are relevant in today’s pedagogy and practice of Chekhov’s technique, because they inform the technique’s contemporary need for stylization. Unlike the American Method used by such teachers as Stella Adler, Uta Hagen, Sanford Meisner, and Lee Strasberg, and which, for the most part, seeks to find a lifelike expression on the level of performer’s own personality and behaviour,²⁸ Chekhov’s technique then trains an actor to work with style. This means that a performer does not strive for personal introspection in order to create images and verisimilitude in expression. Rather s/he creates a new reality through a specific quality of action which uses such elements as the Imaginary Centre and the Imaginary Body, and which draws upon such concepts as inner movement (to be discussed).

A suitable definition of style in the context of Chekhov’s technique is: “the quality that results from a distinctive manner of expression” (Novak 5). Thus, seeking a distinctive manner of expression rather than a lifelike one is a practical difference which currently sets Chekhov’s technique apart from the American Method and other Stanislavsky-based teaching. This is directly connected to another major difference: unlike the various forms of American Method, the Chekhov technique grew out of a spiritual base. In short, the ideal of Chekhov training then is to help the actor who practises the technique to be moved to express his/her personality and then to rise above the personality, creating a reality which, in an artistic domain, always means also creating a performance style.

Today, teachers make a point of expressing their belief that although the technique can be used successfully in Naturalism and Realism, it is *not limited* to these. Further, actors, together with teachers and directors, should attempt to make a theatre which espouses a need for and a belief in creating a style. This is the legacy of the Russian Symbolist movement in Chekhov’s technique.

Eastern Traditional Theatre and its Influence on Chekhov

*I don't think you came to the decision to study a theatre technique for three years through your intellect only. It is not possible. Your decision was made somewhere else in your soul, and it is to this point that I am speaking now. Try to find out what this mysterious point wishes to take from Mr. Shankar, his music, his movements – everything. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 6, 1939)*

Chekhov was familiar with traditional eastern theatrical forms, and according to Mel Gordon, he “loved Kabuki” (*Lessons for the Professional Actor* 17). He also saw examples of eastern theatre: for example, Uday Shankar and his Hindu Ballet gave a performance to celebrate the opening of the Chekhov Theatre Studio at Dartington Hall in 1936. His secretary, Deirdre Hurst Du Prey, writes that upon seeing the level of commitment to the technique by these dancers, and their “facility, clarity, and grace, [Chekhov] gave a lesson on ‘The Future Culture and the Importance of Technique.’” Further, the performance “aroused his deep admiration as well as provided an object lesson for his new students” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for the Professional Actor* 9). In this lesson, Chekhov suggested that Shankar inspired him to create a “‘future culture’ which will be a ‘human culture’ [...] for everyone – for Shankar, too” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 6, 1936). He answered the question “What would I wish to steal from Mr. Shankar?” with the following:

I would wish to have such a great culture, such a big, rich background which you can feel behind his work, behind each movement. [...] The second thing I would wish to steal is this beautiful technique which Mr. Shankar has. [...] this understanding that *art must be based on technique*. [...] The third thing that I would like to steal from Mr. Shankar is music. He and his troupe are permeated with the music – *the whole art is music*. [...] We don't have to dance, but we have to be full of music. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 6, 1936; emphasis in original)

The following years (1936-1942) in Dartington Hall and then Ridgefield, Connecticut, were prolific ones for Chekhov as a pedagogue. During this time, he developed the major elements of his

technique and shaped his three-year acting course. Following the views he expressed with respect to Shankar's technique, one goal was that the actor's body could become a transparent membrane easily filled with any kind of "music" as invoked by such tools and concepts as qualities of movement, sensations, rhythm, inner movement, and radiation. He taught his students to imbue everything with music: "Music has no space as you know; it exists in time, but for us it is the same thing – we must send our will into the past, present, or future time. First listen to the sounds and then take the sounds; they belong to you. Now your whole body is listening to the sound. Try to listen with your backs, with your legs, with your chests, etc. Send out your whole will from your whole body to the sounds" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* September 28, 1937).

Even before his exposure to Shankar, Chekhov attempted to use eastern tradition in his own work, most notably in his eclectic and stylized *Hamlet* (1924), in which the King was described to be "Kabuki-like" by a critic (Law 36). Chekhov's *Hamlet* was both admired and criticized, mostly for its eclecticism,²⁹ and in "The Ripe Action," in *Theatre East and West Revisited*, Eugenio Barba reminds us that

at the beginning of the twentieth century most seminal theatre reformers in Europe were attracted to Asian performances, considering them not only an aesthetical and formal inspiration, but also a mine of objective information to be applied to their very personal and specific visions and practice. I am referring to Craig, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Eisenstein, Copeau and, one generation later, Artaud and Brecht. (Davis et al. 237)

While Chekhov's name is omitted from this illustrious list, in *The Paper Canoe*, Barba refers to Chekhov's technique as the technique which is *most eastern* in the western world. There he devotes several pages to an analysis of Chekhov's technique as situated somewhere in between East and West, quoting Chekhov's explanations of several exercises from *To the Actor*, discussing them in the context of common elements found in all techniques, and ultimately concluding that:

by these ways and means, irrespective of the presence or absence of a codification, the South Pole³⁰ performer meets the North Pole performer [in Chekhov's technique]. The different genres of

performance for which both train cannot hide the presence of similar principles. We might well ask ourselves if it really was worthwhile to travel so far from home, when the essential fruits gathered during the journey were already there, a step away from our point of departure. (Barba 78)

Barba opens up an intercultural discussion of Chekhov's technique, but stays within certain parameters: namely the body-mind connection on the level of psychophysical involvement. Unfortunately, however, he does not include a discussion of philosophical and theoretical postulates, so that the similarity between Chekhov's actor training and the training of the actor in an eastern tradition is not given a larger context.

At this juncture, it is worth examining what is absent in the "Chekhov discussion" in *The Paper Canoe*, namely, how spirituality figures in a traditional eastern theatrical form and how this relates to currently-applied theory within Chekhov's technique. The Hindu/Buddhist religion of Bali is celebrated in Balinese performances, which are thought of as offerings to their deities by the performers and the audience alike. In Japan, meanwhile, the gospel of Kabuki and Noh ("skill") theatre grew out of Zen Buddhist teachings, and the Noh actor employs the theatrical craft to embody a Buddhist understanding of the world. In *Buddhism as/in Performance: Analysis of Meditation and Theatrical Practice*, David E.R. George summarizes this understanding: "The world of things (our world) can be deconstructed to become a world of properties which then can be further re-recognized as a world of events, happenings" (50). George points to the *theatricality* of this philosophy.³¹ As already mentioned, if this is brought to performance, the criterion of a full presence on the stage, in the Buddhist view, is not an abstract moment of pure being, but a creation of *events*, which are the performance of generative *actions* and their *qualities*. The Buddhist idea of reality and self are conducive to the act of transformation as well. The self is thought of as insubstantial, and therefore not an object but an ever-changing illusion, a *process* created by us through causing *events*.

This kind of thinking is prominent in Chekhov's teaching. The actor starts with concentration on real objects, for example, a lamp, in such detail that s/he "will feel that you are creating the lamp at this moment – at this moment it would not exist without you because you

are creating it” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* January 15, 1940). Following this, the actor creates a new reality:

First, we can see unseen things; and, second, we can create unreal things. The third step: if you will create something and then live with this creation. For instance, if you create a strange and interesting landscape, and if you concentrate on this beautiful and strange landscape, you will notice that this landscape changes you. This is again a great wonder. Your creation influences you, its creator, and the soul of the creator changes under the influence of his own creation. This is really the ability of an artist – to be changed because of his own creation. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 8, 1936)

Thus, not only the world, but also the individual being is in a process. In fact, everything is a *process* in this understanding of the world. Consequently, both the audience and the actor ought not to be interested in hearing the story but rather in experiencing the course of action, its progression, and its manner. Such an interest causes the performer to focus on the “how” (the manner of action), not the “what” (the action).

This is also true of how the performer of Chekhov’s technique thinks of his/her art. The actor strives to offer the audience a *quality* of action over and above the action itself. This “how,” and not “what,” is taught by Chekhov’s teachers today and is mentioned by Chekhov on many occasions. In *Lessons for the Professional Actor*, he offers the following:

If for instance, I ask you to take a chair and place it in a certain place, that is doing or “what” I am doing. Now the question remains, “how” do I do it? All the “hows” imaginable can be interpreted as qualities of my acting. I can do it with the quality of “care” – and what is that if it is not acting? Simple, but complete acting. I am *doing* something with a certain *quality*. You may say to yourself, for instance, no feelings, no philosophy, no psychology or anything of that sort, only the chosen business with the chosen qualities. (96; emphasis in original)

What is “the chosen business with the chosen qualities” but a deconstruction of the world into a performance of generative *actions* and their *qualities* such as in the eastern theatrical traditions? (As we have seen, such deconstruction was also employed by Goethe in his “Consider what, but consider *how* even more.”)

In Chekhov's technique, as in eastern theatrical forms, the importance attached to the *quality* of an action results in an acting pedagogy concerned with breath, imagery, altered balance, sensation, tempo/rhythm, and continuous improvisation (which can be described as consistent inconsistency or coherent incoherence in performance), intangibles leading to tangibles, and working with centres of energy and polarities. *Because* any action is in a constant state of change, it is a process, and as such, it can be only captured in a psychophysical way, which is a process as well, and not a fixed quantity. Fundamentally, therefore, the psychophysical exercises in Chekhov's technique imitate the Buddhist making of the world. They are a deliberate creation of what Buddhism calls "the causality of the external world and the subjective experience" and what the Dalai Lama refers to as "the true reality" (Bstan ᠠᠳᠤᠵᠢᠨ ᠷᠭᠡᠶ᠋ᠠ). Currently, Chekhov's *five guiding principles* are used to teach an actor to create such a reality.

Conclusion

Dancers from India are dancing the symbol itself. [...]If you take the symbol of the snake you will find that it is so significant, so deep, but how can we perform this snake? It is not art, it is another realm of our life, perhaps religious, and it must remain in the religious realm. But if the symbol is acted out, then it becomes art. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre April 2, 1937)

As Watson notes, "Interculturalism describes a merging, mixing or creolization. It is a transitive, dialectical process in which at least two cultures fuse and/or suffer partial disculturization to create what the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz termed a 'neoculture'" (Watson and colleagues 5). As has been shown, in Chekhov's technique, Romantic philosophy and Anthroposophical "pop" spirituality, both of which were influenced by Buddhism and Hinduism, merged with Stanislavsky's theatrical practices, Sulerzhitsky's experiments of the First MAT Studio, Russian Symbolism, and the aesthetics and philosophy of eastern traditional theatrical forms. In Chekhov's technique today, this multiple creolization hovers halfway between the Occident and the Orient, and manifests itself through the performer's new-found body-mind connection.

In Chekhov's technique, an actor is given the tools to understand the 'real' or 'true' nature of existence as it is understood in eastern spirituality, namely, that experiences are created within the mind and thus, are inherently empty. How one regards one's situation depends on perception – which is transformed into concepts and ideas. The embodied disruption of the actor's normal, habitual, and egoic³² visualizing makes room for something deeper and more genuine. Ideally, what emerges is the "Higher Self," a selfless, creative, and compassionate force within an individual who is no longer defined by personality, sex, social status, race, or age, and who can now create characters that are not small, dry, or insignificant but universal. Once the actor is imagining in this way, s/he is not separate from others, s/he is not in a degraded world. Rather, s/he is in the world of Creative Individuality where communication occurs naturally.

Therefore, by understanding the self in this eastern way, Chekhov's technique intends to help the actor in his/her reconciliation of his/her dualistic outlook. In order to do this, Chekhov suggests that the actor develop five types of love: the love of acting; the love of the part in which s/he is cast; the love of the process of preparing the part; the love of the product of the rehearsals (the character who is born and who lives on the stage as an "objective reality" for the actor); and finally, the love of the actor for the audience. Ideally, when the Creative Individuality is at work, the audience and the actor are united by these five loves, and communication can take place, as the audience witnesses how dualistic fixation can be replaced by a Sense of the Whole.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE:

¹ "Hindus [and Buddhists] including almost all teachers of Tantra, believe that death is not the end but that we undergo numerous rebirths and repeated deaths." Georg Feuerstein, *Tantra : The Path of Ecstasy* (Boston: Shambhala ; 1998). In this set of beliefs reincarnation is a result of a rebirth that causes something to pass from the past into the present. That Chekhov believed in reincarnation is evident from the following statement from a class taught on July 2, 1937: "This is the question of a previous life for each of us. For instance, I am sure that Eleanor is gifted but in some previous life she was so intellectual that she killed some part of her artist's being." Michael Chekhov and Deirdre Hurst Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* (A Collection of Michael Chekhov's Unpublished Notes and Manuscripts on the Art of Acting and the Theatre, 1977.)

² The Hindu and Buddhist belief in *karma* suggests that volitional actions or intentions result in an effect. The cause and effect principle puts human beings in a cycle of birth, life, death, rebirth ad infinitum. Only by reaching full enlightenment can a human being break this cycle.

³ For example, in a lesson taught on March 22, 1935, Chekhov gives the following instruction: “To this exercise add another exercise, which has been taken from the Hindu. Imagine two entirely different objects – for instance, a tree and a horse. Keep the tree in your imagination in front of you and change the tree slowly in your imagination in such a way that it will become a horse, without breaking the image.” Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*.

⁴ Interested readers may pursue this further in the following books: *India in the Mind of Germany: Schelling, Schopenhauer and Their Time* by Jean W. Sedlar; *Schopenhauer and Buddhism* by E.F.J. Payne; *Schopenhauer as Transmitter of Buddhist Ideas* by Dorothea Dauer; and *The Veil of Maya: Schopenhauer's System and Early Indian Thought* by Douglas L. Berger.

⁵ This statement is a part of the foregone conclusion to which I referred on page 16. I will discuss this further in the section on the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy on Chekhov.

⁶ Goethe classifies Newton's character as rigid and his “obsessive fixation on abstractions to the point where he deceives himself into mistaking them for realities – is, in Goethe's eyes, a prejudice born of the rigidity of the man who committed it, one that can only be understood by character analysis. Once understood for what it is, such dogmatism can be counteracted: Newton's reductionist theory of colour was ‘a part masquerading as a whole’. See R. H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science*, Edinburgh Studies in European Romanticism (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

⁷ I have already mentioned quantum physicist and Nobel laureate Werner Heisenberg who suggested that Goethe's ideas about scientific methods and observation have influenced the field of quantum physics. Also R.H. Stephenson tells us how in 1972 Goethe was being hailed for having played a significant role in the development of the technology which produced color television. Edwin Land who was inventor of the Land Camera claimed that he owed in part to Goethe his ‘new theory of colour’ as well. See Stephenson, *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science*.

⁸ According to Goethe's famous account of the conversation/reconciliation in the hallway in Jena Goethe expounded his theory to Schiller. Schiller reacted by saying that this theory was an idea, not an experience. And Goethe replied that in that case he should be glad to have ideas without knowing it, and even to be able to see them with his own eyes. That, according to Goethe, was precisely the point which, at that moment separated them. However, Goethe also suggested that the opposition between them was not a real one. Goethe says “If he termed an idea what I called an experience, then there must certainly be something negotiable, something in common between us”. What Goethe had in mind was not a single plant corresponding to the *Urphanomen*, and hence an empirical representation of a Platonic idea. Rather, he believed that if one looks at individual plants as differing manifestations of a

constructional and developmental principle, a model encapsulating this principle would appear to the inner eye, “in that highest area of consciousness, where external things can be observed with the utmost deliberation, with impartiality and vigilance alike, where they work in accord with the law of their inner nature, with vision and foresight, and with the enduring hope of acquiring a truly pure and harmonious pint of view”. Not through arbitrary intuition but as consequence of systematic empirical observation. In Goethe’s view intuition is never as of an arbitrary capacity. The intuition is a consequence of the deeper knowledge we possess which is a part of our nature and from which we were disassociated. Goethe asks “Does not the world, do we not ourselves tarnish the luster of such moments?”

In final analysis Goethe and Schiller did not agree on questions of intuitive knowledge but Schiller played a part of the opponent to whom Goethe felt compelled to respond and Goethe says “through the greatest duel between the objective and the subjective, we sealed a bond with lasted uninterruptedly and accomplished much good for ourselves and others. (...) during ten years of intimate association, such philosophic tendencies as were latent in my nature gradually unfolded. It is my intention to account for this unfolding in so far as it is possible, but the difficulties involved must be strikingly evident to the initiated”. See Jeremy Naydler, *Goethe on Science : A Selection of Goethe's Writings* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1996).

⁹ Goethe says: “It has occurred to me, namely, that in that organ of the plant which we usually designate as leaf the true Proteus lies concealed, who can hide and reveal himself in all formations. Forwards and backwards, the plant is always only leaf, so inseparably united with the future germ that one cannot be conceived without the other”. Quoted by Steiner in Rudolf Steiner, *Goethe the Scientist* (New York,: Anthroposophic Press, 1950).

¹⁰ That Chekhov studied Goethe is particularly evident in his theory on colour. Pitches analyzes this in *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*, where he suggests that a certain lecture housed in the Dartington Archive “illuminates more brightly than ever, the depth of Chekhov’s commitment to Romantic science and interestingly prioritizes Goethe above Steiner in its use of primary sources” (160). Pitches further argues that there are direct parallels between Goethe’s *Theory of Colours* and Chekhov’s lecture, “Colour and Light”:

If we look at nature on a very gloomy day through a YELLOW glass it is able to change the day to a happy one. (Chekhov 1937:3)
The eye is gladdened [...] particularly if we look at a landscape through a yellow glass on a grey winter’s day. (Goethe 1967:307)

Or:

Blue gives us the feeling of concentration [...] it recedes from us. (Chekhov 1937:4)

Blue seems to retire from us. But as we readily follow an agreeable object that flies from us, so we love to contemplate blue. (Goethe 1840:311)

See Jonathan Pitches *Science and the Stanislavski Tradition of Acting* (Routledge, London 2006).

¹¹ These are transcribed lessons, and there is no explanation as to what “only at the end” refers. This likely means that these exercises should be taught in advanced classes, as they are very difficult.

¹² The *third guiding principle* reads: “Employing the actor’s creative spirit and ‘Higher’ intellect to unify various aspects of the actor’s performance”, and the *fourth guiding principle* reads: “Each element awakening all the other elements of the technique.” Michael Chekhov, *On the Theatre and the Art of Acting: The Six Hour Master Class* (Applause, New York, 1991).

¹³ Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) postulated that, at the base of the world as it appears to our consciousness there is the “thing-in-itself,” the thing as it is apart from our way of comprehending it, which in itself can never be known by us. This term could also be replaced with the “transcendent object.” However, this term contains a *contradiction in adiecto*, in that something which transcends our consciousness can never become an object to us. See Egon Friedell, *A Cultural History of the Modern Age: the Crisis of the European Soul from the Black Death to the World War. Translated from the German by Charles Francis Atkinson, with an Introductory Essay on Friedell by Alfred Polgar*, vol. 2, 3 vols. (New York: Knopf, 1964). Schopenhauer disagreed with Kant, in that he postulated that “thing-in-itself” can become known to us.

¹⁴ This is how the Dalai Lama’s name is catalogued by the University of Toronto Libraries.

¹⁵ The endless cycle of birth and death is the result of karmic principle, whereby volitional actions or intentions result in an effect. The effect of karmic principle is reincarnation or rebirth. The doctrine of karma is central to Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual-scientific system. See Gilbert Childs, *Steiner Education in Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1991). As an Anthroposophist, Michael Chekhov accepted this doctrine.

¹⁶ Emil Zola (1840-1902): The father of “naturalist” theatre who suggested that the artist should emulate the scientist both in method and aim, the method being the careful study of objective phenomena, the aim “an exact analysis of man”. See Marvin A. Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*, Expanded ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 274.

¹⁷ Steiner also used the term “spiritual science” (*Geisteswissenschaft*). See Gilbert Childs, *Steiner Education in Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1991).

¹⁸ In his essay, “Michael Chekhov. Pedagogy, Spirituality, and the Occult,” Franc Chamberlain refers to Anthroposophy being “occulted” into the technique, in that it is implicit rather than explicit in Chekhov’s published writings. Franc Chamberlain, “Michael Chekhov: Pedagogy, Spirituality, and the Occult.” *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* 4 (2003): 3.

¹⁹ Buddhist deities are enlightened humans, not divinities as we understand them in the West.

²⁰ This large volume describes in detail the career of Madam Blavatsky and the careers of other western gurus who have looked to the East for esoteric wisdom, such as Jiddu Krishnamurti, George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, and Rudolf Steiner. In this “curious comedy of passion, power and gullibility” (Washington 1), only the character and career of Rudolf Steiner is described without controversy and scandal. This is important to mention because of the precarious nature of the esoteric science called Anthroposophy. Washington, who is a detractor, respectfully considers Steiner to be a serious academic, and discusses his work as that of a scientist who rejected materialism, who saw spirit present in everything, and who tried to convince his contemporaries to include spiritual matters in the classroom. Washington credits the success of Waldorf schools to the fact that: “Rudolf Steiner was that unusual thing among alternative spiritual teachers: a rigorous and highly trained western intellectual.” Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon : Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1993) 157. Today, Theosophy has been relegated to the annals of history, at least with respect to education. In contrast, institutions set up by Steiner, such as the Waldorf schools, are still present in many countries including Canada, Germany, and Switzerland. Finally, Chekhov's technique, also an offspring of Anthroposophy, is currently experiencing a revival.

²¹ The full citation of this book reads: H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy : Being a Clear Exposition, in the Form of Question and Answer, of the Ethics, Science, and Philosophy for the Study of Which the Theosophical Society Has Been Founded* (Pasadena, Theosophical University Press, 1972).

²² The term *koan* (pronounced /ko.an/) refers to enigmatic and often shocking spiritual expressions based on dialogical encounters between masters and disciples that were used as pedagogical tools for religious training in the Zen (Chinese Ch'an) Buddhist tradition. The *koan* was conceived as both the tool by which enlightenment is brought about and an expression of an enlightened mind itself. Koans are generally appreciated today as pithy, epigrammatic, elusive utterances that seem to have a psycho-therapeutic effect in liberating practitioners from bondage to ignorance as well as for the way they are contained in the complex, multilevelled literary form of *koan* collection commentaries. See Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²³ All three are used interchangeably in Chekhov's writing and taped sessions.

²⁴ See Chapter Four, pages 187-191 for a description of the exercise.

²⁵ See Appendix 10 pages 318-319 for a description of the exercise.

²⁶ Chamberlain primarily refers to his own pedagogy but also considers Chekhov's pedagogy as well. He does not consider contemporary pedagogy as a whole.

²⁷ In this book the term “naturalistic” will be used as it is defined by Patrice Pavis in *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*: “A naturalistic performance passes itself off as actual reality, and not artistic transposition on stage.” B. Dort defines it as “an attempt to set up the stage in a coherent and concrete milieu

that, given its materiality and closure, incorporates the actor (actor as instrument or actor as creator) and presents itself to the spectator as reality itself" (1854, 11). Patrice Pavis and Christine Shantz, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 236.

²⁸ As Stanislavsky's productions entered America in the 1920s, it was the "lifelike" feelings of the actors of the MAT that attracted those who then became the System's proponents in the United States. North America was in need of a basic, cohesive acting training at that time and did not in general have the complex stylistic concerns such as those of the Russian Symbolist movement (see quote from Wachtel on page 54). Of his North American visit, Stanislavsky writes:

We have never had such a success in Moscow or anywhere else[...]not in self-glorification, for we are not showing anything new here, but just to give you an idea at what an embryonic state stage art is here and how eagerly they snatch up everything good that is brought to America. Paul Gray, "Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology," *Tulane Drama Review* (special edition, "Stanislavski in America") (1964): 29.

Following this, Richard Boleslavsky published "The Laboratory Theatre" in *Theatre Arts* where he praised "the experimental theatre movement [in New York] which made possible the development of the new forms" (Gray 28; parentheses added). This experimental movement was drawn to Stanislavsky's methodology in the search of a "lifelike" performance.

In 1933 Boleslavsky began introducing Americans to the System. In his acting primer, *Acting: The First Six Lessons*, chapters devoted to Memory of Emotion and Dramatic Action served as the basis for what Pitches refers to "the key psychological conflict of the time: psychoanalysis versus behaviorism" Jonathan Pitches, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*, Routledge Advances in Theatre and Performance Studies 3 (London: Routledge, 2006) 3. However, Stanislavsky's ideas, presented by Boleslavsky, were interpreted differently by various American teachers, such as Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner and Lee Strasberg. On the one hand, the System developed with a focus on emotional and sense memory (Strasberg), and on the other, on the action-based behaviouralist approaches (Meisner, Adler). Both sides of this emerging conflict stayed in a scientific-materialistic realm, in that they identified the body with its scientific description, i.e., they regarded it as a material object whose anatomical and functional properties can be characterized according to general scientific law be it behavioristic or psychoanalytical. Such a body is thought to be controlled by the actor's psychology.

While the articulation of both approaches treats the body as "experiencer" and the mind as "cognitionier," Chekhov's technique challenges this basic presumption. From the early days when he assembled a group of students in his private flat, "Chekhov investigated the concept of reincarnation and the techniques of Indian Yoga. One novel exercise involved deep meditation. Tapping their minds' collective or racial unconscious, the students tried to reincarnate themselves as their characters." Gray, "Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology," 125. This early

example describes an idea of a body/mind connection where the body is not an object. This is a body capable of reincarnating and, as such, the body is also a “cognitioneer.” Here, body is the medium where the world comes into being.

²⁹ In 1924, Chekhov directed and played a highly stylized “Kabuki” *Hamlet* as the newly appointed director of the First Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre. Vera Soloviova, who played Gertrude, recalled, “Michael Chekhov was close to Eugene Vakhtangov in principle except that he sometimes arrived at vivid theatrical forms *without* the Stanislavsky foundation of truthful feelings.” Gray, “Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology,” 29.

The reviews for this production were very mixed:

[Theatre critic] Nikolai Aakimov labeled the production mystical and decadent, calling Chekhov’s *Hamlet* “a sickly degenerate.” To [theatre critic] Oleg Litovsky he was “a malicious, hysterical intellectual dressed in the costume of a Danish Prince.” On the other hand, Stanislavsky, who harshly criticized the production for its “eclectic, anti-realistic form” and “grotesquely-symbolic interpretation of Shakespeare,” had only the highest praise for Chekhov, “who created an image of tragic and nervous force, a *Hamlet* who perishes in his frenzy”. Alma H. Law, “Chekhov’s Russian *Hamlet*,” *The Drama Review* 27.3 (1983): 45.

Of the same production, Symbolist Andrei Bely wrote to Chekhov:

Tonight for the first time I understood Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and that shift in understanding happened through you. I didn’t see Chekhov, ‘the great actor’, I saw *Hamlet* and forgot about Chekhov’s Law, “Chekhov’s Russian *Hamlet*,” 45.

The above commentary shows the controversy associated with “anti-realism” in Russia during the first half of the twentieth century. Yet the attempt to put this idea to work was made not only by Chekhov but also by a number of his contemporaries. For example, Stanislavsky experimented with Symbolism, albeit mostly unsuccessfully. And Vesvolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) invented his grotesque theatre in collaboration with Alexander Blok; he proceeded to experiment with formalism until he was murdered by Stalin because of his refusal to embrace *socialrealism*. As we have seen, the value of verisimilitude was questioned by the whole Second Generation of the Russian Symbolists.

³⁰ Barba avoids the terminology of western and eastern, focusing on the formalized and codified vs. creative and rule-free types of performers. He uses his own North and South Pole categorization; The North Pole performer in this categorization, is a performer who is “trained in a rigorous traditional way in a form which remains within a genre and does so through total specialization.” Eugenio Barba, *The Paper Canoe : A Guide to Theatre Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1995) 13. The North Pole performer category includes those who work in Noh and

Kabuki forms, classical ballet, mime, and Chinese acrobatics. Opposed to these artists are the South Pole performers who are trained to be able to perform beyond the specialization but without the rules provided to enable them to advance their craft; a typical South Pole performer is a western commercial actor.

³¹ Interested readers might pursue this in works such as *Buddhism as/in Performance* by David E.R. George, S.C. Malik's *Mind, Man and Mask*, or the classic *Theater East and West: Perspectives Toward a Total Theater* by Leonard Pronko and *Performance and Consciousness and Consciousness and the Actor: A Reassessment of Western and Indian Approaches to the Actor's Emotional Involvement from the Perspective of Vedic Psychology* by Daniel Meyer- Dinkgräfe.

³² Here, the word "egoic" refers to anything to do with ego.

Chapter Two

The Teaching Philosophy of the Michael Chekhov Association and It's Contribution to Contemporary Pedagogy

Thank you very much for you, because I have received very much from you as friends and as human beings, and so we shall go on in friendship and in the belief that we will discover these things which will lead us to the real results in our small sphere which perhaps may become in time a big one – nobody knows. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre July 21, 1938; emphasis in original)

The History of the Michael Chekhov Association

From my first encounter with my students, I felt a tenderness towards them. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 77)

The international character of the contemporary pedagogy of Chekhov's technique was shaped by the unusual circumstances of Chekhov's life. Once he fled Russia, Chekhov moved around Europe extensively. In most places where he settled for some time, he acted and also taught. He lived in Germany from 1928-1930, France from 1930-1931, and Latvia and Lithuania from 1932-1934, at which point he toured the U.S., where he gave lectures on his technique. He headed a studio in Dartington Hall, England, from 1936-1938, and another studio in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and New York from 1938-1942. He moved to Hollywood in 1943, where he stayed to the end of his life in 1955.

When politics, artistic circumstances, or personal problems interfered with Chekhov's acting, he committed himself to teaching. As has been shown, he started to teach because he felt incapable of acting after his nervous breakdown. He was "driven" to teaching again when, after he fled Russia, he could no longer play the parts he



wanted to because of language barriers. His resolve to teach was strengthened, when, in the West, he faced what for him were unacceptable professional conditions. He could not get used to extremely short rehearsal periods in theatre and in film, and he became tired of being type cast in roles to which he referred as “little old professors” (M. Chekhov et al.).

Teaching provided him with an income and had a potential to better the circumstances of young artists. Ironically, his final and full commitment to teaching came after the Hollywood period of “blacklisting” during the anti-communist movement in America from 1950-1956, commonly known as McCarthyism¹. During the congressional hearings, often called “witch-hunts,” his Dartington Hall protégé (and later Academy Award winner) Beatrice Straight and another former Dartington student, John Berry, were blacklisted. Following this, “Chekhov made only a few more films and announced that he would open a school” (M. Chekhov et al.).

Chekhov did this with his associate George Shdanoff (1905-1988) and his wife Elsa Schreiber, “two satellite teachers that circulated around Chekhov in the last decade of his life” (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 253). They continued teaching Chekhov’s technique after Chekhov’s death and through to the late 1980s.² During his final years in Hollywood, Chekhov, together with Shdanoff

and Schreiber coached, “over one hundred Academy Award-nominated performances” (M. Chekhov et al.). The lore which resulted from this period was strong enough to maintain an interest in the technique during the “interim” period of the 1960s and 1970s when the popularity of the American Method³ overshadowed it.

Shdanoff continued to coach and teach into the 1980s, but by then, the grand stars such as James Dean, Gary Cooper, Marilyn Monroe, Leslie Caron, Gregory Peck, and Robert Stack were either long gone, or their popularity was waning. This was a tenuous time, when the survival of the technique in North America was in question. In 1980, however, Beatrice Straight rescued the technique by opening up The Michael Chekhov Studio in New York. The technique’s current resurgence and popularity can be traced back to this moment in time.

This studio opened twenty-five years after Chekhov died, and forty-four years after Beatrice Straight’s mother Dorothy Elmhirst invited Chekhov to head the acting program at Dartington Hall. Straight hired a former Dartington student and an accomplished Chekhov teacher, Blair Cutting, to head the Chekhov Studio. Cutting was Chekhov’s devoted student and had followed Chekhov from England to Connecticut and Los Angeles. As a teacher, he was active from the late 1940s when he taught Charles Marowitz, then a beginning actor. In *The Other Chekhov*, Marowitz recounts his classes with Cutting in New York: “My memory of those classes are hazy but I do remember sessions in which we expended a lot of energy ‘radiating’ to one another and trying to conjure up atmosphere” (1). Upon Cutting’s death, leadership passed to Mel Gordon, and this marked the beginning of the end of the studio. Ted Pugh attributes this to Gordon’s decision to stop teacher certification⁴.

The Michael Chekhov Association

All technique must be re-scrutinized and re-vitalized; external technique must be permeated by the power of the living spirit; inner technique must be developed until the capacity for receiving creative inspiration is acquired. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre “Chekhov Theatre Studio”)

The Michael Chekhov Association (MICHA) is an international organization dedicated to spreading Michael Chekhov’s

acting technique by means of conferences which include numerous workshops, a festival of performances rehearsed using the technique, scholarly presentations, and lectures. According to Joanna Merlin, the current president of the organization, teachers who “originally had questions about the technique” initiated it in Berlin, in 1992 (Merlin, Personal interview). And one of the founding members Sarah Kane recalls: “A new impulse altogether in the Chekhov work started [...] in Berlin in 1992, when Joerg Andrees and Jobst Langhans, two actors, directors and teachers of the technique decided to host a conference at the Theater Forum Kreuzberg to find out who else – apart from them – was teaching and working with [...] Chekhov [technique]” (Kane *Forming MICHA*). This started a series of three open workshops, in Germany, Russia, and then in the UK, called the Michael Chekhov International Workshops (MCIW 1, 2 & 3). The fourth was also held in Berlin, but was called The Experts’ Conference, for its intention was to be an exchange of ideas and teaching experience and sharing the technique among experienced teachers and practitioners. According to Sarah Kane “the so-called Experts’ Conference ended in disharmony” so that “[a]fter the Berlin event the mood amongst the Chekhov community was that the best idea would be to establish the work in the individual countries” (*Forming MICHA*)⁵. As a result Kane set up the Michael Chekhov Center UK (MCC UK) with two other colleagues in 1995, and Andrees and Langhans and set up their own national organization in Germany shortly afterwards.

From 1993 onwards there were thoughts voiced amongst contributors to the above events about starting an international organization. The formal aspects of MICHA were set out at a conference at Emerson College, UK in 1994. In 1995, in Berlin, money was collected to kick-start a fund that would gather money for founding such an organization. According to Kane “a number of issues that stopped this starting, both personal and structural” (*Forming MICHA*). The current organization developed out of these initial steps so that its first large conference took place at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Centre in 1998. While there are other organizations which teach the technique, such as the Michael Chekhov Connection of Los Angeles, the Michael Chekhov Studio New York, and the Michael Chekhov Studio Berlin, only MICHA has an international scope and offers teacher-training.

Four core MICHA teachers started their teaching careers after their work in the Michael Chekhov Studio New York: Joanna Merlin, Ted Pugh, Fern Sloan, and Lenard Petit. In Europe, MICHA faculty members learned the technique in various ways. Sarah Kane was taught Chekhov's technique by the Dartington Hall alumni. The German teacher, Jobst Langhans, was taught Chekhov's technique by German teachers Else Bongers and Jurgen v. Alten. Current MICHA faculty also includes the "third generation" of teachers, such as the American Scott Fielding, the Dutch Marjolein Baars and German Ragnar Freidank, who were taught Chekhov's technique by the "second generation" in the 1990s and David Zinder who came to the technique intuitively and then exchanged ideas with the other MICHA faculty.

Ironically, only in his native Russia has there been no official teaching of Chekhov's technique. This was because his name was erased from history until the mid-1980s, with the arrival of *Perestroika*. Yet in Russia Chekhovian lore, which was passed on secretly, helped to ensure the technique's survival. In the documentary film *From Russia to Hollywood* Anatoli Smeliansky, literary director of MAT, says: "When *To the Actor* appeared in typed shape [in Russia] it was a revelation of this spirit of Russian theatre for us. Stanislavsky was the official teacher, some kind of a 'sacred cow.' But Michael Chekhov, pupil of Stanislavsky, he is real Russian artist who knew the real secret of acting". Most notably, stories were passed on by Maria Knebel of the State Institute of Theatrical Arts (GITIS) from 1948 until her death in 1985. Knebel was a student with whom Chekhov worked in his first independent studio in 1918⁶, who was also a member of the Moscow Art Theatre under Stanislavsky. Other Russian institutions secretly taught the technique, and Slava Kokorin became a teacher through this route. This Russian member of the MICHA faculty graduated from St. Petersburg's State Theatre Academy.

The above teachers are part of an internationally-active group of pedagogues who constitute what Eugenio Barba calls the "Chekhov cabal" (Zinder 26). These teachers all belong or have belonged to MICHA, and their teachings are the basis for the following chapters. Some others whose work will not be described in detail, but whose association with the organization is influential, include Mala Powers (executrix of Chekhov's estate) and Jack Colvin, both "first

generation” teachers, and Andrei Malaev-Babel. The latter is a Russian-American theoretician and practitioner of the Chekhov technique. He studied directing in Schukin College of Theatre Arts of the Vakhtangov State Academic Theatre, Moscow. Malaev-Babel was taught Chekhov’s technique through the “lore” method described above by Alexandra I. Remizova, “a significant Russian director, actress, and teacher, and co-founder of the Vakhtangov State Academic Theatre, and who had been a student of Vakhtangov and Stanislavsky” (MICHA, *The International Michael Chekhov Conference 2000*).



MICHA: The Super-Objective

In all its works the Studio will struggle against the absence of an ideal in the contemporary naturalistic theatre. Modern problems are so serious, so intricate, and so torturous that if a solution is to be offered in the theatre, the theatre must leave the ways of mere imitation and probe beneath the surface. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre March 18 1938)

In the documentary film *From Russia to Hollywood*, George Shdanoff remembers how, when frustrated by the market-oriented film industry, he complained to Chekhov: “Misha what are we doing here in Hollywood? We did not become involved to make better actors for Louis B. Mayer.” Chekhov replied: “We are not making better actors for Louis B. Mayer. We are helping people to grow spiritually, to become better humans” (M. Chekhov et al. *From Russia to Hollywood*). William Elmhirst, Dorothy Straight’s son, had the same impression of Chekhov’s intentions during his explorations in the Dartington Hall laboratory: “He developed his exercises to help free these people. To liberate them. I feel that his exercises would be an enormous help for everybody. They help to liberate your feelings and gather your confidence. The exercises are for an actor but also for the human being” (Sharp). Furthermore, in the Theatre School of Dartington Hall, Chekhov’s holistic vision went so far as to take responsibility for the audience members’ souls: “The new theatre will develop [...] the power to carry the moral RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT ARISES IN THE SOUL OF THE SPECTATOR” (qtd. by Pitches 165; emphasis in original).

MICHA faculty are unified in their “super-objective,” namely the creation of a new type of actor training, one which will differentiate itself from the naturalist aesthetic that is generally taught in undergraduate training in North America and Europe. The term “naturalistic” refers to a kind of art that does not allow for a creation of style or an abstraction in performance, which wishes to train the actors to act “just like in life.” The reasons for this differentiation were originated by Chekhov and are not purely aesthetical. Rather, Chekhov believed that such training has deeper spiritual implications because it engages a part of the actor described by Simon Callow in the documentary film “The Dartington Years”:

It seems to me that it is very, very important that we find a new approach to acting at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The idea of an actor as a chap who stands and imitates life as we recognize it has run out of steam. I think Chekhov had such a different idea of the theatre, so much more profound notion of what acting is. He believed that the actor is able to fundamentally engage the deepest levels of the audience's self. Not just the psychological, mental, or indeed the purely sensual or emotional, but to go to the part of the audience which is deeply buried and help to bring it out. In that sense he reminds me very much of Charles Laughton [...] who wasn't a religious man, but who said that the job of an actor was to reveal the God in man. I'm sure that Chekhov would absolutely subscribe to that too. (Sharp)

Implicitly, the spiritual growth of the students of the technique continues to be an important concern. While there is no discussion about religion *per se*, MICHA's international conferences emphasize the embracing of the technique's spiritual aspects. For example, students are asked to accept the idea of working with intangibles, such as radiation and transformation of energy. They are introduced to concepts like Life Body, the Higher Self, and the "five loves": love for the profession, love for the part, love for the process, love for the creation, and love for the audience. The faculty emphasize that the nature of the acting profession is giving and that the act itself must be selfless. The Anthroposophical beliefs of Chekhov are discussed on occasion, and concepts such as the Three-Fold Nature of Man are explained. Finally, Rudolf Steiner's ideas about speech and imagination are commonly referred to. None of these is presented as a mandatory belief, but being comfortable, or at least open to working with all of the above, is required for those who wish to practice Chekhov's technique.

Even though the spiritual dimension is implied in the training and commonly mentioned in the formal and informal forums at every MICHA gathering⁷, there is a general hesitancy towards discussing the spiritual aspect of the technique in the classroom. This is a curious dichotomy which can only be solved by answering the question "what is spirituality" in this context or rather "what it is not"? For one, the answers to these questions do not involve a familiar doctrine of any major religion. For a Chekhov actor to embrace spirituality does not mean s/he will have to behave according to certain rules (i.e. s/he will change her tone of voice, eating habits and pray regularly). What it does ask of an actor is to accept existence of an invisible,

supersensible dimension and to accept the validity of the intuitive knowledge as well. One also must try and relate to the Sense of the Whole or “emptiness”; a place where ideas and experience can converge and where one can experience moments where the universal and the particular coincide. This requires a willingness to take away supremacy of the intellect and quantitative knowledge and give equal validity to experience and qualitative knowledge. In order to do this both the teacher and the student must meet in the state of openness towards this kind of knowledge which ought not to be thought of as anything special in a sense that it is out of our reach. Then the spiritual dimension in acting can become something very ordinary and this is what Chekhov wanted.

As a result of the hesitancy towards discussing spirituality the general atmosphere of MICHA training *in this respect only* becomes one of catering to the clients instead of teaching students. Paradoxically, in my experience my fellow student-teachers (just like my own students) generally wish to learn about the spiritual aspect of the technique and do not reject this discussion on principle. However, discussing spirituality is inconvenient, difficult and also requires a great deal of time. Moreover teachers’ knowledge of facts about the spiritual underpinnings of the technique and its many influences is also necessary in order to structure this learning. Thus mostly the spiritual matters are left uncovered and the cohesive approach to spirituality in Chekhov’s technique remains lacking in clarity and is often left unspoken.

While the spiritual aspect is implicit, the anti-naturalistic stance is explicit in contemporary pedagogy. There is no doubt among the MICHA faculty that the western acting classrooms of today are naturalism-dominated. While this might not be possible to prove, the faculty works with this perception. All faculty are united in their effort to give the students and student-teachers Chekhov’s message that “style is the most precious thing that [an actor] brings into his/her work, that it is something which ultimately makes being a creative artist worthwhile” (Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 42). Style, in this context, can be defined as a quality which results from a distinct manner of expression which is related (as is everything in this technique) to the body-mind connection: “To understand what the style is, it means to understand the style with each point, each part of your body. The psychology of the style helps the body and the body

helps the psychology” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* November 24, 1937).



In Chekhov’s technique, the style is created through allowing an image to have an independent life, thereby affecting the actor. For instance, Chekhov describes a style for a short play as: “Butterflies coming from the sky and touching the earth and flying off again” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* March 10, 1938). Using this image, the actor can develop a quality of movement and a subsequent sensation which affect the whole of the actor’s body as well as his/her psychology. The Sense of the Whole, which, as has been shown, must permeate every aspect of the performance, derives from this, and a style is created. Chekhov suggests that one must “permeate the body with [a] higher impulse, than we can agree upon

any style” and that “so-called stylization and dead form [are] [...] as dead as stone” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* November 28, 1941). Thus, the style, in this context, cannot be equated with stylization, which for Chekhov implies creation of a form empty of content. Rather, it is permeated by the “how” or the “sense of truth,” which in the above example is a psychophysically internalized image of “butterflies coming from the sky and touching the earth and flying off again.”

In *The Path of the Actor*, Chekhov predicts that unless the style is understood properly, “[naturalism] will reach a point where it will [have] to give its audience a series of ‘powerful sensations’ capable of arousing shock” (42). For Chekhov this was a pathological effect of naturalism. He went so far as to equate rejection of naturalism with the moral responsibility of performing artists. Given that this idea remains prominent in contemporary pedagogy, the following paragraph will be cited in its entirety:

[The actor] will understand that naturalism is not art, for the artist cannot bring anything from himself into a naturalistic “work of art,” that his task in such a case is limited to his ability to copy “nature” more or less exactly and, at best, to bring into a new configuration whatever existed and exists aside him and outside him. He will understand that to engage in naturalistic art is to be no more than a photographer of “nature.” And a naturalism-dominated future in the theatre is a dismal prospect. Remaining within the bounds of narrow themes and objectives, naturalism will be compelled to seek out ever more fiery combinations of facts, combinations that are capable of having a greater effect on the *nerves* of an audience than would have been the case either yesterday or the day before yesterday. It will reach a point where it has to give its audience a series of “powerful sensations” capable of arousing shock within them through a chain of pathological effects. Scenes will appear on the stage of terrible forms of death, physical torments, bloody murders, soul-shattering catastrophes, and pathological psychological disorders, instances of madness, animal-like cries, screams and gunshots. All this will be the peak of achievement for naturalistic ‘art’, but it will also be its end. The legacy that naturalism will leave behind will be a coarsened and nervously disordered audience that has lost its artistic taste, and much time will be needed in order *to restore it to health*. (43; emphasis in original)

Clearly, Chekhov is describing a phenomenon popularly known as “pushing the envelope,” sometimes manifested through graphic depictions of sex and violence.

In current pedagogy, this radical stance has been modified: there is an understanding that an ability to perform in a lifelike manner is a necessity for contemporary actor because it “pays the bills.” To put it in Chekhov’s terminology, an ability to be a “photographer of ‘nature’” is by no means considered negative in the MICHA’s philosophy. This compromise is less evident in the classroom than in the performance. In the classroom actors often take a leap of faith beyond naturalistic expression. Creating a style of an entire performance, however, takes time and courage. It also requires an entire company working towards the same goal with the same technical means. And to make matters harder, unlike its eastern counterpart, the western theatre doesn’t have any prescribed stylistic code which it can modify or break (i.e. Butoh dance breaking the strict rules of Noh theatre). That being said, MICHA faculty make sure to dispel any notion that lifelike and good acting are one and the same, and they teach that equating the two is a common misunderstanding in *most* western acting schools.

Creating a style has been and continues to be a contentious issue between the proponents of this technique and those of the American Method, where naturalism is a default style in all its branches. Uta Hagen sums it up when she says: “When I go to the theatre, if I can see the acting I already don’t like it.” And commenting positively on a scene from *The Taming of the Shrew* rehearsed according to her principles, she goes on to say that her technique brings forth “elimination of style,” meaning that it guarantees a lifelike performance (Hagen).

Hagen’s view is more radical than most, and in Robert Lewis and Sanford Meisner’s writing, there is evidence that style might be acceptable, even desirable. For example, when an interviewer asked Meisner, the quintessential teacher of American realistic acting, “How were you introduced to the Stanislavsky System?” he replied:

In the Group Theatre, by the pioneer leadership of Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg; from Stella Adler, who worked with Stanislavsky and to whom I listened attentively and rewardingly; and by the actor Michael Chekhov, who made me realize that truth, as in naturalism, was far from the whole truth. In him I witnessed

exciting theatrical form with no loss of inner content and I knew that I wanted this too. (Meisner and Longwell 10)

Despite Meisner's wish (uttered many years after he met Chekhov), this significant difference in performance style was a strong enough argument for the Group Theatre to reject Chekhov as a possible leader in the 1930s⁸: "Just as the symbol had been for Stanislavsky 'a hard nut to crack' early in the century, so the Group found theatrical style an impossible challenge" (Gray 36).

The need for stylization in the technique goes beyond aestheticism into a moral and an ethical realm. Contemporary pedagogy continues to embrace the idea of the interconnectedness of all things and suggests that this constitutes a much-needed balance to what is seen by the MICHA as the negative development of Stanislavsky-based teachings. The ethos promoted by MICHA is opposed to a materialistic, egotistic culture prone to emotional introspection. In terms of the technique, MICHA has continued Chekhov's development of Stanislavsky's technique which started during his tenure as the leader of the First Studio where Chekhov had begun to incorporate pioneering, ground-breaking exercises using sound and movements in novel, non-naturalistic ways; and moving away from the main beliefs of the original Moscow Art Theatre. At the time, he was quoted as saying: "I can only say if the system of Konstantin Stanislavsky is high school, then these exercises are the university" (*The Other Chekhov* 9). Currently, MICHA training serves as such a "university" not only for actors but also for student-teachers.

Teaching Philosophy: The Five Guiding Principles

To those of our colleagues who would like to study our method in earnest I would like to give some guiding principles which would enable them to study the ideas better and also facilitate for them the comprehending of all the exercises, their meaning, their purpose and also the way of doing them.
(M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*)

The *five guiding principles* were postulated by Chekhov, only a few months before he died, in a series of taped lectures presented at The Stage Society for a group of professional actors in Hollywood. They are also listed in the companion booklet to the lectures, by Mala Powers. These principles are a combination of physical, psychological, and spiritual categories, and their concise formulation

and simple structure offer evidence of Chekhov's ability to synthesize on a theoretical level. As will be shown, the point of view of these *five guiding principles* is decidedly eastern, and their application contributes to rendering the technique intercultural today. Despite the significance of the principles, which grew out of the influences discussed in Chapter One, their treatment in current training has not been discussed at length in any scholarly publications to date.

The *five guiding principles* are: 1) psychophysical exercises; 2) using intangible means of expression to achieve tangible results; 3) employing the actor's creative spirit and Higher Intellect to unify various aspects of his/her performance; 4) all elements of the technique leading to the goal of Creative Individuality; and 5) using each facet of the technique to acquire more artistic freedom (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*). Each will be discussed in more detail below.

The First Guiding Principle: The Body and its Psychology

We must show our body, our whole body, which is like a membrane through which all the finest psychological problems must be speaking to the audience. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre September 30, 1937)



As shown in Chapter One, the cluster of traditions and theories inspired by eastern philosophy and its consideration of the relationship between body and mind has been very influential in the development of the technique. For instance, Chekhov begins *To the Actor* by explaining the psychophysical principle. This book, arguably the most important one written by Chekhov, opens with the suggestion that the actor “*must* strive for the attainment of complete harmony between the two, body and psychology” (1).

Chekhov continues by outlining three requirements of the acting profession: “extreme sensitivity of body to the psychological creative impulses,” “richness of psychology itself,” and “complete obedience of both body and psychology to the actor,” and concludes that “the entire method suggested [in *To the Actor*] leads us to the accomplishment of the last requirement” (2-6).

In *Beyond Stanislavsky*, Bella Merlin describes how such complete obedience is understood today:

In a nutshell, the basis of psychophysical acting is that *inner feelings* and *outer expression* happen at the same time. In other words, whatever emotion you may be experiencing, your physical response to that emotion is instantaneous. And *vice versa*: whatever physical action you execute, the inner sensation aroused by that action is spontaneous. That doesn't necessarily mean that if you feel upset, you show that sorrow, as we all know that in everyday life we often hide or disguise or deny our real emotions. What it does mean is that there has to be a genuine and dynamic connection within each actor between seen action and unseen sensation. (*Beyond Stanislavsky* 27; emphasis in original)

Merlin develops this psychophysical idea by calling it a *continuum*: “Acting cannot be divided into ‘inner/outer’ techniques (for example Method acting), or ‘outer/inner’ techniques (for example ‘character’ acting)” (27).

Some MICHA faculty members call this continuum, *lemniscating*.⁹ The acting is compared to following the path of the character for infinity, which does not have a beginning or an end and in which two elements can reverse. This is true for acting, voice and movement aspects of training. For example, Sarah Kane, who specializes in teaching voice, is interested in the infinity of the voice/movement connection and the interplay of the inner and outer impulses. She explains how speech originates: “I speak not purely of the physical form, out of a sensation I speak. There is a moment of inner awakening that takes me into speech” (2004). Kane’s exercises are designed to teach the students to speak out of both their physical form and the invisible sensation contained within it.

As in the original technique, current Chekhov’s training uses the *first guiding principle* of psychophysical exercises with an emphasis on the actor’s place as an independent creator rather than skillful interpreter. The psychophysical exercises correspond to what

in Stanislavsky's System falls within the realm of the "work on oneself," but here, personal memory is replaced by physicality. In Chekhov's technique, these are exercises where the actor employs large movement (which is subsequently internalized) to change his/her psychology and vice versa. These are often done simultaneously with what, in Stanislavsky's System, is termed "work on the part," or characterization. Instead of analyzing the part through repetitive reading and intellectual discernment or by creating a score of physical actions (both of which were used by Stanislavsky), an actor employs the principle of Active Analysis¹⁰, which basically means understanding the role through the same exercises used to foster psychophysical connection within the category of "work on oneself." For example, the Four Qualities Exercise (see Appendix 6) is used as a basic body/mind exercise in Chekhov's technique. In the Active Analysis, an actor can choose one of the four qualities of movement – molding, floating, flowing, or radiating – as the basis for an analysis of his/her character during a rehearsal. The actor will engage his/her body and mind to achieve the quality and then analyze what s/he has learned about the character through this abstract movement. These qualities of movement are the same basic exercises used to foster the body/mind connection, and need to be practised repeatedly.

Working with these four qualities means that an actor simultaneously works on the part (by choosing a quality s/he thinks is appropriate for his/her character's inner sensations) and on him/herself (by repetition of the quality so that s/he would be able to respond to most intricate and subtle impulses). This general principle applies to all tools in Chekhov's technique and all other guiding principles.

The Second Guiding Principle: Invisible to Visible

*The atmosphere we call the soul of the performance. We imagine that the air is filled with atmosphere in the same way as the air can be filled with smoke or a fragrance. As we imagine this [...] we try to open ourselves to this atmosphere, and we begin to feel ourselves filled with this atmosphere, and we act in it. We radiate it to our audience. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* May 4, 1941; emphasis in original)*



In Chekhov's *second guiding principle*, the “intangible means to tangible expression,” the actor adds to the body-mind connection an invisible element which is concerned with the radiation of the Inner movement or inner sensation. When viewed from the Aristotelian conception of matter as a mechanical object moving in space (which is also the basis of Newtonian model), the *second guiding principle* might appear as difficult to discuss and understand. However, if the reader takes into consideration the new modern quantum mechanics s/he will quickly see that the concept is in tune with the latest discoveries in the “most rational branch of modern science, physics” (Mindell, Sternback-Scott and Goodman 10-11) Quantum physicist, and teacher at the Jung Institute in Zurich, Dr. Arnold Mindell says:

Einstein himself said that Aristotle's conception of matter as a mechanical object moving in geometrical space inhibited the development of physics for two thousand years. However,

twentieth-century research has forced physics to reject the Greek conception of geometrical space and matter. Surprisingly enough, the new concepts of modern quantum mechanics are similar to Eastern views of matter. Today physicists see matter as fields, energies and intensities, not as isolated definite objects in space. Physics, the most rational branch of modern science, has produced a sort of subtle body view of nature. Matter is both solid and formless energy. The appearance of the body, like all matter, depends of how we look at it. If we measure temperature by putting a thermometer under the arm, then the body appears in terms of temperature. If we close our eyes and attend to inner signals, then the body appears in terms of fantasies and sensations. I would define the real body as the result of objective physiological measurements, and the dreambody as the individual experience of the body. (Mindell, Sternback-Scott and Goodman 10)

The *second guiding principle* is concerned with the individual experience of the body or a “subtle body view of nature” in which the formless energy is transmitted. In the theatrical context of Chekhov’s technique, this subtle transmission can be that of the message or the Super-objective of the play but it also can be a subtle transmission of a moment-by-moment individual experience of the body. The actor must learn how to use his/her energy and discover how to radiate it into the space, covering the distance between him/her and his partner, and between him/her and the spectator.

When placed into such a context, the *second guiding principle* of Chekhov’s technique resonates equally well with both modern quantum physics and ancient Buddhist meditation practices. Mindell explains: “As far as *classical* physics is concerned, elementary quantum events look shy and otherworldly” (Mindell, Sternback-Scott and Goodman 12). Similarly, in Chekhov’s technique today, achieving intangible objectives, referred to as tapping into the “river of energy,” may be difficult to understand simply because they are invisible. However, as will be shown, Chekhov’s theory and practice train actors to create this “river” willingly.

I mention the struggles of quantum physics because such struggles mirror the problems that arise when Chekhov’s intangibles are considered next to the concept of “real body”. Quantum theory challenged Aristotelian classical physics, forcing it to realize that not everything in nature can be understood through mechanical explanations; and Chekhov’s teacher Sulerzhitsky challenged ideas born from the same philosophical base. In fact, as early as 1905,

Sulerzhitsky suggested that not everything related to an actor's performance could or should be explainable within a materialistic philosophical outlook. As already shown, inspired by Sulerzhitsky, Stanislavsky used practices that worked with "irradiation," derived from the Hindu concept of *prana* (the energy field associated with the sustaining of the physical body, and the connecting link between the physical body and the mind). It is worth noting that in Chekhov's technique, *prana* or the "river of energy" is specifically related to action and will in that it is thought of as something accessible and trainable. Today, Chekhov's technique works with *radiation* as a given fact and considers *the second guiding principle* not as experimental but as fact.

While the details of how this training takes place will be offered in Chapters Four and Five, for now, it is important to understand that to work with *prana* means to work consciously with breath:¹¹ "The Sanskrit word *prana* expresses the same reality that is also captured in the Latin term *spiritus*, which is contained in breath-related words like *inspiration* and *expiration*" (Feuerstein 148; emphasis in original). Rudolf Steiner, in his educational philosophy, maintained that there are subtle connections between the breathing processes and the nerves/senses system. This harmony between these two is essential if the soul and spiritual elements are to be satisfactorily incorporated into the physical. In fact, he declared, "education consists in teaching the child to breathe rightly" (Childs 42). The intangibles are impossible to tap into without paying attention to the subtleties of breath.

In Chekhov's technique, the actor employs the breath to tap into his/her subtle energy and achieve constant radiation. When radiated, the intangibles can be likened to the transmission of invisible waves. In order for a wave to travel, radiation needs to occur, but there also needs to be a receptor. Ideally, upon achieving this type of communication, one experiences a coexistence of pure consciousness with the aesthetic, theatre/performance-specific contents, sensory impressions, stimuli for the mind, the will, and the emotions. All these are mentioned in the *second guiding principle*: radiation and receiving, creation of atmospheres, Psychological Gesture, imagination (Imaginary Centres and Imaginary Body etc.), the message or Super-objective of the play and of the character, sensations, and emotions.

The Third Guiding Principle: Using the Higher Self to Synthesize

The artist, whatever he does, must do it with the feeling of completeness or wholeness [...] this marvellous feeling of the whole must be awakened in each of us through exercises. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre January 13, 1939)

When introducing the *third guiding principle*, Chekhov says:



The third guiding principle is perhaps not so obvious as the previous ones. We try to introduce in our method that which we might call the spiritual element. We introduced it so far in a very modest, limited way. What is this spirit, as we understand it in the frame of our professional work? What is its influence? What is its practical value? (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*)

Chekhov then answers his own questions, saying: “To create oneness out of multitude is the most important function of our spirit and especially in art.” He includes the “true”

intellect and “the heart” in this equation:

Let’s once again enter our hidden, subconscious laboratory and see what is going on there now. One is his Higher Self and another is his assistant, the lofty and noble *intellect*. Full of fire, full of flame, heart and intellect join together. Our Higher Self uses the flaming, burning and hot ideas of his assistant [the intellect]. Both of them are preparing oneness out of the multitude thus creating archetypes and prototypes that we as professional people, actors, use and

experience as sensations of our feelings. (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*)

Chekhov's *third guiding principle*, "Employing the actor's creative spirit and higher intellect to unify various aspects of the actor's performance," may be compared to the Buddhist concept of Emptiness, which can only be reached in a cooperation between the intellect and the feeling. The Buddhist concept has a completely different meaning from the western negative connotation of "emptiness," which can mean "without substance, totally without, without foundation, doomed to failure or disappointment, without seriousness" (*The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*, 309). But to abide in Emptiness means to abide in the Form as well, to abide in the eternal present, moment to moment, without an agenda. As with anything in Buddhism, this merging of intellect and heart is "a process more than a truth" (George 144). The practice becomes effortless and when mind pervades the whole body.

In the fourteenth century, Ze-ami Motokiyo, "an actor of singular genius" wrote "many important treatises on Noh acting" (Brandon 145). Ze-ami integrated Zen Buddhist precepts into Noh drama, and as Leonard Pronko says in *Theater East and West*:

Ze-ami has organized the actor's training in three facets: exercise, study, meditation; these correspond to the training of the body, the mind and the spirit. In the perfection of these three facets lies the road to the true flower. [...] On the highest level is the Noh that speaks to the spirit; only the greatest actors can embody it, only the most refined spectators can appreciate it. (81-83)

The accomplished Noh actor attains a state of complete presence, which Noh tradition likens to a "flower," or *hana*. Presence works on two levels – on the level of the performer's skillful meditation in action, and the audience's ability to perceive it.

Discussing these ideas in today's context, Yoshi Oida says that, fundamentally, the philosophical and practical ground of all of his Noh and Kabuki training is related to the concept of Emptiness. Explaining the important concept of Emptiness in Noh and Kabuki training in *The Invisible Actor*, he likens the Noh actor's achievement of the quality of "flower" (*hana*) to Emptiness, while considering the principal concept in Buddhist phenomenology from the main Tibetan text, *Heart Sutra*: "Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form" (Oida

123). Oida suggests that a beautiful flower “emerges from the opening of the heart” and goes “beyond technique into another existence” (118-119).

Similarly, in “Buddhism as/in Performance” George says:

Noh, one can conclude, is a professional theatre without any sacrifice of its Zen ambitions and *vice versa*. Just as a Zen *satori* (Emptiness) occurs most authentically in the primary experience of something entirely ordinary and repetitive, so too one can conclude: there is no contradiction between the professionalism of *Noh* and its Zen-connection when both are realized to be a common practice in selfless discipline aimed at a single moment; the moment of the flower. (George 199)

By professionalism George means the worldliness of *Noh*, which just like Zen Buddhism, aims at achieving Emptiness that is also is Form.

Such Emptiness is analogous to Steiner’s belief in the synthetic ability of the human spirit which results in Spirit Man. This belief was included by Chekhov in his technique, as the *third guiding principle*: “Employing the actor’s creative spirit and ‘Higher’ intellect to unify various aspects of the actor’s performance.” Steiner conceptualized and Chekhov accepted the notion that higher human consciousness has the ability to synthesize through the use of intuitive knowledge. One can only synthesize if there is no distinction between the subject and the objects: both are empty, united in Emptiness. At that point we have oneness with our goal and “form is form and emptiness is emptiness” (Suzuki *Zen Mind* 41). Spiritual seekers adhering to any form of eastern philosophy look for this non-dualistic way of perception. The *third guiding principle* defines Chekhov’s search for the transcendence of subject-object dualism through entering a state of pure consciousness/pure experience/pure presence.

The moment of synthesis is a moment of *inspiration*¹² in which the actor should ideally abide. This is a moment and a quality known to theatre professionals the world over: an actor on fire, vibrating, creating surprising and startling impulses, discovering along the way without having to think about it. These moments of synthesis are unexpected, beautiful, effortless, and, of course, Whole. Form, intensity, and sensibility merge, and the spiritual content is revealed to the audience. These synthetic moments include, concentration, awareness of the visible and the invisible, and ultimately, they free the actor. Today, Chekhov actors do not have a religious framework within which to place such inspired aesthetic moments, but they do

have the *third guiding principle*. To fully realize the *third guiding principle* means to achieve the moment of the flower, to abide in Emptiness or to be one with everything (Whole).

The Fourth Guiding Principle: Each Element Awakening All Other Elements

We know that rhythm substitutes for power, and that repetition is actually the growing power, and herein lies the key to exercise. [...] It is so important to start exercising as if anew. That is the secret. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre November 21, 1941; emphasis in original)

Teachers of Chekhov's technique are aware that some psychophysical exercises might provide instant results. However, it takes years to perfect the technique and to integrate all elements. The *fourth guiding principle of each element awaking all the elements of the technique* is arrived at through repetition and depends on the will. Chekhov suggests: "If we use correctly one of these points separately, the more and the greater the chance is that by using one of them all the others will flare up and the creative state of mind will become ours at any time we want" (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*). Repetition is the *active meditation* principle in the technique.

As Chekhov says: "The *fourth guiding principle* concerns our method as a whole" (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*; emphasis added). One becomes a masterful actor after one has practised, and when the practice becomes second nature. Chekhov teaches that using only *one element* can awaken *all* of the elements of the technique, thus enabling it to merge "work on the self" and "work on the part." Think of all the techniques as letters of the alphabet: initially, one learns the letters, but eventually one learns how to read and write without focusing on each letter separately. This is true of any technique. These ideas about the application of a technique echo back to the approach of Chekhov's teacher Stanislavsky. In fact, in his lessons Chekhov offers Stanislavsky as an example of "what it means to be trained, absolutely trained," recounting Stanislavsky's tears of despair and dissatisfaction with "half things": "He was crying like a child – that was an artist who requires everything or nothing." Chekhov explains:

Not only to know something, because he knew his Method absolutely, but he wanted to get it as his second nature, and when have we seen this around him? We have seen that when he entered the stage – we knew his movements, and eyes and everything absolutely – and we have seen that he was like a wild animal; he was chased by his own hope to be filled by the points which he thought were right. He was never satisfied with his acting, although he was a marvellous actor. He was his own specimen, his own victim, his own patient. We have seen this marvellous quality, and this is what I want you to get. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 4, 1938)

Still, to Stanislavsky's inquisitiveness Chekhov adds the ideas about such intangibles as the soul, spirit and joy in performance, because he believed Stanislavsky's fire had a destructive, critical quality, "a big mistake in the Moscow Art Theatre." Chekhov declares: "We must escape this kind of punishing ourselves" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* June 23, 1937). According to Chekhov, the focus on the body-mind connection can help the actor work without the fear of creating a cliché: "We must not be afraid of the cliché, because cliché has form and without form we cannot express ourselves [...] but [cliché] must be filled with life" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* June 23, 1937).

In conclusion, even though Chekhov credited Stanislavsky for teaching him the value of and need for training, he saw Stanislavsky as overly critical and intellectual. Chekhov remedies this by focusing on imagination: "I mentioned to you that Stanislavsky has found this beautiful thing, but the technique of how to take it and fulfill it we will understand in our own way. [...] It is a great difference for an actor to find the objective with the intellect, or to find it with the imagination" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* September 30, 1937). Therefore, although the *fourth guiding principle* takes Stanislavsky's ideas about *having a method and fully committing to practicing it* so that it can inspire an actor, the *how* of this guiding principle is predicated on committing to imagination in a way specific to this technique.

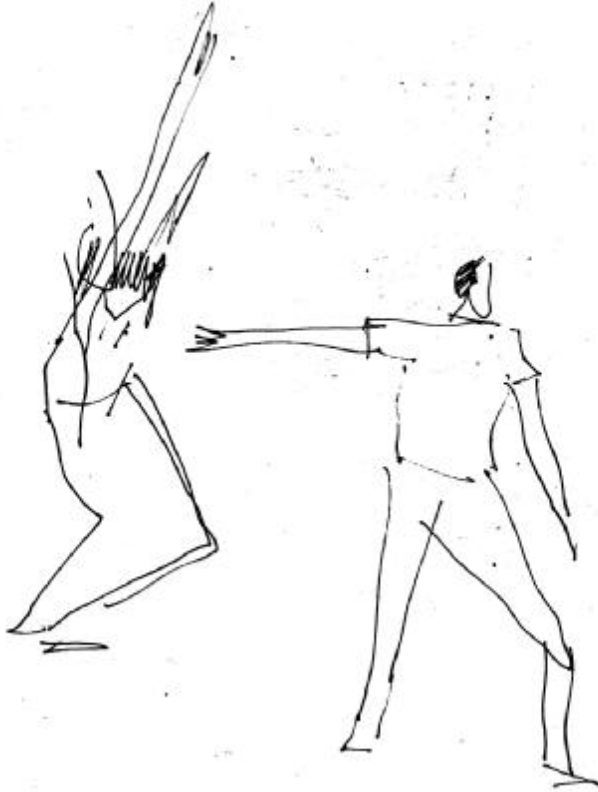
The Fourth Guiding Principle: Polarities

Stanislavsky once said that if you are acting a good person you must find first where he is evil. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre June 23, 1937)

The craft of the *fourth guiding principle* is in repetition, but the art described as “one element waking all the others” inhabits the province of polarities.¹³ In Chekhov’s technique, the actor deliberately works with polarities to create a complex performance. The accomplished Chekhov actor also knows that by pressing the “one button,” the polarity should become manifest. In fact, the polarity itself will likely be the button itself, as it will awaken all other elements of the performance. Furthermore, sensations are created in the body; they are changed by unpredictable factors, such as the offerings of a partner, the audience’s response, or the body’s daily changes. The actor learns to react to changes within the polarity of the known and the unknown; *Form* and *Emptiness* thus can become one.

In Chekhov’s technique, the actor tries to bring both sides of a psychological spectrum to a performance by using physical rather than psychological means. On a larger conceptual scale, the polarities in Chekhov’s technique are these: performance and non-performance, outer space and inner space, movement and stillness. These translate into performance in a qualitative sense. For example, if the inner sensation an actor has created is soft, s/he should experiment with a hard exterior. If the exterior movement is prominent, one should experiment with moments of stillness. If the characterization is “large,” one should find moments where it is “small.” Whatever choice an actor makes, s/he must become aware that the polarity of that choice is needed to create a whole character.

There is no end to the ways with which polarities can be played and experimented in Chekhov’s technique, and to create a complex performance, an actor *must* play with them. For example, opposites are present in the non-movement which precedes movement. The suggestion of Chekhov’s technique is that in this stillness there is already an inner movement, and a skillful Chekhov actor plays with his/her own inner tempo by choosing a different outer tempo. The same can be said for the inner and outer atmosphere. Polarities work on the level of partnership as well: one must always polarize the partner’s use of tempos, qualities, gestures, and rhythms. These contrasts are also qualitative: fast/slow, direct/indirect, rough/soft, large/small, staccato/legato.



Polarities can be created between the actor and the audience. Chekhov says that the actor has to relate to the audience: “The more serious my attitude to the theatre was [...] the more complex my relationship to the audience became [...] I began to feel the will of the spectators, their wishes, their moods” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 125). Chekhov describes moments with Russian audiences, when each night, a different professional group came to watch his *Hamlet*: “I tried to act Hamlet each night not as I wanted to but as the audience wanted me to. It was very interesting because each evening I got different suggestions and questions, as it were, from the audience. If it was an audience from the street, I got one thing. If it was a group

of teachers, I got quite another lot of questions, and they had to be answered differently" (Gordon, "*A Descriptive Chronology*" 12).

Chekhov's ideas about the audience are reflective of Ze-ami's teachings about the audience's response as linked to polarities of *yin* and *yang*:

Even the time of day when you perform has an effect on your style. Since daytime is Yang, your performing style should be Yin, in order to maintain the appropriate balance. In contrast, the night is Yin, and so requires a more Yang style of acting. For Yang acting, you should play more strongly, making clear decisions which are communicated with energy and power. Yin acting is more interior and less extravagant in expression. [...] The important thing is to be aware of exactly how the audience is reacting on that particular occasion, and then to construct your performance accordingly, in order to maintain the correct balance. (Oida and Marshall 83-84)

Whereas Ze-ami's approach categorizes responses to the audience and formalizes them, Chekhov advocates an intuitive response. Chekhov's technique uses an Oriental principle, but changes the Occidental execution to make it less formalized and codified.

The Fifth Guiding Principle: Freedom from the Personal?

*Do you want to see my heart? Then I will cry in you, and you will cry in me and with me. And I will laugh with you, and in you. Then it is something – a sort of sacrifice. But without this it is not worthwhile, and, for me, it is really shameful to be an actor. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 3, 1937)*

The *fifth guiding principle* of Chekhov's technique is posed as a question: "Does the technique free me as an artist?" Chekhov suggests that if the technique does not do so, it should not be used. In fact, Chekhov began to develop his technique in order to free himself from the constriction of using painful personal memories in his work. Chekhov says he "never liked" the use of affective memory practiced when he studied and worked with Stanislavsky,"¹⁴ and he never used this technique"¹⁵ (*The Other Chekhov* 114).

For Chekhov, the source of all acting was the imagination, not personal experience, which limits an actor's choices. A common complaint of western actors is that they end up playing the same type again and again, one that is close to their personality or physical



appearance. They are “cast according to type” as a result of the market’s demands. Furthermore, by dipping into the personal, the actors cannot find enough variation within the designated type or offer themselves to radical transformation. Chekhov was concerned with this problem: “By doing so they are compelled to play always themselves as they are in life. It is as if a painter would always paint a self-portrait and another self-portrait, etc” (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*). The actor who is caught in playing a self-portrait is not free: s/he is playing a personality which is not universal, as opposed to creating an individuality which is universal. If one is to truly practice Chekhov’s technique, one must adopt this transpersonal way of working.

Lessons to the Professional Actor is a collection of lectures which Chekhov presented at his studio classes in New York in 1941. At these lessons, the majority of actors present belonged to the Group Theatre which, because of the Group’s use of sense and emotional (affective) memory, accounts for certain questions regarding Chekhov’s views on personal memory as it relates to creating impulses:

You say it is not necessary for the developed, mature actor to think of his “dying grandfather”. It makes sense to me, but I don’t know how, although I have understood everything you have said about what we want to achieve – the goal. But perhaps I have to use my “dying grandfather” because he is the only way I can get at the goal I want. My problem is, what should I use in place of my “dying grandfather.” (40)

Chekhov’s answer highlights “the imagination of an actor.” He suggests it be used in place of something personal and insists that

concentration will help the actor find his/her way into the world of imagination. Chekhov says that the purpose of concentration is to enable one “to go deeply into oneself, so deeply that you will find all your abilities trembling and willing to obey”, (42) offering the following example:

When my own father was dying I concentrated my attention on him to such an extent that, although it was very tragic and painful to me, I digested the whole event to such an extent that I could use it in *King Lear* —In fact, I had to use it. If I had not completely concentrated at the moment of my father’s death, I might have dragged it with me for many years, and been unable to use it subconsciously. When I cry, I am, of course, crying for my father, my mother, my dog, and all those things and people whom I have actually forgotten, but they are crying through me. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for the Professional Actor* 43)

By concentrating so deeply that he could be emotionally distant and involved simultaneously Chekhov believed that he could intuitively learn about the essence of this event. This was echoed by Amelia Sargisson, a student of mine, in what she described as an “epiphany” which came out of her “theory of indestructible matter” (6-7). She shared how during the run of *Closer* by Patrick Marber she tapped into the universality of human suffering. She recalled a girl she used to baby-sit who tragically died: “It occurred to me [just before the last performance] that all the love she was equipped with at birth, all the love in her little heart lying dormant until the time she met someone worthy of it, all the weight of that was matter that could not be destroyed even when she died” (6). Sargisson then decided that she will use this “indestructible matter” to guide her during the final performance of *Closer* during Scene Five where she was to fall in love. Upon the performance she wrote in her journal addressed to me: “And obviously [the indestructible matter did inform me] because you said after the performance that Scene Five was the best ever” (7). Chekhov might have said that the little girl’s love was “loving through this actor”.

In his second autobiography, *Life and Encounters*, Chekhov explicates the origins of this process: “I also found indications in Steiner’s works on the division of consciousness experienced by great artists. It is well-known, for instance, that Goethe was able to continuously observe himself and all his feelings from the outside

(even when he was in love!)” (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 148). When it comes to the concentration required, again Chekhov looks to the East. In *Lessons for the Teachers of His Technique*, he says:

Concentration – how important. Everyone has the power of concentration to some degree, but this is not sufficient for our work. You may have a group of geniuses, but if they have no concentration, their talent will be lost. While on the other hand, people with less talent but real concentration will have the power to hold your interest. *The East knows the secret, but the West does not and must learn.* (15; emphasis added)

The point that Chekhov makes, a point prominent in today’s pedagogy, is that such concentration will help actors to create a realm that is not “small and insignificant,” but rather, is larger than life. By doing so, the actor can split the focus and achieve dual consciousness in performance.

This type of discussion reappears in Leonard Pronko’s important comparative study, *Theatre East and West*. Like Chekhov, Pronko pits East against West:

We are not given the freedom to express our inner world, our obsessions and fears in any way that might be bigger than life [...] The Oriental actor [...] develops moods, emotions and character in a dozen different ways forbidden us. He has another freedom denied us: the *freedom* of the perfectly disciplined artist who is working within clearly defined traditions and who, within those limits, may develop his individuality. (188-189; emphasis in original)

Chekhov’s technique offers a tangible way for an actor to develop his/her Individuality so that s/he is free; through it, the western artist’s Creative Individuality can go beyond the “forbidden” kind of acting referred to by Pronko. According to master teachers of Chekhov’s technique, this “larger than life” acting has always been controversial and continues to be a contentious issue today, especially for those whose theatrical aesthetics follow the above-mentioned proclamation by Hagen in her *Acting Class*: “When I go to the theatre, if I can see the acting I already don’t like it.”

As Oida puts it: “Noh theatre is about universal experiences, not personal responses” (Oida and Marshall 61). Reliance on personal experience in the work is not encouraged in eastern theatrical techniques, thereby making Chekhov’s resistance to the use of purely

personal impulses Oriental. That being said, there is no denying that the technique is Occidental, as it is not coded like traditional Oriental forms; in traditional Oriental forms, freedom can only be achieved within the restrictions of a code. Thus, a “creolization” of the two forms is evident in Chekhov’s approach to the use of personal memory in acting. Contemporary pedagogy agrees that the purpose of learning the technique is to free oneself from one’s personality and to allow each actor’s Creative Individuality to develop with the use of imagination. In order to generate the impulse, the actor uses imagery to generate inner sensation through skillfully combining actions and qualities.

Teaching Teachers

*Stanislavsky tortured all the actors around him, and he tortured himself even more than us. He was a very difficult and strange teacher, and perhaps a very heartless and merciless teacher, and he has perhaps not found the right way for teaching, but because he was merciless to himself and to us we have a marvellous example of what it means to be trained, really trained. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 4, 1938)*

The Qualities Necessary for a Teacher

*My idea has always been not to be a despotic leader, but to lead with your help. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 4, 1938)*

As noted, the *five guiding principles* are the fundamental structure upon which both actors and teachers in training (student-teachers) rely. However, MICHA’s student-teachers are taught other guidelines as well, guidelines designed specifically for those concerned with pedagogy. Chekhov was a consummate teacher who shared his insights as early as 1936 with Beatrice Straight and Deirdre Hurst Du Prey so that they could be his teaching assistants. At the time, Chekhov was teaching an international group of students, the majority of whom were British. According to William Elmhirst, “Chekhov found British students comparatively inhibited to those he had in Russia” (M. Chekhov et al.). These lessons, which took place in Dartington Hall, were transcribed by Du Prey and incorporated into



Chekhov's *Lessons for Teachers* which, in turn, are the basis for MICHA's teacher training philosophy.

In Chapter Two of *Lessons*, Chekhov describes qualities necessary for the teacher, including (albeit implicitly) his Four Brothers: Ease, Beauty, Form and Whole (Appendix 8). Chekhov suggests that a teacher of his technique must, above all, be "active" and "giving," and that s/he "must enter the room as a teacher." He says, "Prepare your entrance. When you *cross the threshold*, you must be already concentrated on *giving* with as much love as you can feel" (20; emphasis in original). Even in the first guideline, Chekhov considers the *action* of entering and *quality* of entering ("what" and "how"). This entrance implicitly contains the Sense of Form, so that the idea of teaching and learning becomes a ritual of crossing from ordinary reality into a place of learning. A Sense of Form is also implicit in his ideas about lecturing: "You must feel that you are giving your pupils really *formed things*. Your thoughts must be in clearly separated, complete forms, like square blocks. You give your sentences as *a thing formed*" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 21; emphasis in original). By "things formed," Chekhov is

not talking about the formality of approach but of preparedness, which enables the teacher to teach while embodying a Sense of Form.

The act of crossing the threshold with a “giving” and “active” quality includes another “brother,” the Sense of Beauty. Chekhov suggests that to do anything beautifully remains, in principle, “the same as that of distinguishing between *what* and *how*, between the theme and the way of performing it, between the character or situation and the artist with a well-developed sense of beauty and fine taste” (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 15). This is not a sentimental view of something being “pretty.” Chekhov says: “True beauty has its roots *inside* the human being, whereas false beauty is only on the outside.” Ultimately, a teacher is beautiful if his/her inner life is filled with a “giving” and “active” quality.

The other two “brothers,” Sense of Ease and Sense of the Whole must be a part of any transmission of knowledge. With respect to the former, from the outset, the teacher is responsible for creating an atmosphere based on love, generosity, and trust. These must contain a Sense of Ease which can be retained through an overall lightness and positivity, and they include both the body and the mind: “Move a little during the lesson. It will rest the pupils and provides a slight break” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 15). Furthermore, to ensure that the classroom never become a place of fear or stifling criticism Chekhov suggests that “humour is necessary at moments” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 22).

A Sense of the Whole is implicit in Chekhov’s statement that knowledge is useless without the teacher’s ability to transmit energy and not just information. As Chekhov says: “There are two ways to speak to pupils. (1) from intellect to intellect, (2) from one’s *whole* being to another *whole* being” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 20; emphasis added). The teacher should engage fully when speaking to students: “The intellectual way tends to make one speak more quickly. In our school we must fight this English habit to live with the head or brain only” (20). Finally, Chekhov is resolute when it comes to the Sense of the Whole in terms of thoughts and statements uttered in the classroom: “[Y]ou must feel your sentence and your thought as one whole thing” (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 21).

Currently, the teachers of the technique are guided by the Senses of Ease, Beauty, Form, and Whole, so that they can embrace knowledge with their whole beings, thereby ensuring that an exchange

of *radiation* of these takes place between teachers, student-teachers, and students. That Chekhov was such a teacher has been underscored by his numerous pupils:

ANTHONY QUINN: I hope that in some way I give my impression and my reverence, my appreciation and my love for this wonderful man who came from Russia [...] very, very gracious, powerful, influential man. [...] I keep a lot of Chekhov to myself. I treasure it for myself.

JACK PALANCE: They [Chekhov and Shdanoff] were two wonderful guys. I consulted with them when I got a part.

HURT HATFIELD: There was an ethical sense in this man but no such sense in Hollywood. (M. Chekhov et al.)

Contemporary teacher training in the technique calls a great deal of attention to the qualities described above. Teachers are encouraged to be giving, sensitive to students' feelings, to have a light touch, and at the same time, to be responsible for order and direction in the classroom (the Sense of Form demanded by Chekhov). This is not achieved in a disciplinarian manner but through gentleness and humour. The master teachers all strive for a Sense of Ease and instruct student-teachers to do the same. Finally, modelling themselves after Chekhov, contemporary teachers have added one important element to the training, which they emphasize repeatedly, namely loving-kindness. Teachers in training *must* learn to find a positive way of commenting on an exercise instead of criticizing it negatively. Joanna Merlin, who is behind this development, quotes Chekhov: "He never said that was terrible. He rather said, 'that was good, now let's try it this way'" (Merlin, Personal interview).

"Let's try it this way" implies that a Chekhov teacher has to distinguish between leaving the students to cope "on their own" and encouraging a positive change. In order to help a student learn the teachers must notice and identify the problems *as problems*. The trouble-shooting happens case by case and is a part of the training inasmuch problems arise and problems do arise. To facilitate trouble-shooting after each exercise there ought to be a question and answer period. These discussions after the fact are a structured part of the training which allows for reflection and a forum where the various points of the technique are clarified. In these forums the problems will

more often than not be identified by the students themselves. However, if a student does not identify the difficulty the teacher has to point it out. The teacher's responsibility is to address these problems and offer solutions.

Holistic Approach to Teaching Teachers

Therefore, how they will progress depends not only on what you will teach them. [...] but it depends on *who* you are. I must repeat that I am absolutely against the famous "cathedral"¹⁶ atmosphere, but I do want you to realize that our work is a ground and a basis for life, not only for a period of temporary theatre life. We have laughter and humour in our natures, and these we must use as well. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* September 27, 1937; emphasis in original)

Certification Program: MICHA has offered teacher training seminars since 1999 but these were not formalized in terms of what title, if any, a teacher would receive upon completing them. During a panel discussion, "The Future of Michael Chekhov's Technique," at the Michael Chekhov International Workshop and Festival 2000, Lionel Walsh of Windsor University proposed that MICHA could offer a "teacher certification track." This was supported by students and teachers alike, and the parameters of certification were set. Teachers would attend three summer workshops, two teacher training sessions, write a scholarly paper on the technique, and teach one or more classes in front of a MICHA faculty committee. Since 2000, five instructors have been certified.¹⁷ Four were already full-time teachers at European and North American universities, and one had an independent studio.

Subsequently, MICHA received an unexpectedly large number of applications for certification. Because of the lack of a formal structure which could support such an endeavour and ensure its quality and fairness, in 2006, MICHA cancelled the original teacher certification track program. Two candidates are still in the program, having previously been accepted. As of 2006, MICHA will issue "certificates of participation" to teachers who specialize in the technique. This does not appear to have deterred future teachers. At the conference in Windsor, there were more than thirty teachers interested in participating at the next teacher training session. However, this leaves the question of standardization of the teacher

training wide open once again and raises fears of the technique becoming gradually watered down. In the view of the current rapid expansion, the technique would benefit through some kind of guidelines regarding this matter. What is an adequate amount of time spent learning the technique which a teacher must complete in order to become equipped to pass it on? Currently there is no definition or even a guideline addressing this question. This is a complex issue which directly relates to the issue of the ownership of knowledge and is a discussion which goes beyond the scope of this study but which needs to be addressed by the organization in the near future to ensure the quality of passing the technique on to the future generations.

Holistic Approach to Teacher Training: When teaching teachers, MICHA faculty emphasize the need to guide students so that they can wake up their dormant creative forces. Current pedagogy is not teacher-centred and content-oriented, but rather, student-centred and learning-oriented. The emphasis in teacher-training is on the search and the investigation, both of which are profoundly individual. Student-teachers are guided by the master teachers, but they shape their own learning through requests to be trained in certain techniques or areas. The terrain of the technique is therefore explored fluidly but with expert guidance. For example, one student-teacher might like to focus on the voice centred exercises, another on the “Chekhov Clown,” still another on Psychological Gestures and so on.

According to Chekhov, “a cultured actor can not remain an uncultured person,” and this applies to the teachers of the technique (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 41). Thus, student-teachers are encouraged by MICHA to widen their theoretical knowledge and present an academic paper on a topic of their choice at the conferences.

Teachers have an obligation to engage with the technique academically *but also* to approach all knowledge as experience. When applied to teaching teachers, this means that in order to facilitate true understanding of the “living knowledge” in others, student-teachers must experience it themselves. Ideally, teaching teachers in Chekhov’s technique today consists of a meaningful interaction between future teachers and the master teachers in an imaginative search of the new knowledge. This means that student-teachers are encouraged to invent exercises and to improvise, not just parrot the master teachers. They

are also required to record and share their original ideas and findings in written form.

As a rule, during conference workshops all MICHA instructors work on the same material in order to allow the student-teachers to experiment within the same scene or play, while focusing each time on voice, acting, movement, or clowning. In teacher training (as well as in actor training) the faculty takes a holistic approach towards the work, and these categories are only an organizing principle. Voice classes can be filled with as much work on movement as the movement class and vice versa. Teachers team up to work on scenes, so that the student-teachers can integrate teaching various disciplines, such as voice and movement, voice and acting, clown and acting, and so on. At the 2005 conference in Amherst, Massachusetts, the learning process was student-centred to such an extent that the returning student-teachers who were on certification track were asked to design their own learning experience by choosing the teacher with whom they wanted to study and to ask that teacher to teach them a certain aspect of the technique.

Recent Growth of the Association

I will consider your suggestions and draw conclusions, and if necessary change my plans in order to find the right approach. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*)

MICHA attracts actors, directors, and acting teachers from all over the world and is growing steadily. For example, the 2000 conference and workshop at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre in Connecticut had twenty-four participants. Only a few years later, the numbers at the 2003 conference in Amsterdam had doubled to over fifty participants, and the 2004 conference in Croatia was sold out with fifty-eight participants, with an extensive waiting list. In 2006, two summer conferences happened simultaneously: the MICHA yearly conference hosted by University of Windsor and another workshop in California so as to accommodate over 120 students, many of whom will be acting teachers. Also MICHA has organized two smaller yearly events which regularly sell out. The first is the Teacher Training Workshop in Spencertown, New York (since 1999, and as of 2005, in Tuscany as well). The second is the June Intensive in New York City (since 2000).

As a result, Michael Chekhov's technique is introduced into more university acting courses across North America and Europe every year. MICHA's efforts are directly responsible for the fact that the technique is currently taught in theatre schools and university theatre departments, including Brandeis University in Boston, Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Choate Rosemary Hall in Connecticut, Florida International University, Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota, Malone College in Ohio, New York University, Northern Illinois University, Old Globe University of San Diego, Roosevelt University in Chicago, *Real escuela superior de arte dramático* in Madrid, Rutgers University in New Jersey, Ryerson University in Toronto, Santa Clara University, Temple University, University of California in Santa Barbara, University of Georgia in the Republic of Georgia, University of Southern Maine, University of Tel Aviv in Israel, University of Zagreb in Croatia, University of Windsor in Ontario, Yale University in Connecticut, Wesleyan University in Illinois, West Virginia University (Fairmont State), and Witman College in Washington.

MICHA faculty members also teach in their own independent studios: Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan's The Actors' Ensemble, founded in 1985, is in Columbia County, New York. Lenard Petit's The Michael Chekhov Acting Studio, founded in the 1990s, is in New York City, as is Ragnar Freidank's branch of The Actors' Ensemble, founded in 2000. Sarah Kane is the founder and one of the principal teachers in the Michael Chekhov Centre U.K., Andrei Malaev Babel runs the International Stanislavsky Theatre Studio in Washington, D.C., Marjolein Baars runs tiny hero productions in Netherlands, Phelim McDermott is a member of the improbable theatre company, which also offers classes on occasion, and Jobst Langhans is the principal teacher at the Michael Chekhov¹⁸ Studio in Berlin.

Finally, in the last few years, various students of the technique have established new studios and workshops: actor Hugh O' Gorman now teaches "Refining the Actor's Instrument: The Michael Chekhov Technique and Playing Action" in Los Angeles; Dawn Arnold has taught an "Eight Week Workshop and Weekend Intensive" in the Michael Chekhov technique in Chicago on an ongoing basis; David and Bryan Cohen teach "The Art of Inner Movement" as a part of their Michael Chekhov Project in New York; Ulrich Meyer-Horsch

has founded the “Michail Cechov Schauspiel Studio” in Hamburg; and Suzana Nikolić organizes yearly week-long workshops in the International Arts Centre “Imaginary Academy” in *Grožnjan*, Croatia.

The Learning Structure

I would like you to give me some suggestions for the coming year, in whatever direction you wish. Perhaps you will be able to suggest some new things which will help us to find a better way to work together, because we are really creating our school together. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre September 27, 1937)

MICHA yearly conferences have three main components: workshops, performances, and scholarship. The conferences, which typically last between one and two weeks, emphasize the importance of the practice. Days are usually reserved for studio classes, while evenings are divided between performance and scholarship. At every conference, the participants see the technique applied in performance, rehearsal, or improvisation; they also listen to lectures and participate in panel discussions.

Chekhov's technique is applied to plays from various periods and styles during the workshop component of the conferences. This allows the participants to fine-tune their approach, creating an individual performance style and a style for the scene or section they have worked on, and choosing the appropriate technical means. For example, the 2000 conference emphasized creating character and relationships in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, but the same play was also used to work on a discipline recently developed by Lenard Petit (with Marjolein Baars), namely, the “Chekhov Clown.” The 2001 conference emphasized the atmosphere and imaginary space for Maurice Maeterlinck's Symbolist text *The Blind* and explored Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* by combining Chekhov's technique and Anatoli Vasiliev's principles of the “ludo theatre” (to be discussed shortly). At that same conference, Per Brahe conducted a mask workshop, at which Balinese traditional and modern masks were used in conjunction with some elements of Chekhov's technique. And at the 2003 conference, the work was divided between exploration of Psychological Gestures and Imaginary Body in *The Crucible* and extreme characterization and improvisation in *The Government Inspector*.

MICHA is not only interested in pedagogy and experimentation but is also concerned with applying Chekhov's technique to performance. The differences in the various approaches to and applications of the technique are most visible in the conferences' festival component. Companies who use Chekhov's technique in rehearsal are invited to present their work yearly, and MICHA showcases a variety of acting styles. For example, performances at the 2000 festival included *Mrs. Ripley's Trip* by Hamlin Garland, which allowed for a degree of abstraction in an amalgam of Brechtian Epic storytelling and a Realistic Style. This dramatization of a short story was performed by The Actors' Ensemble of New York. That same year, students from Rutgers performed Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, which was directed by Lenard Petit in an Expressionist style (bordering on the grotesque). In this production, the actors' choices brought out and made intelligible, all their secret intentions and technical means, so that the audience witnessed transitions from one quality of movement into another, from one Imaginary Centre to another, and so on. The actors' Imaginary Bodies were not internalized (see Chapters Four and Five), the objectives were externalized, and deep meanings of the play, such as "undying love" or "erotic desire," were foregrounded. The following year, The Actors' Ensemble presented a work-in-progress of Tina Howe's *Painting Churches*, directed by Scott Fielding, done in a Realistic style. This was contrasted by an anti-Naturalistic presentation by Russia's Kaluga State Drama Theatre, which performed *Long Day's Journey into Night* by combining the principles of the "ludo theatre" of Anatoli Vasiliev with Chekhov's technique.

Current Hybrids with Chekhov's Technique: "Ludo Theatre"

Let us suppose your psychological gesture is "pushing". The purer your pushing is in the beginning – that is in the Platonic world – the richer will be your "pushing" in the world of the performance. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre January 16, 1937)

MICHA conferences from 1998-2001 were a forum in which teachers of Chekhov's technique could compare the different ways it was being taught in North America, Europe, and Russia. In fact, while the Russians have recently been reclaiming Chekhov, they must rely on Americans for first-hand knowledge of Chekhov and his technique.

Americans, however, are eager to find out how Russians use Chekhov, and how his technique has developed in Russia. For example, the Russian version of Chekhov's main work, *To the Actor* contained information that the English version of the book did not have. This resulted in the publication of a new version, in English, published by Routledge in 2002, with a translation of the missing parts by Andrei Malaev-Babel.

The exchange of information between the Russians and other practitioners of Chekhov's technique has been the driving force of recent conferences. Not only did Slava Kokorin come to teach in North America, but one of the principal MICHA faculty members, Lenard Petit, taught at the Russian conference in Lake Baikal in 2001. Petit speaks of this conference as a profound learning and teaching experience; he believes that the differences he noted between the various Chekhov teachers were liberating: "I am not an orthodox Chekhov teacher. Chekhov created a situation in which people can be free. As an artist, you bring the artistic freedom to the work. You are there to interpret things" (Petit, Personal interview).

A radical experiment within MICHA was the attempt to marry Chekhov's technique with Anatoli Vasiliev's "ludo theatre," which the Russians introduced to MICHA faculty and students at the 2001 conference. A Russian group performed the theatrical experiment with *Long Day's Journey Into Night* mentioned above. In addition, a laboratory experiment combining the two methods was conducted at the conference. While a detailed explanation of Vasiliev's principles goes beyond the scope of this work, a general introduction to his principles should prove useful.

Anatoli Vasiliev joined the theatre in the late 1960s, and according to Smeliansky, has been credited in Russia with creating a "virtually unique feeling in today's theatre" (qtd. by Pitches 166). He studied acting under the tutelage of Maria Knebel, who as mentioned already, promulgated Chekhov's ideas in Russia for fifty years.

In his essay "Anatoli Vasiliev," in *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*, Pitches says that the use of the term "ludo" carries connotations of the sacred as well as of the disciplined and formally organized, and that Vasiliev found the philosophical base for his "ludo model" in Plato. According to Pitches, Vasiliev shifted the philosophical foundation of Stanislavsky's System from the action-based, emotionally driven model of Aristotle to the pure

thought of Plato: “In both theory and practice, the Socratic dialogues are a central set of texts for Vasiliev. The training he puts his students through is drawing on an essentially Platonic premise: engage deeply in a distanced and rational investigation of something and you will leave the material (for Plato the ‘illusory’) concerns of the world behind” (188). This spiritual emphasis is a common element in Vasiliev and Chekhov’s techniques. However, Vasiliev’s theatre relies on the intellect to guide the actor into a spiritual world, while Chekhov’s theatre relies on the intuition and the Higher Self to take the actor there.

Vasiliev’s “ludo theatre” calls for a more spontaneous, fluid relationship between the text and the actor. Vasiliev suggests that his is a “reconstruction” of Stanislavsky’s system (qtd. by Pitches 166). Where a psychological analysis of a play details the given circumstances so that the actor becomes involved in the causes and effects of the events of a play, a *ludic* approach distances the actor from the given circumstances in order to encourage a playful attitude towards the text. Russian director, Rosa Tolstskaya, who lectured on Vasiliev at MICHA conference 2001, suggests that in Vasiliev’s theatre, the actor “deconstructs the play and during the performance constructs it again” (Toltskaya). This is because *ludic* system shifts the emphasis from the psychology of a character to the psychology of the player. In order to do so, it places an emphasis on theatre as a game in which the story telling is secondary. Thus, fashioning the event of the game, and not re-playing the event as governed by the given circumstances is the focus of the “ludo theatre.”¹⁹

This distancing achieves a state which calls for a dual consciousness in performance, as in Chekhov’s technique. This type of consciousness demands that an actor be fully involved, while at the same time achieving a distance from that “doing.”²⁰ If achieved, this is a new way of experiencing one’s “self,” which helps the actor be guided by the character’s ego rather than his/her own; by default, s/he then operates (as an actor) from an ideal egoless state. Chekhov’s account²¹ of playing Skid the clown in Max Reinhardt’s theatre describes such a state:

I followed Skid with attention. [...] I glanced at Skid, who was sitting on the floor, and it seemed to me that I “saw” his feelings, his agitation and pain. His performance seemed strange to me: at one moment he was suddenly changing tempos, at another

interrupting his phrases with pauses, which were unexpected but so appropriate; then he was making illogical emphases, and then odd gestures [...] “The clown is a professional,” I thought. [...] His anguish grew. I began to feel sorry for him, and at that moment tears splashed from the clown’s eyes. I was startled! “This is sentimental. No Tears – stop them! Skid restrained his tears, but in their place power shot from his eyes. In it was the pain [...] suddenly he began to dance like a clown, using only his legs, comically, faster and faster. [...] Now I could control Skid’s performance. My consciousness split in two – I was in the auditorium, alongside of myself and in each of my partners. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* “Skid”)

Chekhov repeatedly instructed his students to try to develop this ability. The following represent a few selected examples of his admonitions:

Will you try to go through the whole part, speaking your text but always and continuously looking at your image? [...] You may forget all the points of the Method, but just follow this moving picture and follow everything it suggests to you. You must be absolutely present here, and at the same time you must follow the image. When you are looking at the image and producing and rehearsing, you must make a big effort to keep it before you, to draw it to you, to appeal to it; but when it comes to you, then it really comes – you are then passive, although very active. [...] Then it is the first step towards the real imagination, but I call it the result of all the previous preparatory work – it has happened! It is there somewhere. I know this from my own experience with the characters of Don Quixote and Hamlet. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 1, 1938)

And again:

Before you are ready to be inspired. [...] you have to see it, you *must* see it before you [...] If you are able to *divide your consciousness* in two parts, it is right. Then comes the moment when you know that something has happened, and then you begin to improvise. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* April 2, 1937; emphasis in original)

Although it has certain similarities with it, the dual consciousness in performance is not a Brechtian distance, because both Chekhov and Vasiliev have spiritual aspirations. As Chekhov says: “There is a point where there is the pure imaginative, spiritual

state, and another where there is full acting, and the line is a continuous unbroken one. What we are trying to do today is to bring these two things together to a certain extent, so that it is imagination and it is action at the same time; a certain strange thing” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 1, 1938). Similarly, Vasiliev resists comparisons between his “ludo theatre” and Brecht. His work does not strive to establish a critical attitude between actor and character in the pursuit of social truth. Rather, as Pitches explains, the opposite is true: “Vasiliev’s spiritual line through the text imposes a structure of *faith* on the actor, asking him/her to view the actions of the text purely in terms of their religious significance” (Pitches 172). By this, Pitches means that the focus of the “ludo” theatre is on the “metaphorical significance of a character’s deeds” (Pitches 192), closely related to Chekhov’s notion of “the pure imaginative, spiritual state” quoted above.

In the end, while a spiritual emphasis and focus on play is how both Chekhov and Vasiliev have reinterpreted Stanislavsky’s system, Chekhov’s specific psychophysical model is very different than Vasiliev’s model. The latter, unlike the former, gives importance to thinking and “the verbal plane.” Unlike Chekhov, Vasiliev’s theatre depends not on inner sensations and their adequate expression but on a concept-bound, philosophical interpretation, and a focus on the realm of ideas.

Contemporary Fusion with Oriental Theatrical Forms

To this exercise add another exercise, which has been taken from the Hindu. Imagine two entirely different objects – for instance a tree and a horse. Keep the tree in your imagination in front of you and change the tree slowly in your imagination in such a way that it will become a horse, without breaking the image. [...] First of all your *powers of concentration* will be developed. Secondly, you have to use your *will power* to a marked extent. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* March 22, 1935; emphasis in original)

The contemporary search for transpersonal transformation and stylization has opened the door to numerous collaborations between Chekhov actors and teachers, and their eastern counterparts. This is most obvious in collaborations with Butoh specialists and Balinese dance specialists which took place in a variety of forums in 2004 and

2005. Several workshops by Studio 5 in Brooklyn, New York, combined Butoh and Chekhov's technique. This studio is primarily devoted to using Chekhov's technique in conjunction with Balinese masks. Per Brahe, the artistic director, has a large collection of Balinese masks and considers himself a master teacher of Chekhov's technique.

Brahe has also led "The Bali Conservatory," a five week exploration of Chekhov's technique and Balinese traditional theatre, since 2002. In the brochure, Brahe suggests that one of the purposes of this workshop is to "apply and explore the acting technique of Michael Chekhov whose material has, *unknown* to him, a variation of old Hindu and Buddhist exercises for the mind, body and spirit. This is most apparent when one studies Balinese dance" (Brahe, "Taksu and Balinese Egoless Theatre" 1). As has been shown, Chekhov was very aware of Hindu and Buddhist exercises; he repeatedly referred to them in his lectures and was familiar with the philosophy behind them. Brahe is clearly unaware of this in the first part of his statement which reads: "whose material has, unknown to [Chekhov]" That being said, it is obvious that Brahe has made the connection between Chekhov's work and the eastern exercises. We will return to the efficacy of this particular fusion in due course.

MICHA conferences have also included the intercultural discussion on a theoretical and a practical level. A student of Chekhov's technique, Butoh dancer You-ri Yamanaka "has been exploring the meeting point between East and West in workshops and performances. Yamanaka trained in both traditional (Kabuki dance) and avant-garde (Butoh) Japanese movement as well as in Jacques Lecoq's technique and at LAMDA" (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) (Nikolić 10). Yamanaka, who directs and teaches internationally, performed her Butoh piece during the 2004 Chekhov conference in Groznjan. During the panel discussion, "The Intercultural Aspects of Michael Chekhov's Technique," she made the following connection: "Repetitive movement can take one to ecstasy and the repetition in Chekhov's technique is like Zen meditation" (MICHA, "*The Intercultural Aspects of Michael Chekhov's Technique*"). During this panel, similar connections were made by actors who were also practitioners of various forms of Buddhist meditation. At the same conference, Chekhov specialist, Soledad Garre of RESAD, the official Drama School in Madrid (Spain),

showed a video of a performance of her recreation of the contemporary Japanese theatre director Ota Shogo's *Waterstation*, which explored traditional Japanese techniques in conjunction with aspects of the movement of Chekhov's technique. And outside MICHA, Bella Merlin has created her own hybrid; thus, the description of her pre-symposium workshop for the Changing Body symposium at the University of Exeter in 2006 reads: "Drawing upon the ideas of Stanislavsky, Michael Chekhov, Jerzy Grotowski and aspects of Butoh, we will combine physical technique with free improvisations."

All of the above developments are in keeping with the essence of the *fifth guiding principle* which, as has been noted, is formed as a question: How does the technique free my talent? In short, the ideal of the current Chekhov technique is to break out of creative constrictions of any kind.

Other Contemporary Hybrids

The objective is "what," justification is "why," and feeling of truth is "how." These are three brothers." (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre June 17, 1937; emphasis in original)

Chekhov says: "As modern actors we are easily led by action but if there is no atmosphere there is no soul." Chekhov also refers to this soul of the performance as the "how" or the "sense of truth" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* November 21, 1941). One of the most popular ways in which Chekhov's technique is incorporated into other methods is to use all the different ways of providing the "how," while at the same time, providing the "why" and the "what" of the performance. In fact, merging Chekhov's technique with any other by using the "how" of Chekhov's technique has become common-place among Chekhov teachers in training. For example, the voice teacher Lesley-Ann Timlick of Florida's International University has combined Chekhov's PG with Feldenkreis method.

Outside of MICHA's sphere of influence, voice teacher Grace Zandarski,²² who teaches at The Yale School of Drama, and Fordham University,²³ has combined various Chekhov tools with Fitzmaurice Voicework and taught it at the Bali Conservatory 2004 (to be discussed later). This kind of hybridization was also evident in Phelim

McDermott's classes at the Chekhov Workshop and Festival 2006 at the University of Windsor, Ontario. There, McDermott introduced a great number of variations to Chekhov's theory and practice to the Chekhov community. McDermott himself does not consider his work to be purely Chekhovian. Furthermore, he does not consider himself to be a teacher, but a director and actor who occasionally passes his knowledge to others. As he notes, he learned the technique from "the book" [*To the Actor*] and "used the book in the teaching" (McDermott, Personal interview). He was particularly interested in Chekhov's ideas about the "future actor" and did a great deal of work on "visualizing ourselves in the future, what kind of actor we would want to be" (J. Merlin, "*Colour Warm-Up*"). He also read the Deirdre Hurst Du Prey notes, from which he "got very inspired," using Chekhov's technique of visualizing the character to visualize Chekhov himself: "I talked to Michael Chekhov and he gave me advice, gave me confidence to do the work and use it. I can trace the seeds of my interest in spiritual theatre to this noble thing, to those studies, that interest and curiosity" (McDermott, Personal interview).

McDermott is a part of the critically-acclaimed and very popular *improbable theatre company* based in London, UK. His technique fuses many different influences to create a specific hybrid. In the workshop he taught at the 2006 MICHA conference, he brought together improvisational structures of Keith Johnstone and Viola Spolin with Chekhov's technique, deepening the actor's sensory experience through the improvisatory rules provided by Johnstone and Spolin. In other words, he used the Johnstone and Spolin exercises for the "what" and "why" and Chekhov's exercises for the "how," adding the work with Objective and Personal Atmosphere, Imaginary Centre, PG (detailed in Chapters Four and Five) to a structure already proposed by Johnstone and Spolin. The same thing was done in a demonstration class where the rehearsal technique of Jeremy Whelan²⁴ was applied to Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing*. Once again, the "what" and the "why" were provided by Whelan, but the "sense of truth" or "how" was provided by Chekhov.

As a part of his acting workshop, McDermott gave a brief lecture on Arnold Mindell's²⁵ opposing concepts of "consensus reality" and "non-duality," which bear a striking resemblance to Buddhist ideas: the "consensus reality" being the agreed-upon reality of different cultures in different times, and the "non-duality" being the

common essence underneath them. Between these two lie Mindell's concepts of "primary processes" as the agreed-upon facts, and "secondary processes" such as body symptoms, accidents, conflicts, dreams, synchronicities. According to Mindell, the latter are "foreign and distant" to most people but can "be used as a basis for dealing with a wide spectrum of events now separately considered by the various forms and schools of medicine, physics and psychology" (Mindell 12). Mindell's holistic approach to human body work has brought together alchemy, Buddhism, chakra systems, Taoism, dance, various mythologies, shamanism, Jungian psychology, and quantum physics. In his lecture, McDermott added Chekhov's technique to these forms, exploring Mindell's techniques in the powerful "Critic's Fuel Exercise."



Mindell's exercise essentially uses the trapped energy from a blocked creative person to create the image of a person. In the original exercise, the actor remembers a time s/he was blocked, imagines "something that is against [his/her] creativity," sketches this image, and then steps into the imagined figure. Finally, s/he attempts to "imagine its essence in terms of a piece of nature: a river, a cave, a rock" and is instructed to "assume a position that expresses that essence." To this, McDermott adds Chekhov's concept of Atmosphere to help the actor focus on the moment of being blocked. He also adds Chekhov's technique of working with an independent image of the character to help the actor personify "that which is against one's creativity" in a figure. Once this is done, Chekhov's tool Imaginary Body is used to embody the image, "step into the figure." First the actor embodies it and then a colleague improvises the role of the critic as instructed by the actor. Once this is done they enters into a simple improvisation where the actor essentially receives the criticism s/he dreamed up. This results in the whole group witnessing the actor being put down by his/her inner critic. Finally, Chekhov's PG is introduced, and the actor is instructed to assume the role of the critic again. S/he starts from the embodiment of the figure and is then asked to *transform* the negative aspect of the figure into a positive essence of its pent-up energy by imagining its core and its essence in terms of a piece of nature. McDermott uses Chekhov's tools to deepen the actor's psychophysical experience in Mindell's exercise. The final step is suggested by Mindell and it is to imagine how one could use this essence energy in one's life and creative work.²⁶

McDermott's eclectic approach is a good example of how Chekhov's technique is used in contemporary practice, namely to establish a connection between an image created by the actor and the actor's body. In another such example, during Volcano Theatre's rehearsals for *Hedda Gabler*, I conducted a Chekhov workshop in tandem with Ross Manson's Viewpoints workshop. During the Viewpoints Corridors Exercise, I used Chekhov's principles to deepen the gestures used by the Viewpoints exercise.

While the above-described hybrids are far from being "pure" Chekhov technique, such variations in the theory and practice are becoming very common and are not thought of as negative by the MICHA. In the words of Joanna Merlin, MICHA's president: "None of us [MICHA faculty and students] will ever be Michael Chekhov.

He was in favor of the technique evolving and not being mechanical. If we all taught the same way it would be robotic. [Still], there are some things we have to standardize regarding the technique [...].” (Merlin, Personal interview). As we will see in Chapters Four and Five, MICHA faculty has standardized the main elements of Chekhov’s technique. Only when all of these elements are taught and utilized together with the theoretical concepts offered by *the five guiding principles* can an actor become proficient in Chekhov’s technique or a teacher considered a Chekhov teacher. In the rest of the cases, such as described above, elements of Chekhov’s technique are used only as a part of a hybrid or a variation and point to the contemporary tendencies in application of Chekhov’s technique.

Contemporary Scholarship

“When we say discard the intellect, we mean discard it for the creative work, but not for the human ability to understand.” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* June 9, 1938)

The resurgence in the practice of Chekhov's technique has coincided with a sharp rise in Chekhov scholarship in the last six years, underlined by the use of Chekhov's photograph on the cover of *Twentieth-Century Actor Training*, edited by Alison Hodge and published by Routledge in 2000. Following that publication, came the newly-revised and expanded edition of *To the Actor* in 2002 (Routledge), Chamberlain's *Michael Chekhov* and the Croatian translation of *To the Actor* which appeared in 2004 (ITI-UNESCO), while Jonathan Pitches devoted a chapter to Chekhov's technique in *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting* published in 2006 (Routledge). Two major editions of his biographies were released in 2005: Charles Marowitz's *The Other Chekhov* (Applause) and Bella Merlin's and Andrei Kirillov's co-edited translation of Chekhov's biography *Put actjora, The Path of an Actor* (Routledge).

Three recent international conferences, which happened within two months of one another, had Chekhov's technique as their focus. First, the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, organized a conference at Dartington Hall in November 2005. Next, at the Changing Body Symposium, organized by the University of Exeter in January 2006, apart from a general call for papers concerned with body-mind connection, a specific call for papers on new scholarship

of Chekhov's technique resulted in papers by Bella Merlin, David Zinder, Jonathan Pitches, and myself.²⁷ A few weeks later, at the University of Toronto conference, *Stanislavsky and Directing: Theory, Practice, Influence*, keynote speaker Charles Marowitz lectured on "Stanislavsky vs. Chekhov."²⁸

Two new training manuals have been published since 2000. Joanna Merlin's *Auditioning – an Actor-Friendly Guide* was published by Vintage Books in 2001. Merlin uses the principles of Chekhov's technique and tailors them to the audition process. David Zinder's *Body-Voice-Imagination: A Training for the Actor* was published by Routledge in 2002. This book is an amalgam of Zinder's *ImageWork* and Chekhov's technique.

Conclusion

The three essentials in a teacher's approach to her work are: WHO is giving, WHAT is given, HOW it is given. In other words, your work, your method, your being. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 33; emphasis in original)

Robert Gardner from Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota, summarizes some reasons for the current growth in popularity of Chekhov's technique when he says: "Like many others at the [MICHA 2000] conference, I felt that my encounter with the Michael Chekhov technique was a homecoming, a rediscovery of what drew me to acting and theatre in the first place: an intense, joyful blending of the physical, the imaginative, and the spiritual." Gardner's comment foregrounds qualities promoted by the technique which go beyond the art of acting to include the "art of living." What he describes can be viewed as pedagogy for the "human being," such as Chekhov suggested he was creating in his reply to Shdanoff's question: "What are we doing here in Hollywood?" (M. Chekhov et al. *From Russia to Hollywood*).

Upon attending the conferences, many student-teachers have modified their course outlines to include Chekhov's technique in order to help students find ways to engage in exploratory process of an original playmaking which goes beyond a performance attempting the "lifelike." They advocate styles other than naturalism which "passes itself off as actual reality, and not as artistic transposition on stage" (Pavis and Shantz 236). Initially, this is a daunting prospect for many

student-teachers, as they teach students who grew up watching “lifelike” film and television acting, and who *expect* to be trained to do such acting. Still, in practice, student-teachers discover that their students respond very well to psychophysical training, Chekhov’s main pedagogical and practical concept, because verisimilitude and Chekhov training are by no means mutually exclusive. The technique enables the actors to perform in a “lifelike” fashion. At the same time, the training enables students to move towards theatricality by arming them with tools which can help them realize a style.²⁹ However, the emphasis in training changes from an analytical to an intuitive response. For example, instead of teaching the students to create an “inner monologue,” the newly-trained Chekhov teachers now teach them to invoke images and psychological gestures. They also teach a new understanding of the subtext: as a composition of inner sensations, inner movement and inner thoughts rather than just thoughts. Such a felt subtext is a fusion of the Three-Fold Nature of Man: feeling, will, and thinking.

Student-teachers find the technique helpful in implementing the above notions and agree that it allows them to supplement or even in some case replace their course outlines which were conceptualized solely to produce actors who could perform in a “lifelike” manner. Many believe that they are contributing to a much-needed change in the current pedagogical landscape, so well described by Charles Marowitz in his assessment of verisimilitude and Chekhov’s technique:

[Chekhov understood] that in order to capture what we blithely refer to as “reality,” we have to shatter that Shakespearean mirror that we “hold up to nature” showing “virtue her own feature, scorn her own image and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure,” and *confront* the more profound and more elusive truths that lie far below the surface of “natural behaviour” and elementary psychology. Chekhov’s life and work exemplified the idea that if we *were* going to *formulate* a system of acting, it had to be capable of dealing with the same contradictions, paradoxes, absurdities and enigmas-of-life that the greatest literary art dealt with. In the theatre, we become so obsessed with tactics and techniques that we forget that when acting really succeeds it creates not merely *simulations*, but “magic.” Acting *is* magic. (Marowitz, “Stanislavsky vs. Chekhov” 19; emphasis in original)

Furthermore, student-teachers find that Chekhov's method is pragmatic as well as inspiring. There is a great practical advantage to teaching this technique in a university setting because many of the exercises that foster psychophysical involvement can be done with students working simultaneously. This is invaluable for teachers who have large acting, voice, or movement classes (upwards of thirty students, in many cases) and only a limited amount of hours (ranging from two to twelve) with the students. This is not to say that none of the exercises is done one-on-one. Naturally, once the technique is applied to any piece of text, a period of individual coaching is inevitable. However, the part of the training where the "world of the play" is imagined, and the characters are sketched, can be done in large groups. This is helpful in creating the style of the performance organically as well. Finally, the students are given many technical elements and a structure with which to explore their characterization independently.

In sum, the student-teachers of the technique agree that MICHA's effort to offer teacher-training helps to validate a teaching method which encourages students to trust the departure from verisimilitude and to embrace spirituality, a concept that is difficult or unusual. In this regard, something has shifted for teachers since Chekhov's time. Pitches suggests that, for Chekhov, "mysticism became a term of abuse (and a challenge of legality); the country which trained Chekhov could no longer support his radical thinking" (164). Today, faced with similar obstacles, many student-teachers are emboldened by a structure which helps them to encourage their students to work with elements in which they might have already believed (i.e. intuition) but for which they had no cohesive system to use in a classroom. The value placed on trusting the intuitive knowledge gives working with it certain legitimacy, even if it is taught in an otherwise-inclined theatre school. Finally, the teachers find comfort in a sense of belonging to a growing and developing community. New teachers of the technique are supported by this community in their efforts to introduce what is often a new and a radical emphasis on intuition, imagination, and style within their institutions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO:

¹ Joseph Raymond McCarthy (November 14, 1908–May 2, 1957) was a Republican Senator from Wisconsin between 1947 and 1957. During his ten years in the Senate, McCarthy and his staff gained notoriety for making "freewheeling" accusations of membership in the Communist Party or of communist sympathies. These accusations were largely directed towards people in the U.S. government, particularly employees of the State Department, but included many others as well. As a result, the term *McCarthyism* was coined to describe the anti-communist movement that existed in America from 1950 to about 1956, a time which has been labeled "The Second Red Scare" (the first being 1917-1920).

Many people in the arts were targeted as suspects. A case in point is the Hollywood blacklist of the late 1940s and early 1950s. This blacklist has been traditionally viewed by most historians and constitutional scholars as a travesty of political and intellectual freedom. Pursuant to this view, the blacklisted individuals were deprived of their livelihood for no reason other than the unpopularity of their political beliefs. The Hollywood blacklist was an effort by the studios to exclude on a politically selective basis. The Screen Actors' Guild informed its members that "if any actor by his own actions [...] has so offended American public opinion that he has made himself unsaleable at the box office, the Guild cannot and would not want to force an employer to hire him." By imposing the blacklist, the studios were attempting to preserve their profits.

During this period, people from all walks of life were suspected of being Soviet spies or communist sympathizers and were brought before Congressional inquiries. These inquiries later came to be referred to as "witch hunts" by those who opposed them. To this day, dictionary definitions of "McCarthyism" include "the practice of publicizing accusations of political disloyalty or subversion with insufficient regard to evidence" and "the use of unfair investigatory or accusatory methods in order to suppress opposition." See Martin H. Redish, *The Logic of Persecution: Free Expression and the McCarthy Era* (Stanford, : Stanford University Press, 2005).

² Shdanoff and Schreiber were beloved by many well-known Hollywood stars, such as Patricia Neal, Gary Cooper, Jack Palance, Robert Stack, Leslie Caron, Rex Harrison, Sterling Hayden, Paul Newman, and Robert Walker (to name but a few), many of whom were also taught by Chekhov. Born in Vienna, Schreiber was an outstanding young actress in Germany, before becoming "one of the most prestigious coaches in the Hollywood of the forties and fifties." Charles Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov: A Biography of Michael Chekhov, the Legendary Actor, Director & Theorist* (New York: Applause, 2004) 253.

Originally from Russia, Shdanoff was working as a director in Germany in the 1930s and had to flee Hitler's regime after his film *No Man's Land* was banned and he was to be arrested. Shdanoff's teaching incorporated the main principles of Chekhov's technique, and Chekhov referred to him as his "associate." In *From Russia to Hollywood*, he recalls: "Chekhov appointed me co-director of the Chekhov theatre

organization. The plan was to develop it together.” Chekhov and Shdanoff often co-directed, and their tastes and opinions were similar. Shdanoff says, “I directed one act, he another. There was no clash.” Michael Chekhov, George Shdanoff, Mala Powers and Frederick Keeve, *From Russia to Hollywood: the 100-Year Odyssey of Chekhov and Shdanoff*, video recording, Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2002. Shdanoff continued to teach until the late 1980s, yet he did not appear to have the same kind of influence on students as Chekhov in terms of their becoming teachers: no current master teachers came out of his classes.

³ This includes the work of Richard Boleslavsky, Harold Clurman, Elia Kazan, Stella Adler, Robert Lewis, Sanford Meisner, and Lee Strasberg and Uta Hagen, and the work of their numerous students, many of whom became teachers and directors. Interested readers may pursue this in the writings of the above-mentioned authors; for a sample of criticism, see Gray, “Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology.”, David Krasner, *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), Pitches, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*.

⁴ Only Ted Pugh and Simms Wyatt were awarded certificates in the Michael Chekhov Studio at first. Then, upon Joanna Merlin's insistence, Kevin Cotter become certified as well. Cotter still teaches the Chekhov technique in Los Angeles.

⁵ Kane writes “[...] the so-called Experts' Conference ended in disharmony the Russian participants wanting to run a conference the following year in Riga, to which only certain people were invited, and not supporting the start of the international organization, that would have been named the International Michael Chekhov Association (IMCA). Sarah Kane, “Forming MICHA,” ed. Cynthia Ashperger (Toronto: 2007), vol.

⁶ See pages 51-53.

⁷ For example during the 2003 conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands and the 2004 conference in Groznjan, Croatia Open Space discussions took place. The topics were proposed early in the conference and the participants chose their group of interest. In Amsterdam there were two such discussions and in Groznjan there were six.

⁸ Harold Clurman reports on the Group's debate:

We all considered Chekhov a true acting genius, though the New York press has been unable to recognize it. Our actors felt that they had achieved some measure of honesty and truth in their work, but Chekhov's gift for combining these with sharply expressive and yet very free colour, rhythm and design was something in which they knew themselves to be deficient, and which they therefore envied. During the final moments of the meeting someone suggested that Chekhov be shipped back to the Soviet Union. [...]” With the examples of Vakhtangov, Meyerhold and now Chekhov before them, the Group failed to experiment. Lacking a powerful theatre aesthetic, with waning respect for its leaders, the Group continued on its own narrow path. Again, Clurman recalls: “Chekhov was

rejected time and time again. He was too mystical and diffuse” Gray, “Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology. 36.

⁹ The lemniscate, also called the lemniscate of Bernoulli, is a *polar curve*. The sign used for such a curve is a horizontally placed figure eight and is commonly used to depict infinity. This word is most commonly found in fields of mathematic, quantum physics, and Vedic astrology.

¹⁰ This was the rehearsal process that Stanislavsky was exploring at the time of his death and which was subsequently developed by his students and assistants. At its heart lies improvisation, with the actors taking whatever information they have “Here, Today, Now” as the starting point for creative work. Through the simple sequence of reading the text, discussing and improvising, they find that their words and *actions* move closer and closer to the playwright’s script, with the formal learning of text reduced to a minimum. Merlin, Bella. *Konstantin Stanislavsky*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003: 157.

¹¹ For instance, in Zen Buddhism, when working on attainment of the *hara* centre, the practitioner uses breathing. The work with breath is divided in three stages: first, the stage of involuntary breathing as if the breathing is something belonging only to the outer world; then the practitioner practices breathing “within himself;” and finally:

The meaning of the third stage is blissful, convincing and binding experience of participation in the *Whole*. At the third stage it is neither the one nor the other, for here a new life-impulse breaks through which has transcended the opposites and which sets a man on a new path. Karlfried Dèurckheim, *Hara : The Vital Center of Man* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 2004) 162. (emphasis in original).

¹² The notion of *inspiration* can be related back to the Anthroposophist ideas regarding the human *thinking, feeling* and *willing* or the Three-Fold Nature of Man (see pages 39-43). There *inspiration* is an important human activity connected to thinking. It is said to be a proof of materialization of spirit and eventually helps the Steiner’s idea of the human being’s ultimate achievement Spirit Man manifest.

¹³ In the eastern theatrical techniques the philosophical idea of polarities is formalized. For example in Balinese performance *keras* is the name for the outward energy and *manis* is the subtle energy, and in Kabuki and Noh, *yang* (the male principle) and *yin* (the female principle) correspond. In the western world we can see a similar idea in the main polarities of the Jungian psychology: *animus* and *anima*. The *animus* is the more expressive, coming out, active and direct way of communication and *anima* is the passive, softer, miniature and subtle in expression. According to Jung human expression fluctuates between these two polarities. The polarities of *animus* and *anima*, *keras* and *manis* and *yang* and *yin* have identical qualities. Animus, *keras* and *yang* are associated with the masculine energy and their qualities are described as more active, controlled, dominant, analytic and strong. *Anima*, *manis* and *yin* are associated with the female energy and are thought to be

receptive, emotional, synthetic and soft qualities. Chekhov used an analogous general principle of opposites in teaching the principle of polarities which was to help the actor avoid monotony in performance.

¹⁴ Chekhov was already far from Stanislavsky, when Stanislavsky became interested in physical actions. Active Analysis was introduced in an unfinished essay written at the end of his life. Therefore, this refers to Chekhov's experiences with Stanislavsky before he left Russia.

¹⁵ In *The Other Chekhov*, Charles Marowitz describes a meeting between Chekhov and his long-term associate George Shdanoff: "Shdanoff's first question to Chekhov was to ask what he felt about Stanislavsky's view of emotional (affective) and sense memory. 'I do not use them,' replied Chekhov, 'not as tools for preparation of a part nor as exercises. I never liked them and have never used them!'" (114).

¹⁶ In teaching objective atmosphere, one location that is used is that of a cathedral which then gets invaded by another objective atmosphere of noisy tourists. Chekhov is suggesting that the objective atmosphere of the classroom should not resemble that of the cathedral.

¹⁷ Kathy Albers (Case Western Reserve), Dawn Arnold (independent), Cynthia Ashperger (Ryerson University), Suzana Nikolić (University of Zagreb, Croatia), and Lionel Walsh (University of Windsor, Ontario).

¹⁸ Because the original spelling of Chekhov's name is in Cyrillic alphabet the spelling changes from language to language (i.e. in Croatian it is spelled Čehov) but occasionally also there are inconsistencies within one language. German teacher Langhans spells Chekhov "Tschechow" but his countryman Meyer-Horsch spells it "Cechov".

¹⁹ Each inner conflict in the *Long Day's Journey Into Night* was defined as a game. One of these is Mary Tyrone's "game" of deceiving the other family members about her morphine addiction. This game in the Kaluga State Theatre's production became associated with piano as an object and any actions that could be performed around it, with it, on it, under it, playing it, etc., *solely* because the actor chose this. Instead of expressing her inner conflict through a particular pause which would reveal the subtext, Mary could silently perform a five-minute game around the piano which could include hiding under it, playing a tune, closing the lid and opening it in various ways, moving it, turning it, etc. This game had nothing to do with the given circumstances or the dramatic structure suggested by O'Neill but rather it created a new set of circumstances, a new focus, and as a result, new structure of the scene.

²⁰ The point that Chekhov made, a point also prominent in today's pedagogy, is that that intense concentration will help actors to create in a realm that is not "small and insignificant" as life but rather larger than life. He also believed that it will enable the actor to split the focus and achieve *dual consciousness* in performance.

²¹ In *The Path of the Actor's* "Life and Encounters" section, Chekhov described the first experience where a separation between his own consciousness and that of the character happened to him. When performing the role of Skid in *The Artisans* (*Artisen*) in 1928, he had a strange disassociation from what he was playing. At first he noticed how this affected his partners: "For the first time I saw that my fellow actors had a real, living interest in Skid's words and in the drama of his soul"

(144). Then Chekhov started to “anticipate what would happen next inside (the character)” (144; parentheses added) and analyzed this in the following way: “My consciousness had split into two – at one and the same time, I was in the auditorium and standing beside myself and in each of my fellow actors on stage and I knew what all of them were feeling, wanting and expecting” (145). Finally he deemed the performance successful: “The audience, Reinhardt [...]. rewarded me generously [...] I had now ‘found the role’” (145). A further development of this and Chekhov’s subsequent “preoccupation with the question of inspiration and how to gain access to it” led him to direct his efforts to create technical means which can enable the actor to appear organic to the spectator but not to communicate a personal memory. For this Chekhov again turned to his Higher Ego because it, he believed, enabled him to bring on the conditions for the division of consciousness which allowed “the inspiration to enter” (149). This impersonal view of the performance and the character is ultimately the main philosophical and ideological difference between Stanislavsky’s System, both the “psychoanalytical” and “behaviouralist” branches of the American Method and Chekhov’s technique. The impersonal approach to a role is taught to the contemporary students of Chekhov’s technique as an ideal.

²² Zandarski was a faculty member at the Bali Conservatory 2004.

²³ Zandarski has trained actors in the MFA Program at the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University and NYU’s BFA program. She is an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework.

²⁴ Jeremy Whelan invented the Whelan Tape Technique. The basic concept is simple: tape a reading of the scene, then immediately act it out to the playback without moving your lips. Then, when this is done, the scene is taped again, and acted out again to the new recording. This is done five times. Then the scene is played out. Whelan also suggests three basic moves an actor can initially make: Away From – Repelled, Toward – Impelled and To Remain – Compelled. He also suggests that eye contact or physical contact between the partners should be there at all times.

²⁵ Arnold Mindell is a key figure in the revolutionary field of dream and body work. Originally a quantum physicist, Mindell is an analyst in private practice. President of the Research Society for Process-oriented Psychology, Zurich, and training analyst and teacher at the Jung Institute, Zurich. Mindell’s current work focuses on conflict resolution.

²⁶ I did the exercise and imagined the atmosphere at a Chekhov conference 2002 when playing the Charity Commissioner in *The Government Inspector*. I felt untalented and uninspired. I breathed in the atmosphere. Subsequently an image popped into my mind: a cold, enormous hog, with a satisfied mouth, which was pushing me down and strangling me. My facilitator embodied this hog, and I promptly burst into tears, because it frightened me. She gave me the lines which I fed her; “You have no talent. You are the worst actor in this room. Look at you, trying so hard to be funny and you are not. You can *never* be funny. *You push!* You have no original ideas and all the other actors do. In fact you should get off the stage. *Get off the stage!*” This hog also had the magical capacity to move around the space with the speed of light, so I never knew from which direction it would attack.

I then embodied the hog by using the Imaginary Body and then allowed the image to guide me into a PG. The PG was a downward push with a great deal of resistance. To this, I added a growling kind of sound. When asked by the facilitator what this reminded me of in nature I answered, "A waterfall." I was guided to repeat this PG and allowed it to move through me, causing a wonderful sense of relief and joy. I felt the power of the waterfall, a beautiful force of nature, and it lived in me through the PG. My feet stomped and moved and my breathing was full and free. My arm moved up and down strongly in something which became more like a dance. Finally, I internalized the PG and then realized that I could use this process next time the critic attacks.

When we analyzed and discussed the pictures of the "critics" later, I had an epiphany – the picture of a hog was actually an excellent sketch for the Charity Commissioner. Similarly in my classroom, often times I've found that upon completing the words and the actions of the "critic" these are actually easily relatable to the unexpressed sensations of the character and the situation. For example a student visualized the "critic" as the huge wall that was closing in on her and was saying the word "stop". Later on we realized that it directly relates to her character's situation: she wants to stop her rival from taking her lover away.

²⁷ The title of my paper was "East and West Meet in the Body: The Intercultural Aspects of Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique."

²⁸ I contributed with a DVD presentation and a lecture titled "Michael Chekhov's Psychological Gesture in First Two Years of a Conservatory Style Curriculum."

²⁹ This could be Realism, characterized by a desire to represent and imitate reality on stage as faithfully as possible, yet allowing for a degree of abstraction. Chekhov's technique can also successfully be applied to an Epic style which replaces mimesis with exposition. The students could create an Expressionistic performance characterized by "externalization, as a foregrounding of deep meaning or hidden elements, and thus a movement from inside out" (Pavis and Shantz, *Dictionary of the Theatre : Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* 137).

Chapter Three

Current Pedagogy: MICHA Faculty



“It is all a great twisting and wrenching and expanding and contracting of things we get from each other.” (Petit, *"Origins of Exercises"*)

This chapter will discuss the particular focus, outlook and interpretation of the technique by the master teachers of the technique associated with MICHA: Joanna Merlin, Fern Sloan, Ted Pugh, Slava Kokorin, Sarah Kane, Lenard Petit and David Zinder. I will refer to

work of Scott Fielding but not discuss his focus at length. I will also discuss the work of Per Brahe, a teacher who considers himself a Master teacher of the technique but who teaches outside MICHA, to delineate what I see as a negative tendency in current pedagogy. Apart from Merlin, all of the teachers have trained in other methods prior to encountering Chekhov. My practical and theoretical analysis of their work has shown that the training they received prior to Chekhov's technique determines their focus in today's pedagogy. They experience their own Chekhovian pedagogy as either a reaction to, or rejection of the prior experiences. They teach because they have found in Chekhov's technique a better, more effective means to achieve the foremost objective(s) of their prior training and/or because they believe in Chekhov's technique as a remedy for the worst problems of their prior theatrical experiences.

Fern Sloan and Ted Pugh came from the Broadway, off-Broadway and American regional theatre world¹. Their theatrical work both as actors and as teachers reflects a complete rejection of their professional experience and is categorized by a purist approach to Chekhov's acting technique with an emphasis on the value of continuous training in the acting profession. Slava Kokorin clearly reflects the classical Russian conservatory-style training which appears overall to be much more open to the idea of intangibles and spirituality than its western counterparts. Sarah Kane trained in Steiner's Theory of Speech Formation and continued that focus through Chekhov's voice and speech training. Lenard Petit's background is in mime which he studied in Paris in the seventies. Extreme physical choices and full commitment to them is his current interest. Consequently, he more than others teaches Chekhov's movement as a way into performance styles suitable for theatre and not film and TV acting. Scott Fielding's prior training was in Meisner's work, and today he is focused on objectives, giving and receiving and understanding objectives psychophysically.

As already stated, none of the above-mentioned teachers can be classified simply into a category: "acting," "voice," or "movement." Even though Lenard Petit teaches movement, he is not only a movement teacher but also an acting teacher; neither is Sarah Kane only a voice teacher but she also teaches the kind of movement used in the technique; and what is the combination of movement and voice but acting? Joanna Merlin uses the body and voice as much as

psychology in finding the action. The technique is truly holistic and the teachers agree that in their teaching the acting/movement/voice/clown/mask division is arbitrary. That being said, each teacher has particular interests and goals, which then make their teaching emphasis individual and specific, and these differences are influential in creating the whole of contemporary Chekhovian pedagogy.

Unless otherwise indicated, in the rest of this chapter quotations attributed to Joanna Merlin, Fern Sloan, Lenard Petit, and Sarah Kane are derived from my taped interviews at the International Michael Chekhov Conference 2001 at Choate Rosemary Hall, Connecticut. Unless otherwise indicated, information about, and quotations attributed to Ted Pugh and Scott Fielding are derived from my interviews at The International Michael Chekhov Conference 2002 which took place at the same place.

Joanna Merlin

“We are learning! That’s the great thing about getting together: we learn from each other and the students so that technique continues to grow.”²

The President of MICHA, Joanna Merlin, is an actor, teacher and casting director³ of note. Merlin was Chekhov’s student during the last five and a half years of his life from 1949-1955. She attended Chekhov’s studio four sessions a week; Chekhov taught two out of four sessions. Most were improvisations and lectures. “Are you sure you want to be in this terrible business, you are so young?” was the question Chekhov asked a seventeen-year old Joanna Merlin at their first meeting. After fifty years, she still remembers “the gentle spirit” with which he asked her. Today, she embodies the North American legacy of Michael Chekhov, and feels the need to pass on the knowledge. She does so through her style of teaching which is very open, encouraging, and like the Master’s, gentle. Merlin is a sought-after teacher, who has taught many workshops internationally.⁴ She is also a faculty member at the Graduate Acting Department at New York University and the Actors' Centre in New York City.

Merlin became a teacher of the technique because when she started working as a casting director, she was surprised to see that good actors whose work she knew and admired gave bad auditions.

Her desire to understand the problems and challenges actors faced in auditions resulted in an auditioning class but “evolved into a class of Chekhov’s technique.” Merlin found that her students were interested in the technique more than the ins and outs of the auditioning process: “[The technique] worked quickly because [the students] were working intuitively and in a sensory way.”

Merlin’s main goal in an introductory class of Chekhov’s technique is:

To put into practice the whole idea of movement affecting feelings, movement generating feelings through the sensations because that concept is unfamiliar to most American actors. They think of movement only in terms of blocking, what is the movement on the stage. They don’t use the body in an expressive way in a rehearsal process to discover the character or the actions.

Unlike some other Chekhov teachers, Merlin does not shy away from analytical work: “There is no question that an actor needs to know the story, character’s wants and relationships between the characters.” However, she believes that the text has to be approached intuitively through Active Analysis. The imagination must be used before breaking the text into smaller sections, known as “beats” or “bits” to create the score of the performance.

Although Chekhov was in favour of the technique evolving and against anything mechanical in teaching, according to Merlin, the MICHA faculty is “finding there are some things [the faculty] needs to agree on, otherwise we are causing confusion.” As a result Merlin is concerned not so much with the preservation of the technique but with its standardization and development. She is the most outspoken of MICHA’s faculty about the need for consistency of terminology, specifically with respect to the Sensations and Atmosphere Exercises.⁵ Merlin wants the faculty to agree on whether a quality of movement produces sensation or vice versa. These two words “quality” and “sensation” are often used synonymously, yet they are not the same.

Merlin has developed the technique alone and with other teachers but has always insisted that Chekhov’s guiding principles be respected. Her primary focus is on creating character through Archetypal Gesture and action through Psychological Gesture. Her explorations in Archetypal Gesture, Relationship Gesture, and Gestures for Objectives and Beats are an original contribution to the

repertoire of exercises which enable the actor to start exploring character from a transpersonal perspective.⁶ How this contribution manifests in practice will be described in more detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Although Merlin appreciates the fact that using personal memory to create impulses can produce good results, she does not encourage her students to re-live painful memories in order to create impulses:

It is not a question of censoring ourselves, but if we only go into the personal experience we are limited. It also becomes a kind of psychoanalysis in terms of re-examining how we felt at some painful situation and Chekhov felt that there is no need to go through all that pain and suffering. [...] The problem with some of that type of acting (certainly not all of it) is that it stops you from access to imagination. I mean, you are using your imagination to some extent obviously but it is a question of how creatively you can use your imagination? Chekhov said the more you use your imagination the more developed it would be.

In *Method or Madness*, American Method teacher Robert Lewis, whose ideas are closer to Chekhov's than those of most other well-known American teachers, identifies this problem within the American Method and criticizes the "self-indulgent attitude of actors who want to feel "good," and, because of that, gravitate naturally to feelings that are closest to them and therefore more comfortable for them" (Lewis 101). To help avoid this attitude in Chekhov's technique, actors are taught to use the third person singular (he, she) or character's names when discussing their work, instead of the mandatory "I" which is used in the American Method. Chekhov teachers today insist on this differentiation between oneself and the character. The suggestion is that the character exists and has an independent life and that it is the actor's job to merge with the character rather than appropriate it. A Chekhov actor cannot *a priori* consider him/herself one with the character and will not refer to the character as "I" when discussing the character's intentions so as to be reminded not to limit the choices to the most readily available but rather to reach for unfamiliar ones. The opposite applies to the American Method, where the actor will state the objective with "I": I want to confront, I want to defend, I want to teach, and so on. This is not a question of semantics but of difference in approach. When it

comes to approaching the role this is characteristic of Chekhov's technique and as previously mentioned it is this technique's idiosyncrasy.

Merlin, who is not an Anthroposophist, confirms Chamberlain's idea of spirituality being occulted into technique, yet her interests are purely practical.

The only spiritual aspect that is included in his technique is the Higher Self and the Lower Self. [Chekhov] did not express these in terms of religion. The Higher Self is the most creative part of oneself, open and loving and the Lower Self is jealous, competitive and self-centred and so on. He never brought the Steiner philosophy into the classroom. He incorporated a lot of it but it was always about the technique. He never discussed his spiritual beliefs by themselves. He incorporated whatever he wanted to use as a technique.

Governed by this idea, Merlin steers away from discussing spiritual matters. However, she equates the spirituality in Chekhov's technique with imagination: "I don't deal with the spiritual element. I think it is imagination. Most people accept it on that level. That way, it is very grounded. The intangibles in the technique I consider imaginative." Yet Anthroposophy teaches that imagination is only a step towards experiencing supersensible realities directly. Chekhov certainly included this type of thinking in his writing and lecturing, and evidence of this is provided in *Lessons for the Professional Actor* and *Lessons to Teachers*. In "The Actor Will Discover the Spiritual Theatre" in *Lessons for the Professional Actor*, Chekhov imagines the future of the theatre:

The spirit will be concretely studied.⁷ It will not be a spirit "in general," but it will be a concrete tool, or means, which we will have to manage just as easily as any other means. The actor must know what it is, and how to take it and use [it]. This will happen to the spirit, and it will become again a very honorable thing when we know how to manage it, and understand how concrete and objective it can be for us. It can be much more expressive to our fellow man. I believe in the spiritual theatre, in the sense of concrete investigation of the spirit of the human being, but the investigation must be done by artists and actors, but not by scientists. (*Lessons for the Actor* 141)

From Chekhov's *Lessons for the Professional Actor*, it appears that he was confident in this type of future, and as these are lessons

transcribed *verbatim* by Deirdre Hurst Du Prey, they show that he brought spirituality into his classroom, at least at Dartington Hall. In contrast, Merlin's understanding of "spiritual" sets aside Chekhov's goal for the theatre.

Merlin's view of Chekhov's spirituality is simplified into one word, imagination, and thus modified so as not to impose any spiritual requirements or beliefs outwardly on the contemporary student of the technique. This is because, unlike Chekhov, Merlin is careful not to "alienate people who could use the technique but might be put off by the word spiritual." Merlin's caution is rooted in the reality of the idea of spirituality being controversial. After all, Chekhov's spirituality caused the students to drop out of his classes in his First Studio in Moscow. It also caused his colleagues from the Second MAT to denounce him as a "mystic" in 1924 and prompted the Group Theatre to reject his leadership in the 1930s. Paradoxically, Merlin does use the word spirit when discussing the technique in a larger social context:

There is no question about this technique being less materialistic but it is all about how you define [spirituality] as well. The technique brings about an opening of the *spirit* and freeing of the *spirit*. If you want to call that spirituality, [then the technique is spiritual]. Chekhov said and this is a quote: 'To give, constantly to give, is the essence of our profession.' You are not focused on your own ego, reviews, fame and fortune. [Instead], you want to give something to the audience. Yes. That's very uplifting. (emphasis added)

Clearly, for Merlin, spirituality is a problematic concept to discuss. Steiner's warning about what can be expected when this confusing word "spirit" is talked about rings true: "Nowadays, the world understands the word 'Spirit' as intellect. It does not know that the intellect is only a stage on the way towards the spirit inasmuch as it serves to awaken consciousness. It can turn in two directions: towards the spirit, towards clarification and illumination, or towards perception, towards simple deduction" (Steiner, *Creative Speech: The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. 36). Merlin's explanation of spirituality within the technique takes the latter direction described by Steiner; perception and simple deduction in order to avoid controversy.

Merlin's very logical, matter-of-fact, and practical approach supports her aim in teaching Chekhov's technique: "I would hope that

the actors would take from it a way of approaching their roles much more imaginatively and that they have been enriched in terms of their potential for developing a role.” Merlin speaks from the position of a casting agent and an actor as much as a teacher: “Eclectic is the word. [Americans] don’t have companies like *Theatre Du Complicité*.⁸ Actors we train are lucky if they are working. You have to be able to play King Lear one week and in a sitcom the next. You have to have versatility.”

Apart from being an excellent teacher, Merlin is an important link to the original master and his legacy. Merlin’s example of adapting Chekhov’s main tool, the PG, has set a precedent for others to attempt to change the technique. Merlin has also worked to promote MICHA in many different ways. She has been instrumental in securing funding for the Russian visitors and has worked tirelessly to organize the major conferences. Since 2000, Merlin has been especially involved in the workings of teacher training because of her intense desire that the technique be taught properly to those who wish to disseminate it to others. By doing this, Merlin has contributed in a very concrete way to the proliferation of Chekhov’s technique in contemporary acting pedagogy.

The Actors’ Ensemble

We trained in the Actors’ Ensemble [...] to be specific and true. [This] is what we brought and contributed to the contemporary pedagogy. (Pugh, Personal interview)

Fern Sloan and Ted Pugh both abandoned their successful acting careers in order to train full time in the Chekhov technique. They created an artist community in upstate New York and called their company The Actors’ Ensemble. Their company demanded a rigorous acting training of their members in a rebellion against and dissatisfaction with the existing commercial theatre system in which they were very active during the 1970s. According to them, a commercial actor was typecast and asked to create a “self-portrait” over and over again. They felt they were often objectified, causing them to think of themselves as sellable commodities rather than creators. In MICHA classes and my interviews with them, both Sloan

and Pugh suggest that forming the company was not only a drastic adjustment in their way of working, but also a transformation in their way of life, namely a total pursuit of the art of acting and a spirituality based in Anthroposophy. They suggest that the aim of the Actors' Ensemble actor is to be experienced fully as a three-dimensional being by the audience or the director in the theatrical process. Their efforts have resulted in a new generation of Chekhov teachers, such as Ragnar Freidank of Germany and Scott Fielding of the U.S.

Sloan and Pugh left New York and its theatrical social structure and spent two decades transforming themselves into what Chekhov termed "sensitive membrane[s]." They tried to remove themselves from the pressures of type casting, inadequate rehearsal time, and drawing on personal memories to which Sloan refers as "using me, using Fern." Upon quitting their commercial careers, Pugh and Sloan remained in acting, but now on their own terms, seeking full embodiment through Chekhov's acting technique. In 2000, when I began to learn this technique, it was their ability to embody or to "show" the students what result they are looking for in an exercise that convinced me of the technique's effectiveness. More than any other teachers, they convinced me through phenomenological means first and only later through intellectual cognition (explanations of what happened). The direct experience of their full embodiment on the stage was compelling to others as well. Scott Fielding became their student upon seeing them act because of what he described as "fullness of space between the actors."

Fern Sloan

Where does [my characterization] stop being me? It is still me. I am still the one experiencing joy but [the difference] is in how I get to it. There is such an objectivity in working this way. I touch who I am but they are not my emotions.

The most important characteristic of Fern Sloan's work is her purist approach to Chekhov's technique and an Anthroposophist spiritual base which she uses to explain the practice:

Michael Chekhov was an Anthroposophist. That means that he was a student of Rudolf Steiner and I am as well. That means that all of us [Actors' Ensemble] are. Chekhov always talked about the inner life and the intangibles. The questions such as what is *sustaining*?

[Does an image have] an independent life? [When] I get an image, where does it come from? [This image] it affects me and I begin to play with it. What is that? Or if I do a gesture and [...] that gesture [affects me so that it is] moving in and through me. [These are what we refer to as] the intangibles! I don't know if you want to call them spiritual but I'm saying that there is a whole other dimension in this training. No other training talks about the intangibles. Molding, flying, floating and radiating, expanding and contracting, ease, form, beauty they lead to intangibles. These are ways of transforming the energy. We consider that training. We ask ourselves what are the capacities of a human being.

Sloan's main focus is allowing the actor to become transparent, an empty vessel, or a sensitive membrane: "What does it mean: trying to create that sensitive membrane and how educated does this instrument have to be so that whatever I do outwardly I can respond to inwardly immediately?" In order to achieve this, the student actor needs to commit to hours and hours of repetition and this type of *full commitment* to learning the technique properly is the main characteristic of the Chekhov training as taught by Sloan: "It isn't an impossible task but I think that there aren't that many actors that train. We set up training and did it days and weeks and hours and months and years."

However, this meticulously purist focus on building the physical body has certain pitfalls. The problems occur when hours and hours are spent by a student in a meditative movement, all the while trying to remove any thought and embody a sensation. When a student focuses only on a sensation or a quality of movement, this may become too *passive* an exercise for theatrical purposes. The difference between an *active meditation* and a *passive* one is simply the fact that when done passively, the exercises lead the actor to experiencing a sensation, not to action: "A lot of our work is meditative in that it doesn't lead into action. So we have to watch very carefully that there is continuous movement forward and that people stay very awake and active and that they don't turn inward."

The other common problem mentioned by Sloan, and quoted by many other teachers, is that in an attempt to create a sensation, a student might easily slip into *trying* to feel an emotion rather than responding to the inner sensation. Sloan explains:

When working with qualities that lead to sensations the pitfall there is, "oh I have to feel afraid and then I can move like I'm afraid. The

technique asks of an actor to just start to move fearfully. [The difference between the two approaches] is a really hard concept to grasp. Until the students understand [the difference between allowing the movement to happen and controlling the movement] there is no movement forward. [In Chekhov's technique] everything happens through the movement and the body. [The movement] lemniscates. [The effects of the movement] constantly play back on the actor's psychology.

Sloan returned to the Chekhov work after she spent years away from the profession. During this hiatus, she received a Master's degree in art therapy and had forgone any notion of returning to the profession. Sloan does not have fond memories of commercial theatre world:

[Because] I studied with Uta Hagen playing off the personal life was very easy to do. I was extraordinarily emotional [...]. In my work I was basically using me, using Fern. Then I started realizing that this was limiting. I was yearning for transformation.

Ted Pugh somehow convinced Sloan to come to one of the Chekhov classes he taught in the Chekhov Studio in the 1980s and she comments how she "immediately became a convert." Instead of digging through her own past, Fern Sloan recounts how she "abandoned herself" through allowing the exercises such as Four Qualities of Movement (Floating, Radiating, Molding, Flowing), Expanding, Contracting, and Sense of Ease to bring her to the sensations which, in turn, led to the emotions. Sloan thought of herself as a "clean slate" once she embarked on learning this technique; she did so *full-time* for two decades, which eventually led to her becoming a MICHA faculty member.

Ted Pugh

When Chekhov performed *Hamlet*, Russian people would follow his carriage and shout: "What do you believe that you can act like this?"

The most overtly spiritual of the North American teachers, Pugh speaks very simply and directly about it: "There is just a *spirit* to the work that one can sense in the room that is non-competitive. After forty to fifty years of work as an actor you would be stupid not to sense some things." Still, as it is common with all MICHA faculty,

Pugh does not see spirituality as a prerequisite for learning the technique:

Not everybody is looking for a spiritual path and not everybody should. Some people have enough just to deal with this plane. Chekhov was a deeply spiritual man but, interestingly enough, had a period where he was deeply cynical. Anthroposophy is not about enlisting. Just not at all. There is a trust that if it is your destiny you will find it.

Pugh suggests, “The students of this technique fall into it as seekers of something on this plane. They are just trying not to be locked in the boundaries of their own experience.” What these “seekers” are looking for, according to Pugh, is the experience of transformation, which he describes as “pushing the boundaries”: “By pushing back those boundaries, it is possible to reach and find a whole “octave” that wasn’t there for you before.”

Pugh read *To the Actor* in 1957, shortly after it was published (1953). His story before he found a teacher to help him with the technique is quite common: he embarked on a journey of discovery of Chekhov’s technique on his own (master teacher Lenard Petit did the same two decades later). Still, Pugh was certain that he needed to experience the spirit of the work through the *direct transmission* from a human being, namely a teacher of the technique, and he received the spirit he was seeking from his first teacher Edward (Eddie) Growe:

He did not embody the kindness of Chekhov himself. He didn’t even profess to be a good teacher. He had an off-putting personality to some young people but not me. But he gave me the direct contact with it. In direct contact I located something that is living, inspirational, and practical.

Pugh’s objective, however, is not to be “anybody’s teacher,” but rather, to pass on the experience, which he likens to an investigation:

Standing up on your feet you enter into experience so you would find out something. I don’t know what you’re going to find out. I can’t climb inside you and tell you what you need but after being an actor for 50 years, not extracurricular actor but an actor, if I can pass the experience onto the student (and we’ve had many levels of students, very experienced as well) I’ve done my job.

This is precisely what happened in my case. My contact with Chekhov's technique started with utter disbelief. I have marginalia attesting to this in my copy of the 1953 edition of *To the Actor*. Despite this intellectual resistance, by the end of my first class with Pugh in June of 2000, I had "entered the experience." Pugh attributes this instant result to Chekhov's genius: "Chekhov understood the actor's nature. [...] His book is called *To the Actor*. Not to the director, carpenter or anybody else."

As has been discussed, the transformation in this technique means getting away from using personal experience in the work. Pugh explains this from his perspective:

I don't want to spend my life playing me. Good God, I've had it with me. [...] I find myself standing at a fork in the road and I think I can go that way, where [the associations with the image of my own father will lead me to], and I can [choose not work with my father's image]. I don't want to get to an emotional place that I don't have that much control over [such as would be invoked by the image of my father]. I don't want to just burst into tears where it isn't appropriate, but I still can bring [...] all of my memories with me.

As a teacher, Ted Pugh is a combination of a Chekhov encyclopaedia, a piece of living Broadway history, an accomplished actor, and a father-figure. His teaching is concerned with giving an actor tools so that s/he can play in any style. Pugh explains:

The actors who were in the Group theatre, when they saw Chekhov, said: "Oh my God I never even knew that was possible. But I want that too". The early Group Theatre actors stayed away from Shakespeare, Ibsen, even Chekhov. [Harold] Clurman finally said, "We are not very good with the classics". They were not good with a theatre that approaches or requires a style other than realism. However, an actor should be able to play any style.

The Actors' Ensemble has taught all levels of Chekhov training. Still, its contribution to today's practice is best represented in the special care this group takes in establishing the actors' body/mind connection in the initial exercises, such as the ones which deal with space and sensations. The group's work is traditionalist in that it follows the basic Chekhov exercises outlined in *To the Actor*. However, it has contributed to the technique by creating new

exercises, such as the Three Centres Exercise (see Chapter Four), which is now used by all MICHA faculty and the newly-certified teachers. Aside from creating new exercises, much of Pugh and Sloan's work changes the original by using the elements of the technique as steps and sequencing them in new ways which are beneficial for the student. For example, their step-to-step approach to sensations (as a way to emotion) builds on the original. Their new versions of the original exercises will be discussed in the last two chapters. Finally, by continuing the work of the Michael Chekhov's Studio New York, the Actors' Ensemble has contributed a new generation of the teachers of the technique.

Slava Kokorin

"That's so American." (Kokorin)

In *Beyond Stanislavsky*, Bella Merlin describes her experiences as a postgraduate student at Moscow's State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK).⁹ Almost every other page in this book contains a reference to Michael Chekhov. The book is an account of her work with three principal teachers, one of whom was acting master "Albert Filozov who spent a long time reappraising Stanislavsky's system, including his shift from Physical Actions to Active Analysis" (*Beyond Stanislavsky* 161). According to Filozov, Stanislavsky "knew that actors spiritually sleep. First you have to *wake up* the spirit then mould it and rearrange it" (161). That, for Filozov, was the difference between the contemporary Russian approaches to acting and those promulgated in the West: "You have to know that your spirit needs waking. I think that's what defines the real Russian school: it's concerned with awakening the spirit" (*Beyond Stanislavsky* 161).

The way Slava Kokorin¹⁰ uses spirituality in the classroom appears to be unique, in that he presents these concepts as given, ordinary, and workable. His major focus is on drawing forth the actor's ability to transform the energy and to radiate that energy into the space. Chapter Four will return to this contribution to current practice.

Kokorin is a living example of a significant difference between the Russian and western training in the degree of comfort with mention of matters spiritual when teaching Chekhov's technique.

Kokorin has absolutely no problem using such words as “высший ‘я’, Higher Self, in the classroom. Simply stated, Kokorin takes the spiritual aspect of Chekhov’s technique for granted. At the 2000 conference I translated for Kokorin one afternoon, as no official translator was available. After working on “opening energy corridors,”¹¹ the American students wanted a rational explanation of transformation of energy upon successfully performing the exercise. Kokorin passionately replied: “Это так по-американски!” (“That is so American [to ask]”), to which some students took offence. Yet in my opinion, this was not intended as an insult, but came from this Russian’s genuine comfort dealing with the intangibles and a desire to explain to the students that their doubts, apprehensions, and questions are cultural. Kokorin was trying to elucidate that the problem was not in the western actors’ ability to do the work required. Their problem was in what he saw as an impossible need to rationally understand matters which go beyond rational explanation. That being said, as a rule, Chekhov suggested that an acting teacher must make every effort to give the students answers to any and all questions, and Kokorin did not do this.

An apologetic attitude about spiritual matters can also be found in Merlin’s *Beyond Stanislavsky* when she writes about her Russian master teacher, Vladimir Ananyev, who was greatly influenced by Chekhov:

He wanted to help us find ways of “transcending” our everyday physicality and personality, and to find a path into each new character that might take us by surprise and excite us as performers. His training programme assailed this ‘transcendence’ in three particular ways. First, by developing each actor’s physical vocabulary through exercises and improvisations. Secondly, by finding a way of accessing energies and resources rarely used in daily life. (This corresponded to Michael Chekhov’s ‘higher consciousness’ and focused on energies that might through their metaphysical properties, raise the actor’s work to a truly artistic plane. Although this may sound *frighteningly esoteric*, it could in fact be hugely liberating, [...]) Thirdly, Ananyev seemed to propose that, by harnessing this ‘higher consciousness,’ an actor could break from his or her own particular mannerisms and clichés to develop a character’s “Creative Individuality.” (B. Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky* 32; emphasis in original)

By qualifying Ananyev’s ideas in her digression in the brackets as

“frighteningly esoteric” Merlin apologizes for them. I can imagine Kokorin replying to this with: “Это так по-английски!” (“That is so English”).

Yet paradoxically, in “The Changing Body Pre-symposium Workshop” at the University of Exeter in 2006, in which I participated, Merlin divided the workshop into the following five sections: warming up the physical instrument; warming up the psychological instrument; warming up the spiritual instrument; changing body I; and changing body II. In her introductory talk, she pointed out how Stanislavsky mentioned spirit and spiritual fifty-six times in his writing during the Communist era and suggested that “all Stanislavsky means by ‘spirit’ is something beyond the three dimensions which is still there.” While this is vague, it affirms something which appears to be a given in Eastern European acting training in general and a certainty in the current training of Chekhov’s technique in particular. It seems that, by and large, Russian master teachers who are connected to Chekhov’s technique, such as Ananyev, Albert Filozov, Knebel, Vasiliev, and Kokorin, are comfortable with this aspect and are much less apologetic when discussing spirituality than their western counterparts.¹² How Kokorin approaches Chekhov’s exercises in this manner will be discussed later.

Sarah Kane: Voice and Speech

How wonderful is the human voice! It is indeed the organ of the soul. The intellect of man sits enthroned visibly, on his forehead, or in his eyes, and the heart of man is written on his countenance, but the soul reveals itself through the voice only. (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, quoted by Sarah Kane)

In the recently-translated “Russian chapter” of *To the Actor*,¹³ Chekhov discusses artistic speech in two ways. The speech can be motivated with a Psychological Gesture or with an image behind it. Here, Chekhov’s understanding of verbal action includes a definite Steiner influence. Sarah Kane is a MICHA faculty member; evident in her work is the ten years she spent in Steiner’s speech training. She says: “Obviously with words idea of meaning comes into words, but if you get beyond the meaning what you’re looking at with words is movement; is gesture.” And such a statement is clearly related to Steiner’s ideas and philosophy.

Steiner was a polymath: in addition to his religious and philosophical texts, he wrote about scientific experiments, agriculture, education, and architecture. He also engaged in theatrical endeavors, believing that dramatic art is a place within which to holistically unify all arts. Steiner suggested that artists are more capable of awakening consciousness fully than others, because of their connection to poetic imagination and the ability to express it with the art of sound and not just the art of meaning. In the Anthroposophist centre, Goetheanum, in Switzerland, in 1923, his students performed Mystery Plays of which he was the author, and where his experiments with breath, sound, and movement tried to balance preoccupation with the content. In his plays, he attempted to characterize through sound. Those taking part in Steiner's Mystery Play, *The Soul's Probation*, created their characterizations by applying principles of Steiner's Eurythmy; "the science of visible speech" which treats voice and movement as one (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 75). In this approach the actors took their inspiration from the sounds and then allowed the sounds to affect their movement and psychology. Steiner described the characters for the play mainly through the way he imagined them to sound:

- 1st Man: Has to do with I (ee)
 2nd Man: E (eh), r – Go into the sound: must become accustomed to deft speaking through lip exercises and must become more plastic
 1st Woman: E (eh) r. The same. She wants to say something to the others which she thinks she alone knows.
 3rd Man: Palate sounds are all-important.
 2nd Woman: Articulate the consonants strongly.
 3rd Woman: Prepare for the consonants with m.
 4th Man: A liberal fellow, tuned to E (eh) and I (ee); rather a loud gentleman.
 5th Man: A visionary: U (oo), O (oh). [...]
 6th Woman: Increased pity: tune in to the diphthongs and adjust the rest accordingly: speak more inwardly.
 6th Man: Clever prattler, crafty; try particularly to use the broad E (eh). Then you bring out through speech formation, through a broad E (eh), the untrue, slightly hypocritical element. (Steiner, *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. 116-17)

Kane describes herself as "wayward" when it comes to her path to Chekhov. She started her training in the south of Germany, "working in conjunction with a drug rehabilitation program." The

patients were trained in Steiner's voice classes and were "incorporated in roles" in productions. Kane used gestures invoked by sounds to teach someone to breathe correctly, thus enabling him/her to awaken his/her consciousness as described in Chapters One and Two. In the case of the patients of the drug rehabilitation program, this had the purpose of mental and physical healing. To train in such a way was to foster a healthy cooperation of body, soul, and spirit, which would ideally result from giving speech artistic shape and form, so that through such speech, each human being could fully acquire his/her own individuality.

Kane, who is British, but fluent in German, took ten years to finish Steiner's four-year voice training in Germany in the 1980s: "I devised my own curriculum, finding many teachers on the way." A teacher she met along the way was Graham Dixon, "an Australian who was taught by Alice Crowther who taught movement and voice alongside of Chekhov at Dartington Hall." Kane's current path of combining voice and movement reflects this influence. When she finished her degree in Steiner's voice training in 1990 at the age of thirty-six, she immediately found a position teaching voice in an independent acting school in Munich: "It was extraordinary because I could do whatever I wanted to do. Also I was very inspired," remembers Kane.

The inspiration to which she refers was a four-week Chekhov course in London taught just before her engagement by three women who, according to Kane, called themselves "The Ancient Monuments": Felicity Mason, Eleanor Phasen, and Deirdre Hurst Du Prey. They were supported by Hurd Hatfield¹⁴ and Paul Rogers, the one British actor who made a successful career after training with Chekhov in Dartington Hall in the 1930s. This was a rudimentary course, not geared towards teacher training; even so, it gave Kane a desire to pursue the technique: "All of these seventy-something-year-old ladies studied with Chekhov. They were not actors themselves, they were just doing the exercises rather than preparing you to teach."

Today, fifteen years later, Kane is at the core of MICHA. In 1994, she organized a MICHA conference at Emerson College where she headed the Speech and Drama program. A year later she founded The Michael Chekhov Centre UK. She also founded "thresh hold" theatre in 1997 to "further investigate Michael Chekhov's techniques in rehearsal in performance" (ETRA). As a freelance teacher, she has

taught in Croatia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, as well as in Britain and the United States. From 2002 to 2005, Kane was Associate Artist at the Stanislavsky Theater Studio¹⁵ in Washington, under artistic director Andrei Malaev-Babel.

Kane is the Chekhov expert on voice and speech, and at MICHA, she works with teachers in training. Suzana Nikolić of the Dramatic Academy of Zagreb was certified in 2004 as the first Chekhov teacher whose focus is on voice and speech: “I am the only one who has gone so far into the Chekhov work itself in such depth and over such a long period of time that it enables me to teach it now. What I had done is transform [Steiner’s] voice and speech work that I learned. I teach it now not out of the vocabulary in which I had learnt it but out of the Chekhov vocabulary.”

Kane seeks to convey the physicality of words, sounds and syllables. As will be shown, in her introductory classes, Kane often works with ball-throwing, using the ball’s trajectory as a representation of the movement through space. The ball-throwing exercises are a part of the repertoire of all MICHA faculty, but Kane uses them more elaborately than others, as they lend themselves to voice and speech. Chekhov also used ball-throwing, for example, in his rehearsals for a “modern” Hamlet in 1923. In the *Path of the Actor*, he writes:

We would silently throw balls to one another, investing our movements with the artistic content of our roles. The text of the play was read to us slowly and loudly, and we embodied it by throwing balls to one another. With this we achieved the following aims: Firstly, we freed ourselves from the need to speak the words before the inner artistic motivation for them had arisen. [...]. Secondly, we learnt to understand in a practical sense the deep connection of movement with the words on the one hand, and with the emotions on the other. We discerned a law whereby an actor who repeatedly carries out one and the same expressive movement driven by the will [...] gains as a result a corresponding emotion and an inner right to articulate the words relating to it. From movement we went to feeling and word. (M. Chekhov, Kirillov and Merlin 107)

Today, this has been developed to include a number of new exercises (see Appendix 15).



In advanced training, Kane looks at individual sounds as gesture, words as gesture, sentences as gesture, paragraphs and monologues as gestures. By entering into gestures, students enter a whole world of sound where they ask themselves the basic questions: What is sound? What are consonants, vowels? Her classes explore the power of language and the potential of sound. She also explores speech formation and language creation; how a sound inspires the creation of syllable into word and sentence. As Steiner suggests, “I would advise you to pay special attention to entering literally into the sounds, literally growing into them” (Steiner, *Creative Speech: The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. 46). Kane’s mission is to make the students aware that sounds deeply affect their bodies, and more importantly, they can learn to feel the resonance of a sound in the body by “growing into them.” While many actors have done some form of sound and movement exercises in their training before they were introduced to Chekhov’s technique, these usually do not contain a philosophy or an explanation that goes beyond a general statement

about the connection between the body and the mind. In her pedagogy, Kane goes beyond this, reminding students of the origins of language and asking them to rediscover them.

In a conversation worth repeating, Sarah Kane and I discussed the difference between the sounds in the words *tree* and *drvo*; an English and Croatian collection of sounds that give meaning to a group of plants made up of trunks and different kinds of leaves. This conversation made it possible for me to embrace Chekhov speech and gave me a new direction in my understanding of language and etymology. The languages can be examined not only through origin, derivation and development of words through their common roots and meanings but through their sounds – consonants and vowels:

KANE: If you take the word *tree*. The sounds “Tah,” “rrrr,” “ee,” those are the sounds that English language uses to recreate that image in speech. Those combinations have gestures. “T” has a gesture if you just listen to it. Part of it is that it is just a listening exercise. If you look out the window and see those pine trees and you look at the “ee” which is a very upright sound, much more than an “ah” or an “oh”. It is much more a straight line. You only need to look at the form of the letter, because the form of the letter the written sound is very often a reflection of the quality of the gesture of the sound.

ASHPERGER: In Croatian it is *drvo*.

KANE: Yes, so in English it is T “tah” and R “rah” (t-r-ee) and in Croatian it is D “dah” and R “rah” (d-r-vo). Obviously it is picking up on the something similar to start with but in English you have the “ee” which is picking up on a part of the tree, you might say the uprightness of the trunk. What I can hear in the Croatian “voh” is perhaps the more of the whole crown of the tree.

ASHPERGER: Each language will sound it differently depending on what’s important to the group of people speaking, what it sees. But the “D” and “T” followed by an “R” is a point of connection between English and Croatian. When I say “drr” or “trr” I see the bark. The question is how do you transform these images into a continual speech?

KANE: Obviously this is your A, B, Cs.

These A, B, Cs are translated by Kane into her work with consonants, vowels, and syllables.

Kane’s work is filled with deep concern for “Sense of Ease,” the first element of the Four Brothers Exercise previously mentioned (Sense of Ease, Form, Beauty, and Whole). Students spend time developing the ease of speaking, the flow of breath; they learn how to

put into practice “the idea that words travel on the breath” to the other person. Both language creation and the ease and beauty of speech are featured prominently in Steiner’s *Speech Formation*. Thus, Kane’s main contribution to current pedagogy is a coherent pedagogical structure with which to bring together Steiner’s ideas of speech and Chekhov’s acting training.

Lenard Petit: Movement



When I am sad, I am not sad because I’m thinking sad thoughts. I am thinking sad thoughts because I am sad and I am sad in my finger.

Lenard Petit came to this work through a background in movement. He spent the 1970s studying in Paris with Etienne Decroux and read *To the Actor* looking for some help in his acting: “I

was told that if I was to study mime I needed to study acting. I tried reading Stanislavsky but it did not work for me because I needed to think too much. These were just words on paper that I did not know how to use. In Chekhov's book the first chapter is all about movement – so I thought, “oh, I can be an actor.”

In 1979, Petit returned from France to New York, where he “was laughed at because he studied mime,” as this was not then *en vogue* in America. He shot a lead role in a film in 1980, and upon seeing it, thought his acting was “so bad” that he looked for a place to study acting. The Chekhov Studio had just opened in New York, and he signed up:

I was already very interested in this. I worked out whatever I could from the book on my own, I worked with a centre a bit and had some kind of understanding of PG, which was strange because nobody understands it from the book but because it was about movement and I'm a movement person I understood it.

Petit was taught by Blair Cutting at the Chekhov Studio. Cutting's approach to acting was through movement, which clearly suited this student's needs. Petit smiles when he remembers Blair Cutting's favorite expression: “Check your brain at the door.”

Even though he is now a MICHA faculty member, he was initially rejected from the teacher training course in The Chekhov Studio, New York. Petit commented in our interview that he felt an outsider in this fledgling community: “I wasn't one of ‘them’.” Nevertheless, twenty-five years later, he has come to be accepted as a Chekhov teacher on his own terms and within MICHA he now teaches side by side with some of his colleagues who passed the teacher-training at The Chekhov Studio such as Ted Pugh. Petit's new form, “Chekhov Clown,” and his new exercises, such as “Gargoyle to Gesture,” together with an attitude which embraces Active Analysis are accepted as a legitimate approach today. Overall, Petit aims to train a certain kind of actor: a theatre actor. This differs from Joanna Merlin's aim to create a versatile actor who can work in all media – and this is the generally-accepted view. However, MICHA's acceptance of the differences in contemporary approaches and its willingness to incorporate them into the technique point to this organization's commitment to a basic principle of constant exploration

and a liberal view of the contemporary interpretations of the technique.

Petit's main interest is in experimenting with form leading to substance: "I had a lot of physical training, worked in the avant-garde theatre in New York, doing things like recreating Meyerhold productions, investigating that idea of form and directorial freedom and corporeal mind of Etienne Decroux, all of that has influenced me as a teacher." This approach is also different than the common philosophy of his current employer, Rutgers University, which favors Meisner's technique: "I spend no time analyzing the play around the table with my actors and I work in a university where they teach the students and the directors this is how you work on a play."

Petit's understanding of Chekhov's technique is seen in the following sequence of questions: Who, what and how? "Who does what how?" is how he puts it. The first question he asks when teaching or directing is "Who is the character?" The following question is "What is the character's objective?" This is the order followed by many North American schools and is not radical. However, Petit's appreciation for and application of Chekhov's work comes in the "how" portion of this formula, which he qualifies as "clear" and "distinct." Without this portion, Petit believes that actors can never be artists. Petit explains: "This view differs from Stanislavsky's 'Why am I doing what?' which is asked by a lot of American actors." Currently, mainstream Chekhovian pedagogy includes such an interim step of analyzing the "why." However, as previously noted, the Chekhovian pedagogy does not encourage using first person singular in this process but rather reformulates the question to: "Why is *the character* doing what?" Petit's training omits this step. He suggests that if the actor puts his/her attention on a variety of "hows," the "whys" will be answered through this process. Here, Petit is essentially expressing his commitment to the quality of action as it is understood in the Eastern traditional theatre namely that what we refer to as *the character* is an ever-changing illusion, a *process* created by us through causing *events* and not a *solid* entity. In other words Petit operates from a position which embraces the idea of "no self" (see pages 60-61).

In Petit's view, by posing the traditional question, "why am I doing what," the actor approaches the character not as a psychophysical investigation but rather s/he limits the analysis to the

sphere of action and more specifically its psychological motivation inextricably connected to the actor's habitual psychophysical tendencies. Petit suggests, that by doing so s/he often avoids investigating true characterization which ought to involve physicality inspired by an image. In Petit's view the question framed by "why" invites a more "selfish, egoistic way of approaching character which results in the audiences witnessing a very good actor doing the same thing again and again and again." This because such analysis often becomes self-referential and the final result depends on the actor's own personality and psychological conditioning and not on an image of the character:

Chekhov says, and I agree, that if you put your interest your attention and your work into "why" you'll never get to "how" but if you put your attention into "how" this will also answer "why." I have this as a first hand experience as a director. This has absolutely proven to be true. *He walks into the room, he takes out a gun and he shoots her*, these are the stage directions. The traditional American actor will say 'Why? Why does he walk into a room, why does he take out a gun and why does he shoot her?' [But] Chekhov says 'The playwright says that this character must walk into the room, pull out a gun and shoot. So how am I going to do it? Am I going to sneak, burst, tear the door down or pull out the gun in a really "sexy" way?' The possibilities of "how" provide a palette for the director and the actor to choose. Such an approach is a much more theatrical one. It offers a possibility of working with images and movement. (emphasis added)

Petit's justification for omitting the "why" is so that in the final production the *character's* and not the *actor's* personality can come into focus. For Petit, it is a simple progression: "The technique leads to a character, a scene and finally a contact with the audience."

Petit has a particular goal: he wants an actor who can easily change and experiment with mind and body, not one who is "wedded" to his/her choices. His experience has shown that during the "table work," actors are so convinced that their choices are right, that by the time they start to work with a partner, they are unable to make a new choice: "They did it at the table and their logical, reasoning mind says 'Case closed!' When you're working with actors like this and tell them 'I'm sorry this doesn't work, can you please change that?' they want to try it again the same way because they think that they just did not execute the choice well. The choice still makes perfect sense to

them.” Petit equates omitting the “why” with artistic freedom: “[When the actor is] relying on imagination it is much easier to change any choice.” This last statement points to the fact that as a director Petit believes in deconstructing every choice into a performance of generative *actions* and their *qualities* so that the question of a single “right” interpretation is obviated and playfulness is encouraged.

Petit is outspoken when it comes to physical transformation. He is *looking for it* in a performance – if there is no transformation, the performance is lacking. To this end, he focuses on the “how” in unorthodox ways, such as use of grotesque and clown. Chekhov himself was a clown, and according to Deirdre Hurst Du Prey, he lamented not being able to play his clown more often. In *The Dartington Years*, Du Prey remembers: “[He] always wanted to be a clown and how he believed that actors must become jugglers of sorts. A phenomenal improviser himself, Chekhov taught that an actor ought to be able to repeat an action as many times a possible without repeating it exactly but keeping all the elements needed for the story”(Sharp). Petit’s teaching now incorporates clowning. His training also aims for actors to learn how to improvise with objects. He has devised exercises for both improvisation with objects within acting and clowning.

While the above shows how Petit’s work is radically anti-naturalistic, he is very careful when it comes to discussing the spirituality in this training:

It is difficult to talk about the intangibles and spirituality because you don’t know how people are going to respond to such words. [The responses will range] from skepticism, to disgust, to embracing it. I only mention this when it’s necessary. After a lot of work has been done and when it is undeniable that something has happened to everyone in the room then I can talk about it. In Chekhov’s work these intangible means of expression are almost a contradiction in terms. If I’m able to express it then it is tangible. How it became is kind of intangible. What you come to understand about it that it is a kind of a movement all the time.

The Intuitive Group

Stanislavsky in the theatre, and Dr. Steiner (in theatre, speech and Eurythmy) have both created very strong methods, and both have said, first of all the intuition, and then the Method. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 18, 1938)

David Zinder

Chekhov's technique has made its way into the contemporary practice of many teachers, who claim they do not teach "pure" Chekhov's technique but, rather, use elements of it in their training. Such teachers include VGIK's Vladimir Ananyev, whose teaching is the main inspiration behind Bella Merlin's *Beyond Stanislavsky*. David Zinder, who is the subject of this section, and Per Brahe, who is the subject of the next, have both taught for MICHA and been members of MICHA faculty. Each has suggested that he came to the same conclusions as Chekhov about training *before* learning the method and then, by fate or accident, they stumbled on this work, only to recognize the astonishing similarities.

David Zinder calls his connection to Chekhov's technique "retroactive" (Zinder 25). In the introduction to his book he writes about "Synchronicity and Symbiosis" where he gives an example of a workshop he took with Andrei Drazhin¹⁶ at a 1990 conference called "Beyond Stanislavsky" organized by the Liège-based Centre des Recherches Théâtrales. Drazhin taught an exercise which, to Zinder's amazement, "was identical – not similar, *identical*– in almost every single one of its details to an exercise that I *know* I invented one night in the privacy of my own home" (18; emphasis in original). Zinder calls this experience "humbling" and "enlightening at the same time" (19). He attributes this to unintentional synchronicity in training procedures whereby teachers working in the same field, out of the same basic concepts, will invariably come up with similar or even identical solutions for training problems (19). Zinder adds:

After a workshop I gave in what I called *ImageWork*, I was told by Mala Powers (the executrix of Chekhov's intellectual estate and the moving force behind the publication of the Chekhov "bible" *On the Technique of Acting*) [...] that everything I demonstrated in the workshop was identical to central elements in the Chekhov Technique. This revelation was followed by a period of questioning

and learning, during which, with the help of many of my present colleagues in the Chekhov work, I rediscovered and re-embraced the work of this extraordinary man and understood for the first time just how closely my work is to his. (xii)

When it comes to further influences of Chekhov's pedagogy after he made the "retroactive" connection, Zinder credits "the Chekhov cabal," namely:

the teachers of the Chekhov Technique around the world from whom I have learned so much: Joanna Merlin, Jack Colvin, Mala Powers, Lenard Petit, Ted Pugh, Fern Sloan, and Andrei Malaev-Babel, all from the United States; Jorg Andrees and Jobst Langhans from Berlin; Sarah Kane and Graham Dixon, From the United Kingdom and Australia; Slava Kokorin and the late Nelly Dugar-Jabon from Siberia; Andrei Kirilov from Russia; and Per Brahe from Denmark. (26)

Zinder is now part of the "cabal," a regular faculty member at Chekhov conferences, as well as acting and teacher-training workshops.

Zinder is a master teacher in the true sense of the word; he has a great deal of knowledge and a sound structure in order to ensure progression in the training. His steps follow a carefully developed logic which he terms "trajectories": from body to voice to imagination; from physical to physical/vocal to physical/vocal/verbal; and from the abstract to the concrete (Zinder 4).

His first "trajectory" is concerned initially with how to "*em-body*" (4; emphasis in original), then how to give voice to that which we "*em-body*" and finally how to move from this to "the fascinating, elusive, complex, and profound terrain of imagination" (5). Zinder's second trajectory deals with the parameters outlined in the first one but focuses on the "*relationship* among body, voice and language" (5; emphasis added). By this, he means that actor training needs to "stay clear of voice, words, or text as long as possible" (5-7). Finally, in the third trajectory, Zinder undertakes a thorough examination of the "habit of creativity." He works under the premise that a student-actor must experience the "sheer joy of creative/improvisational freedom" (8) before anything is structured. However the "free-form" he describes is structured through a detailed set of principles of improvisation techniques. He doesn't claim to give an exhaustive list; rather, he names as many elements of improvisation as possible,

which can be used in any order necessary (see *Body, Voice and Imagination*). While these are principles outlined in his writing, in *practice*, Zinder does not lecture on these or discuss them extensively *per se*. Most importantly, Improvisation Technique as such is not taught as a distinct element, but “it *is* the training” (13). In the context of MICHA’s pedagogy, Zinder’s work with the Imaginary Centres and Imaginary Body is of most interest. He teaches these regularly at the conferences, and in these two elements of Chekhov’s technique, Zinder’s contribution is evident. This will be examined in more detail in the following two chapters.

Per Brahe

It is not good for students to walk in the dark. If a teacher has to give something, it must never be a secret. The pupil must always know what he is doing, in order that he can decide whether he wishes that method or not. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 8, 1936)

Per Brahe was the Artistic Director for the Michael Chekhov Conference in Siberia in 2000. He also taught at MICHA events up to 2002. According to Brahe, he came to Chekhov’s work when he taught at Gitis Theatre in Moscow: “My initiation took place a few blocks from Michael Chekhov’s home and MAT in Moscow in Gitis theatre. The Russian teachers said your mask work is like Michael Chekhov. They invited me back to Russia and trained me in Chekhov technique and now I pass it on” (Brahe, Bali Lecture 3rd August 2004). Brahe is a founding member of MICHA. Since 2003, however, he has not taught for the organization. The most likely cause of the schism between MICHA and Brahe lies in his publicly-expressed negative opinions about the value of MICHA as an organization. Mainly, these have to do with his public statements that Chekhov’s “guru status” should be abandoned so that the newly developed technique can “surpass the Master” (Brahe, Bali Lecture 3rd August 2004). While MICHA’s stance is not against development of the technique, its respect for the original principles and original teacher is great.

I worked with Per Brahe in a class at a 2002 MICHA conference. During this class, Brahe put masks on students whose eyes were closed, so that they did not see the mask. Many students

started to behave appropriately for the mask-image they were wearing (i.e. the Queen and the King somehow found each other in the space, held hands and waved calmly to the audience, and the Fool and the Clown gravitated towards each other and playfully improvised, and so on). Brahe explained this fascinating phenomenon as: “We mirror a fixed image into each other’s body” (Brahe, *Bali Lecture 3rd August 2004*).

In the first workshop, I experienced this phenomenon wearing the mask of a Seducer. My improvisation started calmly, and the last thought I remember having was: “I don’t know who I am.” This gradually transformed into my running around the room grabbing every person wearing a female mask, showing animosity to males and doing pelvic thrusts. During the next improvisation, I found a great degree of freedom singing while wearing a mask from a series Brahe had made in Bali in images of famous Opera singers. The Brahe stint at MICHA was brief and the masks were so enticing that I decided to spend five weeks of intensive training with Brahe and his partner Aole T. Miller at the pricey Bali Conservatory 2004.¹⁷ There, I had hundreds of hours of contact with Brahe and ample time to carefully consider how he uses Chekhov’s technique.

Spirituality: Chekhov’s philosophy in Brahe’s teaching was evident in his preferred terminology of “Higher Ego” and “Lower Ego.” Yet in an over-simplification of these terms, he tended to equate the Higher Ego with all things good and eastern and the Lower Ego with all things bad and western. Furthermore, he used this simplified understanding to admonish the students when they asked for clarification of the purpose of an exercise. According to Brahe such questions arise out of “western Lower Ego talking” (Brahe, *Bali Lecture 3rd August 2004*). Thus, generally students were not given explanation of the purpose of an exercise and were not offered commentary upon their work in such an exercise. This is completely opposite to what Chekhov asks of a teacher of his technique; namely that “the students know that they have guidance and are led” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 21). It also differs from Chekhov’s style of teaching. In *From Russia to Hollywood*, Lloyd Bridges remarks on Chekhov’s presence as a teacher (such testimonials were echoed during the conferences by Joanna Merlin, Jack Colvin, and Mala Powers): “I had a pleasure of knowing this

man. He had a great love in his heart. *You were never alone when you were acting.* It was a delightful experience” (M. Chekhov et al.; emphasis added). As we can see Chekhov’s general lesson to the teachers was for them to be kind, attentive and patient. Brahe’s style of teaching defied Chekhov’s recommendations in this respect.

Furthermore, Brahe claims that he is deliberately inattentive to students’ work in order to free them from an exhibitionist desire: “We do not rely on applause in Chekhov’s work” (Brahe, Bali Lecture 3rd August 2004). While Chekhov encouraged a loving relationship with the audience and always suggested that the actor take the audience into the given circumstances, during the exercises we performed in Bali, we had no audience, because Brahe seldom watched our work. He often looked into the ground or into the distance (in Bali we worked in a pavilion so that the view was spectacular). To be fair Miller who would often assist Brahe was more attentive in terms of watching but equally silent in providing the constructive criticism. While this “no comment” method might on occasion have some value in terms of freeing one from the need to please the teacher/the audience, it abandons Chekhov’s idea of the audience being an intrinsic element of an actor’s performance. In a classroom setting it is the teacher who acts as this element. When we did perform several exercises in which we were to become aware of how being watched changes our performance the students were paired up and acted as each other’s audience. These exercises took place during one session and were effective in that we actually received and gave commentary of our work.

As a result in Brahe’s teaching, all the worst fears that one might have about making aspirations work with the Higher Ego were realized. Ideas such as working with non-personal imagery, tapping into the universal, using the intuition, or freeing the performer, became ends in themselves. Instead of creating a character, the students were locked in a kind of a daydream, while the precise application of the technique was abandoned. In other words, unlike Chekhov, Brahe did not combine “work on the character” and “work on oneself.” During dozens of hours of mask work, instructions were given to the masked students to move according to what feels right. Granted, sometimes the students were asked to move with a staccato or legato quality, to expand and contract, to focus on thinking, feeling or willing etc. Sometimes even interesting moments occurred. Yet no

specific application or fine tuning and, most importantly, no choices were made so that masked character could be developed. This was unfortunate, because as mentioned, the masks have an incredible potential. Also the conditions were excellent: we had five weeks to play and Purnati Center where the conservatory took place is an extraordinary facility. Each mask was made by one of the two foremost mask-makers in Bali and is a work of art. Brache provided the drawings and concepts for many of the masks made by Ida Bagus Anom.

Visible and Invisible Mask: That Chekhov was interested in working with an invisible mask is common knowledge expressed by MICHA faculty in classes and Mala Powers in *From Russia to Hollywood*: “Chekhov believed that we wear a mask” (M. Chekhov et al.) Chekhov taught that the actor needs to create character’s mask and operate in safety behind it: “We never express ourselves directly but always indirectly. In order to express ourselves on the stage we need a mask” (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*). This *invisible* mask protects an actor and frees his/her sense of play. Ideally, an actor trained in his technique could simply change these invisible masks and play any part.

In “Taksu and The Balinese Egoless Theatre,” Brahe writes:

Atmosphere, Images, “Feeling” of ease are all words familiar to Michael Chekhov inspired actors. Michael Chekhov incorporated these techniques from ancient Hinduism. Even though Chekhov’s material is collected from Hinduism, a lot was lost in the translation of his material. He was close to finding the key to the secret of this special “energy” (*taksu*), but he never succeeded because he was trapped between two religions, the Anthroposophical Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. From Chekhov’s last lecture we know he was close to finding this energy, and in his last telephone call to his secretary Deirdre Hurst Du Prey, he said he wanted to work with masks: it was his first priority after his release from the hospital. He died without having an opportunity to explore mask work although in all of his character work, he used physical masks beautifully. (Brahe, “Taksu and Balinese Egoless Theatre” 3)

Except for the reference to “physical mask.” all other above references from Brahe are to a visible mask work. Brahe’s interpretation suggests that in Chekhov’s technique, an actor imagines his/her character and then embodies that image and that, had Chekhov lived, he would have

explored with actual masks. Brahe's intention to bring this about through his explorations does not go against the focus on exploration in current pedagogy. In fact, it is in accordance with it. However, his method is lacking.

According to Margaret Coldiron, Balinese and Noh mask specialist, the purpose of the mask in such traditional theatre is "the abnegation of the self and a simultaneous subjectivity and objectivity within the performance" (Coldiron 42). The masked performer is "helped by the mask, which covers his/her face, and thus erases the separate identity, the "I-ness," of the performer" (43). Yet the mask also provides an identity. A mask is a mechanism for both the internal and the external transformation – the internal transformation of the actor's consciousness and the external, physical transformation. In contemporary practice of Chekhov's technique the *imaginary* mask serves the same function: it frees the performer from having to create a self-portrait and allow him/her to simultaneously be objective and subjective, which in Chekhov's technique, is called the dual-consciousness in performance.

What Brahe's pedagogy lacks is a concrete study of the external, physical transformation which has to complement the internal change in consciousness. During the Bali Conservatory there was absolutely no instruction which would support the simultaneous observation of the characterization which would then aid in making choices which could be repeated and built on. Furthermore Brahe's pedagogy went against that of Chekhov: "You must direct the student and tell him what to look for, you must always make quite sure that all the pupils understand before you go on to the next point. [...] It is absolutely essential to know that you are understood. To be as definite as a sword. There is no half way" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 21).

In Brahe's class, the students for the most part were not told the precise purpose of an exercise and, as mentioned, if they asked for an explanation, they were running the risk of being accused of being controlling or egotistical. Brahe's article continues: "The western burden of being raised as an individual creates a huge ego, which challenges his or her work with the masks. In the mask work the ego is knocked down, but will strike back again and again and again in its effort to take control over the body. There is an aspect of surrender in the Image/Mask work" (Brahe, Taksu and Balinese Egoless Theatre

3). In my experience, Brahe's method did not facilitate surrender, quite the contrary. The key to Chekhov's pedagogy (or any good pedagogy) is keeping students informed, so that they can surrender.

In the Bali Conservatory brochure, Brahe calls himself "master teacher of Michael Chekhov technique and expert in Balinese Mask according to the Eastern tradition of mask work." When compared with the knowledge acquired during much shorter MICHA conferences while studying with the other master teachers of Chekhov's technique Bali Conservatory proved to be much less effective. As far as mastery of "Eastern tradition of mask" goes, Brahe has an extremely valuable, beautiful, and extraordinary collection of Balinese traditional and non-traditional Balinese-made masks. Brahe also hires Balinese expert teachers to teach the traditional mask dances,¹⁸ which I found the most interesting and illuminating aspect of the Bali Conservatory. While the various approaches to Chekhov's technique taught by the master teachers mentioned above, build on the original, while remaining respectful of the principles that made the original unique, in Brahe's five-week conservatory Chekhov's technique stopped being Chekhov's technique and it became Brahe's own. Thus Brahe's wish for Chekhov's "guru status" to be abandoned did materialize. However, his approach is lacking in both form and substance and will need a lot of improvements before this it can hope to surpass the technique as outlined by Michael Chekhov.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE:

¹ Fern Sloan played leading roles in numerous regional theatres in the US and Canada. Among her many roles, she appeared as Lavinia in *Mourning Becomes Electra* at the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre. She also performed in NYC Off-Broadway and the NY Shakespeare Festival Public Theater.

Ted Pugh started his career at the Arena Theater in Washington, D.C. in the early 1960s. Soon after he became a founding member of the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Connecticut, under the direction of Jon Jory. He has appeared on Broadway in *Irene*, and *Five O'Clock Girl*, and Off-Broadway in a number of productions including *Have I Got a Girl for You*, with Gloria DeHaven. Pugh has performed in practically every aspect of theatre, including night clubs, cabaret, repertory theatre television, and film, and appeared as half of the comedy team of Lawless and Pugh, which was seen on the *Tonight Show*, *Merv Griffin*, and the *David Frost Show*. MICHA, *The International Michael Chekhov Conference 2000*, Connecticut.

² In this section “Merlin” will refer to Joanna Merlin as opposed to Bella Merlin.

³ As an actor, her career spans five decades in theatre, film and TV. Early on in her career she played opposite Laurence Olivier in *Becket* (1960), with Kim Stanley in *A Far Country* (1962), and she originated the role of Tzeitel in *Fiddler on the Roof* directed by Jerome Robbins (1964). She’s appeared in films as diverse as *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *All That Jazz* (1979), *The Killing Fields* (1984), and *Mystic Pizza* (1988). Her TV appearances include a recurring role on *Law and Order*, *NY Undercover*, and *Northern Exposure*. As a theatre casting director for Sir Peter Hall she cast the original Broadway productions of *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Pacific Overtures*, and *Evita*, among others. She has cast for three films for Merchant/Ivory Productions (most notably *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge*) and Michael Cimino’s *Year of the Dragon*. As a casting director, she is the recipient of the Casting Society of America’s Artios Award for Bernardo Bertolucci’s *The Last Emperor* and for Sondheim and Lapine’s *Into the Woods*.

⁴ She has taught workshops all over the U.S.A. (Yale, Brandeis, Brown, Columbia, Vassar, SUNY Purchase, Stella Adler Conservatory, A.C. T. San Francisco) and internationally (U.K., Berlin, Madrid, Croatia, and Canada).

⁵ These two elements originally turned me away from the technique when I first read *To the Actor*. Only upon experiencing them in practice did I understand their function and value.

⁶ By the word transpersonal, I mean an acting approach and a perspective which do not use personal memory to create impulses in rehearsal and performance. This word commonly used in psychology, is derived from two words: *trans*, prefix for on or to the other side of, beyond, over across, from one state to another, and the word *personal*. The field of transpersonal psychology integrates psychological concepts, theories, and methods with the subject matter and practices of the spiritual disciplines. Its interests include spiritual experiences, mystical states of consciousness, mindfulness and meditative practices, shamanic states, ritual, the overlap of spiritual experiences and disturbed states such as psychosis and depression, and the transpersonal dimensions of relationships, service, and encounters with the natural world. The central concept in Transpersonal Psychology is self-transcendence, or a sense of identity which is deeper, broader, and more unified with the whole. The root of the term, transpersonal or literally “beyond the mask,” refers to this self-transcendence.

⁷ Steiner’s influence is exceptionally strong in this. As seen in Chapter One, Steiner formed Anthroposophy in order to establish a “spiritual pedagogy.” Steiner wished to concretely study the spirit and to develop a “body of cognitive techniques that could be recognizably transmitted”. Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* 155.

⁸ Merlin refers to the company spirit of this group as something lacking in the United States. “The original *Theatre Du Complicité* was set up by a small group of practitioners who had trained in Paris with alumni of teachers such as Lecoq, Gaultier and Pagneux in a theatrical vein that prioritises the physical and the visual. They gave themselves a French name because they did not believe that they would get funding

for their type of work in Britain. But they did, then at least. Those productions of the early and mid '90s, such as Durrenmatt's *The Visit*, *Street of Crocodiles*, *Out of a House Walked a Man*, and Lucie Chabrol defined the style [...] visual, physical, ensemble pieces devised by the company. Jackie Fletcher, *Mnemonic*, 2002, Internet, Available: www.britishtheatreinfo.info/reviews, 27. March 2006.

⁹ This research combined with her own practical work also led her to her doctorate thesis *The Russian School of Acting*, from Birmingham University.

¹⁰ Kokorin has taught acting for the past twenty-five years and is currently a permanent professor at the Irkutsk Theater School in Siberia. He is also the Artistic Director of the Baikal School of Acting where MICHA faculty members Lenard Petit and Per Brahe have taught. “ is a holder of Nika Award for for directing plays by Andrei Platonov, Alexandar Vampilov, and William Shakespeare. He is Russian Laureate winner for his theatrical work. He has taught workshops in various countries: US, Cuba, Senegal, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Poland. He has directed about 100 productions of well-known Russian and Western plays. Kokorin has participated in Michael Chekhov conferences in Moscow, Berlin and USA” (1). MICHA, *The International Michael Chekhov Conference 2000 and 2006*.

¹¹ I will discuss this exercise in Chapter Four.

¹² This phenomenon was brought up at a recent conference “Stanislavsky and Directing” in another context. After a speaker apologized for mentioning spirituality during his discussion on aspects of Grotowsky’s theatre, I prompted a short discussion about the reasons for his need to apologize which I thought were symptomatic of the academic culture. Both the panel members were Eastern European, Kris Salata from Poland and Yana Meerzon from Russia. Their explanation of this phenomenon was simply: “It’s an Eastern European thing.” While this is certainly a large and inconclusive statement it did put me at ease. Being an Eastern European myself, I suddenly felt relieved in thinking that it was not the academic culture *per se* but a larger cultural divide which causes one to feel guilty and somehow unscientific when using words such as spirit and spiritual. When translated *dusa* pronounced *doosha* (soul) and *duh* pronounced *dooh* (spirit), simply don’t have a religious connotation or the same weight they carry in the English language. While this by no means constitutes an argument about cultural differences, I believe that it is important to mention. Furthermore, while in Russia as soon as the official Communist anti-religious policy was over, spiritual aspects of Chekhov’s work were re-instated together with the other aspects of the technique, in North America and Europe there was never such a policy but still there are numerous unsolved issues regarding Chekhov’s spirituality. The reason for this have puzzled me greatly, as being an Eastern European, I take it for granted that the training of an actor is a spiritual activity.

¹³ Andrei Malaev-Babel’s appendix to *To the Actor* published by Routledge in the 2002 edition.

¹⁴ Hurd Hatfield is best remembered for his portrayal of Oscar Wilde’s ageless hero in 1945 film *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

¹⁵ Founded in October 1997, the Stanislavsky Theatre Studio Washington (STS) includes a repertory company, an extensive community service program, and a

professional training program. In March 2004 STS received its fifth Helen Hayes Award nomination and in May 2001 it was granted its second consecutive Helen Hayes Award.

¹⁶ Described by Zinder as “one of Russia’s greatest movement experts.” See David Zinder, ed., *Body-Voice-Imagination. A Training for the Actor*. (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁷ The Bali conservatory came with a price tag of \$6000 U.S which at the time was approximately \$9000 CAD.

¹⁸ In Balinese theatre acting and dance are synonymous. Typically Balinese referred to their performers as Balinese dancers and the form as dance and I will use this term. Please consider that this refers to what we know as a kind of a physical theatre because these dancers speak and sing.

Chapter Four

Current Pedagogy: Introductory Level

To be M.C's student was not only to learn theatre art but to be inspired with his vision of the theatre of the future, in which the actor would be the most important element. Believing as he did that "the actor is the theatre" he was convinced of a need for a new technique of acting. In his words: "How the actor will act, that is our mystery, our talent, our individuality. How is the mystery of art. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre. Impressions of M.Chekhov; emphasis in original)

There have been many new developments in the introductory level of training since Chekhov's death in 1955, but the *five guiding principles* have stayed the same: body-mind connection, intangible to tangible, working with the Higher Self, using the technique to free the actor, and developing the synthetic ability. Currently, the introductory level of the technique is geared towards integrating the *five guiding principles* into every facet of the work. The overall aim of the introductory exercises is to give the student a new kind of experience while acting, one where s/he learns to be equally concerned with *quality* of movement and its connection to sound (the "how") and the actual story-telling elements such as the intention and relationship (the "what"). The student is introduced to atmospheres, centring, the concept of inner movement, working with sensation, and images and their incorporation. While the sequencing of these can vary, in a typical beginner class spatial exercises will be followed by work with various sensations, and then both will be incorporated into exercises in imagination.

This chapter will describe the introductory exercises, focusing on those that differ from the original Chekhov conception. In some cases, the original idea has been enhanced. For example, the Ideal Centre has become the Three Centres Exercise. In other cases, the original concept, such as Chekhov's notion of space, has been developed so that completely new exercises now appear, as for

example, the Backspace/Forward Exercise. In yet other cases, the original has been simplified and reduced so that it fits today's sensibilities and the teacher's strengths, for example, the different approaches to the Personal and Objective Atmosphere Exercise.

In the method which uses direct transmission as its primary means of instruction, the teacher becomes the technique and the lineage. Every teacher teaches slightly differently and then every student's Creative Individuality takes the teachings in its own way. In time the differences are likely to become the norm. This is how over time we can account for the variations in how the exercises are taught. As we will see the two different ways of Crossing the Threshold described below are a case in point.

From my own experience I've observed how a particular step in an exercise might resonate with me more than another both when I learn it and when I teach it. Then through the course of a few years of teaching I might emphasize that step and also I might omit altogether a step that I have found less effective.

If this occurs, I found it extremely beneficial to return to the written descriptions of the exercise in question and then deliberately include the step omitted. Whenever I've done so, inadvertently in the discussion that followed one or two students will have found that very step helpful. Thus while a teacher's individual interpretation is inevitable and welcome, standardization which relies on written sources is a must.



Spatial Exercises

The idea of the threshold, which was very important in past centuries, was one of the most important moments if someone wished to go forward. Anyone who goes forward cannot escape the threshold. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 11, 1937)

Chekhov suggests: “The space, the air around you filled with atmospheres will always support and arouse in you new feelings and fresh creative impulses” (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 50), and his answer to Stanislavsky’s Public Solitude is the Threshold, which the actor must learn to cross, guided by the Higher Self. Once this imaginary line is crossed, the actor can enter a world where there is no doubt in one’s creativity.

In fact, Crossing the Threshold is the first exercise a new student learns, and it addresses Chekhov’s idea of atmospheres.

The exercise is used to encourage the actor right from the start to play with the space and the air around him/her. The space becomes an invisible partner in this interplay. In his lessons from 1935-1942, Chekhov refers to threshold on dozens of occasions and describes it as essentially spiritual:



If you know anything about the path of initiation in the occult way, the question of the threshold is much clearer. When a person goes through the school of occult development and reaches the moment

when he receives initiation, then he meets the threshold very concretely. It is a very important experience to cross the threshold from this world into the world to which he is initiated. There are many things which he must leave behind, and many things which he must receive. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 11, 1937)

In this exercise, the actor is asked to stand against the wall and imagine a line in front of him/her. S/he is asked to endow the working space beyond the imaginary line with a quality of safety, imagination, play, creativity, and trust, before being asked to step into that space over the imaginary threshold. If s/he isn't satisfied with the crossover, s/he is encouraged to step into the space one or two more times. The belief that an actor is doing something interesting and important must be all-encompassing. This helps the actor develop a Sense of Truth within a context of a childlike game. The teacher encourages the belief that one can not make a mistake in such an imaginary space, but that one will exist safely in the sense of play and imagination. Everything that happens in a class happens in this space beyond the threshold which offers protection. This same idea is later applied to performance.

During a class, an instructor can create new thresholds, and the students can cross into new spaces that are endowed with qualities other than the ones above, such as, for example, a space filled with "ease" or "sense of rest." In working with space, the emphasis is on teaching the students to replace the utilitarian function of any room with a poetic view. The suggested benefits of this are two-fold: it is both diagnostic and remedial. The actual crossover will quickly help the actor diagnose the precise level of doubt and insecurity s/he carries into an imaginary space, and by endowing the space with a quality, this can be remedied. Ideally, the space becomes a trusted partner for the actor. Daily practice is needed, so that the student learns to recognize his/her habitual tendencies, and thus, leave them behind. Most importantly, "Crossing the Threshold" introduces the simplicity of the general philosophical ground of the technique: namely, that quality of an action creates the reality of a moment which, in turn, is created by one's belief and not just the action itself (the "how," not just the "what").

Within the structure of a class, crossing the threshold is a ritual which emphasizes the importance of both the *present moment* as

the only important moment in an actor's body/mind and *the space* in which this happens. Chekhov asks: "Have you ever as a spectator experienced that peculiar sensation of 'I am looking into a psychologically void space' while watching a scene played on the stage? It was a scene deprived of atmosphere" (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 49). By imagining an atmosphere beyond the threshold, the beginning students start to familiarize themselves with the idea of all their work leading towards being awake and conscious, not only within themselves but also within the space.

Chekhov used the same concept in his Sense of the Whole (also called Feeling of the Whole). For example on February 7, 1941, Chekhov gave the following exercise: "Imagine that before each of you there is a door which you must open before crossing the imaginary threshold. That is all, but try to grasp the business of entering and stepping over as one big whole thing" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*). The ritual of stepping over the threshold into the Sense of the Whole has to happen in the space and in the now. The underlying intention is that the rehearsal or a class ought not to be perceived as being within the arbitrary division of time (i.e. three hours) but rather as a continuous flow of moments. This desire to be constantly aware in the present moment is reflected in the message of the plaque prominently displayed at Dartington Hall's main gate: "Here rolls the sea and even here lies the other shore waiting to be reached. Yes here is everlasting present. Not distant. Not anywhere else."

Before Crossing the Threshold I have found it beneficial to encourage the students to be fearless in their choice of what they are stepping into and to "make space" within themselves to receive that very quality from the space. This advice has featured prominently in their written reflections as beneficial and is worth noting:

[...] fearlessness is a great quality for an actor to have, and [...] fearlessness essentially is a sense of space within a person. This is why we take each day to cross the threshold, to give ourselves that moment of nothing of NOT knowing to clear up some space in ourselves so that we are open to receive. As humans we can fill ourselves up with so many knots, so much tension (Li *Journal* 1).

And

"To be an actor it is necessary to be fearless. Fearlessness is a sense

of space within you that is empty. We are used to being so full, but if we have a little space that is completely empty, that is full of not knowing, this will open you up to receive from someone else. Make a little room within all the demons. Allowing ourselves to be empty and that is when we can receive.” I love this explanation of fearlessness. The image of creating space within all the knots and worries we carry around with us constantly. (Fried *Journal 1*)



Chekhov developed this exercise but did not publish a description of it. As Chamberlain's book lists "Crossing the Threshold" as an independent exercise (116-117), the exercise must have been preserved through direct transmission. This may explain why Chamberlain's exercise differs from that taught by MICHA

faculty. It is also revelatory of a general tendency in current Chekhovian pedagogy to modify the original, which, in turn, honors Chekhov's desire not to create "anything mechanically".

Chamberlain's description includes an interesting first step in which the actor is asked to "make an inner gesture of leaving your private life behind" (Chamberlain 116). The same idea is offered by Chekhov in his unpublished lesson of October 15, 1936: "When the bell rings, we must, as it were, step over the threshold into our artistic life, which is quite apart from our private life. We must drop all our personal thoughts and cross the threshold" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*). In my experience, none of the MICHA faculty has used this step. Chamberlain's variation also emphasizes that the quality the students are stepping into should be imagined as "creative," but MICHA faculty ask the actor to establish the parameters of an individual atmosphere into which s/he would like to cross. I find the freedom of this choice extremely useful in a daily routine with the students. This can be an atmosphere filled with creativity, or the above mentioned play, imagination, etc., but also any other concept that the actor would like to bring into his/her work can be substituted (i.e. an atmosphere filled with patience, listening, giving etc.). Furthermore, in MICHA's practice the threshold is crossed again during any given class as the first important step in many other exercises that have to do with qualities, sensations, and atmospheres. Finally, Chamberlain emphasizes the *quality of the space* that the actor is crossing into, but MICHA faculty call attention to the actor's *wish to cross*, suggesting that it is equally important to the actor's choice of the quality of the space s/he will be crossing into. In the latter case, the actor's will and his/her imagination are needed to cross the threshold. Again, the emphasis on the desire (the wish) to cross can be found in the original: "The ideal actor in our sense is the one who, at the moment he crosses the threshold during the rehearsal, or the performance, feels psychologically hungry if he is not filled quite instinctively and at once with the gesture, with the objective, etc." (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 4, 1938).

The change that occurs after crossing the threshold is "real". By this I mean that if we had appropriate tools we could "measure" a difference of "before" and "after" the actor does this activity. The problems occur in sustaining the change. This relates to a general

issue with concentration and this again is further related to the will. I have seen many actors quickly lose the effect of the change after they crossed the threshold and experienced an initial success. I find that a reminder to the actor to bring the attention to the intention and to draw that quality into the body can be very effective in regaining the initial change in the actor's sensation/quality of movement.



On the opposite end of the spectrum Crossing the Threshold trains the actor's will so that s/he can instantly step out of the character, an atmosphere or an experience. As such it is a very helpful tool for "cooling down" after a performance. If for example a beginner actor's imagination gets so involved that s/he begins to think that the experience of working with a sensation has taken over and s/he has lost control, the actor should be advised to step out of the experience over an imaginary threshold. In Chekhov's technique being lost in an

imaginary experience is regarded as self-indulgence and this type of thinking is strongly discouraged. Stepping out of an intense acting experience de-mystifies it and makes it ordinary.

I have found it very helpful to start and finish my class with a cross over a threshold where after a few minutes of experiencing the quality of the space the students gather in circle for a formal bow. In my classroom we also bow out at the end of the class/rehearsal so as to remind the actor of his/her ability to instantly step out of the world of imagination. The bow is a ritual which encourages a sense of form and also promotes the idea of working with the Higher Self. The students become very protective of ritual of the bow and are quick to remind me of it should I forget it at the end of a long rehearsal. They have commented over the years that it gives them a sense of respect, hope, offering creativity, giving their best to the group and being a part of the group (to name but a few). These qualities speak of them experiencing Sense of the Whole and also of a need for a Sense of Form, which is disappearing from every-day lives in the North American culture.

Once the threshold is crossed, the teacher can carry on with the focus on the space. S/he then continues with one of the following exercises: "Sense of Space Exercise," "Space Expands and Contracts," "Filling the Space/Owning the Space Exercise," "My Disposition Exercise," "Waking up the Space Exercise" (see Appendices 1- 5) and the "Backspace/Forward Exercise." The purpose of these is common to many acting techniques in that it teaches students to acknowledge their current psychophysical state. However, it differs in that students learn always to work with an imaginary atmosphere, doing so by focusing on the elements which contain concepts specific to this technique. In "Waking the Space Exercise," the spatial rhythm is modified in order to change the objective atmosphere. The students treat the space as an entity that needs waking up and do so by tickling it, making noises, and so on, until the overall atmosphere of the space is changed. In "My Disposition Exercise," students work with radiating their disposition into the entire space and noticing the constant changes in it. In "Filling the Space/Owning the Space," students work with the Imaginary Body, which is much larger than their own, and fill the space with it.

Backspace/Forward

The Backspace/Forward Exercise is currently taught by Sarah Kane, Ted Pugh, Fern Sloan, and Lenard Petit, but does not appear in any published material. Like all space exercises, it is done in a group. The Backspace/Forward Exercise is based on the premise that actors have a habit of working with the space in front of them. Actors are used to radiating energy *towards* something and somewhere. Chekhov taught that this can be two dimensional: actors must create atmosphere within a space so they can radiate and receive from all the directions surrounding their bodies – the left, the right, the above, the below, the front, and the back.



The MICHA faculty has correctly identified the backspace as a direction which is mostly ignored. A further argument for this can be found in the new field of Psychology, namely, Embodied Psychology, which distinguishes between the *object body* and *embodiment*. The term object-body is used by psychologist Edward E. Sampson in an essay titled “Establishing Embodiment in Psychology” published in 1998 in *Body and Psychology* edited by Henderikus J. Stam. According to Sampson, the object-body is an aspect of the ocularcentric bias of a western tradition which favors that which can be seen over that which can be felt and is shared by both the scientific and the social constructionist tradition.¹ Within in this context,

Backspace/Forward is an exercise which tries to restore the spatial awareness that has been lost in the ocularcentric culture.

In this exercise, the actor starts by pushing off a wall with the whole back side of the body. As the traveling begins, the actor is instructed to focus on the space behind him/her, so that the body moves forward, but the actor's focus and radiation of energy are directed backwards. The actor keeps a felt focus on the wall behind him/her during the entire cross to the other side of the room, even though the eyes are focusing forward. The felt connection to the wall is two-fold: through imagining the space between the actor and the wall, but also through sensing the wall behind and radiating towards it. If the psychophysical connection to the wall is lost, the actor returns to the wall and starts the voyage again. To aid the sense of connection with the backspace s/he can work with other imagery. For example if the actors are having difficulties, the teacher reminds them of the sensation of hearing footsteps behind them when walking alone, late at night. This example uses familiar, realistic, and auditory stimuli to help shift the focus to the backspace. The point is for an actor to have a different, fuller perception of the space behind him/her. As the actor continues to move forward, the space behind him/her may begin to contain different qualities, often described as "powerful," "frightening," "sad," and so on. This is how one student described her initial journey across the studio: "The backspace was such a powerful experience. [...] It was vast, and expansive. I was not afraid of it. I felt as if I were a vessel, a channel, a messenger for something much bigger than myself. I felt grounded and present" (Werneburg 1).

In several variations, the actor uses backspace and imagery simultaneously. In one variation, the actor imagines the wall is a mirror. As s/he moves away from the "mirror," s/he works with his/her own image walking away. The actor's concentration is on the image, shifting the radiation of the energy to the backspace. A vivid description of a student's experience illustrates this further:

As I continued into the next portion of the exercise the stream of energy and field that it created transformed into an image of me that I constantly walked away from, as though I was constantly shedding my skin and moving forward. [...] The farther I walked away, the more the presence of this immense copy of me loomed over my back and I found next to impossible to move. (McRoberts 1).

In another variation, the actor is instructed to start filling the space with the “history of humanity” behind him/her. How s/he does this depends on the individual imagination. With each step forward, the backspace becomes larger and can receive more imagery, and the actor is instructed to “drag” this along with him/her or to let it “push” or “propel” him/her forward. When working with the “history of humanity,” actors generally receive a barrage of images. For example: “I felt an immediate sense of despair and tragedy. It was like mankind’s history was a burden I was carrying on my back and it was a shameful burden I was forbidden to share with others” (Welham 1) or “Traveling through humanity had a significant texture. It moved parallel to my body and travelled with me as if moving underwater it was so low and a struggle to move forward, but I was always moving. I had images of hands roping together and reaching. Expressive” (Leonard 1), or:

I took a quick and medium-sized step away with a sharp breath and the whole world flew into the space behind beginning with the stewing earth and the fish in the sea and the plants on the shore. The tears streamed down my face as images [...] filled the space behind. The beauty and vastness of human existence was bigger than I and it was profound and utterly overwhelming [...] I saw the first languages being written on the walls in clay and math and counting and agriculture. Then came technology and modern man with machinery and industry and smoke and tall buildings. I could feel all the pain and suffering of humankind, the holocaust and disease and heartache and loss and sorrow. My backside was burning hot and the tears streamed down my face (Li *Journal* 2).

The imagined backspace is often larger than the real space and filled with people, events, places, and objects. The walk becomes extremely slow, and although the actors can use any imagery, what they see is usually devastating. This was my initial experience, and since then, I’ve observed it over a dozen times: indeed, when first attempted, the exercise always has an overwhelmingly tragic note. However, the actors are later taught to modify the imagery to suit the needs of characterization.

Once the actor becomes proficient in working with the backspace, s/he explores shifting focus from forward space to

backspace. To shift, initially s/he imagines throwing open saloon doors as s/he thrusts the body forward into space. The focus should now shift to the front of the body. The actor then experiments with changing the direction of the walk. The actor walks backwards with focus on the front (also called forward-space), walks forward with the focus on the backspace, walks forward with a forward focus, and backward with a backward focus. The actor is asked to further imagine that s/he is energetically “opening the space” before s/he steps into any given direction. This is just to help the actor focus his/her radiation, not to produce any kind of pantomime. To build on this, throwing balls to each other may be introduced as an independent activity, and following that, text may be added. Thus, the Backspace/Forward Exercise helps distinguish between the direction of movement and spatial awareness which without fail invokes surprising discoveries and connections:

How extraordinary! What drive it could give to a performance. It makes you a three dimensional being. It heightens the stakes. What a powerful tool! [...] [Upon reflection] I also realized that anytime I have produced solid, grounded work in acting, singing or dance, I have subconsciously used the backspace”. (Wernenberg 1)

Ideally, by connecting to the backspace, actors extend their radiation so that it is three-dimensional. They also extend their field of influence into the third dimension. In a classroom situation, student comments confirm that the use of the backspace is often a revelation. The common thread in student comments is that the sensation of backspace is *entirely new*. As a result of sensing the backspace, actors often realize what an important role forward-space has played in their lives. In various classes, either which I have taught or in which I have participated, students have described the backspace as more serious, older, angry, sensitive, vulnerable, and powerful, while the forward space was defined as younger, faster, direct, weaker, and lighter.

When text is added, students start to see how directing spatial awareness can create special energy within their bodies which can influence the sound of their speech. In addition, like any basic exercise, this one can be used for characterization as illustrated by this example from a journal of a student playing Apollo in Euripides’ *Orestes*:

It is very interesting how we can put images in either backspace and forward space [...]. I learned a lot from this because as a God, Apollo has ultimate knowledge about the past, but also infinite knowledge about the future. The power that this gives him suggests he should stand upright because he has no reason to fear either as an immortal. I explored walking through the space and standing and I gained a real sense of awareness regarding the space ALL around me, not just in front and back. It will be very interesting to see how I can use the 360 degree awareness for my character". (Li Journal 2)

In characterization Backspace/Forward is also an excellent tool for the actor to create the character's age. Generally, young people move forward at a faster pace, and older people have a stronger awareness of the backspace. To achieve a childlike quality an actor can use a forward walk with a forward focus into a space that is imagined as "light".

Most importantly, once made conscious Backspace/Forward exercise introduces the potential of working from an impersonal point of view. In the following journal entry, while involved with another exercise, this student tapped into that potential and then related it back to the "history of humanity" variation of the Backspace/Forward exercise:

And then it occurred to me that I wasn't weeping for myself, I was weeping for the world, and that there must be an eternal current of sorrow I had just connected to. [...] It exists as a current of energy in the universe like subterranean waters exist below the surface of the earth and if there is one for sorrow, then there must be one for joy, too. And I understood for real why you asked us to walk across the room on the first day of class "with the history of the world" behind us. It all fell into place". (Sargisson 7)

Although this student didn't read Chekhov's *Lessons for the Professional Actors*, her revelation echoes faithfully Chekhov's thoughts on the origin of emotions quoted earlier in the sub-chapter "The Fifth Guiding Principle: Freedom from the Personal?": "When I cry, I am, of course, crying for my father, my mother, my dog, and all those things and people whom I have actually forgotten, but they are crying through me" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for the Professional Actor* 43).

Sensations Exercises

Exercises which invoke sensations are most likely to follow spatial exercises. These all follow the same general principle of learning how to internalize a large physical movement in order to create Inner Movement, which is synonymous with *sensation* in Chekhov's technique. Chekhov says: "While working on our parts we should forget about our feelings and be only concerned with sensations" (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*). In order to create sensation, beginning actors learn to move with a certain quality, before becoming skilled at retaining the stimuli inwardly. The following introductory exercises² are used for this: "Curved and Straight" (Appendix 6a), "The Four Qualities Exercise" (Appendix 6b), "The Four Brothers Exercise" (Appendix 8), "The Three Sisters Exercise" (Appendix 9), "Expansion/Contraction Exercise" (Appendix 11), and "Objective and Subjective Atmosphere" (pp.189-198) All are concerned with deriving an inner movement which is felt as a sensation; they are also used in working towards characterization. Like all exercises in Chekhov's technique, they merge "work on oneself" and "work on the part."

Chekhov's initial point in *To the Actor* has to do with "The Four Qualities Exercises" and can be applied here. He suggests that students must learn to create "a sensation of the actual existence and significance of [the] inner being as a result of this exercise" (*To the Actor* 12). The general principle is always the same: a large physical movement inevitably affects the actor's psychology and prevents the actor from using his/her outer expression



alone. The sensations are “the soul of the character” according to Chekhov (12). This is in keeping with the Anthroposophical concept of the soul of a person being the receiver of the sensory impressions and perception. While the relationship to the space is crucial in creating objective atmosphere, sensations are a major component in creating personal atmosphere or the overall psychophysical content that an actor brings onto the stage.

“For me everything becomes a sensation actually,” says Fern Sloan when speaking about personal atmosphere, adding, “My Personal Atmosphere will play back on me as a sensation.”



This process is very different to that which is proposed by the American Method in general. For example in the DVD “Uta Hagen’s Acting Class,” when critiquing a student’s lack of physical presence Hagen states: “We never stand if we can sit.” In Hagen’s method the given circumstances and their relation to action are thought to

solve all acting problems: “What did I just do? What am I doing now? What do I want? Those are the three steps that will get you there. Not body exercises. Not relaxation exercises. Not workouts. Not inner work.” The influence of Stanislavsky’s Method of Physical Actions is clear here. In this method “without relying on their memories, imaginative powers or analytical abilities the actors were compelled to

decide which Physical Actions they would execute in the Given Circumstances of a play” (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 208).

Gordon suggests that the Method of Physical Actions was predicated on a simple discovery that Stanislavsky borrowed from Michael Chekhov and Vakhtangov’s followers (who, in turn were influenced by Meyerhold): all physical action is psychophysical (208). However, while every action has a psychophysical component and internal feeling can be stimulated by a physical action, the difference between this and Chekhov’s exploration of movement as an abstraction is evident. Working with sensation in Chekhov’s technique is much more akin to Stanislavsky’s period of Active Analysis, a rehearsal technique which followed The Method of Physical Actions. Despite the fact that Active Analysis still primarily considered pursuit of an objective which Chekhov’s work with sensations did not, rather than focusing on everyday action, in Active Analysis the essence of *inner action* which manifests as a sensation was the focus of exploration. Bella Merlin suggests that:

Active Analysis places you at the heart of [pursuit for an objective] putting you in a position where you’re constantly developing a dual consciousness. Dual consciousness enables you to commit physically and imaginatively to the actions in hand, while simultaneously assessing how relevant those sensations are for the character and the scene. So part of you is doing the action; part of you is watching the action. (B. Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky* 24)

Merlin continues with a suggestion that this “isn’t concerned purely with the genre of psychological realism. It is an approach to acting encompassing all styles and ‘-isms’, because it’s concerned with body and psychology feeding each other on the inner/outer continuum discussed by practitioners as diverse as Meyerhold, Grotowski, Brook and Chaikin”(25). Such matter is very different than Hagen’s belief in the value “elimination of style” which in her view can be brought on only by playing the given circumstances truthfully (*Uta Hagen’s Acting Class*). Active Analysis enables the actor to recognize value of different styles and goes beyond into the *quality of actor’s presence* or what Barba calls “the scenic bios” (Barba 9). The following discusses the new developments within the sensation component of introductory training.

Objective and Subjective Atmosphere

Chapter Four of *To the Actor*, “The Atmosphere and the Individual Feelings,” is devoted to the use of the Objective and Subjective Atmosphere in performance. We have already discussed the general principle of the use of Objective Atmosphere in “Crossing the Threshold.” All of the other Objective Atmospheres are created in a similar way. The atmosphere is named and then the actor simply steps over the imaginary threshold into whatever that is. In *To the Director and Playwright*, Charles Leonard chronicles Chekhov’s directing process in his 1946 production of *The Inspector General* in Hollywood. On the first day of the rehearsal Chekhov suggested:

Start by creating the atmosphere for the very first little section. Is it an atmosphere compounded of despondency, premonition, a danger behind the wall, conspiracy? The players don’t have to feel it as yet, only imagine that the air is filled with these elements. They should write the tentative words for this atmosphere at this place in their scripts, and on all pages where other atmospheres start or stop (M. Chekhov, Leonard and Gogol 115).

What is specific to Chekhov’s technique is that the actor relies on an intuitive response to a word such as “despondency,” “premonition,” “conspiracy,” and this is supposed to provide an adequate echo in the actor’s psychology. This is also evident in Exercise 14 of *To the Actor* (55-58), which focuses on the atmospheres and sensations (as a way to emotion). Here Chekhov describes the process of working with the atmospheres. The actor learns how to achieve an atmosphere with no psychological preparation other than a simple imagining of the air filled with an atmosphere just as Chekhov suggested in his notes for *The Government Inspector*.

As we have seen most other schools of thought derived from Stanislavsky insisted that this was a cardinal sin. One had to create the Given Circumstances first, relate to them on a personal level, and then one could experience impulses. There had to be a substantial *development stage*, consisting of homework where the actor answered the basic questions of “who, what, why, when and where” in as much detail as possible so that the actor could relate to it on a personal level, create the impulse and only then one could enter

the *completion stage* – the actual act of acting. Even in the plan of The Method of Physical Actions, there was no mention of anything resembling this kind of work but rather the action still needed to be personalized. For example the second stage of the plan reads: “Using the basic Given Circumstances to inspire the actors *personally*, let them act out the actions” and stage six reads: “Have the actors create a *personalized Through-Action*” (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 209; emphasis added).

In Exercise 14, Chekhov suggests an actor will experience emotion by simply using an imaginary atmosphere to guide him/her. The actor is at first asked to watch “people while they are surrounded by certain atmospheres” (55). Chekhov asks the actor to begin to experiment after the “initial period of observation, when [his/her] ability to perceive the atmospheres is sufficiently trained and sharpened” (55). The actor is asked to “submit to certain atmospheres, ‘listening’ to them as you listen to music” (55). The actor begins to speak and move in harmony with the different atmospheres. Following that the actor imagines atmospheres from “literature, history, plays,” (55) or invents them. Chekhov suggests visualizing the storming of the Bastille for example. The actor is asked to look at the details of the faces and sounds of this occasion, “how the atmosphere stamps its impression upon everything and everyone in this agitated event” (56). The actor is then instructed to change the atmosphere from “agitation, intoxicated with force and boundless might” to “evil and revengeful ruthlessness” and to observe the “power and authority (with which) this altered atmosphere will change all that is happening” (56).

The next step is to “learn to create the atmospheres *without imagining any occurrence or circumstances at all*” (56; emphasis in original). The actor only needs to name the atmosphere and step into it and “have confidence in the power of the atmosphere” (57). Here Chekhov appeals to the actor’s “imagination” as opposed to “cold, analytical reason” and spends time actually trying to convince the actor to try this, clearly conscious of the doubt that the work with something so intangible might provoke: “Don’t ask yourself how it is possible to imagine a feeling of awe, or any other feeling floating in the air around you, before you actually try it, practice it. Two or three efforts will convince you that it is not only possible, but extremely easy” (56). The final step is to let this atmosphere influence the movements of an actor. The actor starts with an arm and a hand and

these are to move in harmony with the atmosphere surrounding them. The movements become more complicated and finally simple dialogue is added. We are faced with working with the intangible in this exercise. Chekhov guides us from what is somewhat tangible (the storming of the Bastille) to learning to create the objective atmospheres without any given circumstances.

Working with the Personal Atmosphere is even more intangible. Chekhov continues the chapter on “The Atmosphere and Individual Feelings” focusing on it. Here he is teaching “a new way of awakening creative feelings” which does not involve any kind of psychology but does involve quality of movement:

Lift your arm. Lower it. What have you done? You have fulfilled a simple physical *action*. You have made a *gesture*. And you have made it without any difficulty. Why? Because, like every action, it is completely within your will. Now make the same gesture but colour it with a certain *quality*. Let this quality be *caution*. You will make your gesture, your movement *cautiously*. Have you not done it with the same ease? Do it again and again and then see what happens. Your movement, made cautiously, is no longer a mere physical action; now it has acquired a certain *psychological* nuance. What is this nuance? It is a *Sensation* of caution which now fills and permeates your arm. It is a psychophysical sensation. Similarly, if you moved your entire body with the quality of caution, then your entire body would naturally be filled with this sensation. Sensation is the vessel into which your genuine artistic feelings pour easily and by themselves; it is kind of magnet which draws to it feelings and emotions akin to whatever quality you have chosen for your movement. (59; emphasis in original)

Rather than working with something imagined outside him/her the actor now works with the inner sensation. Already in the exercises which introduce the Qualities of Movement Chekhov accepts a possibility of creating an inner sensation this way: “A sensation of joyful *lightness* and *easiness* will permeate our entire body” (11). The same lack of extensive preparation is employed in the Four Brothers Exercise which focuses on the sensations of Ease, Form, Beauty and Whole.

While the idea of Objective Atmosphere is easy to grasp, the idea of Personal Atmosphere is not. Most people have crossed a threshold from a sunny, warm, and noisy day into a quiet and cool serenity of a church or from a cold street into a warm party

atmosphere. These atmospheres have affected most people as they were something external to each observer. The Personal Atmosphere is what each individual has carried into that church or that party, his or her interiority. This is an inner sensation which is a lot less easy to describe and pinpoint. In regard to the work with the Personal Atmosphere the question that comes up frequently is whether the actor must spend time moving in order to develop quality of movement so to create a sensation of it, or whether just like with the Objective Atmosphere the actor can learn to be instantly filled with the sensation associated with his/her individual experience and then create an action? In other words does the sensation of a Personal Atmosphere stem from a quality of movement or from an imaginative relationship to the space?

Most commonly taught sequencing of the Subjective Atmosphere Exercise begins with asking the actor to move with a quality of "caution" to move "cautiously." There is no story or imagery needed for this but only a simple instruction: "move with caution" upon which the actor must start to move a part of his/her body with a quality of movement that the word "caution" invokes. The actor first moves the feet and then continues to involve other parts of the body from the ground up, head being the last to move. The face is kept as relaxed as possible. The actor then "takes the caution for a walk" and is instructed to make a large gesture and say "yes" and then gesture again and say "no" in order to connect to the sound and abstract movement. When asked to stop moving the actor focuses on the sensations awakened by the quality of movement. Then with the eyes closed s/he answers the question; "Who is this person?" inwardly. The same is repeated with any other sensation. Some of these are: "fear," "tenderness," "light and easy," "joy," "hard and heavy," "playful," "sad," "happiness," "despair," "bravery," "arrogance." The corresponding qualities suggest to the actor to move: "fearfully," "tenderly," "lightly," "joyfully," "heavily," "playfully," "sadly," "happily," "despairingly," "bravely," and "arrogantly."

Thus in the Personal Atmosphere exercise the actor starts with an intuitive moment responding to words such as "surely," "irritably," "joyfully," and lets the Personal Atmosphere develop from there. This sensation then invokes complex feelings and the action follows. S/he does not try to remember a set of circumstances from his/her life so that this would invoke an emotion as occurs in Substitution in

Strasberg's Method or Transference in Hagen's class. S/he does not use props to create an independent activity which then allows the feelings to arise spontaneously as in Meisner's technique. S/he doesn't need to follow Uta Hagen's "moment to moment" exercise³ where an actor recreates minutiae of the moments from his/her personal memory in order to create a feeling. Chekhov's Personal Atmosphere exercise simply teaches the actor to trust his/her intuition and body. The mind needs only to give the body the initial command such as "surely" but the rest happens because of the actor's awakened individuality.

However, in most techniques that which is most powerful is also most controversial and easy to misunderstand. I don't want to give the reader the illusion that the purely imaginary sensory content is easy to create. The greatest downside in this exercise is that it may result in a purely external kind of acting which we can plainly call pretending or faking, a kind which is less common in the acting techniques which draw from personal experience and memory. Chekhov's comments in the chapter on the "The Atmosphere and Individual Feelings" suggest that he was aware of this problem.

Now ask yourself if you forced your feelings. Did you order yourself to "feel caution"? No. You only made a movement with a certain quality, thus creating a sensation of caution through which you aroused your feelings. Repeat this movement with various other qualities and feeling, your desire, will grow stronger and stronger. (59)

When Chekhov asks, "Did you order yourself to feel caution?" he is reminding the actor not to disconnect from the intuitive response by demanding a sensation and thus render the exercise unsuccessful. In the sensations exercise it is very easy to *pretend* to be "sure," "irritable," or "joyful" to very dissatisfying results. The body and mind in that case are not one but rather the mind's idea of a sensation blocks the access to the actor's actual experience. As an actor learns more about Chekhov's approach, s/he ought to trust the fact that there is an intuitive source of knowledge that s/he is supposed to draw from. But in a "Catch-22," in this process not the intuitive self but its polarity, the analytical reason, becomes aware of the intuitive source of knowledge. In another "Catch-22," as the actor develops this way s/he is encouraged to let go of the analytical thinking and employ the intuition.

Opinions about the use of Personal Atmosphere and ways to create it are varied among the MICHA faculty, so much so that they are controversial. This is because the above mentioned double “Catch-22” has been considered problematic and is approached by MICHA faculty in two different ways. Joanna Merlin has tried to systematize the intuitive approach in a slightly different way than Chekhov. According to Merlin in case of the Personal Atmosphere the quality of movement *always must* precede the sensation. “Sometimes I use the word sensation for quality. We all realize that our terms have to be very clear in our Sense of Form.” Yet as shown above Chekhov suggests that the reverse order of exploration is possible. Some other MICHA teachers such as Fern Sloan and Sarah Kane are more inclined to avoid specific ordering between these two because of Chekhov’s examples and the belief in the synthetic nature of the technique or the *fifth guiding principle*. They suggest that on a micro-level this process does often reverse itself. As the quality produces a sensation, the sensation changes the quality. Sloan and Kane refer to this as “lemniscating” which I have defined in Chapter Two. My experience of the practice has made me believe the same: that the inner sensation and quality of movement can produce and do modify each other.

According to Merlin, sensations can be only created through the qualities of movement. One sensation then produces complex feelings (fear, excitement and loathing can all be a product of one sensation). She explains:

The moment we raise the arm cautiously the sensation begins in the body. The Quality of the Movement leads to Sensation. Otherwise you start “acting.”⁴ You don’t know whether it was the movement or whether you were putting something on the movement. One tries to get the students merely to move and let the movement influence what happens to [them] rather than [the students] influencing the movement with some sort of a feeling.

Merlin has found that approach less difficult to teach to her students:

There are some who put their [idea of an] emotion into their movement. This must be pointed out to them repeatedly. If a teacher points out [that they must start working with a quality of movement] they will understand that it is possible [to reach a sensation]. If you are moving in a certain way it is bound to affect you and that’s the beauty of finding the right kinds of movement.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Slava Kokorin of Russia teaches the Personal Atmosphere⁵ exercise forgoing the notion of quality of movement altogether. He simply draws three circles with chalk on the ground and gives them names: “fear,” “laughter,” and “sorrow.” The actor steps over the threshold into this area and “draws” the sensation into the body. The quality of movement follows the sensation, rather than the other way around. Here we are once again faced with the question of development and completion. While Merlin works with the development phase, using quality of movement to create sensation, Kokorin uses stepping into completion – sensation of laughter for example – and lets the quality of movement develop.

Merlin’s main argument against using sensations directly is that she has seen it lead to sentimentality rather than an aesthetic:

I don’t use words like fear, happiness, joy and sadness. Chekhov did use some of them but I feel that it is dangerous. If I could avoid them I do. I’d rather use movement words: cautiously, quietly or tenderly. Tenderly is on the edge but a tender movement can be done without feeling that you need to be sweet or sentimental. Chekhov hated sentimentality! He avoided it. He said he did not want it. Instead of joyfully, I say “a light and easy movement”. Some sensation that’s not ambivalent. My style is different [than Chekhov’s]. When he used these words it was three dimensional and not as dangerous as when somebody else uses it.

By way of contrast, Kokorin’s teaching reflects the Russian style of training which appears to be much more open to the idea of intangibles and spirituality than its western counterparts. Most other master teachers combine the two extremes.

Centring

One of the many ways of employing the psychophysical principle in Chekhov’s technique is through Imaginary Centres. The whole idea of working with an imaginary centre originates in Tantric⁶ Hinduism and Buddhism, via centres of energy called *chakras*⁷ and their connection to the vital energy *prana*.⁸ Generally, in Tantric meditation practices with *chakras*, one imagines that the centres of energy are connected to a specific spot in the body. Traditional locations for these vary,⁹ but most commonly, they are located in the

perineum, lower abdomen, solar plexus, heart, throat, forehead, and top of head. Each *chakra* is an expression of a different aspect of the human mind called *skhandas*: the physical body, sensations (sometimes also called feelings), emotion (also called cognition or rapport), will (also called mental fabrications with volition), and thinking (also called consciousness). What is generally referred to “the self” are only these five elements shaped by past events and desires. As has been seen, the Anthroposophist Three-Fold Nature of Man is also primarily concerned with thinking, feeling and willing. As in Tantric meditation, the ability to make a connection of these to the body and sensations is essential. In Tantric meditation this is a path to an enlightened state of being, and in Anthroposophy, a path to the Spirit Man.

The Three Centres

In Exercise 2 of *To the Actor*, Chekhov says that the actor should become aware of the Ideal Centre (7-8): “The imaginary centre in your chest will also give you the sensation that your whole body is approaching, as it were, an ‘ideal’ type of human body” (Chekhov, *To the Actor* 8). This is the Imaginary Centre in one’s chest, around the heart area, imagined as if radiating streams of golden light. In the Ideal Centre Exercise, students are instructed to fill their own form by allowing the light from the chest to go down through the abdomen and through the thigh, right into the feet. From the chest it can be guided to go through shoulders and arm down into the fingertips and on up into the head, so that the whole physical form of the actor is filled with the light generated in the chest. The Ideal Centre Exercise helps the actor to achieve the qualities that in Chekhov’s technique should accompany any work of art: Beauty, Form, Ease, and Whole (“The Four Brothers”). That Chekhov placed tremendous amount of importance to this centre is evident in many instances in his transcribed lessons, as for example:

In our chests we have a centre which is powerful, which keeps our whole body, which holds it. It is able to move and it leads us forward or backward, or up and down – everything comes from this centre. Around this centre, as it were, we have our body, our shoulders, necks, everything is in connection with the centre, legs

and feet, torso, everything. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 1, 1937)

The Ideal Centre Exercise has been expanded by the Actors' Ensemble in the Three Centres Exercise:

We've adapted the technique. We worked only with the heart centre for years and then found that we were getting a little imbalance in the bodies and then we started working with the three centres. The heart centre (golden), the will centre [*hara*] (strong), the head (cooler). This exercise is the contribution of the Actors' Ensemble. The fire in the belly makes you strong, the head gives you clarity and the heart makes you open and then you can play with the three. (Sloan, Personal interview)

The Actors' Ensemble reinterpreted the theories of the Three-Fold Nature of Man to create an exercise used by many MICHA faculty and newly-certified teachers. The Actors' Ensemble's Ideal Body Exercise was developed to focus on the three centres simultaneously – the imaginative willing area of the body, the intuitive feeling area of the body and the inspired thinking area of the body. Currently the actor works with these by giving them qualities: a clear head, an open golden heart and a warm, nurturing orange-red underbelly. The actors develop a genuine psychophysical connection between their inner imagined centres and their outer expression, thereby achieving a state void of personality from which s/he can start creating a character.

TED PUGH: This is a preparation for you. We go into it and we forget ourselves. We are not in ourselves. Then you go into the character. The character centre has a different purpose. For character you create a certain kind of energy using a character centre. It takes you out into the world. (MICHA 2004)

The above three centres coincide with locations of three traditional Hindu Tantric *chakras* and their functions. The first centre is in the belly. The human function of the *hara* centre located in the lower belly in traditional Hindu Tantric categorization is *creativity* which in The Three Fold Nature of Man becomes *imagination*. Both creativity and imagination imply the ability to form mental images of objects not perceived or not wholly perceived by the senses, and the willingness to form new ideas by a synthesis of separate elements of experience and resourcefulness. Webster's dictionary explains the

word “creative” as “having the quality or power of creating, imaginative” (227). Clearly, the creative and imaginative features of that centre are one. The next centre is in the heart; the human function of the heart centre in both traditional eastern understanding and Anthroposophy is kindness, compassion, intuition and feeling.



The centre is in the head. Its human function in Anthroposophy is inspiration; similarly, in traditional Hindu Tantra *chakra* is connection to the spiritual dimension. In short, then, the functions of Chekhov’s centres are very much like the traditional Tantric functions.

Today, when using the Three Centres Exercise, the actor is heading toward full body participation and transparency as suggested by Chekhov in *Lessons to Teachers*. This is aided by involving the thinking, feeling, and will areas, and transparency is aided by giving ideal qualities to the centres: clarity, strength and warmth. As a result,

the new exercise helps the actor to understand psychophysically what it means to be a *sensitive membrane*. The entire MICHA faculty teaches this exercise in its new form.

In the first phase, the actor is asked to walk, move, and be with his/her body. The questions that the teacher might ask at the outset are: “How do you feel physically? How do you feel inwardly?” The actor is then asked to stand still, easy and upright, without locking the knees or holding the head. Before the actor starts actively imagining, the body should be brought to what is referred to as “Sense of Ease” (for a detailed description see Appendix 8). The actor can move, yawn, sigh, and even stop moving for a while if necessary.

In the second phase, while standing upright, the actor imagines that the Earth gives the *hara* centre warmth, heat, power, energy, and life. The upper part of his/her body “rides” on the heat of the lower half. The actor continues drawing the strength and the heat from the centre of the Earth into the *hara* while walking for a while. Following this, actor stands still and imagines coolness, lightness, and clarity around the head. The coaching might include: “You’re awake. You feel as if you have jumped in a cool lake.” The actor moves while imagining this quality around the head, then combining it with the heat of the lower half. The actor might struggle while concentrating on both or might sense something missing, namely the middle part of his/her body.

In the third and final phase, the attention is on the torso. The actor stands still and opens the middle of the body by stretching out the arms. S/he focuses on a spot to which one points, saying, “I am.” This Ideal Centre is imagined to be “shining rays of light” on the objects in front of and behind the actor. S/he continues to walk with a sensation of the openness while trying to combine all three centres. The actor continues walking and standing intermittently while experiencing the new qualities of the strength of the lower part of the body, the cool and light head, and the chest that radiates warm rays of light. The body follows the impulses generated by the centres. The energy that is accumulated in any given centre must both precede the movements and follow them.

This exercise is designed to clear the thinking, strengthen the will, and allow the feeling impulses to flow. By using the imaginary centres in this way, the actor is able to create an ideal relaxed and concentrated state from which s/he is ready to work, the qualities of

which can easily transform into less neutral ones. The Actors' Ensemble's version of the exercise enables the actor to quickly and efficiently get out of states of tiredness, stress, or fear. It targets all three possible areas where an actor might carry an excess amount of tension – namely the actor's thinking, feeling, and will body-regions. Instead of dwelling on his/her tension the actor can simply imagine the ideal state of mind, heart, limbs, and embody it. I have often witnessed this exercise's "magical" effect on myself as an actor, on fellow students, or the students I taught. The transformation from a tired, worried, hungry, sleepy, or bored student into an actor ready to work happens in a very short time.

Centring and Characterization

In Tantric Buddhism, when using *chakras* "through meditation and breathing techniques, the *prana* of each *chakra* is stimulated. As a result, repressed emotions and various unconscious states of mind are brought into consciousness" (Breux 19). Similarly, Imaginary Centres ought to bring about such states of mind when an actor is considering a character. They either already lie dormant within an actor or s/he brings these states about through skillful and *imaginative* use of centring. This depends on the differences and similarities between the actor and the character.

In Chekhov's technique, the Imaginary Centre will be the core, the focal point of a character. When considering a character, Chekhov's theatrical practice takes a more liberal view of the *chakras*, changing their traditional shape, colour, temperature, and texture. Still, the use of seven traditional locations is a common practice simply because they are easier to work with and more readily accessible to most people. A good way to start working with centers is to introduce the seven locations by focusing on them, imagining a colour in that area of the body and speaking a familiar monologue. I usually use the following sequence: perineum (red), hara (orange), solar plexus (yellow), heart (green), throat (blue), third eye (deep purple), and top of the head (white light). This sequence often allows students to discover a whole new register:

The first time I felt truly connected was the day we did the exercises with the various colours in the various chakras in our body. It was there that I realized I usually work from my forehead, with a dark

colour. When I said the text from that place it was completely familiar to me, which surprised me. Sort of. [...] The chakra that felt the most foreign was the light purple from the top of my head. It felt light to work there, and I realized that I had not worked from that place before. And it was easy. (Johnston 1)

In current pedagogy of Chekhov's technique, the *hara*¹⁰ centre has gained prominence but other *chakra* locations such as heart, solar plexus, and forehead, are commonly used as well. For example, if one is to portray a very loving person, one will try to modify the heart *chakra* as the seat of the *skhanda* of cognition (or rapport). One could do so by imagining a large golden light in that area. One can easily imagine what the centre for a "heavy heart" would have to be; for instance, one could imagine a lead ball in that area. If one is to portray a "heartless" person, one could try to imagine a void in the cognition or rapport area – heart *chakra*. If one is "heartbroken," one could imagine the heart centre with a shard of glass in it or an image of something else that is broken. It could be placed in the heart, and one could work with that image. The same goes for a "gutsy" or "gutless" person and the *hara* centre. However, as *fifth guiding principle* would have it, the technique, as always, aims to free the actor and consequently, locations of Imaginary Centres in Chekhov's technique are not limited to the traditional ones. By imagining certain qualities in *any* physical centre such as feet, knees, eyes, nose, or eyebrow, or even by imagining a centre outside oneself, a Chekhov actor is taught to achieve psychological qualities. Physicality and imagination are joined to create a new and different psychophysical presence suitable for the character.

In current application of Chekhov's technique, several Centring Exercises use images freely in a psycho-physical way, as described above. These culminate with the Imaginary Body Exercise, the ultimate transformational tool of the human physical form within the technique. The following three new exercises are specific to Zinder's work with Centring and are categorized in his book *Body, Voice and Imagination* under *ImageWork*: Rope Dance and Object/Image Dance I and II. In all centring exercises, Zinder emphasizes that "concept of centring is not a passive device for finding a psychophysical centre of equilibrium, but rather an active process leading to movement" (120). These exercises assume that the

actor has acquired a psychophysical way of working through other introductory exercises which consider space, quality, and sensation.

Zinder uses The Basic Centre and Moving with Centre exercises to introduce the concept of working with the centres (Zinder 123-25). He categorizes them as “warm-up” sequences. The Basic Centre Exercise is almost identical to the Three Centres Exercise in that the actor uses the same three centres (head, heart, *hara*) as the energy source for the walk. In the Moving with Centre Exercise, which uses the same principles as Chekhov’s Imaginary Centre, the actor moves the part of the body chosen as the energy source. This results in an abstract dance in which every movement is connected to the Imaginary Centre, the effects of which are then radiated by the mover into the space: “The center of the character is something that helped me throughout and still does. [...] The center of my character is a quick way to change my way of thinking and my method of moving. Once I start moving around from my center, and shifting my center, I start to experience the character”(Gilgan). Following this, the actor gives the centres a quality. This means that s/he experiences Imaginary Centre with a simple quality (“yellow,” “rough,” “flat,” “wide,” etc.) and then a complex one (“soft, round, and warm” or “small, hard, black, and cold” or “large, yellow, light , and fluffy,” and so on). Finally, the actor creates a polarity in the outward expression (runs smoothly with a cold, icy, rough centre). The actor can add text to this but only if s/he can hang on to the physicality.

In short, the actor undertaking the following three exercises is familiar with the effects of the Imaginary Centre and with the importance of making these outwardly *invisible* and *radiating* their qualities while walking, moving, and speaking.

The Rope Dance

This new exercise follows Zinder’s third “trajectory” described in Chapter Three, as “from abstract to concrete.” In this exercise, an abstract image is used to inspire the actor’s movement and foster body-mind connection: “The image in this case comes from a length of a rope – about 1.2 meters long and half a centimeter thick (so that it has some weight) – preferably white and as neutral as possible, made of very smooth material that does not kink” (Zinder 211).

The exercise is performed individually by each actor in front of the group. The actor holds the rope coiled in his hand. S/he throws the rope in the air and lets it land on the floor. As soon as the rope lands, the actor incorporates a three-dimensional image of the rope into his/her working centre (in this case, the *hara*). The actor then *dances* the rope. S/he can focus on the image of the rope or a specific detail that interests him/her. If one part of the rope exhausts itself, another part is taken in for another impulse. The actor can look at the rope or work with eyes closed until s/he needs to refresh the image.

In the Rope Exercise, the actor learns to respond to an abstract image as a source of the inner rhythm and Inner Movement. At first, the actor concentrates to internalize the image. Once s/he experiences impulses (leaps of imagination), s/he begins to gain a different kind of presence. As impulses garnered from focusing on one part of the image become exhausted, the actor learns to focus on another part, thus initiating another set of impulses, and so on. Eventually, this exercise leads the actor to an emotional content from which s/he begins to create a narrative. By this I do not mean a narrative *with* the rope but rather a narrative *of* the rope. The rope becomes the source of the narrative, and to this, a few lines of a familiar monologue may be added once the exercise has been successfully integrated. In short, the sensations produced by the image create an emotional response from which the actor engages the voice. This is how one student describes it:

This exercise changed your breath and the more it affected your body, the more it affected you emotionally. If you ever felt like you were drifting out of it, especially in the beginning as you just start getting into it, all you needed to do was just go back to the rope image. The rope was the perfect reference point, it gave you such a specific focus, could be so powerful and yet didn't suggest anything or way you in any kind of direction off the bat.

What also was interesting was the cycle that was created. The more I got into it, the more affected I became by it, and whenever I would listen to myself and what I was going through it kept feeding me more and more. What the rope exercise ultimately did for me was it opened up an entire pool of emotion that I knew was there but never understood how to access it. [...] I surprised myself a great deal with this and can now trust that the body is a powerful enough tool to get me to the emotional places I need without forcing. (Coomber 1)

While the above may seem far-fetched, it is usually very effective in the classroom. As an illustration of how it typically works

(I have conducted approximately 120 rope exercises in the last seven years), I am including the following journal entry from one of my students. A simple image of the rope invoked the following journey:

When I began this exercise, I was terrified. I couldn't imagine myself being bold enough to internalize an image from a simple coil of rope and then move it – the whole idea seemed so abstract and bizarre and embarrassing – so far removed from my own experience and my own zone of comfort. [...] At first, I saw nothing. My fear was inhibiting my imagination, but I resisted my characteristic tendency to lose patience and simply stood and breathed and waited. I looked at it and stopped trying to see anything, and eventually all I could think of was a long, red silk cord. [...] The slipperiness of the silk was fun to play with, and as I moved it I could feel the smooth braids sliding across each other. [...] It was so surprisingly easy. (Johnson 1)

While the physicality was “easy,” my outside observation of this student caused me to think that her mind remained separate from her body, as her body was moving in many unusual ways, and her head was erect and uninvolved. I asked her to physically stop to hold her head up and release her neck, and she did so. Following this, she experienced a full body-mind connection:

And then the image changed – suddenly the silk chord jerked up, until it extended through my entire body, from bottom to top, and then continued up to the ceiling, and I was hanging in effortless suspension from the sky. It was here that I felt the most connected – my image was carrying me, easily and my body was responding without direction. When I started to speak, I hardly thought about words. The monologue is so familiar to me – I have known it for almost five years – but it was completely new. It was so easy and so simple. I wasn't thinking about interpretation – I wasn't sculpting my words and intonation the way I usually do. I simply hung from the sky on my silk cord and told those beautiful faces in front of me what I needed to tell them. (Johnson 1)



Several positive effects are reflected in what this student refers to as the “submission” to the image. First, she stopped to intellectually interfere with the content of the monologue. Second, her body was involved, and finally, the audience was no longer perceived as a critic, becoming instead a sea of “beautiful faces.” The student concluded her journal entry with: “I am excited and inspired by the experience, and I look forward to using images in my future work. I can only hope to find again the mind-body connection which I experienced – it was this connection which was so exciting, so rich, so simple, and so surprising.”

The student’s initial scepticism was thus overcome and replaced with excitement and inspiration. This is typical in Chekhov’s technique, where the unusual demands its exercises present are perceived as “bizarre” when initially described. They need to be experienced in practice repeatedly. Only then can the actor appreciate Chekhov’s point that “the more developed imagination through

systematic exercises, the more flexible and fleeting it becomes.” The actor’s job is to imagine! This provided one possesses “enough will power, more than one normally exerts in everyday activities” (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 27). The additional will power derives from the power of concentration that ultimately separates the actor who glides over the surface with his/her imagination from the actor who contributes to the writer’s work as an independent creator. This is how a student described the connection to his/her imagination after the rope exercise:

I wanted the image to speak. I felt that if I spoke without the image I would be lying. It sounds odd but I thought that the image was a part of me and had just as much right to speak as I did. [...]What surprised me about the rope experience were the possibilities of where an image could take me. It was not simply an image from a nylon rope on the floor, but a symbiotic partnership – the image needed me to speak and move for it and I needed to interpret the words. I remember the ease I felt during the exercise because I felt I was not alone. (MacDonald 1)

Object/Image Dance I

While an actor working with a traditional Imaginary Centre focuses on an area of the body such as nose, chest, or abdomen, and gives it qualities, an actor using Zinder’s new exercise also adds *concrete* images. This kind of idea is expressed by Chekhov in his description of the Imaginary Centre:

Your creative imagination is free to endow its centre with different qualities according to the character. The centre of our nosy woman might appear in your mind in a form resembling a needle. A cold and hard needle. Whereas the centre of our truly loving person can be imagined as a big, shiny, warm sun. Our creative imagination cannot and should not be restricted or limited by making its choice while working on form and quality of different centres. (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*)

Zinder’s variation puts this idea into a structured pedagogical progression. The student practices with ordinary objects, such as “shoe,” “feather,” “knife,” or “flower;” also moving imagery, such as “butterfly” or “eye” can be used as images for centres. In his classes, Zinder usually offers his worn-out slipper as the first object which can

be “danced.” Once a student has “danced” it, Zinder suggests that if it can be “danced,” anything can be “danced.” At first, the student is not concerned with the appropriateness of the object, but works with random objects. This teaches him/her that anything can be seen poetically and used psychophysically:

The exploration of the different parts of the body has had a significant effect on me. Placing images into the head, the mouth, the stomach, the groin, the legs, the heart etc., has aided me in finding the different parts of my body that trigger certain emotions. For example, when a soft cottony ball is placed in my forehead, feelings of happiness and joy from my past come rushing back to me. When a dark, sharp, icy ball is placed in my stomach, memories of depressive times return to me. (O'Reilly 1)

This use of the word “dance” is yet another eastern influence in Zinder’s work. By using the word “dance” for what is effectively “acting,” Zinder’s terminology echoes that of Noh, Kabuki, and Balinese theatre, where actor is always referred to as “the dancer.” While in many exercises described here the same activity occurs, Zinder is the first teacher to use the word “dance,” and in fact, this is an accurate description.

The object/image used should be simple so that it can be “danced.” It would be impossible to “dance” a very intricate object such as “stove,” but it is possible to “dance” a part of it – maybe the electrical element, or a knob. However, it is best to choose a simple object, like a pencil, in which case, the actor immediately moves with a centre that is stick-like, hard, and orange, having a sharp tip on one end and a soft rubbery ball on the other, or a simple cotton ball in *hara* which inspires a softer and lighter quality of movement. Zinder notes: “I have occasionally limited my actors to using only objects that are similar to the three archetypal forms suggested by Rudolf Steiner and used by Michael Chekhov: stick, ball, veil” (220).

With every object, the actor connects the image to the voice, either by sounding or speaking. The sounding is more appropriate if the student’s connection is fragile, and the speaking is more suitable if the student is very involved. It is important to note that once the actor is familiar with the image, s/he should not touch it again. As the actor learns to work with internalizing a concrete image, s/he must learn to play with the imaginary stimuli inspired by the concrete imagery.

Finally, once s/he has created an Imaginary Centre, s/he must learn to internalize it and find its polarity in the outward physicality.

The problems that arise with the object centring exercise are as unusual as the exercise itself. Often, actors who have worked with the image become “attached” to it and want to possess it. Zinder gives a disturbing example of a student crushing a wine glass in her hands during an object centring exercise. Even though in his thirty years of practice, this was the only such incident for Zinder, in my classroom I’ve encountered a couple of students wanting to take the objects home with them and being unhappy when someone else worked with the same object. One student was desperate to eat the banana that he used for centring! Zinder comments that, on the one hand, this demonstrates “the power of imagination”, while on the other it shows “how close we always are to an abuse of this power [of imagination] if we are not careful” (223-224). In Chekhov’s terminology, this is the student’s jealous and possessive Lower Ego rearing its ugly head.

Object/Image Dance II

In MICHA workshops, Zinder’s Object/Image Dance II already considers the character, but in his training manual it does not.¹¹ The Object/Image Dance II combines the abstract and the concrete imagery. Now it is up to the actor to *create* an image. These may be real objects (a daisy) or fantastic ones (a daisy with a lead centre). Such ideas are analogous to those in Butoh dance which uses the traditional *hara* centre for all centring but has extended the array of choices of the “dancer” to any image with which s/he wants to work. In *Paper Canoe*, Barba gives as an example of a Butoh practice with the Imaginary Centre of accomplished dancer Katsuko Azuma when illustrating recurring principles in all codified and formalized techniques:

Today, Katsuko Azuma says that the principle of her life, of her scenic presence, can be defined as a centre of gravity found at the *midpoint of an imaginary line between the navel and the coccyx*. Every time she performs she tries to find her balance around this centre. In spite of all her experience, in spite of the fact that he has been the student of one of the greatest Masters and that she herself is now a Master, she doesn’t always find it. She imagines (or perhaps these are the images with which her Master tried to transmit the experience to her) that the centre of her energy is *a ball of steel*,

covered with many layers of cotton, at the centre of a triangle formed by lines connection the hips and the coccyx. The Balinese Master I Masek Tempo nods approvingly and observes: 'Everything that Azuma does is really like this – keras, vigour, covered by manis, softness.'" (34; emphasis added)

The location described as "midpoint of an imaginary line between the navel and the coccyx" is the traditional location of *hara*. Even though Butoh has tried to break free from the confines of traditional Noh and Kabuki theatrical forms, Azuma still uses only *hara* for centring. The "principle of her life" is larger than just a technique; it is a meditation which uses the identical principles as work with *chakras* both in Tantra and traditional theatrical forms. Consequently she can use "the principle of her life" as a tool which will enable spiritual growth.

In Object/Image Dance II, the actor creates his/her own workable centre for the character and works with it in the same way, but is no longer limited to *hara*. The actor creates an abstract "dance." The actor then connects to a partner in a giving/receiving interchange while "dancing." The side coaching may include the following questions: "What do you need to do to your image in order to hold on to it?" or "How does the partner influence your centre?" The actor connects to a sound while working with the partner. Following this interchange, the actor returns to working alone and internalizes the "dance" in a standing position, all the while concentrating on the Imaginary Centre. The Object/Image Dance II teaches the actor to fine tune the image while working with a partner. During the interchange, the image easily "escapes," or the communication suffers if the actor is focusing solely on the image.

Following this complex sequence the actor is ready to use language. When referring to use of language, Zinder often quotes Steiner. He has expressed within MICHA's framework and in his *ImageWork* training manual that:

deconstructing language to the connection between sound and emotion provides actors with a wealth of hidden possibilities for their associative imagination, and helps them acquire another important professional habit; listening to words for their sounds, and thus turning language into a highly charged creative tool, liberated from the strictures of meaning or, conversely imbuing surface meanings of words with a world of aural associations. (Zinder 230)

Once centring is applied to a scene, the actor can play with shifting the location of the image in order to locate the ideal place for it: “Using centres in the development of *Midwife* proved to be extremely helpful. It was shocking how much discovery occurred through playing with changing the *Midwife*’s centers, particularly between her heart and head. I found even a simple awareness of these centers could allow for discovery of new impulses and moments in the run of the scene” (Stanley 2). When working with the text and the partner, the actor ought to intermittently shift focus from giving to receiving. The balance of the two is always necessary if the Imaginary Centre is to be used successfully. The difficulties that may arise as a student tries to apply centring as discovered in the process of Active Analysis to the work within a scene are well illustrated in the following journal excerpt:

I found that the centers would work for a little while but none of them would really stay consistent and stick through the whole scene. [...]. They work for warming up but not for actual scene itself. I found that when I was with [my husband] I had fire in my lower belly. I didn’t really think of it though. It just showed up. [For the other relationship in the scene] I used warm water in my genitals and empty *hara*. I switched between the two throughout my monologue. It took me a long time to find these and I discovered that I couldn’t force them but that I just had to let them come out naturally. (Magliaro 2)

It is crucial the students learn to trust their intuition and engage in the process of reduction when applying a complex psycho-physical element to their performance. They can not “think it” while performing but they have to integrate the image so it becomes their second nature. In order to achieve freedom in their performance they must be able to throw the technique away and play.

The Imaginary Body

Michael Chekhov was the proverbial chameleon. He transformed and taught others to transform into images of the mind. He taught that our thinking can alter, along with our motivational forces, and that our body can change as well. Chekhov practised what he preached, and his numerous complete physical transformations on

the stage are captured in pictures and recorded in memory. Robert Lewis writes in *Method – or Madness?* :

If any of you were lucky enough to see him in *The Inspector General*, you will remember he had a physical characterization that was the envy of any dancer. Although he was a short man, in this part he had a line to his body which made him seem very tall; he walked on his toes, his hands were extended, and to make them longer, gloves dangled from them. He was playing a fop and he had the look, movement and sound of a fop down brilliantly. Yet, when he had to be drunk in the party scene, he didn't do a lot of drunken movements; he got so drunk inside that it was positively catching. I remember very well that, when the curtain came down on that scene, we all arose from our seats and staggered up the aisle, quite intoxicated! (55)

Years before, upon watching Michael Chekhov play Khlestakov on the opening night of Stanislavsky's famous *The Government Inspector*, "a shocked Vakhtangov whispered to Stanislavsky: "Can this be the same man we see in our Studio every morning?" (Gordon, "A Descriptive Chronology" 10).

In his lecture on Gogol's *Inspector General* at the MICHA conference 2002, Andrei Malaev-Babel spoke about this play as "what critics in the twentieth century call mirage intrigue." Babel posed the question: "Who are the characters in conflict in *The Inspector General*? The Inspector General doesn't exist. He is just a mirage, an imaginary obstacle and the Mayor and his cronies are fighting with a phantom. They are really fighting with nothing." According to Babel, all reviews and accounts of Chekhov's portrayal of Khlestakov describe him as playing something that was entirely changeable. This Khlestakov did not have an entity: he would completely change, depending on the situation and relationship. Babel suggests, "Chekhov's ability allowed him to perform 'nothing.' The Mayor was defeated because he was fighting with a phantom" (MICHA 2002). Similar comments about Chekhov's ability to "change form" were made about other roles: Caleb in *The Cricket on the Hearth*, the tyrant Pierre in the mystical Symbolist play, *Archangel Michael*, Fribe in *The Peace Festival*, Frazer in *The Deluge*, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, *Erik XIV*, and *Hamlet*, to name only a few. Chekhov demonstrated this ability to transform in class as well. This is how his students

remembered his gift for transformation in the documentary film *From Russia to Hollywood*.¹²

JOHN BERRY: Working on the *Lower Depths* with Chekhov, Chekhov said to one of the actors: "Alfred, you must be taller." Alfred said "Yeah, of course, I'll try." And he began the scene and Chekhov stopped and said "No, Alfred you must be taller." Well this went on and on. "What the hell is he talking about? How can I be taller?" Chekhov said "I will show you" and he stood next to Kurt Conway, who was taller than him, and before our eyes, and I witnessed this, Chekhov became taller than Kurt Conway.

JACK COLVIN: When he manifested an archetypal internal PG, the whole physical man changed. I saw him become fat, heavy, tall, thin and, God knows, young and very old.

JEFF COREY: I revered him. Loved how this short man when he couldn't convey with his words what he wanted, he would leap up and become a giant.

PAUL ROGERS: We were giggling (in class), which can be utterly destructive, and suddenly this little man became a giant and with tears in his eyes he said: "Children there is a world out there. Unless you are serious actors and artists, they will kill you." (M. Chekhov et al.)

This ability to visibly transform owes much to Chekhov's concept of the Imaginary Body. This acting tool has been developed and fine-tuned by MICHA faculty so that it created a workable sequence for a beginner student. Moreover, several teachers have added new steps. Currently, the sequence usually starts with the Thinking, Feeling, Willing Exercise to introduce the idea of the Imaginary Body through embodiment of the Three-Fold Nature of Man. The Body Parts with Qualities and Centres Exercise leads into the Door Exercise which then leads to the Imaginary Body Exercise. In my experience, Imaginary Body was taught slightly differently by every teacher I studied it with: Pugh/Sloan, Zinder, Petit, and Kokorin. It was also taught differently by two student teachers in their teacher-training classes (Lionel Walsh and Kathy Alberts). Clearly, this exercise lends itself to imagination and, therefore, modification.

Character: Thinking Feeling, Willing, In Stick, Ball, and Veil Exercise

Chekhov follows Steiner's Three-Fold Nature of Man division when, in his taped lectures, he suggests that an actor should ask three questions when creating a character: "What is the difference between my way of thinking and the character's way of thinking; the difference between his mind and my own mind?" (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*) The same question should be asked for the feeling and the will of the character. Chekhov offers many examples as to what these differences might be:

FOR THINKING: You might discover for instance that the character is thinking much faster or slower than you. Or perhaps the process of thinking of character is more passionate than your way of thinking. Or perhaps you'll find that you form and shape and chisel your thoughts with greater clarity and precision. Your character might be a very vague thinker. The more differences you will find between your mind and the mind of your character the clearer, the more distinct you will begin to understand what characterization concerning the mind you will need while studying and later on performing your character.

FOR FEELING: You might discover that you are rather passionate. Easily inflammable. You are inclined to love and forgive people and so on. In contrast to you, your character might appear calm and cool, never losing his temper and inclined to accuse people around him.

FOR WILLING: Your will might be strong, unbending, whereas the will of your character might be feeble and weak. You pursue your aims with great insistence, persistence and never give in. But your character perhaps loses his objectives and purpose long before he is able to achieve them. Accumulate and write down all the differences you are able to discover between you and your character in these three spheres: mind, emotions, and will impulses. (M. Chekhov, *The Six Hour Master Class*)

In Chekhov's technique thinking, feeling, and will are physicalized according to Steiner's ideas: thinking is located in the head and shoulders area (including arms and hands); feeling is located in the torso; and willing is located in the lower abdomen, genitals, behind, legs, and feet. The Imaginary Centres, which are used in the Three Centres Exercise examined earlier, are situated in one of the three

areas. It follows that those located in the lower regions have to do with the will impulses, those in the torso with the feeling impulses, and those in the head with the thinking impulses.

Petit teaches this material in the Stick, Ball, and Veil Exercise. This is a group exercise which is used to incorporate these images. The actor first explores the quality and the form of a stick. The body “becomes a stick,” and s/he moves through the space as a stick. Once s/he finds it outwardly, s/he internalizes this stick-like body into an activity of his/her choice. The activities are very simple, such as looking for something in one’s purse, sitting down and getting up, writing a note, putting one’s coat on, and so on. Once the activity is finished, the “sticks” are allowed to interact in simple conversations or with movement only. The actor repeats the process while exploring the image of a ball, and then a veil.

The Stick, Ball, and Veil Exercise is an excellent way for students to realize that it is possible to physicalize and internalize thinking, feeling, and willing by creating an Imaginary Body. Their analysis of the character’s similarities and differences can become an exciting psychophysical element of characterization. For example, I experimented with a heavy, purple veil for the character of Lyubov Andreyevna from *The Cherry Orchard*. Her emotionalism was her primary, indeed overwhelming, quality. The ball was useful for the exploration of the Child archetype (one of the archetypes I worked with). By working with the image of a bouncy rubber ball I found in my body the rhythm of Lyubov’s occasional willfulness. It appeared quite randomly and quickly and disappeared the same way. As for the thinking, Lyubov did not want to be a Stick, and when she “was,” this



required an enormous effort. The body straightened, but her head was fuzzy and confused. Consequently, I decided she wasn't a thinker of clear thoughts, nor did her thoughts have a great deal of logic or practicality. She wasn't as much of a dreamer as her brother Gayev, but she tended to deny reality.

In Chekhov's lessons from 1935-1942, there are many references to Thinking, Feeling, Willing, but few references to the Stick, Ball, and Veil Exercise. On October 15, 1936, in Chekhov's lesson on Jugglers Psychology, he says: "We must feel, 'I am the ball,' or 'I am the chair,' etc. In this way we will do movements that *are* the chair, or the ball. It is a deep psychological exercise. [...] Now divide the class into groups of balls, chairs, sticks, and veils; and move to the music with individual qualities and movements," and on November 25, 1936, he mentions "Exercise with balls, sticks, veils" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre*).

A shorter and somewhat different version of the Stick, Ball, and Veil Exercise appears in Franc Chamberlain's *Michael Chekhov*:

Take a ball, a stick or a scarf and explore its qualities. Is it heavy or light? Stiff or flexible? How does it move in space? How does it react to being dropped? Spend time finding out as much about the qualities of your object as you can. Explore how you can move with the qualities of your object. How do these qualities affect your feelings? How can you bring these qualities into your voice? Into the way you shape and move your mouth? What kind of character would move and speak like this? Find out as much as you can about the character. (132)

When I asked Petit if he created the current version of the exercise, he suggested he *did*, but added a disclaimer: "It is a bit difficult to say where this and that comes from because we have these conferences and a great deal of sharing goes on. [...] The ideas belong to Chekhov if not Rudolf Steiner. The actual exercise I suppose belongs to me" (Petit, "*Origins of Exercises*"). When Petit's practice and Chamberlain's description are compared, several important differences become apparent. In Petit's application, the actor actually *embodies* the objects' form and qualities (becomes a stick, a ball, a veil), while in Chamberlain's description, the actor explores movement inspired by the qualities of the object (the actual object stays outside him/her). Thus, by using the objects to create an Imaginary Body, Petit's exercise is closer to Chekhov's original ideas

from the lesson on Juggler's Psychology quoted above. More importantly, Chamberlain's description doesn't emphasize the connection of each object to a thinking, feeling, or willing function in characterization, while for Petit this is the purpose of the exercise.

Body Parts with Qualities and Centres: The Door and the Imaginary Body

This version of the Imaginary Body and the warm-up sequences leading to it are taught by the Pugh/Sloan team. They are followed by Zinder's variation. I will describe Kokorin's version of the Imaginary Body and Petit's version of the Imaginary Body for Clown in the next chapter. "The Body Parts With Qualities and Centres" is a version of Exercise 11 from Chapter Two of *To the Actor* which asks the actor to "copy an image faithfully" *combined with* the preparation for the Imaginary Body which Chekhov describes in Chapter Six (89-90) and which uses body parts and movable Centres. I have decided to include it in its current combined form because it is an integral step in teaching the Imaginary Body.

Warm-Up

The Actors' Ensemble skillfully uses work with images, qualities, and sensations in preparation for the Imaginary Body exercise proper. The images are given to the actor by the teacher, and s/he embodies them: "You have very delicate hands and small feet, you have a big behind, you have legs like spaghetti, there is a spinning top above your head, your head is a large, heavy ball etc." In *To the Actor* Chekhov suggests concrete imagery: Body parts: "long, dangling arms, tiny hard tip of your nose;" Centres: "Put a centre in the middle of your chest ... as soon as you try to shift the centre to some other place you will feel that your whole psychological and physical attitude will change;" Qualities: "for a wise man you would imagine a centre in your head as big, shining and radiating, whereas for a fanatic or narrow-minded type of person you would imagine a small tense and hard centre" (88-89).

The Door Exercise

Following this vigorous physical activity the actor is asked to sit down. S/he is asked to imagine a door behind which there will be a three-dimensional image of the character s/he is portraying. The actor first must open the door and then s/he can see and talk to the image, ask the image to perform an action for him/her or simply observe what happens. The Door Exercise is a *simplification* of Chekhov's Exercise 10 in *To the Actor* (29-32) which offers elaborate suggestions for accessing the independent life of an image by collaborating with the image. While in the Door Exercise, the actor uses the device of opening a door behind which s/he sees an image of the character, in Chekhov's exercise, there is no such device. This step has been added

by the Actors' Ensemble in order to make concrete the idea of stepping over a threshold into a world of imagination. The image of the door makes the world beyond the threshold invisible and creates a sense of mystery and play. One doesn't know what one will find behind the door: one merely hopes it will be his/her character. If another image appears (and this often happens), the actor can still collaborate with it by asking it to do something or asking it questions. For example, a student working on Clytemnestra wrote the following in her diary:

1st time – Harsh, rigid, large red hair, ceremonial. Her eyes bleed tears. She becomes transparent and inside she is a small, innocent child. I ask her what she wants and she says to dance. So she does. She twirls and says she doesn't want to stop. At first it's free and joyful, and then it's frantic and tragic.

2nd time – A woman petrified as large tree. Sad. I ask her why and she says because she can't go anywhere. (Haas 2)

From this the student concluded that the character is strong and willful, but "like a prisoner in her own palace. [...] When that strength and nobility is crumbled away, she can't hide that scared child inside" (Haas 2).

Even though the Door Exercise is a simplification of the original in that it only asks the student to open the door and let anything appear, it poses a challenge to most students who are trying it for the first time, as typically, they have worked with concepts rather than images. Mostly the students fear that they won't be able to see anything and then find that their imaginations are much more able than they suspected and that behind the door fascinating images await:

Cynthia told us to imagine that our character was behind the door. When she said that, became so overwhelmed with that thought, I had to open my eyes and adjust myself in my seat [...]. An overpowering feeling rushed through my body and a heavy sadness rested inside my chest and just underneath my rib cage. Cynthia noticed my discomfort [...] and asked me if I was afraid to open the door, and I nodded in agreement. As I pictured the red door, I could feel a pressing feeling of anger, pain, and suffering that was pushing



against the door. It was Clytemnestra's power that opened it. When the door opened I saw her standing in the frame exactly as I pictured her. [...] I could never see her whole face, but it had sharp features and her eyes were green. All around her were skulls, like the skulls of my childhood reoccurring nightmare. She was a heavy presence against my small body. I was uncontrollably crying, for her and for the idea that I created it all in my head using my imagination. What amazed me was that I didn't have to work to create her image, and that by surprise I had already subconsciously created her in my mind and she was waiting for me to open the door. (Boyd-Navazo 2)

When working with tragic or dramatic material I have found it useful to ask the students to imagine the character smile in order to begin to explore the sense of humor. Boyd-Navazo continues:

When Clytemnestra smiled, my body relaxed. I realized right then that she recognized me as her younger self. I felt that she was trying to tell me something. But she never spoke. The sense I got from her presence, was telling me to stay strong and to believe in what I believe in and to grow. She eased my sense of fear, by extending her hand and placing it on my left cheek, she then traced the outline of my cheek, and gently the door closed.(2)



In the above example the student received the permission from her imagination to continue exploring and to trust the imagery. When she returned to the door-exercise the following day she tried to re-create the image but could not: "The door closed and I felt a strange sense of inspiration that left me feeling empty, hungry for more". This hunger led the student into the exploration on her feet and the subsequent character development.

The Imaginary Body

Following The Door Exercise, the actor gets up and embodies the image she/he has just seen. The actor is asked to imagine and embody any detail that has left a strong impression on him/her. For example, when I imagined Elizabeth Proctor from *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, I saw a woman with salt and pepper braid. The detail that touched me the most was the red ribbon she tied at the end of the

braid. The ribbon was worn and made of some left-over fabric, but it showed her attempt to please and to be attractive in some way to her husband John, who she suspected having an affair. Also her hands, strong and worn, were memorable. Those were the two details that made me want to play her. Of the two details I was more surprised by the ribbon and found it the most touching when I imagined myself with such colour hair and this thing tied to it.

With the use of the Imaginary Body the transformation is made visible. The degree of the transformation will also depend on the style. In a comedy such as *The Government Inspector*, ideally the physical shape of the image reflects that predominant psychological feature of the character as described in the Comedy Exercise (see

Appendix 16). In a drama, this movement can be inspired by a small detail from the image such as was “a red ribbon on a salt and pepper braid” for Elizabeth Proctor. In case of tragedy the image of *superhuman* presence can “invade” the creation of the actor’s physical image. For example one of the students who were opening a door to an image of Jocasta was very surprised to saw a dragon, an image that she later found useful. Yet for the most part in tragedy also human shapes will appear behind the door.

Once the students are familiar with the concept of integrating an image, ideas for the Imaginary Body can occur anytime during the rehearsal process. The two examples illustrate potential uses of the Imaginary Body. In case of the actor playing the lesbian Inez Seranno in the Sartre’s *No Exit* the student experienced a great deal of difficulty connecting to Inez’ physical desire for the beautiful Estelle. Discovering and implementing the Imaginary Body was a turn-around point in her rehearsal process:



I had this amazing idea: “I want a man’s body!” I left our rehearsal today observing men’s bodies on the subway. I saw this man who walked pointing his feet outward, his chest slightly brought him forward and this made his but slightly stick out. He had this laid back stroll to his walk and stopped with an ease. I followed the man to the subway and I observed how he stopped, stood in a spot and held his arms, neck and head. [...] Having to connect to my partners was such a challenge because I felt uneasy with myself. [...] The truth is I didn’t know what to do with my body. It is the man’s body that I am so thankful for. I feel mean, steady and in control [...] I feel like I’m now running the scene. The ability that my body has given me is brilliant. I walk like a man, sit like a man and rest like a man. A completely different

body from my own forces a change in the way I speak and react.
My body is my foundation for this character. (Walker 9)

In the second example the actor played two different roles in Ödön von Horvath's *Don Juan Comes Back From the War* and found the Imaginary Body very helpful in creating her roles: "The difference between the two characters lay in their relationship to their bodies and Don Juan" (Fried Von Horvath 3). She used an image of "a black panther" for the role of the Mother. The image gave the student clarity of her overall intention for the Mother's two scenes: "hungry predator" and "viscously protective mother of two cubs". She then learned how to play the two different roles by focusing on "the specifics of their physical selves – how each of them walked, sat, used their hands, the angle/tilt of their heads, which body part lead with, where they breathed from, the speed and quality of their movement, their inner rhythm". She did that through the process of repetition in the course of our daily warm-ups: "[the] Centers exercises (will, thinking, emotion); [directions in space] forward centre back; and working with sensation (for example the sensation of hunger bubbling up from the earth and seeping, first into your feet, and then throughout your entire body); as well as the four elements (fire water, earth air)" (Fried Von Horvath 3).

For the First Girl of Easy Virtue Fried used images from Egon Schiele's paintings. She did not think that her portrayal of this character was as successful. She attributed this to her moral judgment of the character: "I never truly honoured her" (Fried Von Horvath 3).



While the student did have constant doubts about this role she achieved a great degree of physical transformation in this part. I do not think she lacked compassion for this character. I attribute her doubts to the fact that the territory she inhabited was quite unfamiliar as she isn't usually cast in this type of the role and it put her far outside her comfort zone. Sheldon Rosen, a Ryerson Theatre School's faculty member who knows this actor very well did not recognize her during the performance. In our faculty meeting he commented: "I just taught that class in the morning. In the evening I came to see their performance and I thought I was going out of my mind. I couldn't for the life of me figure out who was the prostitute at the beginning of the show." This type of reaction is what Chekhov wished for. Achieving the Imaginary Body is the final confirmation of "the ability of an artist to be changed because of his own creation" and the ultimate point of the psycho-physical training (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* October 8, 1936).

The Grotesque

David Zinder and Lenard Petit have both added this final step in the sequence. Petit's version will be described in the next chapter's section on Chekhov's Clown. While they are different in terms of the "size" of the performance (the degree of internalization of physical expression), both Petit and Zinder work with fusing imagination and action, following Chekhov's original intention: "There is a point where there is the pure imaginative, spiritual state, and another where there is full acting, and the line is a continuous unbroken one. What we are trying to do today is to bring these two things together to a certain extent, so that it is imagination and it is action at the same time; a certain strange thing" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* July 1, 1938).

Zinder does not use the Door Exercise as a preamble to the Imaginary Body. Rather, he asks the actor to simply conjure up an image (picture) of his/her character. Zinder's next step asks the actor to exaggerate and enlarge one or two details which are inspiring or interesting to the actor. Once these are exaggerated, the actor walks or does an ordinary activity. Usually this is very difficult, or even impossible, and the actor must modify the grotesque until it is what Zinder calls "workable," or in other words, until the actor can perform

all required tasks while keeping this element alive. The modification is usually some form of internalizing the grotesque.



In this case, creating the grotesque forces the actor to engage in the “process of reduction” in rehearsal. Zinder suggests that an actor should examine his/her character like a diamond – every angle will be interesting and new. However, in performance, this must be reduced to what is playable. As will be shown, Petit’s grotesque is very different: it asks for a radical physical transformation and, thus, is more visible.

Introductory Voice and Speech Exercises: Sound as Gesture

The meaning of the sound – in connection with the speech method– this is taken entirely from Dr. Steiner". (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre June 8, 1938)

Sarah Kane has created the current direction in Chekhov voice training, one which is unique in the world of voice training. An in-depth comparative analysis between this training and other currently popular approaches to voice, such as Cecily Berry, Fitzmaurice, or Linklater voice training (to name only a few) deserves a volume of its own. For the purpose of describing and assessing the voice training within contemporary Chekhov technique, it will suffice to explain how Kane has re-combined Steiner's training and Chekhov's training, both had been developing separately before she began to bring them back together in the 1980s.

As Voice and Speech training has not been written about, it will have a separate section in the two final chapters, which deal with current practice. However, it is important to note that voice and speech are part of many beginner exercises, which often include sounding or speaking a monologue. For example, all Kane's classes start with a physical warm-up that includes an understanding of the surrounding space; this is also the first element in the sequencing of the current Chekhov beginner training. These are followed by exercises which help the actor experience his/her breathing; this element represents Steiner's contribution.

According to Steiner, it was paramount *not* to equate the word "spirit" with the word "intellect." He saw the intellect as only a stage in achieving the Spirit Man, inasmuch as it served to awaken consciousness. Steiner considered breath to be least removed from the inner aspects of the spiritual being, the Spirit Man, but also connected to the outer aspect such as will because breath could still be managed consciously:

One can sense chiselling, modelling, sculpturing force of the stream of one's own breath, activated and consciously guided through the impulse of will. The breath is given the power to control and give contour to this element of air until one thrust through the spirit. There is an experiencing of oneself as breath-being. [...] Artistic work helps us in this, for art reveals to us the secret laws of nature, and the secret laws of nature lie deeply anchored in the rule of the

divine. We can dip into these divine laws if we work with that within ourself which is least removed from the inner aspect of the spirit and to which we can still attain with our consciousness. That is first and foremost the breath. (Steiner, *Creative Speech: The Formative Process of the Spoken Word* 144).

In keeping with this teaching, Kane accesses the breath through initial full body exercises which do not involve sound. These can be spatial or sensory, as already described.



Following this, Kane uses ball-throwing exercises in conjunction with voice (see Appendix 15). Ball-throwing exercises are part of all MICHA warm-ups, but in Kane's voice training, they are also the main teaching tool. The pedagogical reason for using them is to convey the basic idea of speech in current Chekhov technique;

namely, that words are movements in space. This understanding attempts to make material the notion that body and mind are unified in speech; further, if the movement component is denied as an essential aspect of speaking, then the resulting speech will not harmonize body and spirit in a Steinerian sense.

Balls serve a multitude of purposes, such as to introduce the concept of physical preparation needed for involved speech, including awakening the desire to prepare through playfulness. Before a ball is thrown, the preparation of the arm swing is visible, and an actor is aware of it. Without this preparation, there is no throw and, consequently, no movement through space. The better an actor prepares, the better is his/her throw. Kane uses this as a living metaphor: "The better I prepare, the freer the word is."

Syllables as Independent Agents

From breathing and ball-throwing, Kane moves on to work with syllables. As seen in the Imaginary Body exercise, Chekhov's work with imagery is based on his belief that characters are images which have an independent life. To this, Kane adds: "Syllables have their independent life." According to Kane, just as in the acting training of Chekhov's technique, the idea of a *character's independence* frees the actor from using personal memories, so too in Chekhov's voice training, the *syllables' independence* also frees the actor: "[By understanding that independence] I go to that living resource that is more colourful and energetic than I am." Kane teaches that understanding syllables in this way elevates speaking to an art done on a high level of consciousness of one's inner life and likens this to "the Higher Ego activity within the soul". As Steiner says, "Not that which inspires the creation but that which may be; not the actual, but the possible" (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 21).

From Sounds to Syllables: Three Sample Exercises

The process of the following exercise imitates Steiner's ideas of speech formation: students create syllables from sounds and let images for these appear. The warm-up for this exercise can include a game of tag, stretching, walking at different tempos and with different qualities, and creating patterns in space. In Kane's class, the warm-up

usually includes colourful verses from works as diverse as Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* and Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky." These are spoken in such a way as to involve the body, for example, following one's finger through the space, or walking with imaginary elephant feet while accompanying the verses with a rhythm.

Steiner suggests that when learning to speak beautifully, we should begin with individual sounds: "Start from hearing, from hearing yourself. You must feel the way in which the R rolls differently from the way in which the L casts waves. You should accustom yourself to feeling the part the air plays" (Steiner, *Creative Speech: The Formative Process of the Spoken Word* 37). In Kane's class, this is customary. For instance, the actor explores the sounds M, L, and K, and creates a large, continuous gesture, which has a beginning, middle, and an end (from now on referred to as "gesture" or "gestures") for each one. The actor then creates gestures for vowels such as A (ah), E (eh), I (ee), O (oh), and U (oo). Following this, s/he creates a gesture, allowing the combination of consonants and vowels to motivate it. For example, for the consonant M, the actor can explore syllables like "mine", "may", and "moy"; for L, ones like "ley", "lay", and "loy"; and for K, "kay", "key" and "koy", and so on.

The gesture is an expression of the sensation that the quality of the syllable invokes within the actor. For example, for me, "mine" had a sensation of confidence which I attributed mostly to the open "ah" (m-ah-y-n), and the corresponding gesture was expansive. "Oh" as in "moy" filled me with sensation of fear, and the gesture was a contraction, while "ey" as in "may" was a tender sensation, with a slow lateral gliding and opening gesture. Typically, the sounds affect individuals differently: "moy" created a sensation of "fear" for me, but someone else experienced "wonder."

While the actors are creating syllables and gestures, they are side-coached to connect the sound to their feet to help the body involvement, so that they can begin to move. Once the actor is ready to move, s/he now experiments freely with these resources while applying them to the text. The actor *arbitrarily* chooses any gesture s/he has developed to provide the inner movement for a line of text in the same way that a Psychological Gesture (PG) provides a springboard into a character. The actors are paired up; they watch each other speak the same line informed by three of the different Syllable PGs, sharing their observations. For me, each sound began to appear

as a living component of my language. Many sounds put together were like an organism: they had a life of their own which became outwardly visible when I spoke. For example, my partner described my rendition of a sentence informed by the inner gesture of the consonant "L" as slow and wide and my sentence informed by "key" as fast and staccato.

This changed my speech and illuminated the differences I felt in speaking English and Croatian. By fluctuating between the two as an actor, I knew that the different sounds of the two languages gave me an inner sensation even before I tried to interpret a role, and I had found it frustrating that I could not transfer sensation from one language to another. Previously, even though I knew that each language had its own organic laws, I could not work with the two constructively. This new knowledge made the whole idea of using sound much less daunting and "user-friendly." For a non-native speaker of a language, this is an excellent way of opening up to the vibrations and sensations of strange combinations of sounds. For a native speaker, the familiar sounds may begin to invoke new sensations.

In a similar exercise, the actor begins with the sounds P, B, S, and G. S/he focuses on experiencing the speech in two distant parts of the body: his/her mouth and feet. The same is then done with diphthongs. The actor is asked to observe what happens to the body sensations in the mouth and the feet when the two vowels are combined. S/he continues with a combination of the consonant and a vowel or a diphthong, and so on, until finally s/he creates some simple words, for example: are, there, don't, house, teach, dear, will, archers. Finally, a whole sentence is spoken, one which emerges from the body, not through rational cognition. In order to assure this, Kane asks the actors to allow a millisecond for the inner sensation to appear and to speak out of that sensation. This is the hardest part of this work. If the actor waits too long, or judges the sensation, s/he might return to pragmatic, controlled speech. The kind of intellectual detachment s/he has to work with must not force a solution as to what the sentence should sound like. Rather, there should be a certain amount of uncertainty when speaking so that the speech retains a sense of fluidity and freedom from rational control.

In yet another variation, the actor starts with another set of consonants, for example, K, L, S, F, and M. Kane instructs the actor to

physically “draw” the sounds from the sky and “give” them to the earth or to “extend forward” the sound. She also offers simple imagery: sounds are picked off the space as apples from a tree. The movement gives the sounds directions, so that they travel through space. The movements are simple improvised gestures. Side-coaching may include: “Extend your movement. Don’t extend it too much. Don’t hold back.” Kane emphasizes the ease of the movement: “Let the body move how it will and let it surprise you.”

Once the individual sounds have been “moved,” the actor chooses a word for each of the five consonants *instantly* and immediately describes with one word the individual quality of each first letter. In my case, the first three words that appeared in my mind were Croatian: K – *krizh* (pronounced staccato Kh-rh-ee-zh, cross); L – *lijepo* (pronounced lee-yeh-po, beautiful); M – *moj* (pronounced moy, mine). For the last two, my brain switched to English: R – ruckus; and F – film. I described K with the verb “to hit;” L was an adjective, “lazy;” M was a noun, “molding;” R was an adjective, “quick;” and F was an adverb, “fiery.” I then took a line of text, and spoke the sentence with a quality “to hit” while moving in the gesture of the sound K, or a “lazy” quality while moving in a gesture for the sound L, and so on.

Overall, in beginner training, the actor focuses on two major sound groups while speaking: consonants and vowels. S/he learns to distinguish between the sensations produced by the consonants and the sensations produced by vowels. For example, I generally experienced the sensation produced by the vowels as smoother, softer, slower and more open than that of the consonants. Kane teaches that, according to Steiner¹³, the gesture of the consonants is that of the Will and the gesture of the vowels is that of the Emotion. Thus, I became aware of something new in my speech. I never thought about learning to speak as learning how to distinguish sensorily between consonants and vowels. I have since learned to use the consonants’ relationship to Will and the vowels’ relationship to Emotions. For example, if I need to express the emotional content in a specific moment, I might extend the vowels, and if I am focusing on the action, I might give more emphasis and power when speaking consonants. There are no hard and fast rules about this, however, and just as Steiner suggests “it might also occur that the general rule is reversed”¹⁴ (Steiner, *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. 98) The

emphasis is on sensitivity and creativity to nuances of sensations produced within the speaker by the consonants and the vowels.

In *Creative Speech*, Steiner proclaims, “Mankind owes beautiful speaking to the Orient.” He suggests that the Oriental speech has retained “the ideal [...] that speaking was a singing of speech” (190). While singing is still used as speech in traditional eastern theatrical forms, the above exercises attempt to return to this ideal through speaking. The important similarity to singing is not the actual range of notes in which one speaks, but stems from the idea that the speech can only be sung if it is thought of as a particular direction in the space. Similarly, in *The Invisible Actor*, Yoshi Oida touches on the subject of the independent life of the sound, comparing the sounds “aaah” and “eeee”:

In a sense “eeee” is an artificial sound; it doesn’t happen without a conscious effort, unlike “aaah.” “Aaah” is very natural: babies all over the world produce this sound instinctively. It is also interesting to note that many cultures attach similar meaning to the baby’s “ma ma” sound. In Europe, it is linked to the concept of “mother,” while in Japan, “ma ma” means “food.” Babies always start with the “aaah” sound, not “eeee.” It is far easier for body to produce. (96)

Oida offers an experiment:

Someone (or two someones) grip your body, and lift you straight up, so that your feet come off the ground. The first time, just do it normally, so that you get a sense of how much you actually weigh. The second time, when you are lifted, make the sound “aaah” (you don’t need to drop the head back; just making the sound is enough). When you make the sound “aaah,” imagine that you are unifying yourself with the huge “aaah” in the sky. Return your feet to the ground, and then repeat the lift again, this time making the sound “eeee.” When you make the “eeee,” connect with the “eeee” deep inside the earth. You and your lifters will probably find that you appear ‘heavier’ with the “eeee” sound, to the point that you are quite difficult to get off the ground. Conversely, your body is lighter than normal with the “aaah” sound. There is no real logic to this phenomenon, but something appears to change according to the sound you produce, and this change is linked to *particular directions* in the space. (96; emphasis added)

The *particular directions* in the space are inner gestures as they are understood in current voice training in Chekhov’s technique.

In *Lessons for the Professional Actor*, Chekhov examines the special relationship of the sound to character and temperament. For example, he suggests we can examine the differences between English and Russian by looking at the word each has for expressing oneself: “The English is ‘I’ [ah-ee], and the Russian ‘Ya’ [y-ah]. [The Russian] ‘ah’ is opening everything, while [the English] ‘ee’ is very thin thing like an arrow. The Russian starts timidly [y], and then goes out into the whole universe, while the Englishman is quite the opposite, he looks around and then makes everything for himself” (127). In Chekhov’s interpretation the quieter and individualistic English character is contrasted with the extroverted and collective Russian character.

This type of thinking appears in Steiner’s work, but he attaches specific gestures to these two sounds. With respect to the open “ah” sound, “A: is the whole man,” according to Steiner (*Creative Speech: The Formative Process of the Spoken Word* 72). The gesture he attaches to “ah” is “marvelling.” In the case of “I,” pronounced “ah-ee,” marvelling is brought in with the thin “ee” sound, while the Russians do the opposite: from the fluid and enclosed sound, they move into a marvelling sound. Also, in *Creative Speech*, Steiner analyses the German word for oneself: “Ich” pronounced “ee-hh.” He suggests that, in this word, the “breath streams out and merges with all things; I become like unto all things” (75). To Steiner, his own language “is the language of the soul,” especially when grasped at the level where it remains dialect, and to him, German is an inwardly-experienced language (78).

The word “I” is a part of very important phrase both for Steiner and Chekhov: “I am.” Steiner believed that “the Higher Self is contained in the ‘I am’ as a bearer of our spiritual biography. The Ego is only a dull reflection of the Higher Self within our limited soul consciousness” (Steiner, *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*). Currently, Chekhov’s technique includes the phrase “I am” in the Expansion/Contraction PG, Radiation Circle Exercise, and can be brought into any exercise if the instructor so desires. Current Chekhov training takes into consideration whether an actor is performing in the language of “I am,” or “Ich bin” (German), or “Ya sam” (Croatian), and so on, making the actor conscious that the sound of each language will be vividly present and work directly into the physical being of the actor. The speaker must surrender to the

beauty of the sounds and allow the sounds to sculpt the words. Only then s/he will be able to fully form the thought. How the sound sculpts the words, however, belongs to advanced training which will be discussed in the next chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR:

¹ Sampson also notes that three movements have contributed to our changing conceptions of embodiment. These are the appropriation of Buddhist practices, feminism, and the Pentecostal religious revival. All of these, in some measure, ensure a continued focus and acceptance of embodiment as a vehicle of knowledge and practice. As shown, the appropriation of Buddhist practices is relevant for Chekhov's technique. Harry J.G. Kempen, "Mind as Body Moving in Space. Bringing the Body Back into Self-Psychology,," *The Body and Psychology*, ed. Henderikus J. Stam (London: Sage Publications, 1998) 7-8.

² The exercises that appear in the original will be described in the Appendices and only the new or adapted exercises will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

³ An example starts with: "The tote bag was in the hall, ready for the car, packed with a few books, pages of completed manuscript, mail, sundries such as pills," and so on. After two printed pages of such detailing, the actor notices that the wallet was lost and thus experiences an emotion. Uta Hagen *A Challenge for the Actor*,₂ (New York: Scribner's, 1991) 164.

⁴ In this context, Merlin gives the word the negative connotation of "pretending."

⁵ This exercise is the warm up for the Polarities Exercise; "drawing in" the past and "receiving" the future of the character which I will discuss in the next chapter under Polarities Exercise.

⁶ *Tantra* is a Sanskrit word. Derived from verbal root *tan*, meaning "to expand." According to esoteric explanations, *tantra* is that which expands *jnāna*, which can mean either "knowledge" or "wisdom." Tantrism is a practice that evolved in India around the year 600 C.E. A Tantric characteristic feature is that the knowledge is disseminated by the direct transmission from teacher to student and that the tantric percepts include many bodily practices such as work with chakras, visualizations and rituals. The three mysteries of body, speech and mind are thus analyzed and one must utilize bodily practices in order to achieve oneness of all existence which is *tantra*'s ultimate purpose. See Feuerstein, *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy*.

Tantric Buddhism is regarded with some suspicion because of its association with magic rites and sexual practices. In Tibet, the Vajrajana and Dzogchen denominations embrace Tantrism. In Japan the Shingon denomination represents a development of Tantrism. Many Balinese rituals, particularly the Calonarang dramas which feature witchcraft, magical incantations, sacrifices and death, have strongly Tantric overtones. In the Far East, Tantrism is also referred to as "esoteric Buddhism". See Margaret Coldiron, *Trance and Transformation of the Actor in*

Japanese Noh and Balinese Masked Dance-Drama, Studies in Theatre Arts. Vol. 30 (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 2004).

⁷ The idea of the subtle vital force (*Prana*) and the channels along which it flows appear in the earliest *Upanishads* (7th-8th century B.C.E.). The heart was said to be the centre of the 72,000 *nadis* or subtle channels, and the place into which the senses are withdrawn during sleep. As with many ancient civilizations (e.g. Egypt, Homeric Greece), the heart was also considered the seat of waking consciousness. But it was only in the later *Upanishads* – the earlier of which were composed somewhere between the second century BCE and the second century CE – reference is first made to basic Tantric concepts such as *chakras*, *mantras*, and so on. See Charles Breaux, *Journey into Consciousness: The Chakras, Tantra, and Jungian Psychology* (London: Rider, 1990).

⁸ *Prana* or the “river of energy” relates to the functioning of the body as a manifestation of consciousness. Hindu and Buddhist practices work with the invisible energy field called *prana* as an intangible means to tangible expression. The intangible *prana* is defined by Tantric specialist Georg Feuerstein as “the energy field associated with the sustaining of the physical body, and the connecting link between the physical body and the mind” Feuerstein, *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy* 140.

⁹ The *Brahma-Upanishad* mentions the four “places” occupied by the *purusha* (soul): the navel, heart, throat, and head. Following common tradition, each place is characterized by a particular state of consciousness: the navel (or the eye), waking consciousness; the heart, dreamless sleep; the throat dreaming; and the head, the “fourth” or transcendent state. These four states, originally referred to in the *Mandukya Upanishad*, are identified with the gods Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra (a derivative of Shiva) and Akshara (the indestructible). Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality, and Freedom*, 128

The *Yogatattva Upanishad* speaks of the “five parts” of the body corresponding to the five great or cosmic elements – earth, water, fire, air, and space. Each element corresponds to a particular mantra – a “seed-vibration” or mystical syllable – and a particular deity. Emphasis is also given to *siddhis* (supernormal powers) that can be attained through mastery of yoga and of the different elements. Eliade, 130-131.

Tantric Buddhism (or Vajrajana) broke off from the Indian Tantric one at an early stage. Hence they developed a rather different version of the *chakras*. Tibetan Buddhism acknowledges four (navel, heart, throat, and head), five (seat), seven (genital and third eye), or even ten *chakras* or “channel wheels”; each with a different number of “spokes” to its Indian Tantric counterpart. The navel chakra for example has sixty-four spokes; the heart *chakra* eight; the throat, sixteen (the only one to agree with the Hindu scheme); and the head or crown *chakra* thirty-two. There is also, as in Laya-yoga, an elaborate system of correspondences. Note that in this system it is the head-centre, and not, as in many Western interpretations of Hindu Tantra, the perineal or the base, that is associated with the body and physical consciousness. The throat centre represents a more subtle state of consciousness, the dream state; and the heart centre, the most refined of all: deep meditation, dreamless sleep, the peaceful deities and the Clear Light.

The *chakras* are described as stations or centres of pure consciousness and consciousness-power. They are focal points of meditation; iconographic structures within the occult or "subtle body." Each *chakra* is described by means of a whole lot of symbolic associations or correspondences. Building upon the initial later *Upanishads* speculation, each *chakra*, as well as having a specific position in the physical body, element, mantra, and deity, also has a particular number of "petals", each associated with one of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, a corresponding colour, shape, animal, plane of existence, sense-organ, mantric sound, and so on. As is usually the case with intellectual esoteric systems, many of these correspondences are arbitrary, for example, smell and feet with Muladhara, taste and hand with Swadhishtana, sight and anus with Manipura, etc.

In his definitive work on the *chakras* according to the traditional Indian understanding, *Layayoga – an Advanced Method of Concentration*, Shyam Sundar Goswami, citing numerous references, describes thirteen *chakras* altogether; the seven standard *chakras* plus six minor ones. See Mircea Eliade, *Yoga : Immortality and Freedom. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask*, 2nd ed. Princeton, N.J.: (Princeton University Press, 1970).

¹⁰ In the Eastern traditional theatre, both Balinese dancers and Japanese Noh performance actors use the second *chakra*, the main source of energy for every movement, and call it *hara*. The *hara* designates the part of the lower abdomen and pelvis region near the genital organs. In Tantric practices, this *chakra* relates to desire, especially the sexual urge. It is also connected with six afflictive emotions of lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and envy. These factors, which all arise from the ego, can be overcome by contemplating this centre. In fact, the eastern theatrical practices actively contemplate the ego by working with the *hara* centre, aiming for a spiritual awakening. The basic teaching is simple; to distinguish between body and soul is false; when you see the whole self as a single entity, you are able to attain a higher state of harmony and fulfillment. Yoshi Oida says that the "Japanese concept of *hara* is seen as something more than a physical location; it is the core of the entire self. It is the centre of a person's strength, health, energy, integrity and sense of connection to the word and the universe" (10). At The International Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival 2004, Butoh dancer Youri Yamanaka confirmed the importance of *hara*. Although Butoh strives to overcome the boundaries of traditional theatrical code, it remains faithful to the essential practice with *hara*. Yamanaka who studied Chekhov's technique states her own, essentially cultural limitation: "I can't use different centres consciously. I can only use *hara* centre as the fundamental centre of the human being". "The Intercultural Aspects of Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique. *International Michael Chekhov's Workshop and Festival 2004.*" (Groznan, Croatia: MICHA and ETRA, 2004).

¹¹ In the context of MICHA's training, Zinder crosses into the text and character much sooner. The reason he gives is that because of time constrictions, he condenses the training and skips certain variations of the exercises. It is ultimately up to the instructor to sense when the students are ready to work with character and speak. However, in Chekhov's technique as taught by MICHA faculty, generally the character is brought in early in the learning process. While MICHA's general

philosophy tends to unite the “work on the self” and “work on the part,” Zinder’s *ImageWork* trains these separately.

¹² For a significant sample of similar comments which note the physical transformation of Chekhov in class, on stage and film please see the two documentary films about Chekhov, *The Dartington Years* and *From Russia to Hollywood*, also Gordon, “Chronology.”

¹³ This is how Steiner puts it: “If I try to emphasize the vowels and, in so doing, speak slowly, I turn toward the breath. If I emphasize the consonants and speak quickly, I turn toward the blood.” See Steiner and Maria Von Sievers’ *Creative Speech* in the section “Course on the Art of Speech Formation 1922. Part II” pages 96-120.

Steiner elaborates on the difference between the effects consonants and vowels can have on a speaker. For example: “[W]hen the will comes into the picture, excitement. As long as I speak as a fairly healthy person I must stress the consonants: if I am half dead [...] I must stress the vowels and speak slowly” (98).

Steiner also differentiates between nuances in the speech that is reflective and the speech that is emotive and connects reflection to vowels and emotion to consonants: “You will generally speak what is reflective slowly, thereby bringing out the vowels. You will speak what is emotive rapidly, thereby stressing the consonants” (98) and “Let us now assume we have to communicate something of a contemplative nature. The listener should have the impression: that it is a thoughtful person; he makes us aware of something. In that case it is necessary to stress to vowels, to let the consonants fall away, and to speak slowly” (101).

¹⁴ The whole quote reads: “It might also occur that the general rule is reversed if a person is quite beside himself. Thoughts are generally expressed slowly, stressing the vowels, but if I want to indicate that he who speaks suffers from a kind of flightiness in the realm of ideas, is beside himself, so that it is not he who has the thoughts but the thoughts that have him, I must go over to stressing the consonants and speaking rapidly.” Rudolf Steiner, ed., *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. (London: Rudolph Steiner Press, 1978).

CHAPTER FIVE

Current Pedagogy: Advanced Level

The actor should be well aware of the super-objective for the entire role at the very outset. For how else can he merge all the objectives into a logical and coherent stream without making many errors? (Chekhov, To the Actor 158)

In advanced training, the *five guiding principles* are applied to the theatrical story-telling within the framework of a dramatic scene. Here, the technique is used to explore creative possibilities and choices in relation to a character through the actor's imaginative adjustments in thinking, feeling, and willing elements (the Three-Fold Nature of Man). The exercises are brought into play to help the actor make these adjustments workable and playable on the levels of characterization, relationships, objectives, and atmospheres. This is followed by work on the composition of a piece, as the actor learns how to follow a through-line of a scene, a story, or an entire dramatic work. S/he is encouraged to experiment with choices and, in a process of reduction, to pick the ones which are appropriate to play the role with the desired effect.

While intermediate/advanced training continues to develop the actor's attention, imagination, speech, and body, the emphasis shifts from experimenting with random characterization, to creating short compositions or dramatic *études* to demonstrate technique and to improvisation specific to a chosen theme, scene and role. Thus, while in beginner training, when doing the basic centring exercise, the actor might create a distinct character, now the actor will actively seek a centre which is appropriate for the assigned character. Furthermore, while in intermediate/advanced training, the actor continues to work with space, sensations, breath, and inner movement, once s/he experiments with different elements of the technique, s/he is asked to synthesize these into a performance. In this process, the laws of harmony and rhythm come into play.



While intentions, relationships, and characterization are part of various other approaches derived from Stanislavsky's tradition, such as Strasberg, Stella Adler, Meisner, or Hagen's teachings (to name a few), here they are achieved very differently. The differences are so great that contemporary Stanislavsky scholar Jonathan Pitches has suggested Chekhov's is a "counter-tradition" (125) to other techniques derived from Stanislavsky. Charles Marowitz agrees, stating that the theoretical and practical differences are not "merely quibbles between similar approaches to acting" and that Chekhov's technique "nourishes a very different conception of dramatic art and gravitates toward a different body of work" (*The Other Chekhov* 59). The conception that both Pitches and Marowitz notice as different has to do with stylization. Patrice Pavis says regarding stylization, "According to Gombrich's formula (1977), the artist [who stylizes] tends to see what he paints rather than paint what he sees" (Pavis and Shantz 372). This illuminates a crucial point in the current

intermediate/advanced Chekhov pedagogy and deserves further explanation.

Unlike the proponents of the American Method, current teachers of Chekhov's technique do not suggest that hiding the fact that one is acting is necessarily a good thing. Where they do agree with the American Method, however, is that issues such as vagueness, nervousness, pushing, faking, forcing, illustrating, anticipating, and self-directing are problematic. That being said, these are all arbitrary categories, and "pushing" in Chekhov's technique compared to that in, for instance, Hagen's, might very well be quite different. This is mainly because the American Method does not have, nor is it interested in, a way of developing an abstract theatrical vocabulary. As noted in the preceding theoretical discussion, in Chekhov's technique, while they are not discouraged completely, the tools used in the aforementioned techniques, such as Personalization used in Strasberg's Method (called Transference in Hagen's technique) and the fourth wall used by Hagen, or the concentration on independent activity (also known as "the object work") common to many branches of American Method, are by no means essential. In Chekhov's technique, to create a fourth wall is considered unnecessary, as the audience is included as a part of the given circumstances. To improvise with objects is considered beneficial but to become dependent on them in order to avoid being self-conscious is thought of as an unnecessary crutch.

A comparison of the use of props (part of intermediate/advanced training) may help to illustrate the above-discussed differences in the type of theatrical vocabulary Chekhov's technique advocates. The mandatory use of props to create a performance score is widely practiced in studios inspired by Adler, Meisner, or Hagen's teaching. Such teachers use props to ideally take the actor's attention away from himself/herself, thereby preventing self-consciousness and simultaneously making the actor's objectives clear. This is done to create a score of a performance that is *fixed*. In her class Hagen suggests to her students, "Start with your physical life," and recommends, "Take a sock off and start the scene and you'll be better off" (Hagen *Acting Class*). In her technique, "physical life" is understood in terms of what in Chekhov's technique is considered naturalistic or lifelike behaviour.

But the ideas in Chekhov's technique about objects and the body suggest a very different understanding of both the use of the objects and the actor's physical life. Chekhov himself improvised with objects throughout his career. He was admonished as a young actor for "having too much fun with the part" during one performance of Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid* because of his ability to appropriate the simplest prop and develop an extended scene (Gordon, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia* 119). Furthermore, many accounts of his performance as Khlestakov suggest that he was able to create "new business, unexpected moves and changing intonations"¹ (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 55). Chekhov's virtuosity with the props came from an ability to split his consciousness. As discussed previously this type of consciousness demands that an actor be fully involved, while at the same time achieving a distance from that "doing". Also, Chekhov wanted his students to eventually work on that level. Such virtuosity includes constant change in the score and the partner's ability to respond to it and not a fixed score. According to Marowitz, Chekhov's creation of character was so total that, in *The Government Inspector*, it seemed to observers to have taken on a life of its own, so that Khlestakov controlled Chekhov, not the other way around (54).² Rather than using props to take away the attention from oneself, in the attempt to create an illusion of reality, Chekhov's approach plays with the reality as it is dictated by the image created and which may take on an independent life of its own.

Chekhov teacher Scott Fielding studied Meisner's work for three years in New York City before studying Chekhov's work. This is how he describes the differences:

A Meisner teacher would much rather have an actor with a craft, who could make the play work night in, night out, than an inspired actor whose inspiration couldn't be depended on. In professional business a Meisner actor will make the scene work. The goal of [Chekhov's] work is that inspiration is at the command [of the actor]. Chekhov left us his "chart of inspired acting." All the points of the technique are like doors to inspired acting. What made it work in Meisner technique? Listening and responding. This is what it begins with, but [the Meisner actors] work with actions out of their head and if you are working out of your head then you are not working with inspiration.

Fielding's statement implies that in Meisner's work, inspiration isn't at the command of the actor, whereas in Chekhov's technique, it is. While this cannot be proved, it illustrates the *raison d'être* for current Chekhov intermediate/advanced training. Many practitioners agree that Chekhov's technique is not the easiest approach to creation: it demands a departure from identifying verisimilitude with good acting and often asks for a radical physical transformation. As such, it leaves more freedom of choice for the actor and director. Thus, while difficult, the technique opens up a number of possibilities. While the introductory exercises help the beginning student understand the possibilities, the intermediate/advanced work teaches him/her how to make them a reality in a public presentation.

Several exercises introduced by MICHA faculty have emerged in the intermediate/advanced level of training, and these will be the subject of the main body of this chapter: Archetypal Psychological Gesture (PG), Relationship PG, PG for Intentions and Beats, The Ghost or Doppelganger Exercise, and Energy Corridors. In addition, a new discipline, Chekhov Clown, has been developed. The voice intermediate/advanced training for these new exercises has not been recorded or discussed separately in recent publications, and it continues to be innovative. Petit sums up the process of developing the technique: "It is all a great twisting and wrenching and expanding and contracting of things we get from each other. [...] We all return all the time to the principles which is what Chekhov asked us to do. The meat of it is there, the exercise is only a way to cook the meat" (Petit, "*Origins of Exercises*").

Sequencing

Intermediate/advanced teaching has been shaped by the current faculty in an attempt to simultaneously introduce the elements and give the students a template and a structure which can help them build a whole. Creating the Objective Atmosphere is usually the first step.³ This is in keeping with Chekhov's notion that one must always begin with the relationship to the space, for example, by using the Objective Exercise. Work with the individual atmosphere or sensation is usually next. Here, the Personal Atmosphere Exercise, Imaginary Centre Exercises, Qualities of Movement Exercises, and Sensations Exercises feature prominently (see Appendices and Chapter Four).

The purpose is to help the actor understand the character's point of view by creating a new inner sensation, enabling the actor to go beyond a habitual response dictated by his/her everyday personality, and fostering imagination.

The new sensation is made specific, or shaped, in the next complex step: the characterization. The work on characterization proper begins through the work on the Archetypal PG Exercise, continues through with the Character PG Exercise, and finishes with the Imaginary Body Exercise. Depending on time constraints, Chekhov Clown Exercises may be introduced at this point. The exercises such as Clown Characterization and Gargoyle to Gesture are particularly useful in characterization. This is followed by work on composition, which begins with the Relationship PG Exercise and continues with PGs for important moments and overall intentions. The Objectives for Beats Exercise helps with creating a through-line of a scene or a section of a play. Finally, work with the Energy Corridors Exercise teaches the actors how to effectively radiate all of the above. The following list delineates the typical sequence of intermediate/advanced exercises as currently taught by MICHA faculty:

1. Space and Objective Atmosphere
2. Personal Atmosphere through Centres, Sensations, Qualities
3. Characterization through Archetypal PG, Imaginary Body
4. Composition through Relationship PG, Moments PG, PG for Objectives for Units and Beats
5. Sense of the Whole through the synthesis of Ease, Beauty, Form and Radiation
6. Style

The sequence described here requires a minimum of forty to fifty teaching hours, the amount of time typically available in a week-long conference. If the time is shorter, the teacher may focus on one or two of the elements.

Imagination and Incorporation of Images

Each chapter in Chekhov's *To the Actor* is preceded by a citation. In Chapter Two "Imagination and Incorporation of Images," Chekhov quotes Steiner: "Not that which *is* inspires the creation, but that which may be; not the *actual*, but the *possible*" (21; emphasis in

original). Learning to open up to the “possible” is taught by all MICHA faculty and is considered another essential part of the advanced training if one is looking for thorough psychophysical transformation in acting.



In his lecture given within the advanced group of students on July 5, 2004, in Groznjan Croatia, Jobst Langhans delineated the difference between imagination and memory, and according to him, the images from our past are complete, clear, perhaps only slightly modified by imagination: “These images are fixed and therefore belong to memory.”⁴ But in an Anthroposophist vein, Langhans also

suggested that the images of the future belong to the workings of the soul: "The soul collects the impulses from the future, which are not images but sensations." When such sensations become imagery, one is in the realm of imagination, as conceptualized by Steiner. These images are not fixed, but are the seeds from which further imagination grows and develops, in keeping with Goethe's concept of "intuitive discernment."

At the conference where he gave the above definition, Langhans offered the following exercise as a demonstration: the actors closed their eyes and were given the word "ball." They responded to the word with imagery. They were then given two words: "wide" and "high." Langhans said these words are chosen so that in the first case ("ball"), the actors would see images from their personal memory, while in the second case ("wide"), the experience would ideally be experienced first as a movement, then as a sensation, an atmosphere and finally, as an image. When I did the exercise, my responses did just that. I saw the ball instantly: a juggling ball that I owned. Once I saw it, the image stayed fixed. I had to sense the "wide" and "high" before I could conjure up an image. The "wide" transformed into several poetic images; for example, an image of the Grand Canyon on a hot summer's day followed by an image of the moon rising above it. Thus, Langhans's second set of words invoked not that which "is" but that which is "possible"; the kind of creation Steiner advocates in the citation above.

The next exercise was slightly more complex. We were to experience two points of view: the character's "subjective view" and the actor's "objective view." In the subjective view, we were to see the world through the protagonist's eyes, and in the objective view, we were to see the protagonist from "the above," an imagined bird's eye view. We were allowed to move as much or as little as we wanted. I explored Lyubov Andreyevna's first entrance in *The Cherry Orchard*:

Enter Lyubov Andreyevna, Anya and Carlotta dressed in traveling clothes [...].

ANYA: Here we are. Oh, Mama, do you remember this room?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA: The nursery! (A. P. Chekhov and Schmidt 335)

In my subjective view, I tried to see my own childhood room as I thought that it would help me inhabit the personal point of view. I imagined my bed, and I began to see myself as a child sitting on it. I did not plan on “being” a child because Lyubov is an adult, but the perspective of myself as a child just happened, and I decided to go with it. What surprised me was that someone started to comb my hair; it hurt, and then I had milk and cookies. I developed a happy feeling while imagining this and missed it when the exercise was over. My movements consisted of reactions to the combing of the hair and drinking and eating. In the objective view, I saw my image of Lyubov Andreyevna, a woman in her forties dressed in period costume with a large, feathered hat, come into the room. She laughed and picked up a couple of the books which I knew were from her childhood and which were still on the nursery bookshelf. I also performed all these actions as I saw them unfold.

This exercise was done simultaneously by all of the class members. As a general observation, Langhans noticed that in the first exploration “the [students’] gestures were fuller but the sense of imaginary space was vague,” and that in the second exploration, the students’ gestures were “a little dry but the atmosphere of the space was very clear.” Ideally, we needed both the full gesture and sense of space. In keeping with Anthroposophist ideas about supremacy of pure thought, he urged us to be “kind of aggressive in our concentration because thinking is a very aggressive process.” The point of the second part of this exercise was to step into the realm of fantasy where what we knew and what we did not know was somehow combined. In other words, we knew what the scene was about but we did not yet know the imagery. This was training of the imagination as Steiner would have it.

Langhans said that “one needs a very strong inward balance and concentration” to imagine in this way. When the class wanted a further explanation of the “strong inward balance,” he said that in Chekhov’s technique, “a balanced actor must be like a *spectator* at a play but also must play.” In other words, the actor does not try to direct the activity of imagination, but simply watches the constant flow of images and mental states with full concentration as they come into consciousness. Yet paradoxically, s/he also must allow those images to move him/her psychophysically. To do this, we had to split ourselves from our character, deconstruct the character into a series of

imaginary actions, not a series of personal memories, and then allow ourselves to be moved psychophysically. Ideally, the ability to concentrate in this way would, in the end, enable the actor to achieve dual consciousness in performance. As has been shown, Chekhov argued that by developing such an ability to concentrate, the actor would achieve a measure of freedom in his/her work, in that s/he would *not need* to go into personal memory in order to achieve an emotional state. However, Langhans's observation that the "subjective view" in our experiment produced fuller gestures as opposed to the dry gestures of the "objective view" was a sign that much practice would be needed to achieve this.

In the session following Langhans' lecture on imagination, we tried another approach to the dual consciousness while continuing with our work on *The Cherry Orchard*. The actor playing Trofimov wanted to work with an image for Russia which he often mentioned in his speeches but the concept of which did not move him at all. He stood in front of the class, "on the spot" so to speak, and imagined. He saw a series of stream-of-consciousness images: "large map," "polar bear," "palm tree," while finding his image (he did not share what the chosen image was with the class). As he was letting the found image affect him, the actor became agitated. Langhans instructed him to calm down and reflect the image "like a mirror," suggesting that ideally, the actor's mind can become a mirror able to reflect anything instantly. That instruction changed the body-mind of the actor, and his whole body became involved. Rather than expressing with his head and face, as he settled with the image, his internal life changed, and this was visible to all. Classmates' comments noted that he stopped controlling the impulse and radiated the sensation instead. Langhans agreed and likened this process to meditation: "It is active in images but also passive in waiting for them to work on you." This kind of imagining can be termed an *active meditation*. Both the *reception* of an image and the activity of *visualizing* an image are needed for a complete experience of the dual consciousness and *only then* can it be effective.

Characterization Exercises: New Developments

This is the task: to approach the character from two sides – from the world of the imagination and incorporation, and from the world of the body by imagining an invisible body and by adjusting your

physical body to it. (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, The Actor Is the Theatre June 19, 1938)



Joanna Merlin's development of Chekhov's teaching focuses on various forms of Psychological Gesture,⁵ (PG) as it pertains to characterization and composition. In the introductory stages, she starts by teaching an understanding of "the inner gesture" (Appendix 11) which she learned from Chekhov himself: "Chekhov said that behind every line there is an inner movement. That is a concept that is foreign to most American actors." The inner movement is one of the ways of integrating the *second guiding principle*. Essentially, this is an internalization of a large physical movement, an element common to Chekhov, Noh, and Kabuki techniques, with ties to Hindu and Buddhist practices.

Psychological Gesture is a large, archetypal, continuous gesture, which has a beginning, middle, and end, and which can serve

many functions, such as capturing the essence of the character or several aspects of it, specifying a relationship, or creating an important moment in the play. Chekhov constantly reminded his students that PGs' functions are preparatory and exploratory: "You must remind your cast as often as possible, until everybody will understand, that each Psychological Gesture is given in order to explore some depths. Without this [...] the actors forget that gesture is being done to explore and not for acting" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* January 16, 1937).

Once the form of the gesture is created, it is executed repeatedly with strength and then refined through quality of movement. The actor is ready to internalize the movement of the PG only once the actor experiences strong inner sensations as a result of such a repetition. Chekhov refers to this as "developing sensitiveness to the PG" (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 84) and this is what makes such a large, continuous physical gesture psychological. The repetition of the gesture's outward manifestation is important, as it trains the actor's breathing. In a final analysis, the breath must be controlled in the inner movement, so that the same sensation can be felt in stillness. Bearing this in mind, the large physical movement is explored through different speeds, directions, and resistance in breathing, all of which change the performer's energy and radiation. Similarly, the idea of the intangible expressed through the tangible in both inner movement and large outward movement echoes back to Kabuki training. The inner movement must be visible in the important moments of the absence of activity. Yoshi Oida says in *The Invisible Actor*: "The pauses in performances of Kabuki and No are Masterful moments of the outer stillness and an *inner movement* performed by the actor" (Oida and Marshall 109; emphasis added). In the jargon of Chekhov's technique, "performed" means that the intangible inner movement is made tangible through radiation so that the audience perceives it.

Michael Chekhov describes the pause in the following way: "Your pause will be very significant if you train yourself to *meditate*, to be aware that a pause is something which comes before or after some happening. [...] Without the feeling of the whole, the pause has no significance (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for Teachers* 43; emphasis added). The "meditation" is on the inner movement, because the pause is an internalization of something which precedes it, or of what it precedes; an inner movement in stillness. This understanding

of the pause is well established in contemporary Chekhov pedagogy, and has found its way into such hybrid systems as the one taught by Bella Merlin's teacher, Vladimir Ananyev, where, "echoing the vocabulary of Stanislavsky, Michael Chekhov and Grotowski: the pause is the only door into the *spiritual* world; only when the actor *stops*, might he or she sense the *inner movement*" (B. Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky* 52; emphasis added). Once sensed, the inner movement can carry the actor to the next word and the next pause. The actor expresses the intangible through the tangible at all times.

In the case of characterization the inner movement is motivated by the similarities and the differences between one's own thinking, feeling, and will impulses, and those of the character. Joanna Merlin considers these:

They don't have to be enormous, they can be subtle but that's where the character comes in. How can we exploit that difference, how can we find it that difference, animate it, make it alive and really connect with it? So that it becomes part of my character. Otherwise you play the same character over and over and over again even though the circumstances are different. (J. Merlin, Personal interview)

Merlin's main important contribution to characterization in current training is Archetypal Gesture. In terms of composition, her Relationship Gesture and the specific way of teaching PG for Objectives for Beats also significantly develop the original.

Colours Warm-Up

This particular warm-up exercise can be used in beginner training as well. It is included here, however, because Joanna Merlin frequently uses it before starting her work on Archetypal PG. This is the only warm-up exercise specific to Merlin's work, and it is inspired by Chekhov's interest in Goethe's colour theory: "Chekhov mentions the effect of certain colours in some of his notes, but I devised the exercise myself. It is very powerful in producing sensations" (J. Merlin, "Colour Warm-Up").

In Colours Warm-Up, the group gathers in a circle and begins with the focus on the breath. Inhalations are deep, exhalations are slow. Once the breathing rhythm is established, Merlin names

different colours, and the students collectively breathe in an imaginary colour, letting it “permeate” their bodies. Merlin instructs:

After taking a deep inhalation and slow exhalation, get in touch with the natural rhythm of your breathing. Be aware of the breath going in and out of the body with no effort. Let your body be breathed. Then bring the sensation of openness in your body on the inhalations. As you exhale the openness, imagine it filling the space around you on the inhalations. Then introduce the colours, and after inhaling the colour into this open body and exhaling each colour into the space for a minute or so (I suggest saying the “sensation of redness”, etc.) let the colour go and inhale the openness to bring you back to neutral. As you move from colour to colour, notice the change in tempo, weight, temperature, and whether the colour seems to land in any specific part of the body. Then focus on your character and see if a particular colour seems to present itself. (J. Merlin, “Colour Warm-Up”)

This warm-up works with the *first guiding principle* by connecting mind and body in an imaginative way, but it also works with the *second guiding principle* by teaching the students to visualize the inner space of action. Interestingly, it was not taught to Merlin by Chekhov. Even so, it reaches back to Chekhov’s days at Dartington Hall, where, as seen in Chapter One, Chekhov studied Goethe’s theory of colours. Thus, Merlin continues to weave in Goethean ideas into the current technique.

Although this is not her intention, Merlin’s innovation puts into practice Steiner’s discussion⁶ of colours as having a “spiritual reality,” something which also inspired Chekhov: “We will find many things from Goethe and Rudolf Steiner, who lived very deeply with colours, and who have left us very interesting things about them. We will see how our inside world and our outside world will be enlarged and how speaking the world of colours will be on the stage [...] we shall really study the question of colours” (*Lessons for Teachers* 76). Although Chekhov did not publish an exercise that only uses colours, he frequently mentions colour in exercises which train imagination, colour being one of the qualities we can consider and play with. The other qualities are shape, weight, speed, direction, texture, and temperature.

In sum, through her development of this warm-up exercise, Merlin has continued to include Chekhov’s interests and wishes in current practice.

Archetypal Gestures

In his Chapter on PG in *To the Actor*, Chekhov writes about creating the Character PG, breaking the PG down into three main elements: strength, movement and quality. “We may say that the *strength* of the movement stirs our will power in general” (65; emphasis added). This is to say that one will always use large, strong movements when trying to develop a PG. Chekhov continues: “[T]he *kind* of movement awakens in us a definite corresponding desire” (65; emphasis added). The “kind of movement” refers to the form of the gesture which arises from the actor imagining the character. Finally, Chekhov says that archetypal gesture stands for “an original model for all possible gestures of the same kind” (*To the Actor* 77).



According to Jack Colvin,⁷ the term “archetypal” can be misleading. Chekhov regretted the use of the term “archetypal,” because it confused the students, and they tried to play a symbol – an outward form which did not necessarily affect their inner lives. Chekhov makes it clear: “Psychological Gestures are not symbols – they are absolutely concrete things – as concrete as the floor. One of the big mistakes is that we do not do the gesture with the full being, the whole being” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 22, 1938). When creating this movement, then, an actor must capture an overall intention and translate it into a direction in space, not display a movement of ordinary behaviour or an impersonation.

As a student and a teacher, I have observed that students often begin by striking poses which are symbolic of the archetype with which they are working. Seeing it as a gesture first must lend itself to internalization and absorption, and such a pose is inadequate. Rather, one should look for a continuous movement which might end in this pose. Even more importantly, this movement ought not to depict an everyday activity, such as for instance, stirring a pot for a Mother archetype or a miming of holding playing cards for a Gambler. Chekhov is very clear about this: “The gesture must not be descriptive” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 22, 1938). Instead, a Mother archetype may embrace (to nurture) or expand (to give), while a gambler may create a wringing gesture (to manipulate) or a throwing gesture (to risk). As a rule of thumb, the Archetypal Gestures are more likely to be useful if they do not contain naturalistic behaviour.

Once the form is finished, Chekhov suggests that “the *quality* of the same movement conjures up our feelings” (65; emphasis added). To develop the quality of movement, the actor can simply start with the four basic qualities s/he has already experienced in classroom Molding, Floating, Flowing and Radiating. Also at this stage the actor should have already worked on the Sensations Exercise and has probably experienced creating qualities of fear (fearfully), joy (joyfully), caution (cautiously), aggression (aggressively), tenderness (tenderly), and so on. To pick an appropriate quality, the actor can ask himself/herself what the main desire of the character might be. The actor can use the same initial image to develop the quality as well.

This kind of search for the *quality* goes *directly* against much that is thought possible in the American Method. Hagen suggests that

actors should cross out all the adverbs in the stage directions of a play: “happily, sadly, gladly, like a moth [...]”⁸ I never could play that. [...] Discuss the objectives” (Hagen). Similarly, Meisner-based training focuses on “living truthfully under imaginary circumstances,” founded on “reality of doing” (Meisner and Longwell 87). Sense Memory,⁹ which produces sensation, also deliberately avoids any use of adverbs but allows use of adjectives. It too focuses on the fulfilling intention but through re-creating familiar given circumstances sensorily.¹⁰ By and large, it is safe to say that in the rest of the current teaching which derives from the Stanislavsky tradition, the focus is on the doing and the “what,” and on personal memory. In a search for the quality, such as is needed for a PG, the focus is on the imagination, a receptive body, and the “how.”

Archetypal PG is where Merlin’s work is quite original. She considers this work her “contribution to the technique” and makes an important distinction between Chekhov’s PG and her development, the Archetypal PG: “Every Psychological Gesture is archetypal but every Archetypal Gesture is not necessarily a Psychological Gesture”:

Yes, the way I teach Psychological Gesture is my own approach totally based on his concept, re:qualities, polarity, form, etc. No one teaches [PG] in connection with objective, but it seems clear that that is what Chekhov intended. (J. Merlin, “*Response*”)

Merlin was encouraged by Chekhov’s interest in Eurythmy to use the sound arising from the gesture as an important component: “Also I stress the sound arising from the gesture which I don’t think Chekhov ever did. I have also found that [sound] is very valuable in connecting with the inner movement; the resonance or remembrance of the sound brings the gesture into the body” (J. Merlin, “*Response*”).

Originally, Chekhov used the word “archetypal” in a sense of a prototype: this aspect of a PG stands for a model from which all later examples are developed, or to which they conform. In her development of Chekhov’s PG into the Archetypal PG, Joanna Merlin approaches the PG from the perspective of the character’s intentions and by using the character’s archetype, not only in the sense of a prototype, but also in the Jungian sense of every archetype belonging to a group which shares this intention. Jung held that inherited unconscious patterns constitute the fundamental structure of the mind and that these are common to all human beings. For Jung archetypes

are not inborn ideas, but “typical forms of behaviour which, once they become conscious, naturally present themselves as *ideas and images*, like everything else that becomes a content of consciousness” (Jung and Storr 16). As in Chekhov’s view, in Jungian psychology, the archetypes can be observed through their behaviour patterns and are recognized in dreams. However, Jung also suggests that each archetype is connected to a concept recognized by all cultures, for example, mother, child, king, healer, virgin, criminal. It is these concepts to which Merlin refers as “groups,” and the use of the word “archetypal” helps the actor specify the overall intention of that aspect of the character by identifying first the group that the archetype defines (all the mothers, all the criminals, all the virgins, etc.) and then the group’s emblematic intention (mother nurtures, criminal steals, virgin protects her chastity, etc.).

In short, by combining the focus on intention and identifying the underlying intention of an archetype Merlin has added a new tool to the Chekhov technique, one which involves choice. As each character can belong to several “groups” or archetypes, it is up to the actor to *choose* what aspect of the character is of primary interest and most exciting to him/her. The *art is in the choices* in, and the student actor is always made aware, even at an early stage of training, that the choices are his/hers. My first attempt at creating an Archetypal gesture happened near the beginning of my training. Merlin introduced it after my group was familiar with the Backspace/Forward, Three Centres, Four Qualities, Objective Atmosphere, basic centring, and several basic PGs. I was exploring Lyubov Andreyevna Ranyevskaya¹¹ from *The Cherry Orchard*.

The Archetypal Gesture, like any PG, is considered effective if it moves the actor. Generally, the simpler the Archetypal Gesture, the more effective it will be, because it will be easier for the actor to internalize it and thus create an inner movement which will “play on” the actor. Most importantly, the actor will create sketches of a number of the character’s archetypes and make them felt in the body. Merlin started the initial work with the archetypes with what she called “mining the text,” and the whole class participated in creating archetypal lists for each character, deriving the following lists:

TROFIMOV'S ARCHETYPES: Intellectual, Student, Idealist, Teacher, Radical, Rebel, Visionary, Critic, Priest, Poet, the Big Baby, Wonderer, Revolutionary, Leader, Fool, Tramp, Preacher, Bum.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S ARCHETYPES: Mother, Queen, Star, Child, Lover, Nurse, Adolescent, Goddess, Sinner, Romantic, Centre of the Universe, Fairy, Giver, Cat, Ostrich, Dreamer, Aristocrat, Addict, Prodigal Daughter, Spendthrift, Fallen Woman.

ANYA'S ARCHETYPES: Blossom, Brat, Ingénue, Daughter, Apprentice, Virgin, Baby, Disciple, Adventurer.

VARYA'S ARCHETYPES: Orphan, Nun, School Principal, Saint, Fiancée, Old maid, Drill Sergeant, Prisoner, Bride, Missionary, Mother Superior, Lover, Boss.

YEPIHODOV'S ARCHETYPES: Fumbler, Clown, Looser, Whiner, Mole.

CHARLOTTA'S ARCHETYPES: Entertainer, Orphan, Outsider, Magician, Clown, Loner, Nanny, Malcontent.

GAYEV'S ARCHETYPES: Aristocrat, Sharpshooter, Philosopher, Uncle, Brother, Sweet Tooth, Teddy Bear, Fool, Spoiled Child, Snob, Lost One, Dilettante, Bon Vivant, Blind Man, Sentimentalist, Prince.

FIRS' ARCHETYPES: The Eternal Servant, Grandfather, Valet, Peasant, Serf/Slave, Dog, Mother, Fossil, Grumbler/Nag, Angel of Death, Holy Man, Ghost of the Past, Expert, Anchor.

We were then asked to choose between one and three archetypes and to visualize the archetype(s) we had chosen. Merlin's first suggestion was to create any image invoked by this archetype: it did not have to be from the period of the play or the appropriate age of the character. Rather, the archetypical content of each actor's Creative Individuality was encouraged. Once it appeared, the actor explored the image (picture) moving or standing.

Archetypal PG always expresses in the largest possible way a need universally associated with the group: Outsider will reach, Liar will twist, Hero will expand, Whore will pull towards, and so on. The beginning process can be broken down into the following steps:

1. Get the image and explore the image
2. Imagine yourself doing the gesture

3. Do it repeatedly and allow it to change until you identify the objective
4. Breathe in with the objective (i.e. “I want to Pull” – say this mentally)
5. Do the gesture to the fullest extreme without tension
6. Let the sound/breath come out of the gesture
7. Radiate beyond the gesture and keep the sound

When creating the PG, the actor can begin embodying the image and allow it to move him/her or go into further visualization where the image can move and speak; the details can be examined from the distance brought about by dual consciousness. Next, the actor visualizes and then creates a large, continuous gesture that captures the essence of the archetype. Emphasis is placed on noticing that specific placement of the body changes the actor’s response. For example, when hands are open, palms up, one responds differently than when the hands are clenched or turned down. Tempo changes the response as well. Eventually, the actor will be able to identify the super objective as “to impress,” “to teach,” “to belong,” etc. The actor should work for flow and polarity, and try the gesture with different resistances and sensations (i.e. the sensation of silk, tenderness, caution). For example, for the character of Lyubov Andreyevna, I worked with three archetypes: Queen, Child, and Sinner.

The picture that appeared when I was instructed to “create an image of a Queen” was Queen Elizabeth II in her younger days, wearing a crown and a burgundy velvet gown. The sensation from the image gave me the following impulses to move. My hands led: they extended slowly towards the audience; then my arms lifted and opened to both sides. When I analyzed it later, I realized that I created a combination of two basic PGs Open (Expand) and Lift. I was instructed to attach a word to the gesture, which also meant I needed to identify the underlying objective. The words that intuitively came to me were “take it,” as in “here you go – it is yours.” What this gesture “gave me” when internalized was a physical understanding of and a commitment to Lyubov’s ability to give fearlessly even when she hasn’t got enough for herself. I could reach to others generously, with a charisma needed for this character. “Giving” was the *will force*

I worked with. Lyubov has several moments in the play of silly generosity, most notably the moment with the beggar:

PASSER-BY: (To Varya.) Mademoiselle, could you allow a starving Russian 30 kopecks....

Varya is frightened and shrieks.

LOPAKHIN: (angrily) Even rascals ought to know how to behave properly.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA: (*shocked and confused*) Take it...here... (*Looks in her purse.*) There's no silver here... It doesn't matter, here's a gold coin for you.... (A. P. Chekhov and Bristow 188)

Before I started working on the archetype *I did not anticipate* I would discover an understanding of that moment or that quality. Furthermore, the author's description of Lyubov's reaction, "shocked and confused" had a very different meaning for me now. I understood she was not used to being without money to give to beggars, and this confused and shocked her. It was not the drunkenness and poor appearance of the beggar, which was my initial assessment. By adding the archetype, I met the author's words with an image which departed from my first reading (which, in retrospect, seems to have stayed on the surface).

The second archetype I explored was the Child archetype. The PG I came up with was a jump with a turn in a spot, both legs and arms thrown to the side and bent. It had a staccato quality. Merlin pointed out that my archetypal gesture was too complicated initially. The turn was unnecessary and made the gesture difficult to internalize. The final gesture was a hop on the spot with the arms bent and thrown to the side. The will impulse behind it was mischievous and had a happy quality, thus supporting Lyubov's childish reactions, such as her refusal to believe that the cherry orchard must be sold.

My final archetype for Lyubov, which I created four years later, was the Sinner. For this, I hit my stomach with both hands, bending forward in a fast contraction. There was no word association, but, rather, a deep sound came out of the forward bend. When internalized, this gave me a physical sense of falling, a general weakness, and a physical understanding of Lyubov's guilt regarding the death of her son, her current inappropriate love affair, and her lack of care for the estate and the orchard. The objective of the gesture was "to punish myself."

The coaching that Joanna Merlin offers usually consists of *simplifying* the gesture and trying it with different *qualities*. For example, I explored my Queen archetype with different speeds and added some resistance, finally focusing on “extending” the gesture and “radiating” the giving objective. This helped the gesture “permeate” my body. Merlin suggested that I “see my gesture before I do it” in the process of internalizing it and praised the “strong radiation” that resulted. The inner movement then inspired my spoken words (“here” and “take it”) which effectively became the subtext. Merlin explained that in a subsequent return to the gesture, it can be re-worked, and the text can be added. The actor can speak the lines doing the gesture and eventually visualize the gesture and play the scene, letting the imagined gesture affect the words. The gesture then lives in the body but is not demonstrated outwardly.

In this instance, the actor working on Gayev chose Sharpshooter as his archetype. His gesture was the miming of shooting something. This archetypal gesture could not be internalized because the actor mimed ordinary behavior. The actor did not make the leap into a large abstraction of the will force of the archetype which could, for example, include overall tautness of the body, a sharp focus into forward space, and a hit or a push as the basic form of the gesture. It was impossible for the actor to internalize the gesture, and he abandoned the archetype completely, working with archetype of the Poet instead, where he managed to find an abstract movement; a kind of a curving, slow, legato, flowing lift. Creating “behaviour” is a common problem when learning to work with PGs as generally western actors’ imaginations are trained to look for behavior, not abstractions. There is no formula, however, and the PG is deemed effective if it serves the actor’s inner action or will force.

Merlin’s ideas about the application of intention have been very influential within MICHA faculty so that currently, other MICHA faculty, such as Scott Fielding, Ted Pugh, and Fern Sloan, favour relating PG to intentions (also called objectives). In his essay “The Archetype is the Will Force of the Character,” although he doesn’t credit Merlin with Archetypal PG, Lenard Petit suggests that “the archetypes are how the unconscious can communicate to the conscious, and the body is the medium of this communication” and that in reversing this process, “by making a Psychological Gesture that corresponds to an archetype we can touch the vibration within the

unconscious resulting in an excitation of the conscious” (Petit 2). Petit further suggests that creating an Archetypal PG helps the actor synthesize the quality of the will force for the entire character: “It is not the thing that interests us, but a type of will force it has. Consciously or unconsciously this is what the author has built the character upon, it is the energy behind the sum total of his deeds” (Petit, *The Archetype Is the Will Force of the Character* 3). Ideally, identifying this through large movement strengthens the actor’s will to play that character. All MICHA faculty agree that PGs are created to help the actor in this way. They remind the students: “The PG is for the actor and not the character.”

The Ghost Exercise or Doppelganger Exercise

The Ghost Exercise grew out of a real-life incident and provides an excellent example of how within MICHA the technique is constantly growing and changing. Created by Ragnar Freidank of Germany, it was taught by Joanna Merlin as the Doppelganger Exercise at the MICHA 2004 conference in Groznjan, and at the 2006 conference in Windsor, it was presented as the Ghost Exercise. Freidank is one of the teachers of the technique who studied with the Actors’ Ensemble. In 2003, he found himself in a corner store in rural America. Because of his German accent and the remoteness of the place, he felt he was “being seen as weird” by the salesperson, but all the while, he was “trying to act normal.” The archetype of a German was what he was “trying to dispel” (J. Merlin, “*Doppelganger Exercise*”). The salesperson’s presence affected him so much so that he saw the potential of using an imaginary presence as a motivational force, terming this “Doppelganger.” Joanna Merlin and Freidank then developed it together by combining a few elements that Chekhov suggests, such as atmosphere, image, imaginary body, and PG. In a DVD produced by MICHA,¹² “Master Classes in Michael Chekhov’s Technique,” Freidank comments that the purpose of the exercise is to illuminate “the obstacle. What stops [a character] from doing things,” to which Merlin adds, “and also shows the driving force behind the character.”

The first part of the Ghost Exercise is similar to the Door Exercise in that the actor opens an imaginary door, yet instead of the image of a person the actor conjures up an image of a space

significant to his/her character. The door leads the actor into this space. Only when the actor has seen the space does s/he see his/her character. The actor focuses on the character's image for a while to see if there is anything to capture his/her attention, for example, the colour of the eyes, the size of the eyes, something about the forehead, the nose, the mouth, the texture of the skin, the hair or clothing they are wearing. The character now gets up and moves. S/he looks out



the window and sees something outside the window, or something that has happened in the past, or something s/he would like to see. The character notices that s/he has lost something and starts looking for it. While the character is searching, the actor notices the character's walk, the weight of the body, the tempo of the walk. Finally, the character finds whatever s/he has lost. In this first phase, the actor is looking at the character objectively, much in the same way as proposed by Langhans in his lecture on imagination discussed previously.

Once this is established, the side-coaching suggests, "Suddenly the character feels there is someone else in the room." The actor imagines the character and someone behind his/her back. This is "the ghost." The actor observes the ghost while it is standing behind the character, focusing on it in detail (face, skin colour, lips, hands, clothing etc.). Now the actor imagines that the ghost makes a gesture towards the character. The character doesn't see it yet, but the actor

does. Following this, the ghost whispers something to the character, and the two interact. The actor does his/her best to let these images have an independent life. To finish s/he imagines seeing the two from a greater and greater distance until s/he is not able to distinguish them anymore. Once they are not visible, the actor opens his/her eyes. After the phase of active imagining, the actor describes the imagery to a classmate: “She was moving all the time. She was trying to stand still but she couldn’t” or “She has a few cuts, dirt around her mouth. Kind of always a little dirty” (MICHA, *Master Classes in the Michael Chekhov Technique*).

Following this, the classmate repeats to the actor his/her imaginary journey, and then tries to embody it. The actor can coach his classmate to perform the ghost’s actions. The two create an improvisation in which the original actor is instructed to focus on reacting to the actions of the ghost. Finally, if this is a two-person scene, the regular acting partner is brought into the exercise. The three improvise a scene from the play *while the ghost continues to act as instructed*. The actor whose imagery is brought to life is aware of both his/her partner and the ghost, while the partner ignores the ghost’s presence. This helps the actor explore the question of the obstacle with it embodied and unpredictable. Inevitably, the ghost’s behaviour becomes the driving force in the scene. This should ideally enable the actor to imagine this presence as a palpable one whenever s/he chooses.

When introducing this phase of the exercise, Merlin offered us the following example. A young actor playing Solyoni in *The Three Sisters* did not like his role. He saw the character as very negative. In the Ghost Exercise, he was visited by Solyoni’s father who appeared as an archetypal General and who ordered him around, but the son could never satisfy him. His partner recalls:

He is a towering ghost. A giant with gnarled pointed yellow teeth. He has piercing eyes that are like razor blades and won’t back down. He hates anything soft. Hates poetry, hates love, hates music and wants you to be a man of action. Tough. No nonsense. He is going to make you be a man, rather than what you might become which is a “wuss.” He smashes, he crushes, and he will stand between you and anything that is soft. He values guts. (MICHA, *Master Classes in the Michael Chekhov Technique*)

In the improvisation that followed, the classmate verbally attacked the actor playing Solyoni and his love for Irina. In the created scene, the father physically prevented Solyoni from getting close to Irina. One of the classmates commented: "There was this moment when the father put his hands on Solyoni's neck and stomach and I thought he is so bound. [...] It really made me feel for Solyoni in a way that nobody feels for him." The actor himself said: "There was no softness in this. Just the pure, practical get-things-done and be a man. The value system that he embraces is really what prevents him."

In my Doppelganger vision, I saw Lyubov Andreyevna in an attic apartment in Paris. First, she was looking out of the window in a black dress. She then looked for a gold cross in the apartment; she found it in the bed and hung it around her neck. She was joined by the ghost – a man wearing a red devil mask with a frightening, frozen grin. Lyubov at first feared the man, whose whole image became increasingly clear to me: he was in a well-ironed suit, his shoes polished and shiny. Lyubov touched the man and realized there was no need to fear him, and they started to dance. During the dance, she took his mask off; underneath there was a man with a gentle expression.

After this, we did the following short scene I had been working on while enacting what is described above:

LYUBOV: That's a telegram from Paris. I get them every day. One yesterday. One today. That wild man has fallen ill again, he's in trouble again... He begs my forgiveness, implores me to come, and really, I ought to go to Paris to be near him. Your face is stern Petya, but what can one do my dear? What am I to do? He is ill, all alone and unhappy, and who will look after him there, who will keep him from making mistakes, who will give him his medicine on time? And why hide or keep silent, I love him that's clear. I love him, love him...it's a millstone round my neck, I'm sinking to the bottom with it, but I love that stone, I cannot live without it. Don't think badly of me Petya, and don't say anything to me, don't say anything.

TROFIMOV: For God's sake forgive my frankness: you know that he robbed you.

LYUBOV: No, no, no, you mustn't say such things! (*Covers her ears*)

TROFIMOV: But he is a scoundrel! You're the only one who doesn't know it! He's a petty scoundrel, a nonentity. (A. P. Chekhov and Bristow 195-96)

When I analyzed my imagery I realized that the person who joined my Lyubov Andreyevna was clearly “the wild man from Paris.”

Earlier on in my explorations, I imagined him as someone from my personal experience, because after many discussions with MICHA faculty, I had finally learned how to use a personal image and still work with the technique (see Appendix 17). Essentially, I used such an image because it stirred me; to it, I added several other elements such as the Relationship Gesture, Archetypal Gestures, Qualities, Imaginary Centre, Imaginary Body, thus modifying my habitual response to such an image. The Ghost Exercise was the first one where there was no personal imagery involved, and when doing it, instead of the sadness which I got from the personal image, much to my surprise, the ghost gave me a sense of hope! Even though the grinning mask was grotesque, when “the visitor” took it off, the person underneath was gentle. Thus, instead of reaching for the place of my personal memory where I might have burst into uncontrollable tears, I explored a new image and discovered something fresh and interesting about this relationship. This for me was a perfect example of “the fork in the road” Ted Pugh describes in relation to using personal imagery in acting.¹³ I decided consciously to continue to use the transpersonal path in a hope that the impulses would lead to unusual and surprising discoveries. As I continued to work, the resistance I felt to the grotesque found its polarity in the image of the “gentle man” under the mask. When I used this in her final monologues, Lyubov was now torn about her relationship in a very concrete way: between the grotesqueness of being with such an inappropriate lover and his gentleness.

This kind of imagination was new to me. I was surprised that it was accessible to me and that I could use it. Moreover, my range of choices increased during the process because, in the Ghost Exercise, the actor performs an act of self-observation for the character and, in the process, develops compassion and understanding, thereby helping him/her unite with the character. The actor can be aware of the character’s mood and the character’s thoughts about the mood but remain detached. While the character is reactive, the actor can stay receptive and non-judgmental.

The Ghost Exercise uses the same principle as Arnold Mindell’s Critic’s Fuel Exercise described in Chapter Two, in that it attempts to personify what could be described as the dreamed-up

obstacles. However, neither Freidank nor Merlin were familiar with Mindell's work, nor was Phelim McDermott familiar with this new development in Chekhov's technique. While Critic's Fuel personifies a personal obstacle, the Ghost Exercise works not with the actor's but with the character's blockage. Mindell's strong belief in "dream, body, relationship and synchronicity phenomena" (Mindell 3) here surfaces in two relatively separate disciplines: acting and psychoanalysis. They come together in a contemporaneous use of his "concept of the dreambody, namely the idea that the secondary body processes such as illnesses and symptoms appear in dreams," which for Mindell, include fantasies and daydreams (Mindell 27). In creating the Ghost Exercise, Merlin and Freidank could have just as easily have followed Mindell's process analysis as Chekhov's technique, or conversely, in creating the Critic's Fuel exercise, Mindell, could have followed Chekhov's ideas. What unites the two is their relationship to the body and its connection to the imaginative life, which denies the materialistic outlook and Cartesian split of the body and mind.

The Chekhov Clown

The Chekhov Clown is a new form in Chekhov's technique. This unique way of approaching a role is taught only at MICHA conferences and independent workshops by Lenard Petit and his Dutch counterpart, Marjolein Baars. Baars, who was already clowning before she met Petit, has adopted many of Petit's exercises and approaches which all originate from Chekhov's work. But together they have perfected and developed the teaching aspect. In *The Dartington Years*, Deirdre Hurst Du Prey remembers how Chekhov "always wanted to be a clown." In *To the Actor*, Chekhov says: "Clowning will teach you *to believe in whatever you wish*" (144; emphasis in original). Indeed, Chekhov loved clowning and lamented the fact that he did not have more opportunities to play a clown. He did so in Berlin in Max Reinhardt's 1928 production of Watters and Hopkins' *Artists*. The production was not very successful, but Chekhov's performance was. Later, in his film, *Texas, Brooklyn and Heaven*, his vaudevillian background and clownery are apparent. Thus, this new development, like other new developments in the technique, follows Chekhov's lead.

A few sample exercises described below include both beginner clown exercises in which the actor “finds” his/her own clown and advanced exercises in which the actor “finds” the clown for a particular role. The entire Clown segment is included here, however, because the Chekhov Clown is usually taught to students who already have the basic Chekhov training. The two beginner clown exercises below, Greeting the Clown Gods and Can You Show Me Something, are done in sequence. From these simple exercises, Petit and Baars move on to the Character Clown Exercise, which includes a version of Imaginary Body. The sequence continues by exploring the thinking, feeling, willing elements, combining these with Expansion/Contraction. Finally, Petit and Baars also teach an approach to the character from the point of view of grotesque. For this, they have adapted the Imaginary Body exercise and combined it with the Archetypal PG.

Greeting the Clown Gods

This first clown exercise is a version of the Threshold Exercise done without the clown nose. In Greeting the Clown Gods, with the eyes closed, the actor imagines a space where “the clowns Gods live,” a place of love, warmth, understanding, and above all, lightness and ease. The actor then steps over the threshold into the space. Once in the space, the actor greets the Gods. The actor juggles invisible balls for them or shows them anything s/he wishes – as simple as raising a leg two inches off the floor. Actors are instructed to work with a notion that the Gods love everything they do. After each juggle, the actor bows, accepts imaginary applause from the Gods and applauds the Gods. The Gods love the act so much that the actor continues performing the “special skill.”

Can You Show Me Something?

Each actor chooses a clown nose and puts it on so that the class is now a group of clowns. The exercise continues in pairs: clowns A and B. A asks, “Can you show me something?” B responds with something that s/he considers special. This might be very simple (i.e. waving and saying hello) or a special skill (i.e. a back-flip). Whatever B shows should ideally have a beginning, middle, and end.

A shows his/her approval after every try with complimentary comments and applause. The clowns switch. In the second phase of the exercise, which repeats the format of the first, B now responds, "That wasn't very good, can you show me something else? To this A replies with a sound, for example, "oh." In the last phase of the exercise, two clowns perform and two other clowns are their audience. A performs his/her special skill and B comments on it to the audience only by using the sound "oh."

The emphasis in the preparatory work is on the audience. Petit teaches that the audience is the acting partner for the clown. This should lead the actor to include the audience in the given circumstances when acting: "Once you understand that relationship through the clown, the audience becomes the partner for all the different styles that you do."

The Character Clown

The Character Clown starts with the following warm-up in which the clown can embody the proposed physical traits and perform a corresponding movement.

1. Clown has big feet; clown dances.
2. Clown has a small behind; clown sits down, and has a conversation.
3. Clown has a big behind; clown gets up, and has a conversation.
4. Clown's arms are wet noodles; clown does push-ups and speaks.
5. Clown's head is big and full of water; clown tries to explain how computers work.
6. Clown's head full of water which freezes; clown walks and converses.

Next, the clowns put on the noses. They are asked to create an Imaginary Body for the character through embodying absurd and abstract body parts similar to the ones with which they have just experimented. They explore a character's physicality, moving with the grotesque and unusual Imaginary Body. During the process of creating

the Imaginary Body, side-coaching can prompt the actor to imagine what the character's feet, legs, stomach, torso, arms, fingers, face, mouth, neck, would be like. The clown focuses on a specific colour, size, weight, texture. S/he can work with sensory questions: what does s/he like (or dislike) to see, hear, smell, taste, feel? Whatever the clown works on, s/he also *must* remember that s/he is partnered with the audience at all times.

My clown for Lyubov Andreyevna had enormous breasts and a large bottom but very dainty feet. Previously, in the Door Exercise, she was plump, but now, this was exaggerated. Her quality of giving became self-satisfied and sentimental. She needed the audience's admiration for her grandiosity. Really, she was very vain. The image that I created surprised me by continuously perspiring, and the clown had to wipe the perspiration with a handkerchief. With this came a breathing pattern: a sighing developed spontaneously. While I was improvising with a ridiculous stick-like Gayev, for the first time, I understood why Chekhov wrote *A Comedy in Four Acts* under the title of *The Cherry Orchard*. A whole area of humour opened up in this exercise and with it a new layer of *The Cherry Orchard* waited to be explored. I also became aware that habitually I tend to drama and tragedy rather than comedy and that a willingness to explore the lighter side of any task might be beneficial to me as an actor.

Thinking, Feeling, and Willing in Clown

In this exercise, the actor is asked to work from the perspective of the Character Clown by imaginatively expanding and contracting the physical area of the thinking, feeling, or willing functions. For example, if the character is a thinker, the character's clown will exaggerate expansions and contractions in the thinking area of the body, namely, the head, neck, and arms. For a feeling character, s/he expands/contracts the torso, and for the willing character, s/he uses *hara*, genitals and legs.¹⁴ The actor allows these to move him/her and uses the impulses for interaction with others. After the clowns have explored expansion and contraction of the different areas, they apply their new knowledge in an improvisation to a situation from the play which features a strong conflict. The clowns include the objectives characters have in the scene: the super-objective is also an interesting exploration. For example, when the characters

are saying goodbye to the house, Lyubov Andreyevna wants to say goodbye too, but her super-objective is to keep her house; Lopakhin's super-objective is wanting the house for himself; Gayev wants to leave the house, but he is working with a strong obstacle in that at the same time, he wants to hide, to stay. The clowns emphasize expanding and contracting different parts of the body, as this may stir their objectives/obstacles. At the same time, there is a give and take between the clowns and the third player – the audience. Finally, they create *études* which have a beginning, middle, and end.

This work epitomizes Petit's relationship to emotion: "When I'm sad, I'm not sad because I'm thinking sad thoughts. I'm thinking sad thoughts because I'm sad and I'm sad in my finger". Even though this is a general principle (form to substance) that Petit teaches outside of Clown, the exaggerated physicality of the Clown makes it easier to grasp. It is important to clarify at this juncture that substance is paramount in this equation. Petit explains:

I think it's a terrible thing that they teach now that emotions are fickle and if they come use them and if they don't do not worry about it. Chekhov said [...] that feelings are the language of the actor. This is how we talk to the public. They can't go through it but we can express it for them. This is what they come to see.

For Petit, the aim of an actor must be to satisfy the needs of the director, and to this end, emotion must be at an actor's fingertips. This is why an actor needs the technique which, for Petit begins with the movement: "The movement will get me every time. We start with the movement which is also an inner event and a sensation". Essentially, Petit teaches that the actor must trust that the body has recorded every life experience and that this sensation can be easily recalled through physicality:

My body has been there with me so this experience has been recorded as a sensation. [To get to an emotion] I don't need to think that I've won the lottery or got an Academy Award because it has nothing to do with the play. Thinking slows everything down. We say in English: "Stop and think." The clown simply has no time to "stop and think" but is driven by physical action.

We applied this to the last scene in *The Cherry Orchard*: my Lyubov Andreyevna expanded/contracted the emotion centre while saying

good-bye to the house; Gayev did the same with the thinking centre, and Lopakhin with the will centre. The result was a melodramatic over-dramatization of everything which originated from the body. I passionately pronounced my love for the “old house,” and when it did not offer me love in return, I was crushed. I expanded towards the objects within the house (chandelier, curtains, chairs) in the same way. Meanwhile, Lopakhin was stomping on it with a strong will centre in his feet which, of course, caused Lyubov’s emotional centre to “shrink.” Gayev was buzzing about like a fly with an expanded head, occasionally hiding in the corner when the same centre shrunk. As these expansions/contractions progressed, I started to expand/contract towards the telegram and then to Paris. This resulted with many hopeful expansions and fewer contractions, which ultimately, made me pose a new question: could it be that Lyubov not in love not with the cherry orchard but with a man who has betrayed her? Certainly, the man from Paris asserted himself in many of the exercises. This deserved serious consideration.

It is hard for me to be objective as to what this really looked like from the outside (the dual-consciousness wasn’t “on” at that moment), but I remember the feeling of child-like joy and the laughter of the audience. When I analyzed it later, I understood and could play with some of Lyubov’s weaknesses and self-delusions. More importantly, however, it helped me embrace the audience. I realized that Lyubov gives up on every opportunity to save the house simply because she wants to go back to the man who has betrayed her, but who keeps sending telegrams. She does not press the point when Lopakhin fails to propose to Varya nor does she take Lopakhin’s advice to parcel off the land. In short, Lyubov lacks a true concern for the cherry orchard. Her through line has less to do with saving the house or orchard and more to do with her love life!

Petit’s clown classes acknowledge that acting is a gift to the audience. The fourth wall is considered a “selfish thing,” behind which the actor is driven by the desire to be “looked at,” not to share. This somewhat radical and exclusive view is Petit’s reaction to the problems he sees in the prevalent style of acting in America. Petit clarifies:

The actors that I teach at [Rutgers] University are taught in modern American realism where the audience is denied. Improvisations are improvised with their backs to us and without any consideration for

us. I teach “performance skills” such as clown.... The performance is about them who are coming to see me and I have to give them a gift and then I can get a gift back. It is a circular energy. When you work with Atmosphere, an intangible means of expression, this includes the audience – the atmosphere can cross the threshold of the stage and into the audience. I can’t imagine a theatre without the audience.

Gargoyle to Gesture Exercise

The warm-up for this exercise should include the Staccato/Legato Exercise, which may be followed by Qualities of Movement Exercise, or Stick, Ball, and Veil Exercise. The actor is asked to create a gargoyle sculpture with his/her body, so that the character’s worst vice is outwardly (visibly) expressed: jealousy,



anger, cowardice, misery, and so on. The actor practices striking the pose (sculpture), starting from a neutral position several times. While frozen in the gargoyle, the actor senses which part of the body is rendered most different or activated by this pose. S/he considers the thinking, feeling, or willing sensations awakened by the gargoyle before taking the gargoyle for a walk around the working space. Following this, the actor creates the sculpture again (strikes the pose). This is now *the end* of the Psychological Gesture.

The actor creates the beginning and the middle phase for the gesture, internalizes (miniaturizes) the gesture, and walks around the working space.

The Gargoyle to Gesture Exercise is a good exploration for finding the “shadow” side of the character. In my own teaching, I have

used it in many different student productions towards the end of the rehearsal process. If done at that time, it gives the students a fresh and a humorous look at the character. At the late stage in rehearsal, the actor should have learned how to defend his/her character but might have fallen into a cliché or a predictable, limited version of the character. The gargoyle “shakes” that up, in that it goes beyond the sense of the character that the actor has developed to date. Still, in order to prevent regressing by losing sight of compassion for one’s character, the gargoyle must be brought into the training together with a mention of Chekhov’s “five loves”: love of our profession, the part, the process, the creation, and the audience. Petit comments: “You don’t have to beat yourself up or have terrible, terrible thoughts about yourself [in order to create a gargoyle]” (Petit, “Gargoyle to Gesture”). Ideally, the students will take a step further into transformation, using this tool to find or refresh the humour of the situation/character traits.

Action and Composition: New Developments

As has been shown, on its most basic level, PG is meant to strengthen the actor’s will to play a part, a relationship, or a moment, but it can also be used to create a composition of a scene, section, or even the whole play. As these are all related to both directing and acting, the PG is an excellent tool for the actor and the director to collaborate (appropriately, PG originated from Chekhov’s collaboration with Vakhtangov and Stanislavsky, see Appendix 11). The areas of application of PG continue to be developed by the contemporary teachers of the technique, such as Joanna Merlin, Lenard Petit, Scott Fielding, Ted Pugh, and Fern Sloan, so that today, there are several new exercises which help the actor effectively use the intention base to create the stylistic composition of a scene, while following Chekhov’s original intention: “To understand what is the style, it means to understand the style with each point, each part of your body. If there is style in the play, then in every part of your body the style, like blood, must run through you” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* November 24, 1937).

When an actor develops various PGs together with a director, it effectively brings the will of the director and the actor together in an aesthetic way. The PG trains the will of the actor by using a large physical movement to help replace obedience with desire to play the

part. In a rehearsal process, an actor may develop several types of PGs that have to do with intention, relationship, specific moments, or composition. Once developed, these are internalized or absorbed. The quality of movement and the type of action resulting from the process of internalizing the PGs can translate into a variety of styles, ranging from Epic, to Expressionistic, Realistic, or those falling outside such a stylistic categorization, but whose manner of expression has a distinctive character.

In *To the Actor*, Chekhov invites the actor to gradually and carefully make each Psychological Gesture resemble realistic, naturalistic acting.

By doing this slowly, step by step, you will have a long chain of gestures whose first link will be purely abstract, purely musical, rhythmical one, in close connection to your subconscious creative impulses, and whose last link will become the gesture of everyday life, concrete and naturalistically true. The long series of gestures in between will be a slow transition from the “abstract” to the “concrete” gestures and words. (M. Chekhov and Gordon 88)

This transition from abstract to concrete can liberate the actor’s mind and body and activate the imagination, so that, in the end, the concrete gestures which are born out of the abstract ones are stylized. In fact, the process of an abstraction made concrete is the process of stylization. Such a process is aided by the following exercises which also aid in creating the composition of a scene.

Moment Gestures

The important moments in the play can be made fuller by using the inner movement of a PG. The actor continues his/her exploration of PG by a gestural exploration of the important moments in the play. S/he must learn to choose important moments in the play and physicalize and internalize their objectives by creating a PG.¹⁵ The actor also works with polarities (i.e. moving from a contraction into an expansion) and uses the final radiation. For example, the moment I explored while working with Joanna Merlin was Lyubov Andreyevna’s first entrance and the text “Nursery!” Merlin did not ask us to start with an archetype for this. However, I was initially inspired by the Child archetype which I had already developed. I added to my

unruly and staccato movement a high pitched shout “Nursereeeeey!!!” As I repeated it, the gesture gave me a sensation of mischief and joy. More importantly, it strengthened my resolve to use the gesture to create an inner movement and play certain sections using this. The Moment Gesture clarified Lyubov’s intention in her first entrance and made it playable; the intention was “to remember playfully,” and its quality was unruly and staccato. All of these, the objective, sensation, and quality, were created intuitively and instantly. Only by analyzing them afterwards, could I categorize them in this much detail.



Relationship Gestures

Relationship Gesture can be done individually, or in pairs, or even trios. In this version of the Relationship PG, the exploration is of the relationship between the two characters. Partners respond to each other with large, continuous, abstract, and archetypal gestures which



have a beginning, middle, and end. The objective when creating the movement and form of the gesture is to “do something to the other character.” For example the actor playing Firs and I explored the relationship between Lyubov and Firs. My gesture for this relationship was a version of the basic PG “to embrace.” His response was a reaching gesture. We repeated this and added the following text:

LYUBOV: Thank you Firs. Thank you my dear old friend. I’m so glad you’re still alive.

FIRS: Forgotten. Nobody remembers... (A. P. Chekhov and Schmidt)

These two lines were not consecutive lines of dialogue from the play, as the text was chosen separately by us as a homework assignment. Each actor picked a line s/he thought was important, typical, or

indicative of that particular relationship. The line Firs chose became important for Lyubov because of its finality. It also became a metaphor for the end of a way of life. For Firs, who dies at the end of the play, Lyubov's line foreshadowed his end. Our choices of movement specified the relationship as primarily an old friendship rather than servant/master. Our gestures helped us develop intimacy, making us aware of the love between these two, and giving importance to the life in the old house. For Lyubov, Firs reminded her why she loved the house.

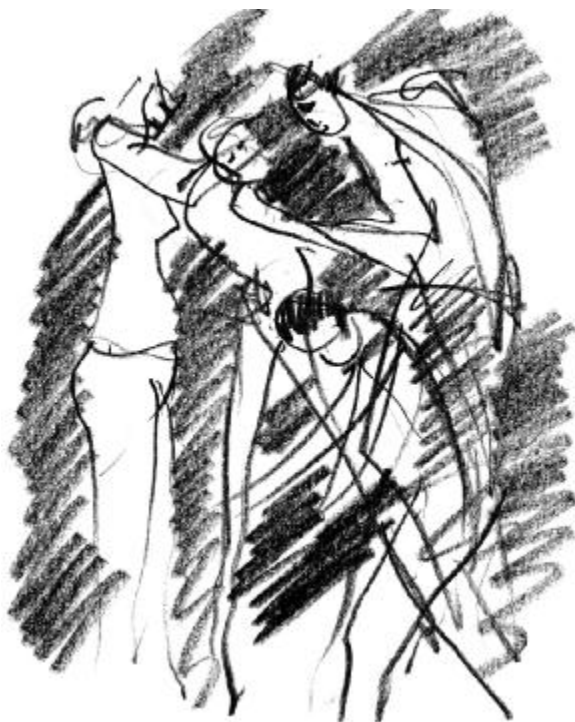
Once we internalized the gesture, certain problems arose. Discussion centred on how to play with the acting partner while staying with ourselves and our gesture. Could we shift the need of the gesture onto the acting partner? An account of how Chekhov did that is in *Method or Madness*, where Robert Lewis describes seeing him play an American businessman in *The Deluge*:

He sat down with his partner and tried to tell him that it wasn't that he'd hated him, that it was the fault of the business, and that he'd really always loved him. His partner wouldn't believe him so he kept trying to prove he'd loved him. As Chekhov was talking, his hands started to dig into the man's heart. Suddenly one got this terrific image of what love is – the wanting to become one with somebody. (56)

While the origin of Chekhov's choice is impossible to determine because of a lack of evidence, the effect described by Lewis is the desired effect of the Relationship PG, as it appears in current practice.

Relationship Gesture in Groups

At the end of his Exercise 16, which describes how to work on a PG, Chekhov concludes: "If you exercise in a group, make short improvisations, using different PGs for each of the participants" (Chekhov *To the Actor* 82). In this version of the Relationship PG, collectively developed and taught by the current MICHA faculty, the whole ensemble focuses on the relationships. One actor is the centre of attention, focusing on receiving, and all others are asked to create a gesture for their characters' relationship to him/her. Each member of the ensemble performs his/her gesture it in the *proximity* s/he feels is



appropriate for the relationship. Generally, the more intimate the relationship, the closer the actors will be. The actor receiving the gestures is still and receptive, while the rest move to provide him/her with live and active images. Merlin's side-coaching constantly reminds the receiver to "wait for the images to work on (him/her)" and then to radiate the emotional content outwardly (J. Merlin, "Relationship Gestures in Groups").

This group exercise clarifies the relationships in large ensemble productions. The actors giving the gesture also receive on several levels: from their gesture, from what they receive from the person to whom they are relating, and from their position in the group. One character will have many people fighting for attention, but there might be someone reaching towards him/her from the end of the studio as well. For example in *The Cherry Orchard* exploration, my proximity to Varya had a great effect on the actor portraying her. She expected Lyubov to come much closer. She commented afterwards

that she read my gesture as a mixture of disappointment and pity, which combined with the distance, she found heartbreaking. Interestingly, her heartbreak was judged by my Lyubov as “too demanding and judgmental.” She said this interchange helped her understand Varya’s feeling of inadequacy. It helped me understand moments of Lyubov’s selfishness and her emotional hierarchy, where Varya figured below Anya, Gayev, the “man from Paris,” and even Firs. During my turn to receive, I was overwhelmed by the amount of affection that Lyubov was given from the entire cast. I understood what she stood to lose by the end of her life in the old house. It also confirmed my choice of Queen archetype; during the Group Relationship Gesture, Lyubov *was* the Queen of the family.

Intention/Objective PGs

The use of the term “Intention/Objective PG” is a new development in Chekhov’s technique which can be credited to American teachers, such as Joanna Merlin, and American groups devoted to Chekhov’s technique, such as the Actors’ Ensemble. The development in today’s teaching incorporates “objectives” for beats and makes them prominent. This is in keeping with the general overriding concerns and preoccupations of modern North American acting training on “doing” or action. Chekhov’s PG is an excellent tool which can aid in creating appropriate action because the whole notion of the PG is about the training of the actor’s will.¹⁶ That being said, it is important to differentiate this work from both Stanislavsky’s ideas about the objective and Stanislavsky’s Method of Physical Actions.



Chekhov asked his teachers to distinguish the two methods when dealing with the objective: “In teaching the objective please use the term in our sense, and not as we find it in Stanislavsky’s books – that is the foundation – but *how* we apply the objective, in our sense, that is; by taking the activity with the whole body” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* September 27, 1937). Stanislavsky’s Method of Physical Actions is concerned with an actor always doing something but is not focused on the “whole body.” In the Method, the emphasis is on creating a “score” of actions – that is, a moment-by-moment listing of “turning a handle,” “opening a door,” “switching on a light switch,” “taking the gloves and the hat off,” “mixing a martini,” and so on. The doing in the Method of Physical Actions is an interpretation of the given circumstances in a Naturalistic setting. Introduced to Soviet theater by Stanislavsky, the Method led to a long period of dependence on continuous external action. Albert Filozov argues that this “in effect killed Russian theatre,” because it encouraged a Naturalism which passed itself off as

reality, not as artistic transposition on stage (B. Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky* 158).

In current pedagogy, the work on Intention/Objectives PGs is preceded by warm-up exercises such as the Objective Ball Game and Desire/Justification Exercise none of which appears in the original sources. Both are designed to help the *actor* distinguish between playing the objectives obediently and playing them with real desire. One premise is that, just because an actor decides “what” the character’s objective is, this does not necessarily mean that s/he will follow up on this understanding psychophysically or with his/her entire being. Another important proposition of the warm-ups is that, in order to play a desire, the actor must find a valid obstacle, so that s/he then finds the path to overcoming the obstacle, thereby making the tactics more intricate. Finally, in order to experience true desire to overcome an obstacle and achieve an objective, an actor must create a justification for that particular objective. According to MICHA faculty, justification will intuitively surface if the actor reaches the point of real desire. Thus it will come up even if the actor isn’t instructed to justify.

To create Intention/Objective PGs for a scene, the actor creates an “essential image” for the scene, in other words, the underlying reason for it, or the super-objective. The image can also be thought of as “the desire” behind the action. The actor reads the scene quietly, breaking it into units and beats. S/he assigns an action in the form of a verb to each unit and beat. Inspired by Stanislavsky’s ideas about pursuing action, this process is called “verbing” and is a technique used across North America. In the next step, the verbs are translated into action on a stage. Until I applied Chekhov’s principles to verbing (learned from Joanna Merlin and Scott Fielding), I could not take that last step successfully as an actor. Eventually, I abandoned the last step in verbing and used it solely as an analytical technique. While involving the body appears obvious to me now, it did not before I studied this technique. Only when I translated actions into PGs did the verbs become tangible and moving (pun intended).

Fielding’s specific contribution to MICHA is in verbing of the units and beats, the area in which he met with obstacles in his Meisner training. Fielding adds the body-mind in creating the verbs’ inner movement, but he also places a great deal of importance on that which is reactive between the two partners. This is an “obsession” of current

Meisner training apparent in the most popular Meisner Repetition Exercise which trains actors to react and listen. Meisner explains:

I decided I wanted an exercise for actors where there is no intellectuality. I wanted to eliminate all that 'head' work, to take away all the mental manipulation and get to where the impulses come from. And I began with the premise that if I repeat what I hear you saying, my head is not working. I'm listening, and there is an absolute elimination of the brain. [...] Let's say I say to you, 'Lend me ten dollars.' And you say, 'Lend you ten dollars?' [...] and that goes on for six times until – and this is vital – your refusal sets up an impulse in me which comes directly out of the repetition and it makes me say to you "You're a stinker!" That's repetition which leads to impulses. (Meisner and Longwell 36)

Fielding here uses Chekhov's general idea of benefits of repetition and builds on it by applying the repetition principle described above in the Intention/Objective PG Exercise. The improvisation with the PGs for actions is a kind of a free style repetition of the gestures in which the actors repeat a gesture until a change to the next gesture comes directly out of the repetition. Thus, Fielding's main contribution to current technique is in marrying Meisner's technique of "listening and responding" with Chekhov's idea of interconnectedness of the body and the mind.

Intention/Objective PG for Beats Exercise varies depending on the scene size, number of actors and the time frame. For example, for Lyubov Andreyevna's speech (below), I worked on the actions (the actions are in caps):

LYUBOV: (I SHOW) That's a telegram from Paris. (I BRAG) I get them every day. One yesterday. One today. (I EXPLAIN) That wild man has fallen ill again, he's in trouble again...(I CONFIDE) He begs my forgiveness, implores me to come (I CONCLUDE), and really, I ought to go to Paris to be near him. (I OBSERVE) Your face is stern Petya (I QUESTION), but what can one do my dear? What am I to do? (I DESCRIBE) He is ill, all alone and unhappy, and who will look after him there, who will keep him from making mistakes, who will give him his medicine on time? (I JUSTIFY) And why hide or keep silent, I love him that's clear. (I DECLARE) I love him, love him...(I DESCRIBE) It's a millstone round my neck (I PAINT A PICTURE), I'm sinking to the bottom with it, but I love that stone (I DECLARE), I cannot live without it. (I ASK NICELY) Don't think badly of me Petya (I ORDER), and don't say anything to me, don't say anything. (A.Chekhov and Schmidt 367)



In the first improvisation, I worked with the guiding image of Lyubov's drowned son used the overall archetypal PG of the Fallen Woman. My overall intention was "to be absolved." I invented a large gesture for each action and performed them while speaking the text alone. When partnered with Trofimov, I internalized them and spoke them to him. Uli, who played Trofimov, was instructed to be in a receptive state and respond only when

Lyubov's gestures started to "work on him." Somewhere near the end of the monologue, Trofimov responded by wiping away Lyubov's tears, which changed my overall image for the scene. I decided to replace a somewhat morbid image of Lyubov's drowned son with an image of a "Trofimov as a little boy who loves Lyubov unconditionally."

We did the improvisation again with revised imagery. I repeated this monologue with my new "essential image," and the objective for it changed from Lyubov's desire to be absolved, to an immediate desire to be touched gently by Trofimov. The results of that second exploration gave the scene a new layer. While the image of the drowned son added a tragic note, the image of Trofimov as a little boy brought him into Lyubov's immediate sphere of influence. Lyubov wanted grown-up Trofimov to love her unconditionally and to forgive her. The conflict became stronger as Trofimov does not forgive her in this scene. Therefore, the image changed the tone of the scene, making

it less tragic and more dramatic. I now had two different choices with which I could work.

In the next example from rehearsals for David Hare's *The Blue Room* for the role of the Politician the listed archetypes were Father, Pervert, Politician, Lover, Lonely Man, Addict, Sugar Daddy, Adulterer and Cuckold. For the Model they were Child, Beauty, Whore, Businesswoman, Addict, Kept Woman, Lonely Woman and Lover. Both actors first worked on two of their chosen archetypes to create a gesture. The actor who was playing the Politician chose the Cuckold and the Sugar Daddy and the actor playing the Model chose the Child and the Whore. Following this the actors' spent time developing the PGs for the intentions/objectives. The actors started with creating an "essential image" for the scene. The student playing the Model used the image of Politician taking the Model home with the line: "I want you to take me home" and sometimes "Take me home Charley". Once the overall desire is expressed in this way the actors read the scene quietly and divided it into units and beats. The actors assigned a verb to each unit and beat. The actors then created a PG for each one of the verbs assigned to each beats all the while allowing the "essential image" to guide them. For example in the first half of the scene (before the blackout) between the Politician and the Model the actors worked out gestures for the following intentions:

<u>Politician's PGs:</u>	<u>Model's PGs:</u>
I pamper	I tease
I manipulate	I taunt
I intrude	I allude
I offer	I confide
I intrude	I push
I distance	I assert
I reach	I play
I triumph	I slip
I rise	I fall

Once the work on creating the gestures is complete the partners then do the PGs in a sequence responding to one another; giving and receiving in an improvisational game. They begin by

continuously repeating one pair of gestures until one of them feels compelled to move on. For example in case of Politician and the Model they repeated PGs for “I pamper” and “I tease” five or six times each until the actor playing the Politician changed his gesture to “I offer” and the actress responded with “I allude” which they repeated several times and so on. The gestures are done in turn but can also overlap on occasion. The actors are instructed to notice how their interaction changes their gestures in terms of the gestures quality, tempo, intensity or size. During this phase of the exploration the structure or a skeleton of the scene is often revealed.

The next task is for the actors to be able to work with the gestures internally. Once the PG is created the actor learns how to make it his/her secret. This means that the actor will absorb the PG into an “inner movement” and use it in rehearsal as a springboard into character and a guide for creating action. Over the course of directing some fifteen productions while using this exercise I have developed the following series of repetitions in order to aid the process of absorption. Once the actors are familiar with their sequence (this might take two rounds), the actors now repeat the series of PGs but instead of accompanying the PG with saying the verbs (i.e. saying “I tease” or “I pamper”) I ask the actors to try and perform the PGs and connect them to a sound. The sound doesn’t need to be complicated. A simple “aaah” which is spoken in conjunction with the movement is sufficient. Following this I ask the students to gradually minimize the outer movement while maintaining the intensity of their experience. I ask them to continue sounding as they experience the inner movement. Thus gradually their behavior begins to appear as more of an “ordinary” type of human movement and their sounding slowly begins to sound as a conversation. Once this is achieved the actors are ready to use the developed inner movement in creation of *mis-en-scene*. This inner movement is effectively a map of the actors’ tactics which now begins to live in the actors’ bodies rather than their intellect. The actors return to it in rehearsal when they need it but also effects of the exercise begin to live within them independently. Thus the actors have now become a kind of “dancers” who together dance an inner “dance of wills”. The idea of actor as a dancer is a common one in the traditional Asian theatrical forms such as No, Kabuki and the contemporary form of Butoh. Chekhov technique here aligns with these models and this is in fact a true description of a Chekhov actor.

Upon finishing work on *The Blue Room* Janick Hebert who played the Model wrote: “When we had to verb our text, find moments and gestures for each moment, Brian and I worked through our text together, finding the dynamics that we thought fitted here and there. We understood the scene together. We worked on our gestures **on our own** but when we came together we realized we had created a “sort of really animated tug-of-war dance” (2). In blocking of the scene I used this “animated tug-of-war dance” so that it remained the basic stylistic element throughout the rehearsal process and in performance:

This became part of our warm-up especially in October. We then forgot about the gestures for a while, as we felt they were now part of our bodies. But then around mid-November we started to revisit our gestures and realized we had found new moments. Old moments could be split up into two or three new, more precise moments. With the change in tactics, a change in gestures. The gestures really helped me to get inside my body and out of my head (which is my problem). The gestures helped me follow my body as opposed to try to guide it. I listened to it and let it do the work. (2)

These actors’ commitment to the gestures was crucial in the success of the application of this exploration and ultimately the scene was very successful. The deep effects of the above process were evident when I asked these students to recreate their PG exercise so that I could tape it for a presentation at the “Stanislavsky and Directing: Theory, Practice, Influences” conference at University of Toronto in 2006. The recording of the PGs was done a year and a half after the production of *The Blue Room*. I was astonished as to how well their bodies remembered their PGs. Without any prior rehearsal the actors simply launched into an improvisation which was given its structure through the PG sequence they developed.



In a group scene which is described in the next example PGs are offered by each member of the group simultaneously and the giving and taking aspect of the exercise develops as a part of course. The above example is a detailed work with intentions, objectives, and actions. But this type of work can also be done with broad strokes and in a much shorter period of time. For example, in Fielding's class we explored Proctor's trial scene from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Each actor picked two to three PGs for the large units of the scene. For Elizabeth Proctor, I used a light, flowing reach towards Proctor, a gesture of push with a lot of resistance towards all Proctor's accusers, and a slow fall (a kind of a melt to the ground) for the moments of shame and helplessness. All actors first performed their gestures externally to create a kind of a movement sequence which did not necessarily follow the script, so that the turns in which lines were spoken were not considered. What emerged was the basic scene structure, not a detailed one. Once the gestures were internalized, the

space between the actors was filled with the “rivers” of inner gestures. The often-silent Elizabeth now had inner activity, giving her purpose and presence.

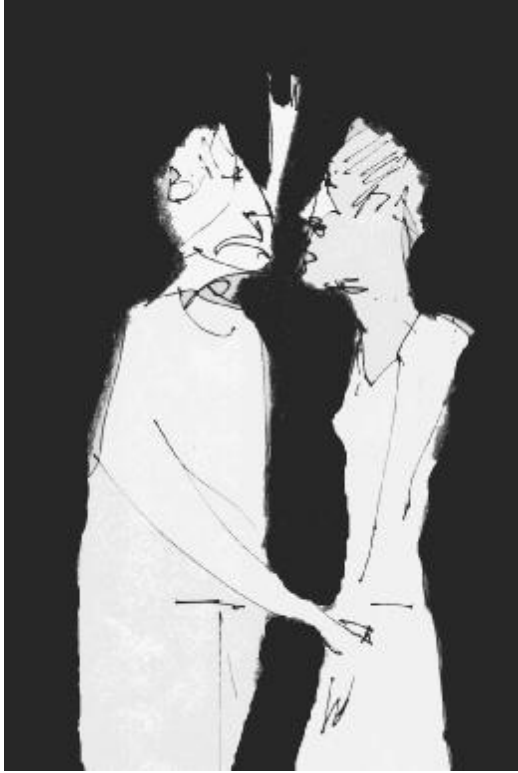
The Objectives for a Scene Exercise is a continuation of work with Archetypal PG, Relationship PG, and Important Moment PG. Now, however, the actors are concerned with creating a composition of a performance, the score. This will not happen without radiation of the internalized movements between the actors and full psychophysical involvement. At any moment, if an actor feels that the inner movement isn’t working, s/he can perform the PG until s/he feels comfortable returning to the inner movement only. Moreover, the purpose of creating the PG is not to show it outwardly in most cases. Chekhov says:

I don’t think it is even necessary to mention that the PG itself must never be shown to the audience, no more than an architect would be expected to show the public the scaffolding of his building instead of the completed Masterwork. A PG is the scaffolding of your part and it must remain your technical “secret”. (Chekhov *To the Actor* 82)

In advanced classes, the actors learn how to work with only the inner movement. The following exercise shows how this is currently taught. It does not appear in published material on Chekhov’s technique.

Inner Objectives

This exercise was taught to me by Scott Fielding. Once again, his Meisner background is evident in his focus on listening and reacting. Meisner suggests that the “Repetition Exercise [...] plays on the source of all organic creativity, which is the inner impulses” and that “the practitioner is somebody who is learning to funnel his instincts, not give performances” (37). In the Repetition Exercise, the para-linguistic markers, such as the small changes in the face and body, invoke reactions from those involved. The Inner Objective Exercise is a departure from Meisner’s kind of listening and reacting because of its emphasis on the inner movement rather than any outward manifestation of it; “the river of energy,” rather than behaviour.



The Inner Objective exercise suggests that acting/reacting is trainable not only through repetition but through a focus on a partner's invisible energy. Meisner asks for “no intellectuality [...] of an (i)mpulse” (36) and this is made concrete in the Inner Objective Exercise in work with intangibles through radiation of energy. Once the actor is confident working with desire, obstacle, and justification, s/he adds the radiation principle to working with objectives. Radiating is the hook on which Chekhov hangs the aspects of the technique which he calls the *intangibles*, for example, Imaginary Centres, Imaginary Body, Inner Movement, and Atmosphere. Intangibles are created through the imagination and made tangible or real in the outer expression. The actor becomes attuned to the *direction* of his/her *prana* and the *radiation* of it. As will be shown, in Slava Kokorin's

class, a teaching segment titled “energetic corridors” is based on this principle.

This exercise is done in partners: Radiator and Receiver. Receiver leaves the room. The teacher whispers an intention into Radiator’s ear. S/he is to fulfill an objective by using no words and as little movement as possible. The objectives are simple: “to get the other person to leave the room,” “to get the other person to embrace me,” or “to get the other person to kneel,” etc. The instructor should not choose a purely physical objective, as for example, “to get a glass,” but a psychological objective, “to get an embrace,” “to reject someone,” etc. In this exercise, choosing the right objective is paramount. As Radiator, I was assigned “to get an embrace” from Receiver. I radiated an inner gesture of a pull while standing in a spot. As Chekhov suggests in *To the Actor* to do this is to go “beyond the boundaries of [the] body by means of radiating its power and qualities in the direction indicated by the PG” (79). As per instruction I tried to keep my facial expression as still as possible but I did make eye contact with the partner. My partner’s objective was to understand my inner objective, make contact, and respond. We were responding to the action of the energetic “river” or “corridor” between us, namely, “a pull.” Our objective was fulfilled quickly; she hugged me within a minute.

In another example, where the objective was “to get the other person to kneel,” Radiator started a “Simon says” type of a game with the partner, quickly getting him to kneel. This interaction was not deemed successful, however; instead of radiation, the clever game was used to trick the Receiver.

In yet another example, the objective was “to get the other person to leave the room.” Here, Radiator started with an introspective position, turning her back to the door from where Receiver was to enter. This produced the opposite effect to the one intended. Her inner action was wrong for the desired objective, and she attracted the partner rather than rejecting him. During the course of the exercise, she kept changing spots in the space, all the while with her back turned to her partner, who kept following her. Finally, she faced him and, according to her subsequent commentary, created a strong inner gesture of a push. Although she remained still, Receiver now understood and promptly left the room. This last example is a good illustration of a common tendency to use intellectual tactics. On the

one hand, the initial inner movement of “contracting” (turning back introspectively) is a self directed tactic, not a full-bodied desire, and did not fulfil the objective. On the other hand, the inner desire performed as an inner movement radiated outwardly, and succeeded.

When radiated, the intangibles can be likened to the transmission of invisible waves. Being able to communicate on this level is a joyful experience for the actors performing simple objectives in the classroom and for their audience. When fulfilled, the inner objectives appeared to be magic. Yet there is nothing mystical about the inner movement. As has been noted, in Chekhov’s technique today, achieving intangible objectives is referred to as tapping into a “river of energy.” This “river” is created willingly between two actors. In order for a wave to travel, transmission needs to occur, but there must also be a receptor: this is the action/reception principle of the technique. Chekhov actors are trained to seek this intangible “river of energy.” They are trained to become aware of and receptive to the intangibles and to make them tangible.

Polarities Exercise

Slava Kokorin’s main interest during his time with MICHA was in polarities in performance. According to Kokorin’s analysis these polarities can be traced in every character of every play. Consequently, I understood *The Cherry Orchard*’s characters through polarities: the play is about the death of an old way of life and a start of a new one, i.e. *Lopakhin* is a new master of the estate but internally he is still a serf, *Trofimov*’s freedom brings on a burden of having to work for a living, *Yepihodov*’s constant misfortune brings him profit, *Firs*’ constant concern for the affairs of day-to-day life ends in his physical death and so on. To create polarities, Kokorin first teaches students to visualize two separate territories for polarities in space which help embody the paradox that he believes needs to be portrayed within any given character. As shown in Chapter Two, the principle of polarities always works with opposites, and in this case, they are the character’s Past and Future. As in the Backspace Exercise, here, the actor uses the space and transforms its energy through imagination. The actor can reach a state of presence by first creating psychophysical polarities within and then becoming conscious of

them. Kokorin explained that by living between the past and the future, one creates drama in the now.

The exercise is taught in the following phases:

Phase 1 – Warm-up: The room is divided into three areas: “Laughter,” “Fear,” “Sadness.” It is important to create a threshold, so the borders are sharp, drawn in chalk, or divided by tape. The students are instructed to “draw” these qualities from “below” as they step over the threshold into the delineated areas.

Phase 2 – Character’s Past: Phase 2 continues without a break. Chalk-marks on the floor are quickly erased. The whole space is now open to the actor to “draw” a sensation of his/her choice; a quality his/her character draws from “below.” This quality should be informed by the character’s entire Past. The side-coaching should include a reminder to “draw” the sensation, *not the emotion*. This is crucial: the success of the exercise depends on it.

Phase 3 – Character’s Future: Upon doing this for about ten minutes, the actor is instructed to “receive” another quality from “above.” This time it is his/her character’s Future, all the character’s fears, hopes, and dreams. As in the Backspace Exercise, the actor is using the space and transforming its energy through imagination.

Phase 4 – Creating the NOW: The actor is instructed to allow the two sensations to mix somewhere inside the body and to express the result vocally, in a vowel or a line of text.

Phase 5 – Creating the NOW with a Partner: The actors are paired up by the teacher or instructed to find a partner (guiding them might be better because it avoids the possible danger of breaking the momentum with such thoughts as: “Who should I pick?”). The partners continue to radiate and receive (give and take), expressing the sensation and the multitude of emotions it produces to the partner, and letting the partner’s reaction change him/her in return. In Phase 5, some very interesting scenes begin to develop. This exercise is most usefully done in the second half of a rehearsal process, as it can refresh important

moments so that they are played in new rhythms, with different tones, and new-found interest.

For example, an actress playing Irina in *The Three Sisters* often has a difficult task achieving an intense emotional state in the third act, where the author's stage directions require Irina to cry, and the sisters refer to this in the dialogue. In my classroom, I observed a student, who had a great deal of difficulty with this moment, break through. She commented: "The 'below' and the 'above' met in my stomach and created this windmill of emotion which shot from my stomach into my extremities. I know that sounds very corny but that's how it was." What she described as "corny" was actually her creation of an imaginative polarity.

However, the fact that she chose to describe what happened with a disclaimer points to a perennial problem faced by a Chekhov teacher. When an imaginative moment happens in practice, although elated and inspired, the actors seldom believe this is repeatable. In this case, the *fourth guiding principle* was at work: the student woke up all the elements of the technique through working on this one. Her experience was psychophysical, she expressed intangibles, and she was free in her creation. What she lacked was a belief in this kind of experience. I realized in hindsight that this was the moment where Chekhov's idea of the Higher Self might have helped her trust the process. Subsequently I have used this explanation in moments where students have entered into such an experience, because at this time, they are able to apply the vague term to the sensation which accompanies inspiration and understand the notion of Higher Self. I have also found that only those actors who have understood the technique on this level will continue to use it independently; if not, they will likely embrace the acting work which encourages creating "self-portraits."

Kokorin follows this exercise with his variation of Imaginary Body exercise. The partners are asked to stop their improvisation with polarities, close their eyes, and allow an image of their character to arise in their imagination. Following this, they are asked to imagine their bodies shrinking and the image becoming human size and then to step into the image and grow into it. Kokorin's side-coaching is as follows:

How is the image different? What is she/he wearing? Look at the person's hair, nose, eyes, neck, arms, hands, torso, hips, legs, knees and feet. How is this person's thinking, feeling, will different? Keep the Polarities. Start walking around the room. Keep the Polarities, Body, add Imaginary Centre. Focus on one at the time. Throw the technique away and just play. (Kokorin)

Kokorin's Imaginary Body Exercise uses all *five guiding principles*. At first it focuses on the psychophysical means and intangibles (*first and second guiding principle*). Kokorin then strives to bring the students to the point at which they will "flow" from one tool to another, as in the *fourth guiding principle* in which one element of the technique wakes all other elements. This version employs the actor's ability to unify various aspects of the technique now available to him/her as it appears in the *third guiding principle*. Finally, by asking the actors to "throw the technique away and just play," the actors employ the *fifth guiding principle* which is concerned with the technique freeing the actor's creativity. Starting with the A, B, C's, the students eventually arrive at the full sentence in intermediate/advanced training.

Energy Transformation Exercises: Energy Corridors

Within MICHA, experimentation with the radiation of invisible energy (*prana*) is the specialty of Slava Kokorin. He has shared this with Lenard Petit, David Zinder, and Per Brahe, who now include it in their practice. As has been mentioned, Russian schools are generally more comfortable with the idea of such intangibles. Further evidence can be found in Bella Merlin's description of exercises with *prana* during her schooling at VGIK. Merlin describes the experience of her teacher Ananyev placing the palms of his hands on a subject's palms: "[T]he transmission of energy through his palms seemed to cause subject's hands almost to vibrate" (B. Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky* 74). Merlin suggests that "there was no doubt that Ananyev had developed his own energy communication to a significant degree" (75). This was even more apparent in the Energy Tug-of-War exercise in which, without direct contact and simply by radiating energy through the palms of his hands, one actor was to lead the other through the room. According to Bella Merlin, despite her doubt that she could experience this type of communication she did

so.¹⁷ Scholars such as Pitches and Bella Merlin agree that this general openness to the eastern view of working with *prana* in Russian current training owes a great deal to Maria Knebel,¹⁸ who “like her teacher [Michael Chekhov] sought a feeling of ease on stage, to reinvest the acting process of *play* and *a spirituality*” (B. Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky* 158 emphasis in original).

The following playful warm-up taught by Kokorin prepares students for the actual work with the radiation of energy. It trains the collective psycho-physicality with a focus on the *second guiding principle* – from the invisible to the visible. In the warm-up, Radiator starts by rubbing the hands together and finds the radiation between the hands. This is shaped into an imaginary ball of energy. The Radiator imagines s/he has absorbed this ball into his/her heart from where the energy is radiated into the limbs and head and neck.

The rest of the group members are now Receivers, and they stand two to three meters apart from the Radiator, who sends the energy through the fingers to move the other members of the group. Others enter into the energetic corridor and move. A whole chorus of people moves in sync with the Radiator’s energetic corridor. The chorus is only released when the Radiator wants to end the exercise. S/he must draw the energy back into his/her own body and cut the transmission of energy. The second stage of the exercise is more difficult. The Radiator lowers his/her arms and, without moving, continues trying to move about the group by radiating and receiving energy from his/her heart centre.

Another energy transmission exercise, the Radiation Circle Exercise, appears in David Zinder’s book *Body, Voice, Imagination*. Although this exercise, invented by Chekhov, has not been published, he taught it on May 4, 1941, albeit in a slightly altered way. This was introduced to MICHA faculty by Slava Kokorin, who likely picked it up from his Russian teachers through the “lore” method. In his foreword, Zinder thanks Kokorin, but does not specify for which exercises, but when asked, Per Brahe credits Kokorin with the exercise.

It starts with the group in a circle. At first, the actor’s arms are limp. They are lifted mechanically and dropped. Following this, the arms are invested with the rays of energy coming from the actor’s heart centre (Ideal Centre). The arms are lifted up and lowered. The actor is asked to notice any difference in the sensation and quality of

movement. Next, s/he does the basic Expansion gesture (raises the arms and opens them in a V shape) and says “I am.” After that, s/he extends the arms forward and says, “You are.” S/he extends one arm to the side and says, “He is,” or “She is.” The actor opens the arms to the side in an embracing gesture and says, “We are.” The actors turn away from the group and say, “They are.” Each opening of the arms also includes the inner action of opening an imaginary corridor in the space in the direction in which the arms are extended. If this is to be used in rehearsals, the actors can replace the “I, you, he, she, we, they” with the names of the characters from the play on which they are working. They then open the energy corridors while bringing in the imagery from the play. In Chekhov’s version, which only included the phrase, “I am,” the final step was to “Take a musical theme and move it to try to incorporate the theme in the form of the group movement. Then form two groups and find the connection between the two” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* May 4 1941).

Kokorin taught his “energy corridors segment” during the last few days of the 2000 conference and finished with the Radiation Circle. In the final circle, each actor was given the opportunity to open up the corridor s/he wished to open, making his/her concluding statement silently in that way. The circle became a ritual in which the students said goodbye to one another, energetically communicating thanks to their partners and the teacher.¹⁹ One of the most powerful moments in my life as a performer was such a circle at the end of the two-week session at the Eugene O’Neill Centre in Connecticut in 2000. The difference between an actor’s energy when the corridor is “on” and “off” was something that all participants experienced and were moved by. I now recognize this as radiation of energy.

Advanced Voice and Speech Exercises

Speaking the Text: Words and Phrases as Movement and Gesture

In an advanced Chekhov speech class, after an extended period of time of working with vowels, consonants, and some words the actor finally asks the following questions: How do I work with text? How do I let the imagination become gesture in the word? How do I transform the relationship that I have with what the word is saying (the meaning) into the speaking of it? The following few

exercises help the actor find the answers to those questions while moving; while “on the feet.” There are endless variations of these exercises (as many as there are words), and the general structure of Sarah Kane’s advanced class is always similar, in that it begins with warming up the body, proceeds to work with imagery, and finally, applies this to text.

Kane warms up by using three nonsensical words in the Step with Three Words Exercise and the Three Words with Qualities Exercise (Appendix 17). The purpose of the first warm-up is to connect the actor’s feet to the words, to start exploring the distance that the words have to travel, and ultimately, to internalize that distance. In the second warm-up, the actor creates a PG for each nonsensical word and plays with qualities, such as the colour, texture, weight, shape, temperature, and size. The purpose is to understand that the guiding image for the inner movement behind speaking a word can be constructed from abstractions like “yellow,” “square,” or “heavy.” The questions which the actor can ask now are: Are the gestures for the three words similar or not? Are the words a “thing-in-itself?” Do they have a life independent of their meaning? This warm-up plays with Steiner’s idea that “Speech arose out of fantasy. It preceded the development of the intellect” (*Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*, 111). The warm-up brings forth the important difference between “Am I now speaking the word itself?” and “Am I commenting, playing the relationship to the meaning word?” The actor is reminded that the two invoke different states: the first relationship is without judgment and, as such, supports imagination and includes sensation (what Steiner calls beautiful speech), and the second is generated by thought which includes judgment and takes the focus away from the sensation.

Kane continues the warm-up by using personal names. The actors “throw” their own names around the circle, and these are “thrown” back to them. The proper names are useful because, in themselves, they are a nonsensical collection of sounds. Only with an image attached does a name become a meaningful concept. This focus of the exercise is in an exploration of “how” each student’s name is pronounced. For example, my name is pronounced differently in Croatian and English. If analyzed through Chekhov’s voice, my two different sounding names are: Cintija Ašperger (pronounced Tzeent-ee-yah and Ashperger, with rolled r’s and voiced e’s sounding like

“eh” Ahsh-pehrr-gerr) and Cynthia (pronounced Seen-thee-ah) and Ashperger (pronounced without rolled r’s and e’s which are silent Ash-phr-ghr). With Chekhov’s voice principles applied, these two names have independent lives within me through the sensations they produce. I experience the sensations of Cintija as quick and fiery. The name sound is brighter so that if I were to use musical terms, to me, it rings in a major key. When the name is pronounced in the English way, the Cynthia as a collection of sounds offers sensations which are softer, and the sound, as I hear it, is in a minor key. I experience it as introspective and mellow. Through this work, I have become aware of the inner sensations produced by sound of my name, and how they can instantly change my relationship to the outside world. Simply by hearing my name pronounced a certain way, I can experience my memory, history, culture, intentions, and relationships as sensations. I can then connect these to the sounds of the two languages I speak. Both names cause a different interiority, and as a result, I express myself differently.

Such exploration of personal names is followed with an exploration of what each student’s character’s name sounds like: “Charlotta,” “Varya,” “Firs,” “Anya,” “Trofimov,” “Lopakhin.” Now the focus is not on what the character calls himself/herself, but what others call them. This includes nicknames and titles, so that in case of Lyubov Andreyevna Ranyevskaya, variations can be used: for example, Lyuba, Ranyevskaya, Lyubov Andreyevna, Madam, mother, mama.

The Six Revelations of Speech

In advanced training, Kane introduces Steiner's exercise "The Six Revelations of Speech," six gestures which Steiner categorized and defined. The following table of their qualities and functions includes these and a seventh one added by Kane:

<u>Gesture</u>	<u>Voice Gesture</u>	<u>Speech Revelation</u>
1. Pointing	incisive	effective
2. Holding onto oneself	full-toned round	thoughtful
3. Rolling forward with hands and feet	slightly vibrating, trembling	cautiously feeling questioning
4. Flinging out an arm or leg	antipathy, repudiation	hard
5. Reaching out to touch	soft	sympathy, recognition
6. Slanting an arm or leg away from body	abrupt	withdrawing onto own ground
7. Holding still of limbs	slow, deliberate falling	inability to come to decision, despair

Steiner's categorization of revelations of speech resembles Chekhov's Basic Psychological Gestures: expand, contract, push, pull, embrace, lift, wring, tear, and hit. Both offer a repertoire of gestures which make it easier to choose a movement to touch and stir an inner content. They are like musical scales which can be repeated in daily practice. For example, in *The Cherry Orchard* exploration, the fifth revelation, "reaching out to touch," can be applied to a simple dialogue between Lyubov and Anya:

ANYA: And you'll come back soon, won't you? You promise? [...]
 LUYBOV: I will, my angel, I promise. (*Embraces her*) (Schmidt 379)

The same reach can be applied to Lyubov's line: "Oh, my dear, sweet, lovely orchard!" The sixth revelation, which is an abrupt movement, can be applied to Lyubov's line, "I couldn't help it! I couldn't help it," and so on.

Working with Text

Sarah Kane quotes Rudolph Steiner frequently in her class. She teaches that, for Steiner, "conversation" was an actual "gesture of

turning,” and reminds her students that conversation means etymologically “to turn with.” The following exercise plays with that idea and is specific to Kane’s pedagogy. This exercise can only be done at a later stage of rehearsals when the actors are off book and have blocked the scene.

Change!

The actors are ready to play the scene with a focus on one of the following: sensations, gestures of the sounds, gestures of the syllables, gestures of the words, gestures of the sections or beats, or larger units of text. This is up to the individual actor and will be determined in the moment. Emphasized in this exercise is the idea of constant change of inner sensation due to the qualities of movement. The actor is now attuned to lemniscating;²⁰ a process in which the inner change affects the expression and vice versa. Each time the actor hears the word “change,” s/he must change the position in the space and deliberately access the sensations s/he is experiencing. As the quality produces a sensation, the sensation changes the quality. The sensations are a result of the quality of the sound s/he is making, the quality of the inner or the outer movement, or the quality of the partner’s sound/movement, or the quality of the new location in space. This exercise trains the actor to view the voice movement connection as infinite and inexhaustible. It is motivated by the teacher’s side-coaching,



which consists of one word: “change.” As soon as the actor hears the word “change,” s/he must access another sensation through an image or an inner gesture of the language and “turn” it together with the partner. Actors must be influenced by one another: this too is inexhaustible. The actor’s body must be a “sensitive membrane” for the actor to genuinely change (not “put on” a change).

In her studio classes, Kane uses Steiner’s method of defining the character through a sound or a combination of sound in an attempt to precede intellect. Steiner’s differentiation between speech and concept is evident in Kane’s advanced voice and speech pedagogy. Rather than being correct in relation to content of his/her speech, a student of current Chekhov voice and speech technique is looking for an aesthetic way of speaking. Here, speaking beautifully must not be confused with a sentimental notion of beauty. Rather, it is a poetic view of just about anything. Steiner taught that by differentiating between the sound and meaning, the speaker allows that which is spoken to *live inwardly*; if this is not done, word and concept will merge, and our speech will be only correct and logical, not whole. Kane brings his attitude towards speech to the classroom and practices it herself. She combines this with the main elements of Chekhov’s technique of acting to create voice and speech practice suitable to the holistic nature of Chekhov’s technique.

In *To the Actor* Chekhov offers the following Concluding Note:

The method, when understood and applied, will inculcate in the actor a most gratifying habit of professional thinking, whether he is evaluating the creative work of his colleagues or his own. He will then no longer be satisfied with such general terms as ‘natural,’ ‘conversational,’ ‘arty,’ ‘good,’ ‘bad’; or with such expressions as ‘underacting,’ ‘overacting,’ etc. Instead, he will develop a more indicative professional language and become conversant with more professional terms like Unites, Objectives, Atmospheres, Radiating and Receiving, Imagination, Imaginary Body, Imaginary Centre, Inner and Outer Tempos, Climaxes,²¹ Accents, Rhythmical Waves and Repetitions, Composition of the Characters, Psychological Gestures, Ensemble, Qualities, Sensations, and so forth. (174).

The purpose of the intermediate/advanced training of MICHA has stayed true to Chekhov’s intention quoted above. Ideally, the actors who have gone through this training will not only have a shared vocabulary but will also be able to translate any director’s note into

the above suggested terminology skillfully. All this is done in order to shift the actor's artistic creation from the actor's ego to the character's ego thus freeing the actor's Creative Individuality.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE:

¹ The reviews of Chekhov's Khlestakov all suggest that he displayed genius when it came to improvisation. A contemporary critic, Konstantin Rudnisky, writes :

[Chekhov] stunned with his unbelievable improvised ease and unrestrained imagination. Chekhov's Khlestakov now dived underneath the table three times in search of money, now skipped across the stage like a young goat, now lusting for the mayor's wife, gnawed the leg of a chair, now mocking Khlopov, moved a burning candle about right under his nose. Countless mischievous, eccentric pranks followed one after another, forming themselves into the dodging, confused line of behaviour of the unprepossessing snub-nosed official from Petersburg, the silliest, emptiest man, gripped by a great flight of imagination. Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov*, (New York: Applause, 2004) 54.

² Marowitz goes on to suggest that this anticipated Brecht's alienation: "Although Chekhov never went that extra step toward alienation *per se*, he was fond of leading audiences up the garden path, projecting one set of characteristics and then abruptly reversing them – segueing from comedy into pathos or virtue into villainy" (54).

³ Occasionally, characterization can replace this in the Comedic genre. The exercises in that case start with Thinking, Feeling, Willing, and quickly move to Imaginary Body.

⁴ For a comprehensive understanding of "intuitive discernment," readers will want to consult Steiner's introduction to the four volumes of Goethe's scientific works that he edited for publication. In addition, there are many references to Goethe and his work in Steiner's later lectures. These references show us that it was not only the *content* of Goethe's research in the organic sciences, but very centrally Goethe's cognitive method that Steiner recognized as an essential contribution to the further evolution of science. This cognitive method tried to understand the organic world by picturing it. For example Goethe practiced this by seeking to hold an image of leaf in his mind that was not a fixed, lifeless concept but rather one that could express itself in the most varied forms. When we let such idea-forms proceed one from another, we can eventually construct the whole plant. Chekhov used this practice as a concentration exercise in *Lessons for Teachers* (Lesson VI, page 37).

⁵ For a historical context for PG and for basic PGs, see Appendix 11.

⁶ Steiner's consideration for colour was such that in his Anthroposophical headquarters, Goetheanum, even the glass in the windows, the walls, and the ceilings was coloured according to Steiner's version of the Goethean theory of colour. Steiner used different shades because he believed these indicated different soul-states and

produced different psychological and spiritual effects. All were subsequently used by Steiner in his Eurythmy and theories of speech. Steiner claimed he saw colours of people's moods, will impulses, and thoughts, and also of their speech: "Cesar's words are reddish-yellow. Manuel's words are blue-green." Steiner, ed., *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. 108. (Interested readers may pursue this in Ahearn's *Sun at Midnight*.)

⁷ A recently deceased Chekhov student who was associated with MICHA. Colvin also had his own Chekhov studio in Los Angeles.

⁸ Tennessee Williams describes Blanche DuBois as "like a moth" in stage directions for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Hagen refers to it in her Acting Class DVD.

⁹ Sense memory and emotion memory were used in the work of Stanislavsky before he discovered the Method of Physical Actions. Such sense and emotional memory is also applied in the exercises still used in the Lee Strasberg branch of the American Method. This is how Stanislavsky describes it in *An Actor Prepares*: "Just as your visual memory can reconstruct an inner image of some forgotten thing, place or person, your emotion memory can bring back feelings you have already experienced. They may seem to be beyond recall, when suddenly a suggestion, a thought, a familiar object will bring them back in full force." Konstantin Stanislavsky, *An Actor Prepares*. Translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. Introd. By John Gielgud (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1972) 158.

Stanislavsky and Strasberg both taught that in order to achieve full concentration, the actor must focus his mind fully on *an object*. The way to do this is by employing the five senses to recall the personally *familiar* object of the concentration. Thus the familiar objects and the concentration on them became the basic building blocks for actors. The term "familiar object" is not limited to inanimate objects but also includes anything that the actor needs to make real in order to achieve the Sense of Truth. This is simply the object of actor's attention. An actor can choose to focus on the place; he can answer the question where am I? In that case the object he focuses on can be a familiar park or more specifically a familiar tree or the focus can be on a familiar room and then specifically a familiar lamp, carpet pattern, window sill, curtain etc. The actor is recalling the details of any such object of concentration by asking sensory questions until the picture is complete, for example, what colour is the object; how does it smell; what texture does it have; can I taste it; how heavy is it; does it make any sound. If the object of attention is a relationship then the focus is on imagining a familiar person and if the object of attention is an emotional response then the focus is on an event when the actor experienced emotion analogous to the one needed for the scene, but which belongs to the actor's memory. Both the familiar person and the event are re-created by using sense memory and then the sensory experience that these images provoke is transposed into the scene, relationship: "Don't think about the feeling itself, but set your mind to work on what makes it grow, what the conditions were that brought about the experience" (Stanislavsky 175). This process of recalling familiar objects in this way is known as Sense Memory, while recalling of emotional states in a sensory way is referred to as the Affective Memory: "Our whole creative experiences are vivid and full in direct

proportion to the power, keenness and exactness of our memory" (175). Thus those trained in "early" Stanislavsky's System and the proponents of Strasberg's Method were taught to believe that in order to create truthful behavior on stage the chosen objects of concentration are best when intensely personal. In case of Affective Memory these can be completely outside of the given circumstances (this depends on the actor's personal experiences).

Michael Chekhov believed in creating an imaginary world that is *not personal* but which still involved the actor's senses, for example, if an actor is to perform a scene where s/he is walking in a rainstorm, Stanislavsky and Strasberg would allow the actor to bring in the sensation of a particular rainstorm in a particular place that this actor has experienced. If an actor has never walked in a rainstorm, Strasberg would go so far as to prefer an imaginary but familiar shower moving with the actor and "raining" on him/her to a completely imaginary rain. However, Chekhov would suggest that the actor imagine a detailed picture of a purely imaginary rainy atmosphere and step into it over an imaginary "threshold" and then breathe it in and move with it.

¹⁰ For example, if the intention is to *see oneself in an imaginary mirror*, the actor uses material objects of attention at first (i.e. a real mirror) and then re-creates sensory stimuli these objects produce through sense memory (i.e. a memory of seeing oneself in an imaginary mirror). This is done through asking questions that have to do with senses i.e. what is the shape of my eyes. As the actor's senses respond with answers to such question an imaginary reflection in a mirror is gradually created and adequate emotional and motoric responses ensue. Sense Memory is usually restricted to re-creating familiar surroundings, people and situations.

¹¹ I worked on the same character during two different conferences (2000 and 2004).

¹² According to Jessica Cerullo, the managing director of MICHA, the DVD is soon to be released by a New York publisher.

¹³ See Chapter Three, page 146.

¹⁴ I have found a similar but more intricate division in Bella Merlin's *Beyond Stanislavsky*. Merlin's movement teacher Vladimir Ananyev suggests that qualities of the thought, emotion, and will centres could be found in more localized areas than head/shoulders, torso, and lower abdomen/legs:

The *thought-centre* (the head) featured *feeling* in the *eyes* (consider the nuances of emotion we betray through our eyes); *thought* in the *nose and ears* (consider the curious cat poking its nose into every crevice, and the eavesdropping neighbor with the glass to the wall); and *action* in the chin and the mouth (consider Desperate Dan and his spade-like chin, having 'more brawn than brains'). The *emotion-centre* (or feeling) (the chest and torso) is more complex as it involves energy centres. [...] Therefore, it's easier to consider the emotion-centre in its totality, rather than breaking it down into areas. The *will-centre* (or action) (the groin, arms and legs) featured *feeling* in the *knees* (consider how our knees shake involuntarily

when we're nervous) and *shoulders* (consider how we carry our tension in our hunched shoulders); *thought* in the *feet* (consider tapping of toes and kicking of heels) and *hands* (consider how we gesticulate when we communicate our thoughts) and *elbows* (consider elbowing people out of the way). Bella Merlin, *Beyond Stanislavsky : The Psycho-Physical Approach to Actor Training* (London: Routledge, 2001) 55-56.

This division is taught by Per Brahe and Aole T. Miller as well.

¹⁵ As always, this is done by creating a large, continuous, archetypal gesture which has a beginning, middle, and end. In this case, the theme is the intention of the moment.

¹⁶ Training of the actor's will and the "willing" in character analysis are not one and the same. The actor's will is trained but on the level of the character analysis Chekhov also always includes the thinking, feeling and *willing* in analysis of the gesture. We must engage all three in order to fully perform a PG. Chekhov says:

Your *intuition* might prompt you: *down to the earth* (gesture), *heavily and slowly* (quality) etc. The new experience of PG will lead you to new movements. Now it might become, perhaps, like this: the gesture receives an inclination to the side (canniness), hands clench into fists (intense will), shoulders lift up, the entire body slightly bows towards the earth, knees bend (cowardliness), feet are slightly turned inside (secretiveness).

He adds, "Your hands are thrown up (amazement) quickly (power, force), your fists are clenched (pain and force)." See *To the Actor* pages 187-96.

¹⁷ The full description reads:

Personally, I was almost incapable of budging my partner a millimetre with my radiated energy alone, but I experienced the most extraordinary sensation when I was 'blind. I found it a very difficult exercise as, from start to finish, I struggled to silence my conscious mind. There was a voice in my head which insisted on discrediting the notion of "irradiation," believing it to be a load of old nonsense. I tried as hard as I could to "hear" the energy commands of my partner A, and move when I *thought* I felt an impulse, but I was never really sure and I suspected that I was probably making the whole thing up. Besides which, it's not the kind of exercise where "trying hard" really helps. Then in the midst of all my blind stumbling around, oblivious to my partner's guidance, I suddenly felt this huge surge of energy. I was overwhelmed by a tremendously physical sense of confusion or turmoil, as if I was being pulled from one place to another in some kind of energy whirlwind. It was such a disquieting sensation that I

had to open my eyes just to re-orientate myself and stop myself falling over. As I looked around, I discovered that Ananyev and my partner were on either side of me – neither of them closer to me than a ruler's length – and a battle of energies had indeed been in progress. Each of them was trying to divert my energy in contradictory direction through the space.

¹⁸ Knebel was instrumental in Anatoly Vasilyev's training as well. Her work is thought of as exemplary in promoting the technique in the USSR during the difficult second part of the twentieth century in which Chekhov's name was erased from the annals of history.

¹⁹ At that moment I did not know that this would be our final goodbye to Kokorin. The funding for the Russians has dried up, and students have not had the opportunity to study with Kokorin within the MICHA framework. However, Kokorin has organized several conferences at Lake Baikal which some MICHA students attended.

²⁰ As the quality produces a sensation, the sensation changes the quality.

²¹ Andrei Malaev-Babel has lectured on Chekhov's ideas about Climaxes at various MICHA conferences. Chekhov suggested that main and auxiliary moments of Climax must be identified for every play and has given a few detailed examples of these. The principles were then applied to identify the main and auxiliary Climaxes of the play(s) used at the conferences. See *To the Actor* and *To the Director and Playwright*.

Conclusion



Artists are specialists in the spiritual sense, otherwise they are puppets and nothing else.”(M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *The Actor Is the Theatre* February 5, 1940)

Chekhov’s technique today, a half-century after his death, is alive and well. The technique is growing in popularity while being developed, modified, restructured; yet it is absolutely retaining the *five guiding principles* postulated by Chekhov. The combination of these

principles sets it apart from any other technique in contemporary pedagogy: psychophysical, invisible to visible, freedom, working with Higher Self, and synthesis. Chekhov pedagogy treats inspiration as a basic human need which, if disowned, can wreak havoc, not only on artistic, but also on physical, psychological, and spiritual planes. Hence, concepts such as joy, playfulness, and compassion are considered more important than a sellable performance. To this end, Chekhov suggests the bringing together of body and spirit: "On the stage today the physical body is mostly the enemy of the actor. From the point of view of the theatre of the future, as I try to imagine, everything will become more and more spiritualized, in the sense of concrete spirit" (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for the Professional Actor* 146).

A case in point is my own experience. A change in my body-mind connection became evident for me upon doing the Train Station Exercise with Lenard Petit at the end of my first experience with the technique in June 2000. Petit does the exercise to summarize all that has been learned to that point. In it, the actors create a simple improvisation in an imaginary space of choice; in this case, the train station. The actors are evenly spaced around the room, with their backs close to the wall, and an imaginary threshold in front of them. One actor steps over the threshold, performs an action, and another joins him/her. They interact, the first actor leaves, and one or two more actors cross into the space. This is repeated until everyone has had a turn. The improvisation must include speaking. The whole thing is now referred to as "the form." Once "the form" has been created, it is repeated numerous times by all the actors using one element of the technique at a time. Usually this lasts between half an hour and an hour. The teacher announces the theme for the exploration prior to each repetition: Staccato, Legato, Radiating, Receiving, Molding, Floating, Flying, Sensation of Form, Ease, Beauty, Whole, Caution, Balancing, Falling, Rising, Tenderness, Joy, Fear; centres: centre in the head, centre in the *hara*, centre in the heart (these can be specified, i.e. soft centre in the forehead, butterfly in the stomach, lead in the *hara*, etc.); Imaginary Body; Stick, Ball, Veil; Inner Gestures: Push, Pull, Lift, Expand, Contract, Throw; Styles: Tragedy, Comedy, Drama, Clown; and so on. The actors are usually surprised at the number of tools available to them at this point. After only two weeks of Chekhov training, I had already come into contact with all of the

tools mentioned above and could apply them to the Train Station Exercise. As we finished, I was struck with the wealth of choices I had at my disposal, even though it would take years to perfect them. I wrote in my diary: “I found out that I’m an actor again. I have glimpsed the thread of my laughter, my life and my essence. I have learned so much in two weeks.” This, after two decades of being a professional actor.

Since then I have included this exercise towards the end of the rehearsal process in order to remind the students of the freedom they actually have even once the form/score of a piece is created. During the process I am always adamant that the students allow themselves “not to know” how they are going to feel and I persist that they “do not know” how their partner is going to react. Once the form of a piece is done true listening and responding in an open playful way becomes a challenge. My student’s journals have reflected the same excitement about the new choices available to them to support the idea of “not knowing” upon performing this exercise which essentially summarizes the technique itself:

[W]hat the train station really helped me viscerally realize, is that we are never married to our choices, and that amazing discoveries can be made by playing with these choices. Ultimately, a director may limit your choices, bring you back to earth, or what have you, or you may find that a specific choice doesn’t work in the scheme of an entire scene, but to allow yourself that freedom, the moment of not knowing, opens up your work to a whole realm of possibility. Applying this exercise to rehearsal. I realized the importance of first finding a form (Li *Von Horvath Journal*).

And...

I think we all struggled with finding freshness and new life in each scene in the last few weeks. The Train Station exercise was an extremely useful tool to combat complacency, as well as the habits that had begun to develop. Having to work within the form and structure we had created, while changing the quality – be it using one of the 4 elements, or a Sense of Beauty, or staccato, or the style of Greek tragedy. We all went back to our individual group rehearsal with a revitalized determination to breathe life back into what we were doing (Fried *Von Horvath Journal* 3).

In 2000, I came to a Chekhov workshop with the intention of verifying in practice my belief that this technique could not be effective, only to prove myself wrong. The resulting intensely

personal journey has resulted in years of exploration of the theory and the practice of this technique and has culminated in this study. I have found both the theory and practice useful, creative, rich, imaginative, containing inexhaustible choices and joy. My colleague Lenard Petit says:

People ask me what I do and I tell them that my job is to teach people things that they already know but they don't know that they know. I reacquaint people with knowledge that they already possess and they are born with. I make them aware of the processes. Talent is a spark of this energy that has the ability to come to flame, to be turned into a fire.

While many acting theories purport to do this, when compared with other techniques I've studied as an actor, namely, Stanislavsky's System, Strasberg's Method, Hagen's Technique, and Brecht's suggestions, this one opened up areas and possibilities which I did not think were in the realm of my innate knowledge or artistic talent. Not only have I been greatly transformed, but I have watched it transform the students I teach, both as people and as actors.

When given a chance through proper instruction and commitment, this technique can illuminate the somewhat murky understanding of the meaning and creation of style in today's western acting pedagogy. It can also, without any special effort, help acting pedagogy reclaim the area of spirituality which is currently ignored or feared, because in Chekhov's technique, the actor is "striving for that otherness that we look for in religion, postulate in metaphysics and encounter in dreams" (Marowitz, *The Other Chekhov* 272). Most importantly, it can nurture the actor's imagination in a holistic way. This is critically needed now and will continue to be crucial throughout the twenty-first century. Many fields, including the theatre, are waking up to the problems caused by a disregard of the interconnectedness between science and nature, body and mind, inner and outer, and are now actively searching for the Sense of the Whole.

In terms of the notion of self, Chekhov's technique offers a new understanding. To examine how a Chekhov actor deconstructs the ego, I have analyzed the points of contact between principles of Chekhov's technique and an eastern view through a cluster of spiritual, philosophical, and artistic influences. The creolization caused by this combination teaches the actor to understand his/her body-mind connection through a philosophical process in which the

traditional western notion of the self is replaced by an eastern one. This is done practically by shifting the focus in creating impulses from personal memories to an exploration of a variety of imaginary *qualities* of the generative *actions* used in performance; the “how” and the “what.” The side effect of experiencing an *entirely new* quality of action, as it is invoked by the psychophysical practices can greatly aid an actor to understand that his/her own personality is not solid, but transitory. In order to do this, an accomplished actor must be able to *experience* a generative action fully and yet maintain a distance from it. The actor will understand that the world s/he has created is an ontologically-different world, but one and the same as the real world. Thus, ideally, a Chekhov actor becomes a free creator of his/her world.

Chekhov’s vision for the future suggested that “the spirit will become a very honorable thing when we know how to manage it” and that “it will be a concrete tool, or means, which we will have to manage just as easily as any other means” (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for the Professional Actor* 141). The current technique’s developments in training the body by the means of imagination implicitly examine the spirit as “a concrete tool” by connecting it to the body. As such, they have a potential to deliver acting students and teachers from the current rationalistic and materialistic classroom predicament.

Indeed, this was Chekhov’s wish. Thus, by allowing, even embracing experimentation, the current pedagogy and practice of Chekhov’s technique has stayed true to the original intention of the investigation of the spirit “by artists and actors, but not by scientists” (Chekhov and Du Prey 141). Today, although there is no heir apparent to the original Master, whose effort was long, all-encompassing, and inventive, there is a collective will to use his principles in new and unusual ways, while preserving them in their original form. Almost a century after its inception, Chekhov’s technique appears to have been shifted from the margins. Through the collective synergy of master teachers, student-teachers, students, and Chekhov scholars, it has finally arrived in the mainstream of contemporary acting pedagogy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Sense of Space

The Exercise:

The actor is asked to “arrive” into the space itself. S/he is asked to “really” see the space. This means that s/he focuses on the specifics of the room. The actor is asked to take in the shapes, the colours, the objects and the shadows of the working space. The actor is asked to embrace any physical tension s/he might have and is asked to stay conscious and awake. The actor is asked to become “awake to the room” and “awake to yourself”, to accept whatever s/he senses and become conscious of it. The teacher can suggest to the actor that s/he can “unite” the personal tension with the sense of space by radiating it into the space. The object of the exercise is to experience “the here and the now.”

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To start from “where we are” – to sensitize the actor to the gap between “I” and “me” (“I” can only exist in the here and now, and “me” exists as an intellectual notion).
- To start familiarizing oneself with the idea of all work leading towards being awake and conscious.
- To emphasize the importance of “the present moment” as the only important moment in acting; to sensitize the actor to the gap between “now” and “time” (i.e. “now” is different than the arbitrary division of time: this minute, this second, etc.).
- To see ordinary things through a poetic prism.

The room starts having a different meaning to the actor. Upon crossing the threshold, the actor enters an imaginary space but by immediately connecting to the actual space, the imaginary line that was there initially (the line over which the actors crossed the threshold) is now gone.

Appendix 2

Space Expands and Contracts

The Exercise:

The actors are walking, changing tempo and direction, while focusing on the six dimensions: forward, back, sides, up and down. They are instructed to “fill the room with the breath and their presence.” The actors then find equal distance from one another. The space contracts so that they come closer to one another and the space expands again during which the actors imagine they are filling the expanded space with breath and presence. The actors then continue to stretch on their own, changing the tempo of their movement while continuing to focus on filling the space with their breath and presence. The breath is already an inner movement: to fill the space with the breath is to expand inwardly. Breath exercises are followed with the ball-throwing exercises.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Breath awareness in itself and in relation to inner gesture and space.

Appendix 3

Filling the Space/ Owning the Space

The Exercise:

Phase 1: The actor is asked to touch the whole space and fill the whole space with his/her energy/disposition and walk. The actor is then asked to deliberately change the tempo of the walk and then change it again.

Phase 2: The actor is asked to look at the space in front of him/her as s/he walks around the room and then to stop. The actor then imagines what is behind him/her and upon getting a clear image, is asked to look at what is behind him/her and to acquaint him/her with it and then finally touch it. This is repeated again with going into more detail (i.e. imagining a door and then looking at it).

Phase 3: On the third or fourth following repetition, the image of whatever the actor acquaints him/her with is to be “kept inside.” The actor integrates the image and walks with the image of the space taken from space by integrating it within him/her.

Phase 4: The actor is finally asked to transform the image somehow. The blue door might become a different colour, the crack in the wall might become larger, the set of chairs might get a different upholstery etc. This image is then “moved”. It is internally imagined in different centres of the actor’s body. The actor radiates the psychological and physical changes invoked by this into the surrounding space.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To work with the atmosphere of the space.
- To start integrating imagery into centres in one’s body.
- To radiate the effects of the Imaginary Centres.

Appendix 4

My Disposition

The Exercise:

As in “The Space” exercise, the actor is asked to stand in the space and start from where s/he is now and to take a good look of the space. The actor starts walking and while walking allows the arms to dangle (opposite arm and leg). The arm swing becomes bigger until it reaches its maximum and so do the steps. The actor is then asked to release his/her current disposition (tiredness, boredom, excitement, nervousness, anger, depression, joy etc.) into the space by radiating it and by breathing it out. The breath can slowly transform into a sound or the actor can continue simply breathing out his/her disposition whatever it is. As the disposition is being expressed the actor is asked to gradually diminish the arm dangle and the size of the steps to a “regular” size and then to a full stop and there the actor continues to radiate and breathe out his/her disposition out into the space. The actor is asked to “fill the entire space” with whatever the disposition is at that moment. The actor is now asked to notice if the disposition has changed in any way. (Most students report that their disposition has changed significantly during the exercise.)

Pedagogical Objectives:

- All objectives of the Space Exercise listed above.
- To become aware of the ability to transform one’s energy through large physicalization (in this case the arm dangle and large steps).
- To experience radiation.
- To learn how to transform any emotional state into a more neutral, empty state.

Appendix 5

Waking up the Space

The Exercise:

The actor is simply asked to “wake up” the space. This can be done as tickling the space, shaking it, pushing it, making noises, jumping, or any other means. The actor is asked to notice if his/her experience of the space has changed in any way. (Most students describe the space as “more awake.”)

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To emphasize the notion of space as changeable.
- To introduce the idea of rhythm of space (this will eventually translate into the very important concept of Atmosphere).

The students might start a class sleepy, frightened, rushed, overexcited or ready to work. Whatever their state is, by connecting to the working space in a different way – by crossing the threshold, seeing the space in a different way and waking it up – the students have a much greater chance to start working from the present moment. By using the familiar working space and changing it the student is becoming accustomed to the idea his/her ability to transform the space phenomenologically – by creating a new reality with body and mind. The basic space exercises also remind an actor to be playful and receptive at all times.

Appendix 6

Qualities of Movement: Curved and Straight

The Exercise:

Phase 1: The actor is asked to move with large movements at first. The actor is then asked to “experience a curved movement” and continue to move with large movements. The actor then gradually internalizes that large movement so that the outward physicality is a simple walk but internally there is a “curved” quality about it. The actor is asked to stop, close his/her eyes, and focus on his inner sensation and answer the question “Who is this person?” The inner sensation inspires the answer to the question.

Phase 2: The actor is asked to repeat the same with “experiencing the straight movement.”

Phase 3: The actor is asked to make an external transition from curved to straight movement.

Phase 4: S/he repeats the transition internally.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Learning how to internalize a large physical movement to create inner movement in a psychophysical way.
- Learning to recognize internalized large physicality as a sensation.
- Learning to transition from one sensation to another internally by transforming the inner movement.
- Understanding inner sensation as the first step towards characterization.

This is the first attempt to simultaneously “work-on-oneself” and “work on the part” which is characteristic of all Chekhov’s exercises. The result of internalizing a simple large movement is already the beginning of a psychophysical characterization although the actor doesn’t set out with any particular part in mind.

In this exercise the students are most surprised and interested by the question “Who is this person?” This is a beginner exercise so this is the first time such a question is asked. This question continues

to be asked throughout the training in many other exercises. The answers vary in that some students will answer in a word that has an emotional content: this is a happy person, sad, angry, funny etc.; others will answer in a word that is an image: this is a professor, a priest, a policeman, a prostitute, a nurse or a description of an image: a drug addict who hasn't slept in two days, a ditzzy blonde, a strict Nazi prison guard, a cruising gay man etc.

For the most part the straight movement will initially inspire the actors to imagine characteristics that are more emotionally restrained and generally negative qualities are attached to it and the curved movement will invoke more positive qualities. The "looser" curved inner movement results in images of a person with a less-inhibited psychology and the more contained and formal straight body will inspire the students to imagine the opposite.

The students are beginning to understand that each human "type" carries a certain physical and not only psychological quality. At this early stage they are sometimes instantly worried that they are going to perform by using this one tool and therefore not be specific enough. This is a premature worry and they need to be instructed that many other tools will become available to them in good time and that the rehearsal process and the performance will be scored by combining these skillfully. Even if they use only the "curved" quality of inner movement they will still need to play with relationships, intentions, rhythms. Most probably, however, they will further fine-tune the physicality by using many other tools.

Qualities of Movement: Molding, Floating, Flying, and Radiating

In *To the Actor*, exercises 3-6 are devoted to the four basic qualities of movement: molding, floating, flying and radiating (8-13). These exercises are most frequently used and repeated by all of the MICHA teachers in today's practice. They are now taught under the umbrella of "The Four Qualities Exercise." The exercises are described in detail in Franc Chamberlain's book *Michael Chekhov* (64-68) as well. The four qualities are connected to the four elements: molding to earth, floating to water, flying to air and radiating to fire. All of the exercises start with a broad movement with the whole body and then the actors gradually add a different quality to their

movements. These can then be done with a variety of actions, while speaking the text, to deepen the moments of transition, as an initial place of characterization, etc.

The Exercise:

- a) **Molding.** The actor is to imagine that s/he is moving through clay. Each movement molds the surrounding space. As the actor moves through the clay, the actor is asked to imagine how “in the air around me I leave forms which appear to be chiselled by the movements of my body” (Chekhov, *To the Actor* 8).
- b) **Flowing.** The actor is to imagine s/he is submerged under a body of water. The body of water is moving. The type of movement will depend on whether this is an ocean, river, pool or a stream. The actor is asked to imagine how: “My movements are floating in space, merging gently and beautifully one into another” (Chekhov, *To the Actor* 10).
- c) **Flying.** The actor imagines that s/he is flying through the space. S/he is not bound by gravity. The actor must move continuously and continue to change tempos rather than coming to a stop. “Your desire must be to overcome the weight of your body, to fight the law of gravity” (Chekhov, *To the Actor* 11).
- d) **Radiating.** The actor imagines a large fire and steps into that fire. The fire is harmless to the actor (just as breathing under water and flying through the air). The actor is asked to “continuously and in advance send the rays from (his/her) body into the space around (him/her), in the direction of the movement (he/she) makes and after the movement is made” (Chekhov, *To the Actor* 11).

Appendix 7

Staccato/Legato

The basic form of this exercise is used by all Chekhov teachers. Petit places a great deal of emphasis on this exercise:

It was the very first thing I learned, but it took me fifteen years to figure it out. I do it every day in class and I cannot go on stage without doing it first. Now most of my students can't go on the stage without first doing this as an energizing exercise to warm-up. But the whole method is in this exercise. Put different filters on it and get something new from it all the time. I do believe the whole method is in it.

The filters that Petit talks about are all the different qualities of movement such as molding, floating, flying and radiating; Four Brothers: Ease, Form, Beauty and Whole; Three Sisters: Falling, Rising and Balancing; Tragedy, Comedy and any sensation one can name. There are no limits to variations of this exercise.

The Exercise:

The actor starts in a basic standing position (an easy stance, legs about shoulder-width apart). The actor performs the following sequence of movements and always returns to the basic standing position.

To the right: Left foot anchored, lounge to the right, hands and arms stretched as far as they can go, palms extended, gaze directed to the right, radiate energy to the right, send out, back to standing.

To the left: Same as above, right foot anchored, lounge to the left.

Up: Lift the arms up along the side of the body, palms extended, gaze up, radiate energy upwards, send out, and back to standing.

Down: Arms reach toward the floor, knees bend, head follows body, gaze down, radiate energy down, send out, and back to standing.

Forward: Left foot anchored, lounge forward, hands and arms stretched out, radiate energy forward, send out, and back to standing.

Back: Right foot anchored, lounge back, hands and arms stretch back, radiate energy backward, send out, back to standing.

The actors are spread out in the space. The sequence is done twice with staccato quality and twice with legato quality, then once with staccato and once with legato quality.

Variation 1: The actors say the directional words “up,” “down,” as they move.

Variation 2: The actors do the sequence as an inner movement while standing still.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To use full body movement with different qualities and create an inner and outer rhythm.
- To become aware of the radiation of energy in the “hold” position and later in the inner movement.
- To become aware of the directions available to an actor as well as how these differ from a neutral position.
- To start to differentiate between form and substance in a psychophysical way.

Appendix 8

Four Brothers Exercise

The Four Brothers are Sense of Ease, Sense of Beauty, Sense of Form and Sense of the Whole. Applying any of the four “senses” during the rehearsal process can be very beneficial in discovering new impulses. I have seen it transform performances by lifting them from the ordinariness and by inspiring the actors to go beyond the “small and insignificant” performance. They are taught to the beginners but can be used at any level! Chekhov lectured on these, taught them and practiced them as well. Deirdre Hurst Du Prey remembers: “In person Michael Chekhov was slight, and moved with lightness and ease, the personification of ‘the feeling of ease’ and ‘weightlessness’ (M. Chekhov and Du Prey, *Lessons for the Professional Actor* 9). This exercise is taught by all MICHA faculty. It is included in the Actors’ Ensemble’s section in an example of how it is taught to the beginners. For more variations and a comparison to this version see Chamberlain’s *Michael Chekhov* (121-127).

The Exercise:

The actors cross the threshold into a space filled with one of the four qualities Ease, Beauty, Form and Whole, and move. This space can also be imagined as the Siberian bubble. The focus can be varied: standing still, moving with large movements and internalizing the movement. These four qualities considered by practitioners of Chekhov’s technique as integral to all artistic work.

Ease: Instead trying to “relax,” in the Chekhov technique, the students “work with sense of ease.” Once the students have crossed the threshold into the space they move with ease while performing large abstract movements. These can be curved, straight, fast, slow. The students can work on different qualities; mold, float, flow and fly with ease. The students can work on different actions; walk, kneel, stand or run with ease etc.

Beauty: The students imagine something they consider beautiful. They touch that image and examine it through their senses. Once they have examined it the students internalize that image and move with it. The same variations as with the ease can be used (i.e. working with qualities or actions). The students can fill the space beyond the threshold so that the entire room or the space beyond the room is filled with the quality of their chosen image. Beauty includes Sense of Ease.

Form: The space beyond the threshold is filled with “sense of form.” Every movement either creates forms in space or the space forms the students’ movement. The movements can be large, abstract or ordinary but every movement has a beginning, middle and an end. Form includes Sense of Ease and Sense of Beauty.

Whole: Each student considers the whole working space and moves within it imagining that s/he is at the centre of a whole while doing so. The student can “extend the whole” so that it is as large as “the entire universe” or as small as the boundaries of his/her own skin. The student is an integral part of whatever s/he chooses to concentrate on (“embrace with his/her consciousness”). Whole includes Sense of Ease, Beauty and Form.

Appendix 9

Three Sisters Exercise

The Three Sisters exercise was taught to Jack Colvin by Michael Chekhov towards the end of his life. This exercise hadn't made its way into print until Franc Chamberlain's *Michael Chekhov* in 2004. After describing the exercise Chamberlain offers only one comment: "Explore different characters which emerge from balancing, floating and falling" (131). However, in his lecture on *The Three Sisters* which he gave at the International Michael Chekhov Conference 2002, Colvin recounted how Chekhov suggested that the way to experiment with this is to attempt to do an entire play while all characters in it fluctuate between the experience of the three directions: raising, falling and balancing. As a movement rising is similar to expanding and falling is similar to contracting while balancing is similar to a basic standing position. Chekhov believed that during the course of the play, characters will continuously seek balance from one or the other direction. In his lecture on this exercise Jack Colvin commented: "This is a common element without which there is no play. What we know as conflict [Chekhov] puts in psychophysical terms."

In a demonstration during the lecture (I was one of demonstrators) we used the closing scene from *The Three Sisters*. Nothing was rehearsed but we knew our lines. Colvin simply asked us to internally fall, balance or rise as we are inspired by the text. What we experienced is that the rising was in inhalation and falling in exhalation and that balancing was that moment in between of "nowhere to go, nothing to do but be present." The rising and falling acted as a cohesive force between the actors by providing a sensation of a sense of the whole, a connection through inhalation and exhalation yet the inhalation and exhalation came at different times and were also conflicting, contracting and dispersing forces. When speaking we brought thought back again into the speech and gave it birth through the rising and falling of its sounds, its tendencies to movement, its depths, breaths and heights. The audience commented how watching it was a moving experience. Petit teaches this exercise in an elaborate way with four Variations.

The Exercise:

Variation 1: The work space is divided in three areas. They are named “falling,” “balancing,” and “floating.” The actors perform these movements in each of the areas. For floating, the feet are anchored but the body is rising up. For falling, the gravity pulls the actor down and s/he tries to resist finishing the fall, and for the balancing, the actor is finding the neutral state between the two. The actors then transition from one area to another as they wish. The actors are asked to take their time in the moment of transition.

Variation 2: The actors are seated in chairs. Falling down in a chair they say “no” and rising up they say “yes” and the middle point is the point of balance. At first this is done outwardly, the impulse is allowed to move the actor so that s/he doesn’t finish the journey from down to up each and every time. Following that the movement is internalized and “yes” and “no” are spoken accordingly.

Variation 3: This exercise is done in pairs. The inner raising and falling continues but the partnership now influences the direction of the raising and falling. The storyline develops between the partners. The lines used are: “I’m falling”, “I’m rising”, “I’m balancing”, “I’m watching you fall” and “I’m watching you rise” and “I’m watching you balance”.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Playing with a continuous inner movement.
- Playing with a partner while experiencing a continuous inner movement.

I have taught *The Three Sisters* exercise extensively since 2000. In my practice I have found it helpful to change the words “yes” and “no” with “I fall” and “I rise” and “I balance.” Also in order to foster the connection between the partners I use another variation where the text “I’m watching you fall” and “I’m watching you rise” may be used in order to help the actors receive the partner’s offers. Because of the intensity of the inner movement and the words “Yes” and “No,” the giving in appears to be much easier than receiving in Variations 2 and 3. The same can be done with

I have also experimented with doing the entire scene/play with breathing only while focusing on raising, falling and balancing and have found this invaluable at later stages of rehearsal. It helps the actors' impulses to gain more breath (pun intended). By communicating with breathing only the actors also experience a sense of the whole within which they can hear each other's inner life rather than words only.

Appendix 10

Character: Stick, Ball, and Veil

The Exercise:

A group exercise. The actor first explores the quality and the form of a stick. The body becomes a stick and s/he moves through the space as a stick. Once s/he finds it outwardly s/he internalizes this stick-like body into and performs an activity of his/her choice. The activities are very simple such as looking for something in one's purse, sitting down and getting up, writing a note, putting one's coat on etc. Once the activity is finished the "sticks" are allowed to interact in simple conversations or with movement only. The actor repeats the same process while exploring the quality of a ball and then that of a veil.

In the following example I used Petit's exercise and built on it to lead the students into a long character exploration. The effects of Petit's exercise were instant. The sticks communicated with a distance. They were rigid. "A stick" gives out an impression of someone "stuck up," "very serious," "square," or "superior." A group of sticks resembled a group of scientists at a conference. "The balls" created a happy havoc. We were all of a sudden in a dance club or a hockey arena. A bunch of people were yelling and jumping with enormous energy. Infectious laughter permeated the room. The whole group (thirty students) ended up in a big group -hug screaming with joy. "The veils" were slow and gentle and seemed understanding and interested in one another. There was a prevailing emotion of wistfulness in the room. We could have been at a funeral. I asked the students which of the three human functions each of the objects are related to. They guessed immediately: The stick was related to "thinking," the ball to "will," and the veil to the "feeling" function.

We continued in my two variations of this exercise by adding a Quality of Movement (Molding, Flying, Floating or Radiating) to the Stick, Ball and Veil exercise and improvising by changing the size, weight, colour or texture of the stick, ball and veil. For example the veil can be wet and velvety and the stick can be made of fiberglass, the ball can be made of lead. My aim was to combine qualities and blend these with the three Imaginary Bodies to create a character. Each Creative Individuality will create a certain type of a "thinker," "feeler," or "willer."

We proceeded with picking one of the three as a prevailing trait of their character and engaged the physicality of the body area specified by Chekhov. The “thinker’s” general area is the head, neck or shoulders; the “feeler’s” is the torso and the “willer’s” south of their belly button. Once they students were engaged in this, we added the specifics of character’s Imaginary Centre to the mix (a colourful butterfly in the stomach or a cold heavy lead sphere in the forehead, etc).

Once this was done I asked the students to “hide the technique,” in other words to internalize it. We ended up with a parade of the new-found bodies and walks to the delight of the whole group.

The reactions to the exercise range from some students confirming that their thoughts about their character’s prevailing trait was correct to some others now being less sure about the prevailing trait of their character. Every character thinks feels and has will impulses. In Chekhov’s characterization, it is important that an actor uncovers which function is most important to emphasize or change in some way. Usually this function of the character is different than the actor’s. Naturally all three may be different and then the actor needs to deal with each one separately.

The Stick-Ball-Veil Exercise is an excellent way for the students to realize that it is possible to physicalize and then internalize thinking, feeling and willing. Their analysis of the character’s similarities and differences can become an exciting psychophysical element of characterization.

Appendix 11

Basic Psychological Gestures

Chekhov believed that even though the actor rationally believes s/he wants to play the part, his/her will must be strengthened at the outset otherwise there is a danger that an actor will simply act obedient rather than develop a real desire to play the part. The set of nine basic Psychological Gestures was developed by Chekhov himself and taught in his Hollywood studio as a prerequisite for exploring Character PG. Basic PGs are designed to strengthen the actor's will simply through the actor's physical effort: "The PG must be strong in order to be able to stir and increase our will power, but it should never be produced by means of unnecessary muscular tension (which weakens the movement rather than increases its power)" (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 77).

The following basic gestures and their objective groups are taught by MICHA faculty. These nine gestures have not been published as such. They were passed on to MICHA faculty by Jack Colvin and Joanna Merlin. Every subsequent PG (Character, Relationship, Important Moment, and Fantastical) is a version of one of the basic PGs or a few combined. The quality, speed, weight, and colour are elements with which the actor changes the basic gesture, giving it a specific intention.

Push: annihilate, humiliate, punch, stop, shock, provoke, dominate, stab, jolt, intimidate, demean, and flatten.

Pull: awaken, consume, grasp, seduce, seize, fill (myself), devour, possess, take, receive.

Open: illuminate, offer, dazzle, uncover, reveal, purge, heal, free, awaken, expose, give.

Embrace: protect, unite, suckle, nurture, merge, and give.

Wring: manipulate, bend, fascinate, unravel, fool, seduce, charm, trick, oil, twist, beguile, trap, mold.

Lift: elevate, lionize, inspire, release, soar, strengthen, exalt, transcend, give.

Tear: strip, break, rip, eviscerate, punish, shock, reveal.

Close: mask, hide, bury, escape, protect, surround.

Hit: destroy, punish, frighten, hurt, strike, affect, reach, knock down (humiliate).

The Exercise:

The teacher usually demonstrates his/her version of a basic PG and then asks the students to either try that form or come up with their version of a large, continuous gesture which has a beginning, middle, and end and which is a pulling, opening, embracing, wringing, tearing etc. gesture. Once the students have repeated this gesture externally they are asked to add a sound to it. Finally the gesture is internalized. The gesture is only effective if it somehow affects the actor's psychology. Chekhov refers to this as the gesture "permeating the body" which then carries the movement "into the radiation." Only such a gesture can be successfully internalized.

MICHA faculty agrees that the beginner actor must spend some time with the basic PGs. The PG must not be mistaken for a still pose but rather must be understood as a *continuous movement* with a beginning, middle, and an end. Chekhov student Jack Colvin suggests that these should be done in class for about a year and likens them to musical scales: "Basic gestures are like scales. You might never use them but they will come in handy" (Colvin, *Chekhov Conference* 2002).

Variation 1: I created this variation and have found it exceptionally useful in introducing practical applications of PGs. It is done in front of an audience in pairs. The actors begin seated in two chairs. They are asked to follow their inner movement and to precisely observe that of their partner while simultaneously verbalizing: "I'm expanding", "I'm contracting", "I'm standing my ground", "I'm watching you expand", "I'm watching you contract" and "I'm watching you stand your ground". They allow the partnership to influence their inner expansion and contraction and to let these impulses take them into physicality which leads them into the space. As a result, the movement and the storyline develop effortlessly and organically between the partners.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To experience the origin of an intention/objective as the inner movement of an internalized PG.
- To understand intention as a direction in space.
- To understand how storyline is created through action/reaction.

Appendix 12

The Objective Ball Game

The Exercise:

This game is done with the whole ensemble. One actor is “it.” S/he stands at one end of the room with a juggling ball lying in front of his/her feet. “It” repeatedly turns away from the ensemble, counts to three and then quickly turns towards the ensemble again. During the time “it” is turned away the ensemble moves forward and freezes as soon as “it” turns towards it. If “it” catches someone moving s/he is sent to the back of the room. If the ball is taken from its original place “it” can guess once who’s got it. If “it” guesses right the ball is put back in its place and the person who had it returns to the starting position. If “it” guesses wrong s/he turns away and counts to three again. The objective of the game is to get the ball from underneath “its” feet and somehow bring it to the back of the room.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- Developing an ensemble, becoming a part of “a whole.”
- Developing patience in achieving an objective.
- Understanding the difference between tactic, strategy, and action.
- Developing an instinctive ability for choice of action, fluidity of actions and ease.
- *Physicalizing a desire.*

The first game usually finishes quickly. As the “it” becomes more sophisticated, the ensemble members quickly realize that a strategy and tactics as well as working together will help them achieve victory. For example: one of the physically larger members will block “its” view, while several others will pretend they are holding the ball behind their backs. Or the person actually holding the ball deliberately gets him/her caught so that he would be sent to the end of the room and therefore wins. Or the actors create a train to the end of the room and pass the ball when “it” is turned away. The second victory is always a collective one.

In this game, the ensemble inadvertently physicalizes a desire to win. The bodies are filled with anticipation, energy. Those caught jump, moan, scream, laugh, and throw themselves on the floor beating

it, etcetera. In the analysis following the game the actors are asked to try and pinpoint where was *the desire* located during the game (this is in relation to their body). At first the actors point to their legs and chest but then they include the arms and eyes and shoulders and feet. The answer eventually comes to: “Everywhere! In the whole body.” When asked “why” it is easy for the actors to answer “because we wanted to win!”

This exercise makes the actor psychophysically aware of the fact that in order to play an objective s/he has to have a *desire* to win. Naming the objectives and thinking up clever tactics isn’t enough in itself. The game helps the students understanding of how desire works on the level of sensations as they realize that it must fill their entire being.

Appendix 13

Desire/Justification

The Exercise:

Variation 1: The exercise is done in a group. Actors are asked to pick a spot on the wall which they want to physically touch and then to walk around the room with the attention directed towards it. The actors can come close to the spot, move as far away as possible from it or turn their back to it. Finally the actors are asked to drop the objective completely and regain it several times. Only then do they get the permission to touch the spot.

Variation 2: The exercise begins as a Sensations Exercise. It follows the above steps but with the added element of moving “joyfully,” “cautiously,” “fearfully,” etc.

Variation 3: The actors are sitting down. They are instructed to have an inner desire to stand up but instead to lie down.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To understand physically the difference between obedience and desire.
- To experience the value of obstacles when playing a desire.
- To break down the objective in to three components:
 - Desire/Obstacle.
 - Sense of Truth (How).
 - Justification

Fielding points out that playing of the objectives often becomes an obedient activity by the actor rather than a desire. In other words the actor decides through the means of analysis “what” the objective is but does not go after it with his/her entire being.

As this exercise progresses, all the actors experience a much stronger desire to touch the spot on the wall because they are forbidden to do so. In order to play a desire the actor must find a valid obstacle. Both the desire and the obstacle are in the function of the will. Also, the actor must find the truthful path to fulfilling the obstacle. In this exercise, this is exemplified by the different way of

approaching the wall either by using the sensation of distance in the space or through the use of sensations *per se*. This is the function of feeling. Finally, in order to experience true desire an actor must create a justification for that particular objective. Justification will surface parallel with the desire even if the actor isn't instructed to justify. Justification is function of thinking.

In this exercise, the actors come up with a variety of ways to justify the desire: I need to touch the spot on the wall because it is beautiful, safe, healing, my secret, etc. Each time s/he drops the objective and regains it, the justification comes into play as a motivational force. When an actor is finally allowed to touch the spot, the "how" of that action will become elaborate. For example, one actor will touch it as it were a lover or a life source, the other will prick it with his finger repeatedly, the third one will whisper something to it, the fourth actor will slap it, etc. This same care to truthfully justify a desire must be used when fulfilling any objective within a scene.

Appendix 14

Ball-throwing

These are introductory voice and speech exercises taught by Sarah Kane.

Three Balls with Words

The Exercise:

Phase 1: The group is throwing a juggling ball in a circle. The ball is introduced as “an object that one should get familiar with.” The actors then “throw” their own name to someone in the circle. Following that they “throw” the other person’s name. Two more balls are brought in. When throwing the balls the students should attempt to throw the ball to the area of the other person’s heart. Ideally the ball has a curved trajectory. While continuing to throw the balls, the actors now travel around the space. The actors speed up and slow down their pace and change direction frequently (the teacher can also call these out). Finally they use the sensation of gentleness and throw and catch the ball “gently.”

Phase 2: The balls are given words attached to them. Any three words can be used. In all the subsequent multiple variations of this exercise Kane uses nonsense words from “Jabberwocky” such as “brilig,” “mimsy,” “slithy.” She also makes up her own nonsense words such as “bifcy-bafcy,” “zayo,” “hulaleli,” and so on.

Ball-throwing with Pattern

The Exercise:

Phase 1: The actors are in a circle throwing the ball. The teacher throws a ball and a syllable, HUM, (rhymes with room) to someone in the circle who passes it on. The teacher introduces four more syllables: HAM (rhymes with gum), HEM (hem of a skirt), HIM, HOM (rhymes with Tom), and each is attached to a ball. The actors can throw the balls to each other in pairs for a while to get acquainted with the syllables if there is time.

Phase 2: A pattern is created so that the ball never comes to the same actor twice but that everyone has the ball at least once. The teacher

starts the pattern and receives the ball last to finish the pattern. The syllables are then “thrown” according to this pattern.

In each class Kane’s ball-throwing exercises change in qualities (staccato, legato, cautious, light, heavy, etc). Kane also puts focus on different the body parts in relation to speech so that one time the students are asked to wake the feet up but another to wake the hands or knees or the mouth and so on.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To convey the basic idea that words are movements.
- To convey the concept of preparing. The preparation is made visible and an actor is made aware of it.
- To awake the desire to prepare physically for speech. “The better I prepare, the freer the word is.”

Appendix 15

Comedy/Tragedy = Styles

In *To the Actor*, Chekhov describes the following sensations which are present in different styles:

1. Tragedy is made easier to play by imagining the presence of some superhuman being.
2. Drama needs a purely human attitude and artistic truth in given circumstances.
3. Comedy requires of the performer four main conditions: stressing a predominant psychological feature of the character; feeling of ease; strong radiations of gay and happy qualities; and quick tempo interspersed with slow moments.
4. Clowning calls for the presence of gay and humorous sub-human beings (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 144-45).

For the most part in Chekhov classes, the exercises are done to facilitate all these. In this exercise the styles themselves are characterized through a sensation. To my knowledge, within MICHA only Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan use this exercise. The Actors' Ensemble's attempt to preserve it in the practice is therefore significant. In the case of the Comedy segment the Actors' Ensemble's version varies slightly from the original.

Tragedy

The Exercise:

This exercise is done in a group. The actors cross the threshold into a newly created space where they are to imagine a presence of something larger than themselves. Chekhov says:

It should be a kind of *superhuman Presence!* The actor must allow this "Double-ganger" (literally, double-walker) – this spectre, wraith or apparition – to act *through* the character which inspires it. The actor will soon make a pleasant discovery that he doesn't need to exaggerate his movements, his business or his speech. Neither does he need to inflate himself psychologically by artificial means nor to resort to empty pathos in order to achieve the greatness, the

true dimensions of a tragic mood. (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 139; emphasis in original)

Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan's instructions are very similar to those of Chekhov.

Comedy

The Exercise:

This exercise is done for a short time in a group and then individually.

Phase 1: The first part of the exercise which focuses on the "positive expectation" is The Actors' Ensemble's contribution to the original version. The actor is asked to step over the threshold into a space of positive expectations; "something good is about to happen, everything will end well." The quality of the space is light and quick. This quality permeates everything else that follows. Next, the actor is asked to add a "predominant psychological feature" of his/her character by using a quality of movement or a sensation. These are often vices or faults in a comedy: "greedy," "jealous," "vain," "stupid," "strict," "pious," "cowardly," to name a few." Here Chekhov's advice ought to be followed: "whatever outstanding quality you choose for your comedy character. It must be performed with the utmost inner truth and without even the slightest attempt to be 'funny' (*To the Actor* 140).

Phase 2: The actors proceed to "enter" the imaginary space one by one "with great expectations and with that quality" and come to the centre of the room, stop and exit.

This little individual performance is Pugh and Sloan's touch. I have taught this exercise as well as the tragedy exercise as a preparation to whatever style the students were about to work in. Both Comedy and Tragedy exercise were an effective way to prepare the students to play a style through a psychophysical method. The intangible presence and the expectations led to a tangible type of movement and expression which was visible in the expression.

Clown

The Exercise:

This is a group exercise. The group simply imagines “*subhuman beings*” being present in the space. Chekhov describes this in the following way:

Let us consider the humourous retinue of the clown as consisting of subhuman beings. To them [the clown] gives access to his body and his psychology. Together with his spectators he enjoys their whimsical, eccentric and odd appearances through himself. [...] There can be one or many of these pixies, gnomes, elves, brownies, trolls, nymphs or other “good folk” of that species who take possession of the clown, who make us feel that he is not quite a human being. But all of them have to be nice, sympathetic, lovable, mischievous, funny otherwise the clowning might become repulsive. (M. Chekhov, *To the Actor* 142)

I have not adapted these exercises in my practice because I found it extremely difficult to imagine these beings. The one time I tried it in class, I remember the results of the exercise as repulsive just as Chekhov suggests. I myself felt extremely self-indulgent. I attributed this to our imaginations’ inexperience with imagining such other-worldly creatures.

Appendix 16

Three-Word Variations

Stepping the Three Words

The Exercise:

Variation 1: The actors warm-up with the balls. They now step the distance of the ball throw and attempt to “speak with the feet.”

Variation 2: Individual actors or pairs “step” three words for example: “brillig,” “mimsy,” and “slithy.” They can step one step per syllable or one step per word.

The actors imagine the path and the distance they just stepped and imagine that the words move through that path while speaking them standing still.

Variation 3: The group is in a circle. One by one the actors lounge with a pointing gesture and speak the three words in a sequence. They repeat speaking the three words with an inner gesture. (The ball throw has now been replaced with a pointing gesture.)

Three Words with Qualities

The Exercise:

Phase 1: The actor connects to three images (one for each word) and continues to speak them with the image informing the sound. For example hot coal for “brilig”, a feather for “mimsy” and a sponge for “slithy.”

Phase 2: The actor does the same with three colours. For example: Blue for “brilig,” yellow for “mimsy,” and purple for “slithy”.

Phase 3: The actor adds a shape and a colour to the words.

Phase 4: The actor creates a gesture for each word.

The questions which the actor can ask now are: Are these gestures similar or not? Are the words a “thing-in-itself”; do they have a life independent of their meaning? The speaker in Chekhov’s technique considers the very important difference between “am I now speaking the word itself” or “am I commenting, playing the

relationship to the meaning of this word?" The two invoke different states: the first relationship is without judgment and includes a sensation (what Steiner called "beautiful speech") and the second is generated by thought which includes judgment.

At the end of the exercises the students can compare the gestures that they have created for the combination of sounds and syllables – the words. Often times we will find that the qualities and gestures created by different actors for the same word will be similar. For example, in the session I participated, the qualities of movement for "mimsy" and "slithy" had a lot of commonalities. "Mimsy" was light and mischievous for most of the actors and "slithy" was legato, snake-like, curvy and lugubrious. "Mimsy" was a jump or an upward direction and "slithy" was done in the horizontal (table) plane. "Brillig" varied the most in its shape, but the quality of it was staccato and direct and quick.

Pedagogical Objectives:

- To create an inner image for the collection of sounds and syllables this makes a word.
- To understand image as character. Yellow, square and heavy is the character.

Appendix 17

Focus on Sound: Monologues with Inner Gesture and Qualities

This voice and speech exercise taught by Sarah Kane offers a point of connection with acting and movement training. The first PG I've described in Joanna Merlin's section was an archetypal PG accompanied by a sound or a word. Now the sound and the word have an inner gesture. This word comes out of the movement but also plays on the movement. As a result the inner life is affected through syllables and sounds and vice versa. As I've mentioned in the introduction, in Chekhov's technique as taught by MICHA, teachers will team together and experiment. This is a holistic practice in which the teachers do not worry about boundaries of their specialization. The following exercise could be taught from any of the three perspectives. This type of unifying all the elements that are traditionally taught separately unifies "work on the self" with "work on the part": body, voice and mind. Chekhov suggested that this should be done but he did not leave us the guidelines as to how this should unfold. It is a credit to MICHA's faculty that by working side by side the acting, voice, and movement specialists have made strides in merging the "work on the self" and "work on the part" and made such holistic thinking integral in the teacher training as well.

Phase 1: In this exercise the actor starts with pointing in many directions. The *point* is a large continuous gesture. The actor then points and says "look" simultaneously and then points, relaxes from the gesture and says "look." The actor repeats the same with a *fling* and the word "never." After a while the flinging gesture is internalized.

Phase 2: The actor now applies the inner gestures while saying a monologue. The monologue is done with an inner gesture of flinging and then with an inner gesture of pointing.

Phase 3: The actor then adds a quality to the inner gesture. S/he flings *tenderly* or *cautiously* or points *strongly* etc. The Qualities of Movement exercise can be also combined so that the actor uses fire, water, air and earth with the gestures. This is applied to a monologue.

Phase 4: In pairs, with eyes closed, partners listen to each other's creation of character reached through different inner gestures and sensations. Partners now watch each other's monologue.

Phase 5: The actors now create a gesture specific for the monologue. They are not only focused on the intention but also on the sound of the monologue. Partners now watch each other's monologue.

Phase 6: Partners comment on what they've seen and heard.

In Monologues with Gestures the actor is using character of the sounds contained in group of sounds “never” and “look” sensations and a gesture in many different ways. The initial phase of this sequence comes from Steiner's teaching. Yet Steiner had very precise theory about the specificities of the speech formation which Sarah Kane doesn't follow or teach. If she did, the Chekhov speech would divide sounds into “distinct,” “fluid,” “closed,” and “membering,” and the students would be taught that lyric style of speech forms through the labial sounds, dramatic style through the lingual sounds, the epic style through the palatal sounds, etc. Kane has stayed true to Steiner's ideas in principle but in her pedagogy the character's speech is found through experimentation typical for Chekhov's technique. Steiner himself said: “Do not theorize. Every rule in language has exceptions. Hard can become soft, we can find softness of a consonant in a word” (Steiner, *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. 105).

Appendix 18

The Use of Personal Imagery

Petit was very helpful in answering my query about Personalized Substitution, a technique taught by the teachers of Strasberg's Method. This is a method where the partner is substituted by an image of a person from one's own life with whom one has a similar relationship to the one in the play. I wanted to know whether I needed to substitute Substitution (pun intended) if I were to work in Chekhov's technique and what could possibly replace it. I was reluctant to give up the substitution because has been my "secret weapon" in auditions for decades and I've also taught it successfully to my students. Also, in the first few years of working with Chekhov's technique I used substitution in conjunction with it and created my own hybrid.

I asked Petit the following question: "Let's imagine a scene that I have cancer and I'm in a hospital. My mother comes to visit me. Would I use the image of my own mother to create a relationship in such a scene?"¹ I was hoping that Petit could offer his view on this aspect of Chekhov's teaching which is confusing to many. After some discussion of what is the sample scene's most important aspect we specified that scene was about the mother-daughter relationship. I wanted to know if on one hand an actor does the Chekhov work (Archetype PG, centre, a quality or a sensation) why couldn't one on the other hand imagine s/he talks to someone familiar whose presence will stir her/him emotionally and *combine* the two. Petit answered with an example from his practice:

I directed a play *Memoir* with Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan. It was about Sarah Bernhard's memories and her male secretary. (Fern and Ted) knew a lot of the text and were very clear about what they were doing. What we needed was a relationship and so we set out to find a gesture that supports that relationship. She created a gesture where she was falling and he created a gesture in which he was catching her and this was their relationship which came out of the facts of the play. We worked with this gesture for two months so that we would find the "how" of the gesture, which is the quality. For example: If she falls (gesture) aggressively (quality) then he will catch her (gesture) reluctantly (quality). There is a quality in the making of this gesture which then creates the whole tension of

the scene. We scored the relationship this way: now in this scene we will relate with this gesture and quality. Now in this moment I will lovingly fall towards you and you will openly accept me or I throw myself at you and you in the last minute catch me. This has nothing to do with your mother specifically but it has probably a lot to do with your mother.

I was still dissatisfied and wanted to know why while “he was catching me and I was falling in his arms” couldn’t he be substituted for someone I know well catching me? “What will that add?” asked Petit. “It will give my partner a quality which will be consistent for me.” “Well then do it. I’m not against it,” he answered.

This was a moment of “aha” for me in understanding the use of impulses generated from personal memory within Chekhov’s technique. When working within Stanislavsky’s System and Strasberg’s Method² I would just attach an image of my mother to my partner. This would help me retain a consistent sensation throughout the scene which combined with intentions would translate into several tactics. Yet, all of this would stay on the level of my personal experience.

Petit’s answer clarified to me that in Chekhov’s technique the sensation induced by a familiar image is simply not enough. A Chekhov actor needs to be active in his/her will (intention and tactics) *and* also needs to add a much more detailed score of inner action to his own personal sensations. In the above-described example then, the image of my mother stirs a sensation within me but this then needs to be shaped artistically. Within this method this means reaching for an archetype and translating archetypal quality into several inner gestures. Chekhov’s theory suggests that only the inner gestures will enable an actor to make a connection with a relationship archetype which has a *universal* vibration. (This makes it an archetype and this is a reason that it is an archetype.) Such an archetype moves through me, the artist, in a way that it would move through only me which makes it creative and individual, the Creative Individuality! Yet I have taken a step beyond my personality. Once again Petit echoed the eastern approach by invoking a universal and not a personal impulse.

NOTES TO APPENDIX 19

¹ See a similar example in “Personal” in Chapter Four. Chekhov was questioned by the members of the Group Theatre about the value of using personal images in the work. Chekhov described how he “completely concentrated at the moment of [his] father’s death” and “used it in *King Lear*” but added that an actor has to “be influenced by one’s own imagination” (*Lessons to the Actor* 43).

² The early Stanislavsky System and Strasberg’s Method have the same approach.

Bibliography

- Ahern, Geoffrey. *Sun at Midnight: The Rudolf Steiner Movement and the Western Esoteric Tradition*. Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1984.
- Anom, Ida Bagus. "Lecture on Balinese Dance." Bali Conservatory. Ubud, Bali. 2004.
- Archer, William. *Masks or Faces?: A Study in the Psychology of Acting*. London: Longmans, 1888.
- Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double*. Trans. Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Press, 1958.
- Barba, Eugenio. *Beyond the Floating Islands*. 1st ed. New York: PAJ Publications, 1986.
- . *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theatre Anthropology*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Barfield, Owen. *Romanticism Comes of Age*. London: Anthroposophical Publishing Co., 1944.
- Barnes, Henry. *A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time*. Vista Ser. vol. 1. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1997.
- Bates, Brian. *The Way of the Actor: A Path to Knowledge & Power*. 1st ed. Boston: Shambhala, 1987.
- Beaton, Alistair, and Nikolaï Vasilevich Gogol. *The Government Inspector*. London: Oberon Books, 2005.
- Bennett-Goleman, Tara. *Emotional Alchemy: How the Mind Can Heal the Heart*. 1st ed. New York: Harmony Books, 2001.
- Berger, Douglas L. *The Veil of Maya: Schopenhauer's System and Early Indian Thought*. Binghamton, NY: Global Academic Pub., 2004.
- Berry, Cicely. *The Actor and His Text*. 1st American ed. New York: Scribner, 1988.

- Bhattacharyya, Narendra Nath. *History of the Tantric Religion: A Historical, Ritualistic and Philosophical Study*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Manohar, 1982.
- Bilowitz, Ira J. *Joanna Merlin. Imagination, Body, and Intellect*. Connecticut: Backstage (2000).
- Black, Lendley C. *Mikhail Chekhov as Actor, Director, and Teacher*. Theater and Dramatic Studies. No. 43. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1987.
- Blavatsky, H. P. *The Key to Theosophy: Being a Clear Exposition, in the Form of Question and Answer, of the Ethics, Science, and Philosophy for the Study of which the Theosophical Society Has Been Founded*. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1972.
- . *The Secret Doctrine: the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1963.
- Bogart, Anne, and Tina Landau. *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*. 1st ed. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2005.
- Bogdanov, Gennadi, perf. *Meyerhold's Theater and Biomechanics: a Film by the Mime Center, Berlin in Collaboration with Gennadi Bogdanov*. videocassette. Mime Centrum Berlin. Berlin, 1999.
- Boleslavski, Richard. *Acting: The First Six Lessons*. New York: Theatre Arts, 1945.
- Boyd, Navazo. "Reflection." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2003.
- Brahe, Per. Bali Conservatory Classes. Bali, Indonesia. August 2004.
- . "Bali Lecture". Bali Conservatory. Bali, Indonesia. 3rd August 2004.
- . *Studio 5 Website*. 6 February 2006. <<https://www.perbrahe.com>>
- . "Taksu and Balinese Egoless Theatre." Bali Conservatory. Bali, Indonesia, August 2004.
- Brandon, James R. "Ze-ami and the Theory of No." *Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- Breaux, Charles. *Journey into Consciousness: The Chakras, Tantra, and Jungian Psychology*. London: Rider, 1990.
- Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Atheneum, 1978.
- . *There Are No Secrets: Thoughts on Acting and Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1993.

- . *Threads of Time: A Memoir*. London: Methuen Drama, 1999.
- Bstan ʒdzin rgya, mtsho. "His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Dharma Talk." Kalachakra. Toronto, 2004.
- Bstan ʒdzin rgya, mtsho, et al. *Dzogchen, the Heart Essence of the Great Perfection: Dzogchen Teachings Given in the West*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2000.
- Bstan ʒdzin rgya, mtsho, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Dge-legs-dpal-bzañ-po Mkhas-grub. *The Kāalachakra Tantra Rite of Initiation for the Stage of Generation: A Commentary on the Text of Kay-Drup-Ge-Lek-Bāel-Sang-Bāo*. London: Wisdom Publications, 1985.
- Bstan ʒdzin rgya, mtsho, and Jinpa Thupten. *Essence of the Heart Sutra: The Dalai Lama's Heart of Wisdom Teachings*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002.
- Byckling, Liisa. "Michael Chekhov as Actor, Teacher and Director in the West." *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* 4 (2002).
- Callow, Simon. *Being an Actor*. London: Methuen, 1984.
- . "Is It Time to Change the Way We Act?" *Daily Telegraph* 23 November 1999: 4.
- Carlson, Marvin A. *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*. Expanded ed. Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1993.
- Carnicke, Sharon M. *Stanislavsky in Focus*. Singapore: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998.
- Castle, William. *Texas, Brooklyn and Heaven*. Videorecording. Nostalgia Video, 1996.
- Chamberlain, Franc. *Michael Chekhov*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- . "Michael Chekhov on the Technique of Acting." *Twentieth Century Actor Training*. Ed. Alison Hodge. New York: Routledge, 2000. 79-98.
- . "Michael Chekhov: Pedagogy, Spirituality, and the Occult." *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* 4 (2003): 1-7.
- Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich, and Eugene Kerr Bristow. *Anton Chekhov's Plays*. 1st ed. New York: Norton, 1977.
- Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich, and Paul Schmidt. *The Plays of Anton Chekhov*. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

- Chekhov, Michael. *On the Theatre and the Art of Acting: The Six Hour Master Class*. New York: Applause, 1991.
- . *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- . *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*. New York: Harper & Row, 1953.
- Chekhov, Michael, and Deirdre Hurst Du Prey. *Michael Chekhov Lessons for Teachers of His Acting Technique*. Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 2000.
- . *Lessons for the Professional Actor*. 1st ed. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1985.
- . *The Actor Is the Theatre*. A Collection of Michael Chekhov's Unpublished Notes and Manuscripts on the Art of Acting and the Theatre, 1977.
- Chekhov, Michael, and Mel Gordon. *On the Technique of Acting*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1991.
- Chekhov, Michael, Andrei Kirillov, and Bella Merlin. *The Path of the Actor*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005.
- Chekhov, Michael, Charles Leonard, and Nikolaï Vasilievich Gogol. *Michael Chekhov's To the Director and Playwright*. 1st Limelight ed. New York: Limelight Editions, 1984.
- Chekhov, Michael, et al., perf. *From Russia to Hollywood: the 100-Year Odyssey of Chekhov and Shdanoff*. Videocassette. Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2002.
- Chèodrèon, Pema. *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*. 1st ed. Boston: Shambhala, 2001.
- Childs, Gilbert. *Steiner Education in Theory and Practice*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1991.
- Cohen, Robert. *Acting One*. 2nd ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Pub. Co., 1991.
- Coldiron, Margaret. *Trance and Transformation of the Actor in Japanese Noh and Balinese Masked Dance-Drama*. Studies in Theatre Arts; vol. 30. Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2004.
- Cole, Toby. *Acting: a Handbook of the Stanislavski Method*. New York: Lear, 1947.
- Cole, Toby, and Helen Krich Chinoy, eds. *Actors on Acting: the Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the Great Actors of All Times as Told in Their Own Words*. Rev. ed. New York: Crown Publishers, 1970.

- . *Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater*. Rev. ed. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.
- Colvin, Jack. "The Three Sisters Lecture." Choate Rosemary Hall, Connecticut: MICHA, 2002.
- Coomber, David. "Closer Journal" THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2007.
- Craig, Edward Gordon. *On the Art of the Theatre*. London: Mercury Books, 1962.
- Craig, Edward Gordon, and J. Michael Walton. *Craig on Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Croyden, Margaret. *Conversations with Peter Brook, 1970-2000*. 1st ed. New York: Faber and Faber, 2003.
- Dauer, Dorothea W. *Schopenhauer as Transmitter of Buddhist Ideas*. Berne: Lang, 1969.
- Davis, Carol, et al. *Theatre East and West Revisited*. Claremont, CA: Pomona College Theatre Department for the Claremont Colleges, 2003.
- Dèurckheim, Karlfried. *Hara: The Vital Center of Man*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2004.
- Dorsey, Kristina. *Rediscovering Chekhov: An Acting Technique Finds a New Audience*. Hartford: Day, 1999.
- Eccles, John C. *The Human Psyche*. Gifford Lectures. 1979. New York: Springer International, 1980.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Tr. Willard R. Trask. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Ephros, Guravich and Petrovsky. "Chekhov's Academy of Arts Questionnaire" *The Drama Review* 27.3 (1923).
- ETRA. The International Michael Chekhov Workshop & Festival 2004 Brochure. Ed. Suzana Nikolić. Groznjan, Croatia: MICHA and ETRA, 2004.
- Frailigh, Sondra Horton. *Dancing into Darkness : Butoh, Zen, and Japan*. Pittsburgh, Pa. University of Pittsburgh Press; Dance Books, 1999.
- Fried, Sochi. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.

- . "Von Horvath Journal" THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- Feuerstein, Georg. *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy*. Boston: Shambhala, 1998.
- Fielding, Scott. Personal Interview. 22 June 2002.
- Fletcher, Jackie. *Mnemonic*. 2002. 27 March 2006. <www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews>
- Fortier, Mark. *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Freeman, Anthony. *Consciousness : A Guide to the Debates*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003.
- Friedell, Egon. *A Cultural History of the Modern Age: the Crisis of the European Soul from the Black Death to the World War*. Trans. Charles Francis Atkinson. Intr. Alfred Polgar. Vol. 2. 3 vols. New York: Knopf, 1964.
- Gardiner, Robert. *Teacher Testimonials*. 2003. 15 May 2006. MICHA. <www.Michaelchekhov.org> George, David E.R. "Buddhism as/in Performance: Analysis of Meditation and Theatrical Practice." *Emerging Perceptions in Buddhist Studies*. No. 11. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1999.
- George, David E.R. *Buddhism as/in Performance*. New Delhi: D.K.Printworld Ltd., 1999.
- Gilgan, Luke. "Theatre of the Absurd Journal." THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2004.
- Glass, Newman Robert. *Working Emptiness : Toward a Third Reading of Emptiness in Buddhism and Postmodern Thought*. Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion No. 01. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, and Charles Lock Eastlake. *Theory of Colours; Translated by Charles Lock Eastlake. [New Impression with Index]*. Cass Library of Science Classics, No. 3. London: F. Cass, 1967.
- Gogol, Nikolaei Vasilievich, and Michael Beresford. *The Government Inspector: A Comedy in Five Acts*. Studies in Slavic Language and Literature. Vol. 9. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996.
- Gogol, Nikolaei Vasilievich, Christopher English, and Richard Arthur Peace. *Petersburg Tales; Marriage; The Government Inspector*. New York: Oxford U P, 1995.
- Goldstein, Joseph, and Jack Kornfield. *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation*. 1st ed. Boston: Shambhala, 1987.

- Goleman, Daniel. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books, 1998.
- . *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.
- Goleman, Daniel, Paul Kaufman, and Michael L. Ray. *The Creative Spirit*. New York: Dutton, 1992.
- Gombrich, E. H. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts. 1956. 4th ed. London: Phaidon Press, 1972.
- Gorchakov, N. *Stanislavsky Directs*. London: Minerva Press, 1968.
- Gordon, Mel. "Michael Chekhov's Life and Work: A Descriptive Chronology." *The Drama Review* 27 (Fall) 1983. 3-21
- . *The Stanislavsky Technique, Russia: a Workbook for Actors*. New York: Applause, 1987.
- Gray, Paul. "Stanislavski and America: A Critical Chronology." *Tulane Drama Review*. Special edition, "Stanislavski in America." 1964.
- Green, Michael. *The Russian Symbolist Theatre: An Anthology of Plays and Critical Texts*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1986.
- Greene, Maxine. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. The Jossey-Bass Education Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.
- Grotowski, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Pref. by Peter Brook. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.
- . "Tu Es Le Fils De Quelqu'un (You Are Someone's Son)." *The Drama Review* 31.3 (1985). 30-41
- Guenther, Herbert V. *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*. Berkeley: Shambhala Publications, 1971.
- Guenther, Herbert V., and Chogyam Trungpa. *The Dawn of Tantra*. Berkeley: Shambhala, 1975.
- Haas, Ingrid. "The Door Exercise." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2002.
- Hagen, Uta. *A Challenge for the Actor*. New York: Macmillan Canada, 1991.
- . *Uta Hagen's Acting Class*. New York: Applause, 2002.
- Hagen, Uta, and Haskel Frankel. *Respect for Acting*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.

- Harris, Sam. "Killing the Buddha." *The Shambhala Sun*. March 2006: 73.
- Hayward, Jeremy W. *Letters to Vanessa: On Love, Science, and Awareness in an Enchanted World*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997.
- Hebert, Janick. "The Blue Room Journal." THA 201 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2004
- Hecht, Ben. *Ben Hecht's Spectre of the Rose*. Videorecording. Republic Pictures Home Video, 1989.
- Heine, Steven, and Dale S. Wright. *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Hitchcock, Alfred, dir. *Alfred Hitchcock's Spellbound*. Videorecording. Anchor Bay Entertainment, 1945.
- Hodge, Alison. *Twentieth Century Actor Training*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Hoffman, Ethan, and Mark Holborn. *Butoh : Dance of the Dark Soul*. New York: Aperture, 1987.
- Hull, S. Loraine. *Strasberg's Method as Taught by Lorrie Hull: a Practical Guide for Actors, Directors, and Teachers*. Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Pub., 1985.
- Hutchins, H. J., and Ruth Ohi. *And You Can Be the Cat*. Annick Kindergarten Collection. Willowdale, ON: Annick Press, 1992.
- Jensen, Eric, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998.
- Johnson, Anika. "The Rope Exercise." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- Johnston, Barbara. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- Johnson, Don Hanlon, ed. *Bone, Breath & Gesture. Practices of Embodiment*. Berkley: North Atlantic Books, 1995.
- Johnstone, Keith. *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1981.
- Jung, C. G. *Four Archetypes – Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*. Bollingen Series. Vol. 20. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1970.
- Jung, C. G. *The Essential Jung*. Ed. and intr. Anthon Storr. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983.

- Kane, Sarah. "The Movement and Voice Interplay." Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival 2004. Groznjan, Croatia., 2004.
- . "Forming Micha." Ed. Cynthia Ashperger. Toronto, 2007.
- . Personal Interview. 11 June 2001.
- Kember, David. *Action Learning and Action Research: Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning*. London: Kogan Page/Stylus, 2000.
- Kempen, Harry J.G. "Mind as Body Moving in Space. Bringing the Body Back into Self-Psychology." *The Body and Psychology*. Ed. Henderikus J. Stam. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Kokorin, Slava. "Imaginary Body." The International Michael Chekhov Conference 2000. Eugene O'Neill Theater Center Connecticut. Kominsky, Jane, and Wellspring Media. *First Lesson: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*. Videocassette. New York: Wellspring Media, 1998.
- Konijn, Elly. *Acting Emotions: Shaping Emotions on Stage*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2000.
- Kornfield, Jack. *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry: How the Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path*. New York: Bantam Books, 2000.
- . *A Path with Heart: A Guide through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1993.
- . *Living Buddhist Masters*. Santa Cruz: Unity Press, 1977.
- Kott, Jan. "Why Should I Take Part in the Sacred Dance?" *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. Eds. Lisa Wolford and Richard Schechner. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Krasner, David. *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*. 1st ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Krishnamurti, J. *The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1991.
- . *Life the Goal*. Eerde, Holland: Star Publishing Trust, 1928.
- Krishnamurti, J., and Raymond Martin. *Krishnamurti: Reflections on the Self*. Chicago: Open Court, 1997.
- Langhans, Jobst. "Imagination in Chekhov's Technique." Groznjan, Croatia, 2004.
- Law, Alma H. "Chekhov's Russian Hamlet." *The Drama Review* 27:3. 1983.

- Leach, Robert. *Stanislavsky and Meyerhold*. Stage and Screen Studies; Vol. 3. Oxford:: P. Lang, 2003.
- Learning Styles Network (National Association of Secondary School Principals), and St. John's University (New York NY). *Student Learning Styles and Brain Behavior: Programs, Instrumentation, Research*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1982.
- Lecoq, Jacques Jean-Gabriel Carasso, and Jean-Claude Lallias. *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- . *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*. London: Methuen, 2000.
- Leder, Drew. *The Absent Body*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Li, Tyson. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- . "Von Horvath Journal" THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- Leonard, Aynsley. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2005.
- Lesser, Elizabeth. *The New American Spirituality: A Seeker's Guide*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 1999.
- Levy, Jerre. "Children Think with Whole Brains: Myth and Reality." *Student Learning Styles and Brain Behavior: Programs, Instrumentation, Research*. Ed. Learning Styles Network. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1982.
- Lewis, Robert. *Method – or Madness?* New York: S. French, 1986.
- Magliaro, Rosanna. "A Journal of the Techniques Used to Bring Flora to Life." THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2002.
- Malaev-Babel, Andrei. "2002 Release of *To the Actor* ." The International Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival 2002. Choate Rosemary Hall. Wallingford, CT, 2002.
- Malaev-Babel, Andrei. "Composition in Michael Chekhov's Technique." Michael Chekhov International Conference. Choate Rosemary Hall, Wallingford, Connecticut, U.S.A., 2001.
- Malik, S. C., and Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts. *Rāupa-Pratirāupa – Mind, Man, and Mask*. New Delhi: Aryan Books, 2001.
- Mamet, David. *True and False: Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor*. 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1997.

- Marowitz, Charles. *The Other Chekhov: A Biography of Michael Chekhov, the Legendary Actor, Director & Theorist*. New York: Applause, 2004.
- . "Stanislavsky vs. Chekhov." *Stanislavsky and Directing: Theory, Practice, Influence*. University of Toronto, Graduate Centre for Study of Drama, 2006.
- Mayer, Gladys. *The Mystery-Wisdom of Colour: Its Creative and Healing Powers*. London: New Knowledge Books, 1970.
- McDermott, Phelim. Personal Interview. 14. July 2006.
- McLuhan, Eric, and Frank Zingrone. *Essential McLuhan*. Toronto: House of Anansi, 1995.
- McRoberts, Ian. "Journal" THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2005.
- Meisner, Sanford, and Dennis Longwell. *Sanford Meisner on Acting*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1987.
- Meerzon, Yana. "Forgotten Hollywood." *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* 4 (2004).
- Mekler, Eva. *The New Generation of Acting Teachers*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin, 1987.
- Merlin, Bella. *Beyond Stanislavsky: The Psycho-Physical Approach to Actor Training*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- . *Konstantin Stanislavsky*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- . Pre-Symposium Workshop. University of Exeter, 2006.
- . "Re: Greeting from Cynthia Ashperger." E-mail to Cynthia Ashperger. 23 January 2006
- Merlin, Joanna. *Auditioning: An Actor-Friendly Guide*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 2001.
- . "Colour Warm-Up." Email to Cynthia Ashperger. 24 April 2006.
- . "Doppelganger Exercise." International Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival 2004. Groznjan, Croatia, 2004.
- . Personal Interview. 19 June 2001.
- . "Relationship Gestures in Groups." The International Michael Chekhov Conference 2000. Eugene O'Neill Center, CT, 2000.
- . "Response." Email to Cynthia Ashperger. 2005. September 6.

- . Psychological Gesture Workshop. Michael Chekhov International Conference and Festival 2002. Choate Rosemary Hall, CT, 2002.
- Meyer, T. H., and Elisabeth Vreede. *The Bodhisattva Question: Krishnamurti, Rudolf Steiner, Annie Besant, Valentin Tomberg, and the Mystery of the Twentieth-Century Master*. London: Temple Lodge, 1993.
- Meyer-Dinkgräfe, Daniel. *Consciousness and the Actor: A Reassessment of Western and Indian Approaches to the Actor's Emotional Involvement from the Perspective of Vedic Psychology*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996.
- . *Performance and Consciousness*. Performing Arts International. Vol.1 Pt.4. Reading: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999.
- . *Theatre and Consciousness: Explanatory Scope and Future Potential*. Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2005.
- MICHA. Brochure for the International Michael Chekhov Conference 2000. Connecticut: MICHA, 2000.
- . "The Intercultural Aspects of Michael Chekhov's Technique." The International Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival 2004. Groznanj, Croatia., 2004.
- . Master Classes in the Michael Chekhov Technique. 2006.
- Mindell, Arnold. *River's Way: The Process Science of the Dreambody: Information and Channels in Dream and Bodywork, Psychology and Physics, Taoism and Alchemy*. London: Routledge, 1985.
- Mindell, Arnold, Sisa Sternback-Scott, and Becky Goodman. *Dreambody: the Body's Role in Revealing the Self*. Santa Monica: Sigo Press, 1982.
- Munk, Erika. *Stanislavski and America: An Anthology from the Tulane Drama Review*. Ed. Erika Munk. Introd. by Richard Schechner. 1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1966.
- Namkhai, Norbu, and John Shane. *The Crystal and the Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen, The Teachings of Namkhai Norbu*. London: Routledge, 1986.
- Naydler, Jeremy. *Goethe on Science : A Selection of Goethe's Writings*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1996.
- Nesfield-Cookson, Bernard, and Rudolf Steiner. *Rudolf Steiner's Vision of Love: Spiritual Science and the Logic of the Heart*. Bristol: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1994.
- The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: IbLexicon Pub., 1987.

- Nhâãat, Hòanh. *Cultivating the Mind of Love: The Practice of Looking Deeply in the Mahayana Buddhist Tradition*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1996.
- . *Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999.
- . *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.
- . *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991.
- Nhâãat, Hòanh, and Daniel Berrigan. *The Raft Is Not the Shore: Conversations Toward a Buddhist-Christian Awareness*. New York: Orbis Books, 2001.
- Nhâãat, Hòanh, and Robert Ellsberg. *Thich Nhat Hanh: Essential Writings*. Modern Spiritual Masters Series. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.
- Nicholls, Moira. "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself." *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*. Ed. Christopher Janaway. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. xiv.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Raymond Geuss, and Ronald Speirs. *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Walter Arnold Kaufmann. *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Modern Library ed. New York: Modern Library, 2000.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Eliseo Vivas. *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Tr. James W. Hillesheim and Malcolm B. Simpson. Introd. by Eliseo Vivas. Chicago: Regnery, 1965.
- Nisbet, Hugh Barr. *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*. London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1972.
- Novak, Elaine Adams. *Styles of Acting : A Scenebook for Aspiring Actors*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985.
- Oida, Yoshi, and Lorna Marshall. *The Invisible Actor*. London: Methuen, 1997.
- Olsen, Mark. *The Golden Buddha Changing Masks: Essays on the Spiritual Dimension of Acting*. Nevada City, CA: Gateways/IDHHB Pub., 1989.
- O'Meara, John. *The Thinking Spirit: Rudolf Steiner and Romantic Theory*. North Bay, Ont.: John O'Meara, 2000.
- O'Reilly, Ryan. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Higher Education Group. *Ontario Journal of Higher Education*. (1994): v.

- Palmer, Parker J. *Active Life: Leader's Guide*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.
- . *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. 1st ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Partsch-Bergsohn, Isa, and Harold Bergsohn. *The Makers of Modern Dance in Germany: Rudolph Laban, Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Co., 2003.
- Pavis, Patrice. *Languages of the Stage*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.
- . *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Pavis, Patrice, and Christine Shantz. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- Payne, E. F. J., and éCedomil Veljačić. "Schopenhauer and Buddhism." *Wheel*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Ceylon Buddhist Publication Society, 1970.144-146.
- Petit, Lenard. "The Archetype Is the Will Force of the Character." Unpublished Article. New York.
- . "Gargoyle to Gesture." *The International Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival*. Choate Rosemary Hall. Wallingford, CT, 2002.
- . Personal Interview. 10 June 2001.
- . "Origins of Exercises." Email to Cynthia Ashperger. 25 September 2005.
- Pitches, Jonathan. *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*. Routledge Advances in Theatre and Performance Studies 3. London: Routledge, 2006.
- . *Vsevolod Meyerhold*. Routledge Performance Practitioners. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Powers, Mala. *Michael Chekhov: On Theatre and the Art of Acting: The Six-Hour Master Class. A Guide to Discovery with Exercises*. New York: Applause, 1992.
- . "The Past, Present and Future of Michael Chekhov." *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Pronko, Leonard Cabell, ed. *Theater East and West: Perspectives toward a Total Theater*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
- . "Three Visions of Noh." *Theater East and West; Perspectives Toward a Total Theater*. Ed. Leonard Cabell Pronko. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

- Pugh, Ted. Personal interview. 23 June 2002.
- Pusch, Hans. *Working Together on Rudolf Steiner's Mystery Dramas*. 1st ed. Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1980.
- Ray, Reginald A. *Secret of the Vajra World: The Tantric Buddhism of Tibet*. 1st ed. Boston: Shambhala, 2001.
- Redish, Martin H. *The Logic of Persecution: Free Expression and the McCarthy Era*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2005.
- Rice, Martin P. *Valery Briusov and the Rise of Russian Symbolism*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1975.
- Richards, Thomas, and Jerzy Grotowski. *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Riley, Jo. *Chinese Theatre and the Actor in Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.
- Sargisson, Amelia. "Mediations on Rehearsing Closser with the Michael Chekhov Technique." THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2007.
- Sampson, Edward E. "Establishing Embodiment in Psychology." *The Body and Psychology*. Ed. Henderikus J. Stam. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Schlegel, August Wilhelm von, and Alexander James William Morrison. *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. 2nd ed. London: G. Bell, 1900.
- Schumacher, Claude. *Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre, 1850-1918*. Theatre in Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Sedlar, Jean W. *India in the Mind of Germany: Schelling, Schopenhauer and their Times*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982.
- Seldes, Marian. "A Sort of Religion." *American Theatre*. July/August (2003).
- Senelick, Laurence. *Wandering Stars: Russian Emigré Theatre, 1905-1940*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992.
- Michael Chekhov: the Dartington Years*. 2002. Videocassette. Martin Sharp.
- Simmer-Brown, Judith. *Dakini's Warm Breath : The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*. 1st ed. Boston: Shambhala, 2001.
- Sloan, Fern. Personal Interview. 20 June 2002.
- Sousa, David A. *How the Brain Learns: A Classroom Teacher's Guide*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1995.

- Spence, J.I. "Achievement American Style: The Rewards and Costs of Punishment." *American Psychologist* 40 (1985): 1298-95.
- Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques*. Updated with new pref. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1983.
- . *Theater Games for Rehearsal: A Director's Handbook*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1985.
- . *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1986.
- Sprenger, Marilee. *Learning and Memory: The Brain in Action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999.
- Staff, Dharma Publishing. *Ways of Enlightenments*. Berkley: Dharma Publishing, 1993.
- Stam, Henderikus J. *The Body and Psychology*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Stanley, Stephanie "Von Horvath Journal." THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2006.
- Stephenson, R. H. *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science*. Edinburgh Studies in European Romanticism. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.
- Stanislavsky, Konstantin. *An Actor Prepares*. Tr. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. Introd. by John Gielgud. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1972.
- . *Building a Character*. New York: Routledge/Theater Arts Books, 1989.
- . *My Life in Art*. Tr. J.J. Robbins. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1952.
- . *Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage*. 2nd ed. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- Stanislavsky, Konstantin, and David Magarshack. *Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage*. 2nd ed. London: Faber and Faber, 1967.
- Stanislavsky, Konstantin, and Hermine I. Popper. *Creating a Role*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Steiner, Rudolf. *Esoteric Development: Selected Lectures and Writings*. Rev. ed. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2003.
- . *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Spiritual Processes in Human Life and in the Cosmos*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1994.

- . *Cosmic Memory: Prehistory of Earth and Man*. 1st Harper & Row pbk. ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.
- . *Creative Speech. The Formative Process of the Spoken Word*. London: Rudolph Steiner Press, 1978.
- . "The Nature of Man." *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1971.
- . *Friedrich Nietzsche: Fighter for Freedom*. New Jersey: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1960.
- . *Goethe the Scientist*. New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1950.
- Steiner, Rudolf, and Paul Marshall Allen. *Education as an Art*. 1st ed. Blauvelt, NY: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1970.
- Steiner, Rudolf, and Christopher Bamford. *How to Know Higher Worlds: A Modern Path of Initiation*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1994.
- Steiner, Rudolf, and Michael Howard. *Art as Spiritual Activity: Rudolf Steiner's Contribution to the Visual Arts*. Vista Series. Vol. 3. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1997.
- Strasberg, Lee, and Robert H. Hethmon. *Strasberg at the Actors' Studio: Tape-Recorded Sessions*. New York: Theater Communications Group, 1991.
- Strasberg, Lee, and Evangeline Morphos. *A Dream of Passion: The Development of the Method*. 1st ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1987.
- Stephenson, R. H. *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science*. Edinburgh Studies in European Romanticism. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.
- Strindberg, August. *Six Plays*. Tr. Elizabeth Sprigge. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955.
- . *The Vasa Trilogy: Master Olof, Gustav Vasa, Erik XIV*. Tr. and intr. by Walter Johnson. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959.
- Suzuki, Shunryū, and Trudy Dixon. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. 1st rev. ed. New York: Weatherhill, 1999.
- Suzuki, Tadashi. *The Way of Acting: The Theatre Writings of Tadashi Suzuki*. 1st ed. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1986.
- Thornton, Samuel. *A Movement Perspective of Rudolf Laban*. London: Macdonald and Evans, 1971.

- Toltskaya, Rosa. "Anatoli Vasilyev's Players Theatre." *The International Michael Chekhov Workshop and Festival*. Choate Rosemary Hall. Connecticut, 2001.
- Toporkov, Vasiliei Osipovich. *Stanislavski in Rehearsal*. London: Methuen, 2001.
- . *Stanislavski in Rehearsal: The Final Years*. New York: Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 1998.
- Trotter, Robert J., and James V. McConnell. *Psychology: The Human Science*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978.
- Trungpa, Chogyam. *Meditation in Action*. Clear Light Series. Berkeley: Shambhala, 1970.
- Trungpa, Chogyam, John Baker, and Marvin Casper. *Cutting through Spiritual Materialism*. Berkeley: Shambhala, 1973.
- Trungpa, Chogyam, and Carolyn Rose Gimian. *The Essential Chogyam Trungpa*. 1st ed. Boston: Shambhala, 1999.
- . *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. Boston: Shambhala, 1988.
- Wachtel, Michael. *Russian Symbolism and Literary Tradition: Goethe, Novalis, and the Poetics of Vyacheslav Ivanov*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.
- Walker, Sophia. "Reflection: The Journey of an Actor in No Exit." THA 200 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2002.
- Wangh, Stephen. *An Acrobat of the Heart: A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the Work of Jerzy Grotowski*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.
- Washington, Peter. *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1993.
- Watson, Ian, et al. *Negotiating Cultures: Eugenio Barba and the Intercultural Debate*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002.
- Welham, Tim. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2005.
- Werneberg, Kate. "Journal." THA 101 Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, 2005.
- West, James D. *Russian Symbolism: a Study of Vyacheslav Ivanov and the Russian Symbolist Aesthetic*. London: Methuen, 1970.

- Wiles, Timothy J. *The Theater Event: Modern Theories of Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Wilkinson, Roy. *The Spiritual Basis of Steiner Education*. London: Sophia Books, 1996.
- Wolfe, Pat. *Brain Matters: Translating Research into Classroom Practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.
- Wolford, Lisa, and Richard Schechner. *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Worley, Lee. "Interview: On Acting." *Performing Arts Journal* III/1 (1978): 60.
- Zarrilli, Phillip B. *Acting (Re)Considered: Theories and Practices*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Zinder, David, ed. *Body-Voice-Imagination: A Training for the Actor*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Index

A

Aakimov, Nikolai, 62
 Aberystwith, 114
 Aberystwyth, 114
 Academy Award, 66, 67, 161, 260
Acting
 The First Six Lessons, 61, 340
 Active Analysis, 80, 121, 128, 138, 147, 179, 201
Actor is the Theatre, The, 19, 39
Actor Prepares, An, 2, 293, 354
 Adler, Stella, 6, 10, 50, 61, 76, 119, 160, 230
 Ahern, Geoffrey, 32
 Albers, Kathy, 121
All That Jazz, 160
 Alten, Jurgen v., 69
 America, 10, 28, 61, 62, 66, 67, 71, 102, 104, 105, 118, 119, 120, 143, 147, 152, 160, 161, 162, 251, 261, 271, 345, 348, 349, 350, 353
 American Method, 50, 67, 76, 122, 129, 178, 231, 244, 293
 Amherst, Massachusetts, 101
 Ananyev, Vladimir, 139, 151, 241, 294
 Andrees, Jorg, 152
animus and anima, 120
 Anom, Ida Bagus, 154, 157, 162
 Anouilh, Jean, 103
 Anthroposophy, 3, 4, 9, 14, 15, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 55, 59, 60, 72, 120, 130, 133, 136, 141, 157, 160, 178, 187, 189, 235, 237, 292, 339
Antigone, 103
Archangel Michael, 202

Archetypal Gesture, 128, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 255
 archetype, 205, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 264, 269, 336
 Aristotle, 81, 82, 105
 Arnold, Dawn, 102, 121
 Artaud, Antonin, 52, 339
Artists, 256, 297
 Ashperger, Cynthia, 115, 119, 121, 145, 209, 287, 347, 349, 352
 atmosphere, 8, 28, 41, 67, 73, 80, 89, 97, 99, 103, 110, 121, 122, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172, 178, 180, 181, 183, 233, 236, 237, 251, 262, 294, 305
 audience, 5, 25, 53, 54, 56, 71, 72, 75, 78, 80, 85, 86, 89, 90, 91, 104, 122, 131, 133, 149, 154, 156, 196, 231, 240, 248, 258, 259, 260, 261, 263, 278, 281, 315
 Australia, 152
Awake and Sing, 111
 Azuma, Katsuko, 199

B

Baars, Marjolein, 69, 102, 103, 256
 Bali, 53, 109, 110, 122, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 162, 339, 340
 Bali Conservatory, The, 109
 Balinese, 5, 53, 103, 108, 109, 120, 154, 157, 158, 159, 162, 198, 200, 224, 226, 339, 340, 342
 Barnes, Henry, 20
Becket, 159
 Bely, Andrei, 15, 48, 62
 Berlin, 26, 68, 102, 152, 160, 161, 256, 340
 Berry, John, 66, 203
 Bertolucci, Bernardo, 160

Beyond Stanislavsky, 79, 138, 139,
151, 179, 241, 271, 284, 294, 295,
349
Black, Lendley C., 23
Blavatsky, Madam, 30, 31, 33, 59
Blok, Alexander, 62
Blue Room, The, 274, 276, 346
body, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 18, 26, 27, 29, 31,
32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42,
44, 45, 47, 52, 53, 55, 61, 73, 74,
78, 80, 81, 82, 85, 88, 89, 97, 109,
112, 113, 114, 116, 122, 126, 128,
134, 135, 137, 140, 142, 144, 149,
152, 154, 158, 160, 163, 167, 170,
172, 173, 174, 175, 178, 179, 182,
183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189,
190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197,
198, 201, 202, 205, 207, 209, 210,
212, 213, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221,
222, 224, 225, 226, 229, 230, 232,
233, 238, 242, 245, 246, 248, 250,
251, 252, 256, 258, 259, 260, 261,
262, 263, 264, 270, 271, 272, 276,
278, 280, 282, 285, 287, 289, 291,
295, 298, 300, 301, 305, 307, 309,
310, 311, 312, 316, 318, 319, 321,
323, 327, 330, 333
Body, Voice, Imagination, 285
body-mind, 6, 11, 18, 31, 32, 38, 41,
45, 47, 53, 55, 73, 81, 88, 114,
163, 193, 195, 238, 271, 298, 300
Boleslavsky, Richard, 10, 61, 119
Bongers, Else, 69
Brahe, Per, 7, 103, 109, 126, 151,
152, 153, 161, 284, 285, 295
Brandeis University, 102
breath, 3, 6, 34, 54, 83, 120, 123, 141,
145, 174, 191, 194, 216, 217, 218,
223, 227, 229, 240, 241, 242, 248,
259, 304, 306, 310, 316
Brecht, Bertolt, 104, 107
Brecht, Bertolt, 52, 108, 292, 300
Britain, 143, 160
Broadway, 126, 137, 159, 160
Buddha, 29, 30, 31, 32, 346, 351
Buddhism, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15,
16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31,
32, 33, 34, 41, 42, 43, 44, 53, 55,

56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 82, 85, 86, 109,
111, 120, 154, 186, 191, 224, 225,
239, 343, 344, 346, 347, 351, 352,
353

Buddhism as/in Performance

Analysis of Meditation and

Theatrical Practice, 53, 344

Buddhist, 10, 15, 30, 53, 60, 85, 86,
109, 120, 343, 346

Butoh, 5, 11, 76, 108, 109, 199, 200,
226, 275, 343, 346

C

Callow, Simon, 71

Caroll, Lewis, 219

Caron, Leslie, 67, 118

Case Western Reserve University,
102

Case, The, 2

centring, 33, 50, 83, 104, 111, 120,
141, 147, 153, 163, 186, 187, 188,
189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 197,
198, 199, 200, 201, 204, 207, 213,
225, 226, 229, 233, 246, 255, 260,
267, 279, 284, 285, 291, 294, 298,
305, 314, 319, 329, 335

Chabrol, Lucie, 160

chakra, 10, 112, 186, 188, 189, 191,
192, 200, 224, 225, 226

Chamberlain, Franc, 9, 41, 59, 206,
309, 315

Changing Body Symposium, The, 11,
140

character, 2, 3, 7, 16, 19, 22, 37, 39,
42, 43, 44, 56, 57, 60, 65, 79, 80,
83, 89, 94, 97, 103, 106, 108, 111,
113, 121, 123, 128, 129, 139, 148,
149, 156, 157, 170, 176, 178, 179,
188, 191, 192, 193, 197, 199, 200,
204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211,
213, 214, 215, 218, 219, 223, 224,
226, 229, 232, 234, 236, 237, 238,
240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246,
247, 248, 251, 252, 253, 255, 256,
257, 258, 259, 262, 264, 266, 268,
271, 275, 281, 282, 283, 288, 291,

292, 294, 295, 318, 319, 328, 329,
332, 333, 334
Chekhov Theatre Studio, 51, 67
Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich, 1
Choate Rosemary Hall, 102, 127,
343, 348, 350, 352, 355
Christianity, 9, 10, 15, 29, 32, 35, 42,
351
Cimino, Michael, 160
Closer, 93, 343, 353
Clytemnestra, 209, 210
Cohen, David and Bryan, 102
Coldiron, Margaret, 158, 224
Colvin, Jack, 69, 152, 155, 203, 244,
315, 320, 321
compassion, 29, 42, 189, 214, 255,
263, 298
composition, 8, 22, 116, 229, 234,
239, 241, 263, 264, 278
concentration, 19, 53, 58, 86, 93, 94,
108, 121, 170, 173, 197, 231, 237,
292, 293
consciousness, 5, 6, 10, 11, 23, 27,
31, 33, 43, 44, 46, 49, 57, 59, 83,
86, 93, 94, 106, 107, 121, 131,
139, 141, 142, 158, 160, 179, 187,
191, 216, 217, 218, 223, 225, 226,
231, 232, 237, 238, 246, 248, 261,
314
Cooper, Garry, 67, 118
Copeau, Jacques, 52
Correy, Jeff, 203
Cotter, Kevin, 119
Craig, Gordon, 52, 343
Creative Individuality, 2, 4, 9, 56, 78,
94, 95, 139, 155, 164, 247, 292,
318, 336
Creative Speech, 131, 141, 144, 217,
219, 221, 222, 223, 227, 287, 293,
334, 355
Crickets on the Hearth, The, 202
Croatia, 101, 102, 103, 119, 121, 143,
160, 235, 343, 347, 349, 350
Crucible, The, 103, 211, 277
Cutting, Blair, 67, 147
Cynthia Ashperger, 287

D

Dalai Lama, 11, 22, 42, 55, 59, 341
Dartington Hall, 18, 39, 51, 65, 66,
67, 69, 71, 95, 114, 131, 142, 167,
242
Dartington Years, The, 71, 150, 227,
256
Dean, James, 67
Decroux, Etienne, 146, 148
Deluge, The, 1, 202, 267
Deluge, The, 1, 202, 267
Dixon, Graham, 142, 152
Don Juan Comes Back From the War,
213
Don Quixote, 107
Drazhin, Andrei, 151
Dugar-Jabon, Nelly, 152

E

Education as an Art, 20, 355
Eisenstein, Sergei, 52
Elmhirst, Dorothy, 39, 42, 67
Emerson College, 68, 142
emotional memory, 293
Emptiness, 11, 23, 85, 86, 87, 89, 344
Entertaining Mr. Sloane, 104
Erik XIV, 1, 202, 355
ethics, 19, 29
Eurythmy, 9, 26, 39, 141, 151, 245,
293
Evita, 160

F

Far Country, A, 160
feeling, 14, 24, 27, 35, 37, 38, 45, 58,
84, 85, 105, 110, 116, 120, 122,
143, 156, 179, 181, 184, 185, 186,
187, 188, 189, 190, 204, 205, 207,
209, 211, 219, 229, 237, 240, 241,
257, 259, 261, 262, 269, 284, 285,
289, 293, 294, 295, 313, 318, 319,
325, 328
Feldenkreis method, 110
Feurestein, Georg, 56
Fiddler on the Roof, 160

Fielding, Scott, 69, 104, 126, 127,
133, 232, 250, 263, 271, 278
Filozov, Albert, 138, 140, 270
Finland, 143
first guiding principle, 79, 242
First Studio, 9, 15, 24, 45, 46, 62, 77,
131
Fitzmaurice Voicework, 110, 122
five guiding principles, 5, 9, 22, 47,
55, 77, 78, 95, 114, 163, 229, 284,
297
Florida International University, 102
Follies, 160
Four Brother, The, 177, 187, 313
France, 11, 65, 126, 146, 147, 160,
161, 254, 255, 261, 269, 272
Frazer, 1, 202
freedom, 5, 19, 21, 78, 94, 95, 105,
118, 148, 150, 152, 154, 169, 201,
220, 233, 238, 281, 298, 299
Freidank, Ragnar, 69, 102, 133, 251
Friedell, Egon, 59
From Russia to Hollywood, 69, 71,
115, 118, 155, 157, 203, 227, 342

G

Gardner, Robert, 115
Garland Hamlin, 104
Germany, 57, 60, 65, 68, 118, 133,
141, 142, 143, 161, 251, 352, 353
gesture, 6, 22, 104, 134, 140, 144,
145, 169, 182, 183, 219, 221, 223,
237, 239, 240, 243, 244, 245, 246,
247, 248, 249, 250, 252, 262, 264,
265, 266, 267, 268, 272, 273, 274,
275, 277, 280, 286, 289, 291, 295,
304, 320, 321, 331, 333, 334, 335
Gilbert and Sullivan, 219
Goethe, 4, 6, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20,
21, 23, 25, 27, 48, 54, 57, 58, 93,
236, 241, 242, 292, 344, 350, 351,
354, 355, 356
Goetheanum, 141, 292
Gordon, Mel, 3, 9, 51, 67, 342
Government Inspector, The, 1, 103,
122, 180, 202, 211, 232, 339, 344
Gray, Paul, 61

grotesque, 62, 104, 150, 214, 215,
255, 257, 258
Grotowski, Jerzy, 110, 353, 356
Group Theatre, 76, 77, 92, 131, 137,
337
Grožnjan, Croatia, 103
Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch, 59
Gustavus Adolphus College, 102, 115

H

Hagen, Uta, 6, 10, 50, 76, 119, 135,
178, 179, 184, 224, 345
Hall, Sir Peter, 160
Hamlet, 1, 52, 62, 90, 107, 135, 143,
202, 347
hara centre, 120, 188, 190, 192, 199,
226
Hatfield, Hurd, 142, 161
Heard, Gerald, 42
Hebert, Janick, 276
Hedda Gabler, 113
Hermes, 29
Higher Self (Higher Ego, Higher I), 3,
9, 24, 25, 37, 38, 39, 44, 56, 72,
78, 84, 106, 122, 130, 139, 155,
156, 163, 165, 171, 218, 223, 283,
298
Hinduism, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,
24, 25, 41, 43, 44, 46, 51, 53, 55,
56, 57, 83, 108, 109, 154, 157,
186, 188, 189, 225, 239
Hitler, Adolf, 118
Hodge, Alison, 114, 341
Hollywood, 65, 66, 69, 71, 77, 98,
115, 118, 119, 155, 157, 180, 203,
227, 320, 342, 349
Howe, Tina, 104

I

ImageWork, 115, 151, 192, 200, 227
Imaginary Body, 50, 83, 103, 113,
123, 153, 171, 192, 201, 203, 205,
206, 207, 211, 212, 213, 214, 218,
234, 255, 257, 258, 279, 283, 284,
291, 292, 298, 347
Imaginary Invalid, The, 232

imagination, 2, 4, 8, 11, 16, 18, 19,
 23, 26, 27, 35, 36, 38, 43, 44, 45,
 56, 57, 72, 80, 83, 88, 91, 92, 95,
 100, 107, 108, 113, 115, 117, 128,
 129, 130, 131, 140, 141, 150, 152,
 163, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171, 173,
 174, 175, 178, 180, 181, 183, 188,
 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 196, 197,
 199, 200, 203, 207, 208, 209, 210,
 211, 214, 222, 229, 234, 235, 237,
 238, 242, 243, 245, 252, 253, 255,
 256, 259, 262, 264, 279, 281, 282,
 283, 286, 287, 292, 293, 294, 298,
 300, 301, 304, 305, 309, 310, 314,
 328, 330, 331, 335, 337
 India, 29, 55, 57, 224, 353
 inner movement, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 50, 52,
 89, 116, 163, 177, 219, 229, 239,
 240, 241, 245, 246, 250, 264, 271,
 275, 278, 281, 287, 304, 308, 309,
 312, 316
 inspiration, 3, 19, 25, 27, 33, 36, 38,
 43, 52, 67, 83, 86, 120, 122, 141,
 142, 151, 189, 196, 211, 232, 233,
 283, 298
 intercultural, 55, 109, 123, 226, 350,
 352, 356
 International Michael Chekhov
 Conference 2000, The, 70, 159,
 161, 347, 349
Into the Woods, 160
 intuition, 5, 7, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24,
 25, 26, 27, 33, 36, 38, 39, 44, 48,
 49, 58, 73, 86, 91, 106, 116, 117,
 151, 156, 180, 183, 184, 185, 188,
 189, 201, 236, 292, 295
Invisible Actor, The, 85, 222, 240,
 351

J

Japan, 53, 109, 162, 222, 224, 226,
 342, 343
 Jocasta, 212
 Johnstone, Keith, 111
 Jung, Carl, 112, 120, 225, 245, 340

K

Kabuki, 5, 51, 52, 53, 62, 85, 109,
 120, 198, 200, 239, 240, 275
 Kaluga State Theatre, 121
 Kane, Sarah, 7, 68, 69, 79, 102, 119,
 125, 126, 127, 140, 145, 152, 172,
 185, 216, 287, 289, 326, 333, 334
 Kant, Immanuel, 59
karma, 14, 56, 59
keras and manis, 120, 200
Killing Fields, The, 160
 Kirillov, Andrei, 114, 342
 Knebel, Maria, 69, 105, 285
*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds, and
 it's Attainment*, 27
koan, 31, 60
 Kobe, 1
 Kokorin, Slava, 7, 69, 105, 125, 126,
 138, 152, 186, 279, 281, 284, 285
 Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 59

L

Laban, Rudolf, 355
 Langhans, Jobst, 68, 69, 102, 152,
 235
Last Emperor, The, 160
 Latin, 83
 Latvia and Lithuania, 65
Law and Order, 160
 Lecoq, Jacques, 109, 160, 348
 Lenin, Vladimir, 28
Lessons for Teachers, 19, 20, 96, 97,
 115, 155, 158, 240, 242, 292, 342
Lessons for the Professional Actor,
 51, 54, 93, 130, 176, 223, 298,
 301, 313, 342
 Lewis, Robert, 76, 119, 129, 202, 267
Life and Encounters, 3, 93, 121
 Lin Chi, 31
 Litovsky, Oleg, 62
Little Night Music, A, 160
 Lyubov Andreyevna, 205, 236, 237,
 246, 247, 248, 249, 254, 255, 259,
 260, 264, 272, 288

M

Madame Blavatsky's Baboon
Theosophy and the Emergence of
the Western Guru, 29

Maeterlinck, Maurice, 103
 Malaev-Babel, Andrei, 28, 70, 105,
 143, 152, 161, 202, 296
 Malik, S.C., 63
 Malone College, 102
 Malvolio, 1, 9, 202
 Manson, Ross, 113
 Marowitz, Charles, 6, 42, 67, 114,
 115, 116, 118, 121, 230
 Mason, Felicity, 142
 MAT, 1, 2, 4, 28, 45, 55, 61, 69, 131,
 153
 McCarthy, Joseph Raymond, 66, 118
 McDermott, Phelim, 102, 111, 256
 meditation, 10, 15, 25, 26, 32, 40, 41,
 42, 44, 45, 46, 61, 82, 85, 87, 109,
 134, 186, 191, 200, 225, 226, 238,
 240
 Meerzon, Yana, 161
 Meisner, Sanford, 6, 10, 50, 61, 76,
 119, 349
 Merchant/Ivory Productions, 160
 Merlin, Joanna, 7, 28, 41, 68, 69, 98,
 113, 115, 119, 125, 126, 127, 147,
 152, 155, 159, 185, 239, 241, 245,
 250, 251, 263, 264, 269, 271, 320,
 333, 340
 Method of Physical Actions, The,
 179, 181
Method or Madness, 129, 267
 Meyerhold, Vsevolod, 10, 352
 MICHA, 4, 5, 7, 8, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72,
 73, 76, 77, 79, 95, 96, 99, 100,
 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109,
 110, 111, 113, 115, 117, 125, 127,
 128, 132, 135, 138, 140, 142, 143,
 147, 151, 153, 154, 157, 159, 161,
 168, 169, 172, 185, 188, 190, 199,
 200, 202, 203, 217, 226, 233, 234,
 235, 250, 251, 253, 255, 256, 267,
 271, 281, 284, 285, 291, 293, 294,
 296, 309, 313, 320, 321, 328, 333,
 343, 344, 350

Michael Chekhov Centre U.K., 102
 Michael Chekhov Conference 2001,
 127
 Michael Chekhov Conference 2002,
 127, 315
 Michael Chekhov International
 Workshop and Festival, 28, 99
 Miller, Aole T., 154, 295
 Miller, Arthur, 211, 277
 Mindell, Arnold, 81, 111, 122, 255
 Molière, 232
 Monroe, Marilyn, 67
 Moscow, 1, 9, 27, 28, 61, 62, 69, 70,
 77, 88, 131, 138, 153, 161
 Moscow Art Theatre, 1, 9, 62, 69, 77,
 88
 movement, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, 18, 24,
 26, 29, 39, 50, 51, 52, 61, 66, 74,
 79, 80, 81, 89, 101, 104, 109, 116,
 117, 118, 123, 126, 128, 134, 135,
 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147,
 149, 150, 162, 163, 170, 175, 177,
 179, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 192,
 193, 198, 202, 205, 206, 212, 213,
 218, 219, 221, 226, 229, 236, 239,
 240, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 250,
 251, 258, 260, 263, 265, 266, 267,
 271, 275, 277, 278, 280, 281, 286,
 287, 289, 290, 294, 304, 308, 309,
 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316,
 318, 320, 321, 329, 332, 333
Mr. and Mrs. Bridge, 160
 Muromsky, 1
 Mystery Play, 141
Mystic Pizza, 160

N

Naturalism, 50, 270, 353
 Nemirovich-Danchenko, Vladimir, 9
 Netherlands, 9, 102, 119, 143
 New York, 9, 58, 59, 60, 61, 65, 67,
 68, 69, 92, 101, 102, 104, 109,
 118, 119, 120, 127, 132, 133, 138,
 147, 148, 162, 224, 232, 292, 293,
 294, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344,
 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351,
 352, 354, 355, 356, 357

New York University, 102, 127, 162
 Nicholls, Moira, 22
 Nikolić, Suzana, 103, 121, 143, 343
No Exit, 212, 356
No Man's Land, 118
 Noh, 5, 15, 53, 62, 76, 85, 86, 94,
 120, 158, 198, 200, 225, 226, 239,
 342, 352
Northern Exposure, 160
 Northern Illinois University, 102
NY Undercover, 160

O

Occidental, 10, 30, 32, 33, 34, 52, 59,
 60, 63, 66, 85, 91, 94, 95, 102,
 109, 121, 123, 138, 160, 161, 225,
 339, 341, 343, 350, 352, 356
 Odets, Clifford, 111
 Oida, Yoshi, 85, 222, 226, 240
 Olcott, Colonel, 30
 Old Globe University, 102
 Olivier, Laurence, 159
 Oriental, 4, 6, 10, 15, 22, 29, 51, 52,
 59, 63, 82, 85, 91, 94, 95, 108,
 109, 123, 140, 148, 159, 161, 222,
 224, 226, 343, 351, 352
 Orton, Joe, 104
Other Chekhov, The, 14, 15, 26, 39,
 46, 66, 67, 77, 91, 114, 118, 121,
 141, 230, 232, 292, 300, 349
Out of a House Walked a Man, 160
 Overlie, Mary, 162

P

Pacific Overtures, 160
Painting Churches, 104
 Palance, Jack, 98, 118
Paper Canoe, The, 52, 53, 62, 339
Path of the Actor, The, 2, 3, 45, 49,
 75, 121, 342
 Pavis, Patrice and Christine Shantz,
 61
Peace Festiva, The, 202
 Peck, Gregory, 67
Perestroika, 69

personal, 2, 4, 5, 10, 30, 46, 50, 52,
 65, 68, 80, 91, 92, 94, 122, 129,
 133, 135, 137, 156, 160, 169, 178,
 180, 184, 218, 236, 237, 238, 245,
 255, 256, 287, 288, 294, 300, 301,
 303, 336, 337
 Petit Lenard, 7, 69, 102, 103, 104,
 105, 125, 126, 127, 136, 146, 152,
 161, 172, 214, 250, 256, 263, 284,
 298, 300
 Phasen, Eleanor, 142
Pirates of Penzance, 219
 Pitches, Jonathan, 4, 6, 10, 58, 61,
 114, 115, 230
 Platonic, 17, 57, 104, 105
 Powers, Mala, 41, 69, 77, 119, 151,
 152, 155, 157
prana, 46, 83, 186, 191, 225, 279,
 284
 Pronko, Leonard, 63, 85, 94
 Psychological Gesture (PG), 104,
 116, 128, 241, 255, 265, 267, 268,
 269, 349
 psychology, 22, 34, 43, 54, 61, 72,
 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 80, 89, 104,
 106, 112, 116, 120, 127, 135, 140,
 141, 149, 160, 177, 179, 180, 182,
 192, 206, 207, 211, 240, 246, 280,
 293, 298, 305, 309, 321, 328, 329,
 330
 Pugh, Ted, 7, 67, 69, 102, 119, 125,
 126, 127, 132, 135, 137, 147, 152,
 159, 172, 188, 250, 255, 263, 328,
 329, 335

Q

quality, 21, 40, 50, 54, 73, 74, 80, 85,
 86, 88, 96, 97, 99, 104, 128, 134,
 145, 148, 156, 163, 166, 167, 169,
 170, 171, 176, 177, 179, 182, 183,
 184, 185, 186, 189, 190, 193, 197,
 198, 205, 213, 219, 221, 240, 243,
 244, 249, 251, 259, 264, 265, 275,
 282, 285, 290, 295, 296, 299, 301,
 308, 309, 312, 314, 318, 320, 329,
 332, 333, 335, 336
 quantum physics, 57, 82, 112, 120

Quinn, Anthony, 98

R

radiating, 67, 80, 134, 171, 172, 173,
187, 193, 207, 250, 280, 284, 285,
303, 306, 309, 311

*Real escuela superior de arte
dramatico*, 102

Realism, 50, 123

Reinhardt, Max, 106, 256

Remizova, Alexandra I., 70

rhythm, 52, 55, 87, 119, 171, 194,
205, 213, 219, 229, 241, 242, 307,
312

Robins, Jerome, 160

Rogers, Paul, 142, 203

Romanticism, 4, 14, 16, 55, 57, 58,
247, 339, 351, 354, 355

Roosevelt University, 102

Rosen, Sheldon, 214

Russia, 1, 3, 9, 15, 26, 28, 46, 62, 65,
68, 69, 71, 95, 98, 104, 105, 115,
118, 121, 152, 153, 155, 157, 161,
162, 179, 181, 186, 203, 227, 232,
238, 342, 345

Russian Symbolism, 4, 15, 41, 46, 48,
49, 50, 55, 61, 62, 103, 202, 345,
353, 356

Rutgers University, 102, 148

Ryerson Theatre School, 214, 340,
343, 344, 345, 346, 348, 349, 351,
353, 354, 356

Ryerson University, 102, 121, 340,
343, 344, 345, 346, 348, 349, 351,
353, 354, 356

S

Salata, Kris, 161

Sampson, Edward E., 172

Sanskrit, 83, 224, 226

Santa Clara University, 102

Sargisson, Amelia, 93

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 212

Schiele, Egon, 213

Schopenhauer, Arthur, 14, 22

Schreiber, Elsa, 66

Schukin College, 70

Science and the Stanislavsky

Tradition of Acting, 4, 58, 61, 105,
114, 119, 352

Screen Actors' Guild, The, 118

second guiding principle, 81, 82, 83,
239, 242, 284, 285

Secret Doctrine

*the Synthesis of Science, Religion
and Philosophy. The*, 30, 340

sensations, 3, 7, 8, 20, 27, 38, 52, 54,
74, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 89,
95, 108, 116, 123, 128, 134, 135,
137, 163, 167, 169, 170, 173, 175,
177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 184,
185, 186, 187, 190, 193, 194, 207,
213, 219, 220, 221, 229, 233, 234,
236, 238, 240, 241, 242, 245, 248,
260, 262, 265, 282, 283, 285, 287,
288, 290, 294, 295, 296, 308, 311,
315, 323, 325, 326, 328, 329, 332,
333, 334, 335, 336

Sense of Beauty, 97, 299, 313, 314

Sense of Ease, 97, 98, 135, 145, 190,
313, 314

Sense of Form, 96, 98, 171, 185, 313

Sense of the Whole, 21, 23, 24, 25,
44, 56, 73, 74, 97, 167, 171, 234,
300, 313

Shakespeare, William, 161

shamanism, 112

Shankar, Uday, 51

Shdanoff, George, 66, 71, 119, 121

Shogo, Ota, 110

Skid, 106, 121

Sloan, Fern, 7, 69, 102, 125, 126,
127, 132, 133, 135, 152, 159, 172,
178, 185, 250, 263, 328, 329, 335

Slovenia, 143

Smeliansky, Anatoli, 69

Soloviova, Vera, 62

Solovyev, Vladimir, 15

Solovyov, Vladimir, 49

Sondheim and Lapine, 160

Soviet Communist Party, 28

space, 3, 8, 24, 46, 52, 81, 82, 89,
103, 122, 133, 137, 138, 143, 154,
163, 165, 166, 167, 169, 171, 172,

173, 174, 175, 176, 178, 183, 193,
205, 206, 213, 216, 218, 221, 222,
225, 229, 233, 237, 242, 244, 250,
251, 257, 262, 278, 280, 281, 282,
286, 290, 296, 298, 303, 304, 305,
306, 307, 310, 312, 313, 314, 316,
318, 325, 326, 328, 329, 330
Spain, 109, 143
speech, 9, 26, 72, 79, 126, 140, 141,
142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 151, 175,
216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 224,
227, 229, 272, 286, 287, 289, 291,
293, 315, 326, 327, 328, 332, 333,
334
Spencertown, New York, 101
Spirit Man, 36, 44, 86, 120, 187, 216
spiritual, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20,
21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32,
33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41,
42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 59, 60, 71, 72,
73, 77, 83, 84, 86, 106, 107, 108,
111, 115, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135,
136, 138, 139, 140, 160, 161, 165,
189, 200, 214, 216, 223, 226, 241,
242, 293, 297, 298, 300
spirituality, 16, 28, 29, 33, 41, 42, 47,
49, 53, 55, 72, 73, 117, 126, 130,
131, 133, 136, 138, 140, 150, 154,
161, 186, 285, 300
Spolin, Viola, 111
Stack, Robertq, 67, 118
Stalin, Joseph, 27
Stam, Henderikus J., 224, 347, 353
Stanislavky, Konstantin, 1, 77, 120,
293, 349
Stanislavsky Theatre Studio, 102, 161
Stanley, Kim, 160
State Institute of Theatrical Arts
(GITIS), 69
Straight, Beatrice, 66, 67, 95
Strasberg, Lee, 6, 10, 50, 61, 76, 119,
293
Street of Crocodiles, 160
style, 2, 11, 48, 49, 50, 71, 73, 74, 75,
76, 77, 91, 103, 104, 116, 117,
123, 126, 127, 137, 155, 160, 179,
186, 211, 261, 263, 272, 299, 300,
329, 334

Sulerzhitsky, Leopold, 4, 15, 45, 46
Sun at Midnight
*The Rudolf Steiner Movement and
the Western Esoteric Tradition*,
32, 339
Suzuki, Tadashi, 162, 355
Sweeney Todd, 160
Switzerland, 60, 141, 161

T

taksu, 154, 157, 162
Taming of the Shrew, The, 76
Tantra, 56, 189, 200, 224, 225, 340,
341, 344, 345, 350
tantric, 224
Taoism, 42, 112, 350
Temple University, 102
Tempo, I Masek, 200
Ten Commandments, The, 160
Texas, Brooklyn and Heaven, 256,
341
The Blue Room, 274, 276, 346
The Changing Body Symposium, 11,
140
The Cherry Orchard, 103, 205, 236,
238, 246, 247, 249, 250, 254, 259,
260, 261, 266, 267, 268, 273, 281,
288, 289
The International Michael Chekhov
Conference 2000, 70, 159, 161,
347, 349
The Last Emperor, 160
The Other Chekhov, 14, 15, 26, 39,
46, 66, 67, 77, 91, 114, 118, 121,
141, 230, 232, 292, 300, 349
The Taming of the Shrew, 76
The Three Sisters, 177, 253, 254, 283,
315, 316, 343
The Visit, 160
Theater East and West, 63, 85, 352
Theatre Du Complicité, 132, 160
Theosophy, 14, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31,
32, 35, 37, 38, 60, 160, 340, 354,
355, 356
thinking, 11, 18, 20, 27, 33, 35, 37,
38, 40, 44, 45, 53, 108, 116, 117,
120, 130, 146, 156, 161, 171, 184,

187, 188, 189, 190, 193, 195, 201,
204, 205, 207, 213, 223, 229, 237,
241, 257, 259, 260, 261, 262, 284,
291, 295, 318, 319, 323, 325, 333
third guiding principle, 59, 84, 85,
86, 87, 284
Three Sisters, The, 177, 253, 254,
283, 315, 316, 343
Three-Fold Nature of Man, 34, 35,
38, 41, 44, 72, 116, 120, 187, 188,
203, 204, 229
tiny hero productions, 102
To the Actor, 52, 69, 78, 97, 105, 111,
114, 136, 137, 140, 146, 160, 161,
165, 167, 177, 180, 187, 197, 207,
208, 218, 229, 234, 240, 243, 256,
264, 267, 278, 280, 291, 295, 296,
309, 310, 320, 328, 329, 330, 342,
348, 352
Toltskaya, Rosa, 106
transformation, 3, 45, 49, 53, 72, 92,
108, 133, 135, 136, 137, 139, 150,
158, 191, 203, 211, 214, 215, 227,
233, 235, 263
transpersonal, 92, 108, 129, 160, 255
Trotsky, Leon, 28
Twelfth Night, 1, 202
Twentieth-Century Actor Training,
114

U

University of California in Santa
Barbara, 102
University of Exeter, 11, 110, 114,
140, 349
University of Georgia, 102
University of Southern Maine, 102
University of Toronto, 6, 42, 59, 61,
115, 276, 349, 352
University of Wales, 114
University of Windsor, 39, 101, 102,
111, 121
University of Zagreb, 102, 121
Upanishads, 225, 226

V

Vakhtangov, Eugene, 45, 62, 70, 119,
179, 202, 263
Vasiliev, Anatoli, 103, 104, 105
verisimilitude, 2, 50, 62, 116, 117,
233
Viewpoints, 11, 113, 154, 162, 340
Visit, The, 160
von Horvath, Ödön, 213

W

Wachtel, Michael, 48, 49, 61, 356
Walsh, Lionel, 99, 121, 203
Washington, Peter, 29, 60
Waterstation, 110
Watters and Hopkins, 256
Wesleyan University, 102
West Virginia University, 102
Whelan Tape Technique, 111, 122
Witman College, 102
Wreck of the Good Hope, 1
Wyatt, Simms, 119

Y

Yale University, 102, 110
Yamanaka, You-ri, 109
Year of the Dragon, 160
yin and yang, 91, 120
Yoga, 13, 27, 29, 61, 225, 226, 343

Z

Zandarski, Grace, 110
Zarathustra, 29
Ze-ami, 15, 85
Zinder, David, 7, 69, 115, 125, 151,
162, 214, 284, 285
Zola, Emil, 27, 59
Zurich, 81, 122