T H E W A Y O F T R A N S F O R M A T I O N

(*The Laban-Malmgren System of Dramatic Character Analysis*)

VOL I

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a '**critical edition**' of a system of actor training based on three main sources: a vocabulary of movement analysis developed by Rudolf Laban in the last years of his life and mostly unknown until now; C. G. Jung's theory of psychological functions and types; and the acting system of C. Stanislavski and his main followers. The three strands were brought together by the British acting teacher Yat Malmgren, who has taught his system for over forty years to some of the major figures of world theatre and film: Peter Brook, Pierce Brosnan, Simon Callow, Sean Connery, Anthony Hopkins, Adrian Noble among others.

The dissertation is presented in two volumes:

- Volume I sets the system in context, historically as well as in terms of the current discourse about the nature of acting. It includes a survey of its origins, followed by an in-depth examination of its three main sources, focusing on the central concept of **energy** in acting. Further chapters describe:

a. a systematic, step-by-step psychophysical approach to analysing character, the actor's own self and to ways of bridging the two in the process of **transformation**. The author captures the salient features of a method of work which informs much current Western acting practice.

b. the light thrown by the system on the idea of theatre character. The author puts forward the idea of a character '**independent**' of both actor and text.

c. the applications of the system in training and professional practice, based on interviews with a number of prominent British actors and directors.

- Volume II is more technical in nature - it consists of a detailed, annotated description of the system. It is based on a free transcript of recordings of Yat Malmgren's teaching and amounts to a 'manual' for those interested in studying and/or teaching the system. The volume is illustrated throughout. Appendices include original materials derived from Laban's last years of work, published here for the first time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME TWO - THE LABAN-MALMGREN SYSTEM

DIAGRAMS AND GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS

Volume I - Critical Introduction

The Three Pillars of the System

Volume II - The System

Basic Concepts

Attitudes

ILLUSTRATIONS

V O L U M E O N E

C R I T I C A L I N T R O D U C T I O N

C H A P T E R I

P R E F A C E

PREFACE

This thesis describes a method of theatre character analysis and training which I have christened the 'Laban-Malmgren System' in deference to its two originators: the choreographer Rudolf von Laban and the dancer and teacher of acting Yat Malmgren. Laban's impact on dance and movement education in this country is well documented. Yat Malmgren's teaching has also affected a number of major figures on the post-war British theatre scene, from Peter Brook, Anthony Hopkins and Sean Connery in the fifties to more recent disciples such as Pierce Brosnan, Simon Callow and Adrian Noble. Despite his undoubted influence on a constellation of former pupils, however, his work is as yet little known to the wider public.

In a teaching career spanning over four decades, Yat Malmgren developed certain ideas left by Laban and his collaborators into a theory of character analysis designed specifically with the theatre in mind. At first this was done to help the work of the professional actors who attended his private Studio in the West End of London; then for acting students at the R.A.D.A. and the Central School of Speech and Drama. Since 1963 Yat Malmgren has taught the system at the Drama Centre, the London acting and directing school he co-founded and whose Director he still is. He and his disciples have taught in the United States (notably at the American Conservatory Theatre school in San Francisco), in Sweden, Australia, Canada, Israel, Greece, etc.

The thesis is therefore concerned with a critical account of Yat Malmgren's particular approach to analysing and creating theatre character. This approach is based on a deceptively simple idea: between certain psychological and certain physical functions there is a direct correspondence. The method of work which emerges from this basic principle is therefore concerned first with the psychological understanding of characters; secondly with their physical realisation in action. The pages which follow examine in detail this method and its roots: the various schools of thought and practice upon which the founders drew in

establishing the system and the way in which these influences are drawn together in a unique synthesis. In travelling on the intricate ways and byways of the system, however, the reader ought to keep in sight these simple pointers:

> the system consists of a classification of characters into six fundamental types called the *"Inner Attitudes"*. The actor uses them in two ways:
> a. he places the character into one of these groups.
> b. he trains, through simple acting exercises, to recognise each of these types in himself.
> This process enables the actor to begin the process of transformation into the character.

This is the *raison d'etre* of the system and its attraction to actors, directors, teachers and students of acting. The description which follows explains the criteria by which one arrives at the six types and outlines the implications and applications of this approach to acting and the teaching of acting.

Over the years of working on this complex material I have sometimes been asked whether I was writing a 'manual for actors' or an 'essay' on the art of acting. I must confess I have difficulties seeing the difference. Can a text addressed to the actor be anything but a discourse on a certain view of theatre? Are Stanislavski's books only descriptions of exercises and *"psycho-technique"*? Have they not a whole subtext of assumptions, very explicit at times, on the realistic nature of theatre, on its social function, on empathy? And are Grotowski's and Meyerhold's writings only in the way of theoretical manifestos, or do they begin to make sense only when they describe productions and rehearsal processes? As Grotowski shows[1], someone like Artaud, who only writes *"proposals"* - that is a form of theatrical 'ideology', without a method and technique - cannot really be put into practice. And texts made purely of exercises often raise more questions than they answer. Therefore this thesis is both a practical and a theoretical description. The reader is invited to look at it from both

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[1] Jerzy Grotowski: *Towards A Poor Theatre*, New York, Touchstone Books, 1968. p. 118

points of view: not only from the 'normal' observation point of the spectator, but also from what Eugenio Barba calls the *"complementary point of view"*[1] - that of the performers themselves. The system is first and foremost concerned with establishing a possible method of work for the actor. As a consequence, it also evolves a specific understanding of the Idea of theatre character. Thirdly, it is concerned with some aspects of training. As Sartre says, *"all technique leads to metaphysics"*.

However, one thing must be made clear: although this is a movement-based system, and its practical applications often use elements of movement, the reader looking for a description of physical exercises risks being disappointed. Unlike the work of Grotowski and predecessors such as Delsarte and Meyerhold, the Laban-Malmgren system is concerned primarily with the laws of expressive movement on stage, not its realisation in exercises. Yat Malmgren and his colleagues do teach movement, in related but separate courses, but their exercises are not special in themselves: the work done at the Laban Centre, the exercises described by Dalcroze, by Grotowski and others are essentially similar to one another[2] and indeed to the exercises taught at the Drama Centre and in other British drama schools.[3] What is special is the relationship between these exercises and Yat Malmgren's theoretical course on "Movement Psychology". The point of the system lies not in its physical aspects, important as these are in training, but in the underlining philosophy and in the theoretical underpinning which it provides for all Western systems of movement. In this respect the system is closest to the work on "theatre anthropology" developed at the Odin Theatre and the ISTA by Eugenio Barba. Like Barba, Laban and Malmgren are concerned first and foremost with the laws which determine the *"pre-expressive"*[4] platform upon which all theatres are built. The system therefore invites actors not to learn a specific technique, but to *"learn how to learn"*. It attempts to describe, to use Barba's phrase, *"the technique of techniques"*[5].

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[1] Eugenio Barba: *The Paper Canoe*, London, Routledge, 1995. p. 11
[2] see for example, Grotowski's reworking of Stanislavski's exercises based on observing a cat. ("Towards a Poor Theatre", p. 135)
[3] The application of specific, Laban-inspired, movement exercises to theatre is described extensively in Jean Newlove: *Laban for Actors and Dancers*, London, Nick Hern Books, 1993.
[4] Barba: "The Paper Canoe", p. 9
[5] ibid., p. 10

The thesis raises a number of fundamental questions in acting as well as in the related fields of movement, psychology and philosophy. Its purpose is not, however, to provide an 'ultimate explanation' or 'scientific proof' of the validity of the approach to acting it describes. Further research based on this material may throw additional light on its implications, which are far from being exhausted here. This thesis, however, is consciously designed in the form of an '**annotated edition**' setting for the first time in writing the Laban-Malmgren system and noting its points of contact with other authorities. In addition, the Introduction places the system in context in terms of its sources and draws parallels with related aspects of theatre, movement and psychological theory.

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Tracing the origin and evolution of these ideas is often fraught with difficulties. Laban is notorious for not giving sources in his books. Yat Malmgren only mentions in his teaching his main 'artistic heroes': Stanislavski, the American actress and teacher Uta Hagen and, of course, Laban himself. Both men wish to present their ideas to practitioners - notoriously suspicious of intellectuals speculating about creative work - as entirely original. This is not vanity: they know that their assertions are likely to be absorbed more readily if not weighed down by an apparatus of references. Therefore previous acting or related theories, if acknowledged at all, are valued only because they confer legitimacy to their own observations and conclusions.[1] However, seeing the work set down on paper, therefore subject to the scrutiny of a readership with a range of theatre-related interests, inevitably raises critical questions as to the validity and origin of some of its assertions. I therefore feel it is important at this, the first outing in print of the system, to place it in

[1] In one of his earliest books, published while he was still in Germany, Laban states: *"I avoid deliberately mentioning the great ones of the past...I have not found the core of my insights in the works of intellectual heroes. My experience came exclusively from dance itself...Theoretical works on the dance as art...have confirmed the correctness of my impressions...as have the works of the great thinkers and creators."* (Rudolf Laban: *Die Welt Des Tanzers, Stuttgart, Walter Seiffert*, 1920, Appendix, p. 253; unpublished translation quoted in Gordon Curl: "A Critical Study of Rudolf von Laban's Theory and Practice of Movement", *MEd Thesis*, Leicester University, 1967, p. 40)

its proper context. This I do both in the Introduction and in the notes which accompany the description of the system proper.

Finally, two sections examine its applications in training and professional theatre practice:

The section on training is based on my own and other former students' recollections of the way in which the system is passed on to student actors. The chapter on applications in professional practice records the traces left by the system in the daily work of a representative group of British actors and directors, taught by Yat Malmgren at various stages of his career. They were interviewed by me during the summer of 1996. Throughout, Yat Malmgren, my other interlocutors and I use examples taken from well known dramatic texts. In addition, Yat Malmgren refers occasionally to actual performances, especially to productions which have entered the post-war theatrical 'collective consciousness': Brook's "Dream", Olivier's "Othello", Bergman's "Hamlet". In my descriptions, however, I have tried to keep mostly to examples based on textual clues. I am aware that examples taken from actual performances might seem more appropriate in a discussion about character and acting. Unfortunately, there is no way of ensuring that both writer and reader have detailed, if any, recollections of particular performances. Filmed excerpts, even if one could manage the technicalities of assembling a sufficient number of suitable extracts on a video cassette or similar *addendum* to the text, are often most unsatisfactory in reproducing the rapport between actor and live audience on which so much depends in the theatre. The texts, on the other hand, are a fund of knowledge commonly owned by all: by Yat Malmgren and his students, by me and the reader. Unlike live performances, they can be revisited, re-examined, re-interpreted. Constant reference to texts guarantees that everyone shares the same experience.

Yat Malmgren's main way of recording his work consists of a typescript, known amongst his pupils as the "Book".[1] The "Book" has been the basis of Mr. Malmgren's classes at the Drama Centre and elsewhere, where successive

[1] A copy of this typescript can be found at Appendix A. I shall refer to it as the "Book" throughout. All bibliographical references are to pages of the "Book" as appended.

generations of students have set down its contents from his 'commented dictation'. Its main function is to list crucial concepts developed by Laban in the last years of his life and bequeathed to Yat Malmgren in the form of succinct notes and definitions.[1] These definitions, as well as Mr. Malmgren's own additions, are listed in the "Book" in an *organic* order, following the journey of acting energy from its innermost psychological source to its outer, perceptible expression in movement and speech. In addition, the "Book" contains a number of representations in graphic form of central ideas of the system, designed as teaching aids. I have redrawn these graphics using a computer programme and inserted them where relevant in the central section of the thesis. Yat Malmgren's own typescript, constantly updated over the years in the light of new discoveries made during its practical application in acting training, is made widely available here for the first time.

The typescript would make little sense, however, without the explanations furnished by Yat Malmgren to his students. The classes given by Mr. Malmgren to first year students at the Drama Centre during the 1990-1991 session were recorded and I have extracted from them extensive notes.[2] One must understand, however, that these are acting classes, not academic lectures: the tapes record the live dynamic of the conservatoire, where a turn of the corners of the mouth may say more than any number of words. Moreover, Yat Malmgren, whose first language is Swedish, often uses English terms in engaging yet idiosyncratic ways.[3] Like all live teaching,

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[1] see below "The Origins of the System", pp. 20ff.

[2] Mr. Malmgren taught three ninety minutes sessions every week for about thirty weeks during the year. There are 92 tapes in all, numbered from 1 onwards. The first fifty or so are directly relevant to the thesis, as they consist of Yat Malmgren's commentary on Laban's definitions. The rest are mainly taken up with practical exercises devised by the students as part of Yat Malmgren's teaching method and are of direct relevance only to the individual students whose work they feature. These tapes do offer occasional comments of general import, but they often reiterate points made earlier in the year. I therefore refer to them sparingly.
All references to the tapes are given with two numbers separated by a hyphen. The first refers to the tape number, the second is the number of the page in my notes where the particular reference is to be found. For example, "Tapes: 22-3" means that a particular reference comes from page 3 of my notes to tape 22.

[3] cf. Simon Callow: *Being An Actor*, London, Penguin Books, 1985 (1984), p. 171: *"I remember Yat Malmgren telling a student who'd done a successful exercise concerning his camera (which he loved): 'You can go round the world on your camera.' Freely translated from the Swedish, this meant: You*

his classes are full of jumps, digressions, references to the plays in which the students are performing, to current events, to other people in the school. A student may be asked to sing in order to bring home a point; a sequence of steps might be shown to illustrate another. The tapes also contain numerous restatements - sometimes separated by weeks or even months - of the same ideas, as is normal when students need to be reminded of aspects of the work they may have overlooked. Translating all this into a text accessible to the general reader seemed at times a hopeless task.

I chose not to give a *verbatim* account of the classes - given their nature this would have been impossible anyway. Instead, what follows is a personal retelling of the content of the tapes. Nevertheless, I follow closely the order in which the concepts of the system are presented in the "Book". Each section dealing with one of these concepts is preceded - as it would have been in Yat Malmgren's classes - by the relevant definition from the "Book" and consists of his comments on that definition, culled from across the tapes. However, the sections are structured by me and the explanations are articulated, mainly through my words, into a unified discourse. I have traced the sources mentioned by Yat Malmgren and give appropriate bibliographical references where needed. I have also conflated the repetitions and only give tape references when an idea is introduced for the first time or when new elements are added. There is no doubt that much of the spirit and charm of Mr. Malmgren's classes is lost in the process. I would hope, however, that in exchange something may have been gained in the clarity and accuracy of the exposition. In the same spirit, I have added a "Dictionary of Terms Used in the System" which precedes the description of the system proper. It gives succinct definitions of the terms used by Laban and Malmgren in ways specific to their work. It also shows the way in which certain psychological concepts have been adapted and integrated into the system.

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will be able to discover a whole world of emotions and sensations in what you feel for your camera and the depth of your knowledge of it. For example, the sensation of clicking the shutter may be exactly the way in which you tell someone that you don't love them..." Simon Callow is neither the first nor the last to realize that Yat Malmgren's pithy sayings needed 'translation' and elaboration in many more words than he himself uses in class. This often accounts for the extended explanations in Volume II of the thesis.

The system builds up into a relatively complicated structure, as the pages which follow make clear. The tapes only record one year of the three year course followed by the students - inevitably, there are certain omissions, gaps in the gloss on the "Book" which would have been remedied in subsequent years of the course. Yat Malmgren filled in most of these gaps and clarified a number of related points in a series of private interviews with me. In a few cases - mainly to do with examples needed to illustrate an aspect of the system - when neither the tapes nor my interview notes were of help, I give my own instances. Furthermore, in writing one can analyse texts to a level of detail which would be self-defeating in the live class. I therefore sometimes build upon Yat Malmgren's examples of scenes or speeches in order to supply the reader with an analysis detailed enough to answer potential queries which a teacher might illuminate with a slight inflection of the voice. As I hope to make abundantly clear in what follows, the system is a live, dynamic tool which lends itself to any number of interpretations and views on plays and characters. I have used it in my own work as a director and teacher of acting for almost twenty years. Inevitably, therefore, my examples reflect my own practice and ideas. However, all such additions are marked in the notes and any errors, of fact or of opinion, are entirely mine.

C H A P T E R II

T H E O R I G I N S O F T H E S Y S T E M

THE ORIGINS OF THE LABAN-MALMGREN SYSTEM

The story of the Laban-Malmgren system begins with a tantrum thrown by Dr. Goebbels. Rudolf von Laban, movement teacher and choreographer, well known in Germany for his mass movement displays, had been charged with arranging part of the opening ceremony of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Although he disliked the regime, Laban accepted, attracted by the opportunity of experimenting with a 'movement choir' *"several thousand strong"*[1]. At the official preview, however, Goebbels objected to the 'un-German' character of some of the performance and banned both Laban and his dancers.[2] Thereafter Laban found it increasingly difficult to get work and, some sixteen months later, left Germany for France together with some of his closest personal and professional associates. He seems not to have had much luck getting work in France and therefore seized eagerly upon an invitation to find political and artistic asylum at Dartington Hall, near Totnes in Devon. He arrived there *"starving"*[3] in 1938, thus beginning the last, and arguably the most productive, period of his life as an exile in England.

The invitation to Dartington had come from Kurt Joos, world-famous dancer and choreographer. He was one of Laban's most successful former pupils - indeed, his success, together with that of Mary Wigman, Laban's other world-renowned pupil, had contributed in no small measure to Laban's own reputation as a teacher. By the thirties Joos had his own dance group, the *Ballets Joos*, for whom he choreographed a number of important shows, notably the anti-war ballet "The Green Table" which survives in the repertory of major companies to this day.[4] In the summer of 1934, Joos and

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[1] David Housden: "Dancing The Whirlwind (Obituary: Sylvia Bodmer)", *The Guardian*, 31 October 1991, p. 23, coll. 6

[2] cf. Newlove: "Laban for Actors", p. 7. Laban's creation for the Olympics was called *Vom Tauwind und der neuen Freude* (The Warm Wind and the New Joy)

[3] according to Geraldine Stephenson, choreographer and former assistant to Laban - Interviewed by me on 6.5.1995

[4] at the time of writing it could be found in Britain in the repertory of the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

his company had moved from Germany to Dartington, where they replaced the resident semi-amateur dance company.[1]

Dartington was the private adventure of a family of patrons of the arts, the Elmhursts, who created on their estate in Devon an artistic community in which world class artists could teach as well as perform and exchange ideas with local and visiting amateurs. Joos was invited to take residence not only for his dancing company, but also for the innovative dance school which stemmed from it. By 1939 the ballet school, led by Sigurd Lederer, Joos' close associate, had as many as 40 pupils. Joos could therefore safely assume that Laban and his entourage would find satisfactory employment in different capacities within the school.

As a pendant to its successful dance school, the Dartington arts department had also sought to create a drama school, under the leadership of an equally prominent figure. The Dartington Drama Studio was to train young people for the professional stage and eventually form a touring company. Their search for a suitable director eventually produced the famous actor and teacher Michael Chekhov, nephew of the playwright and a former collaborator of Stanislavski's from the days of the Second Moscow Art Theatre Studio. Michael Chekhov had left Russia in 1928 and begun a successful teaching career in America. In 1936 he came to Britain and a theatre school was started at Dartington under his aegis, thus bringing under the same roof for a short period two important European traditions of performance: expressionist dance and realistic acting. These two traditions lingered on at Dartington in spite of the fact that two years later, under the imminent threat of war, Michael Chekhov moved back to safety in America, taking with him most of his acting pupils. They were soon to be followed by the Ballets Joos, who counted by then among their number a young dancer freshly arrived from the continent.

Born in Gavle, Sweden, on the 23rd. of March 1916, Yat Malmgren was only 23 at the time.[2] He had trained originally as an actor with Julia

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[1] cf. Victor Bonham-Carter: *Dartington Hall (the History of an Experiment)*, London, Phoenix House, 1958, pp. 130-132.

[2] the biographical details are extracted from an interview with Yat Malmgren on 7.10.93 as well as from the *curriculum vitae* attached to the Drama Centre course documentation, 1996.

Hakanson, the leading actress at the Svenska Teatern in Stockholm. Then already in her eighties, Julia Hakanson had been in her heyday a leading Ibsen actress and a great friend of Strindberg's. In her teaching she often referred to Stanislavski's ideas and Yat Malmgren traces his interest in realism to her influence. As he matured, Yat Malmgren moved to studying ballet, first as a private pupil of Sven Trop, Ballet Master of the Swedish Royal Opera, then in Berlin with Eugenia Dwardowa[1] and Victor Gsovsky. By 1939 he had already distinguished himself as a creator of striking solo character dances but continued training with Trude Engelhardt, a former member of Mary Wigman's company. In 1939-40 he gave a number of solo recitals in Paris, Stockholm, Berlin and Warsaw and was awarded the Gold Medal at the *Concours International de la Danse* in Brussels. His solo dances, with titles such as "The Rebels", "The Victims", "Fanatics", "Witnesses", were portraits in movement, combining dance with his life-long interest in creating characters. He had also begun work in Paris with Mme. Breobrajenska, a prominent member of Diaghilev's company, but, as work on the continent was becoming rarer and more dangerous, Yat Malmgren accepted an invitation to join the Ballets Joos at Dartington. He eventually danced in several of their creations, including "The Green Table", in which he took the role of the Young Soldier. His work with Gertrude Engelhardt had prepared him to some extent for the expressionist dance style which characterised Joos' and Wigman's companies, both affected profoundly by Laban's teaching. Now, in the first of two fateful encounters, he was to meet the master himself.[2]

On arriving at Dartington, Yat Malmgren expected to work mainly with Sigurd Lederer, studying the Joos technique and repertoire prior to his

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[1] first character dancer in Pavlova's ballet company.

[2] This account of his meetings with Laban and of the beginnings of the system is based mainly on Yat Malmgren's own recollections, recounted in interviews with me between 1990-93. They are of course personal and one is aware that considerable time has elapsed since the events in question. Nevertheless, the broad lines of the story are corroborated by other Laban collaborators. The story of the strange relationship between Laban and William Carpenter on the one hand and Laban and Yat Malmgren on the other, has never to my knowledge been told publicly before. I therefore think it is important to record Mr. Malmgren's version of the events as he remembers them, especially as it throws a significant light on the somewhat haphazard evolution of the Laban-Malmgren system. I have only added some details from the life of Laban and his main collaborators which are a matter of public record.

inclusion in the company. Unfortunately, the two men took an instant dislike to one another. Lederer found it difficult to accept this new arrival into his well established company of dancers. On his part, Yat Malmgren rejected Lederer's teaching, which did not sit well with his own way of working. As a result, he was given the use of a studio and left to work on his own on one of his solo character dances - "Joseph", based on Thomas Mann's "Joseph's Legends". His work came to the attention of Lisa Ullmann, Laban's closest collaborator at the time, who introduced him to the master.

Yat Malmgren remembers vividly Laban's room at Dartington: full of tables covered in papers and mysterious crystal-like shapes - early models for Laban's icosahedron, the representation of his ideas on stage space. This was the first glimpse of Laban's in-depth theoretical work afforded the young dancer. It struck a deep chord.

In this and a subsequent meeting over tea, Laban asked the new arrival what he thought of Joos' work. Yat Malmgren asserted his own interest in the 'human' side of movement, in that side of dance which is closest to the classical mime and the actor. He thought Joos had moved too far away from *eukinetics* - the inner quality of movement - and towards *choreutics*, the preoccupation with abstract shapes. He contrasted Joos' ideas with those of Mary Wigman as well as with his own interest in developing dances anchored in inner life and concentrating less on form and pattern, as much of what he saw around him was doing. His words seemed to strike a chord with Laban and may account for the subsequent development of their relationship.

For the moment their acquaintance did not progress, however, because a few months later Yat Malmgren left Britain with the Ballets Joos, with whom he toured the United States, Canada and South America. So, although Yat Malmgren was never trained directly by Laban, the master's way of looking at movement, passed on via his two most successful pupils - Mary Wigman and Kurt Joos - left a strong mark on the young dancer's mind. In 1940 he separated from Joos and spent the years 1940-7 dancing, choreographing and teaching in Rio de Janeiro. Here he threw himself into the most unusual

aspects of Brazilian life and created a number of character dances steeped in the Brazilian experience.[1] Most interestingly from our point of view, he was taken on several occasions to watch the secret rites of the *macumba*, the African-Brazilian form of ancestor worship similar to the Haitian voodoo. There, as he often relates to his students, Yat Malmgren found himself prone to go into trances and become a medium for the spirits invoked by the *macumba* priestess. To his stupefaction, he discovered in this strange way a principle which was to inform much of his later teaching: he experienced the sensation of the peculiar state which allows a performer to forgo his own nature and 'give in' to someone or something else. This insight was woven into his continuing preoccupation with the creation of characters, of 'other people', in his solo dances.

Yat Malmgren returned to Europe in 1947 to give a series of recitals in Copenhagen, then on tour in Sweden and Finland. In 1948-49 he was invited to join an international ballet company based in England and to that end resumed his training in London and Paris. He worked as a soloist until 1953 when, following an injury, he started teaching at the International School of Ballet in London and opened what was to become his famed Studio at 26 West Street, Cambridge Circus. There he moved increasingly away from ballet and dance and towards the application of movement to acting. Between 1953-63 his classes at the Studio were attended by Peter Brook, William Gaskill, Tony Richardson, Sean Connery, Harold Lang, Diane Cilento, Fenella Fielding, Gillian Lynne, Anthony Hopkins and many others. In 1955 he assisted Peter Brook on his production of "The Tempest", in which he choreographed the role of Ariel for Brian Bedford. Soon after the opening of the Studio, William Gaskill, then a young aspiring director, heard that Laban had settled near London and was giving classes at the old YWCA in Great Russell Street. He suggested that Yat Malmgren renew his acquaintance.

The second encounter between the two men was to become, indirectly, the cornerstone of the Laban-Malmgren system. To Yat Malmgren's surprise,

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[1] The dance critic of the newspaper *"A Manha"*, Rio de Janeiro, 1945: *"It is really surprising that a Nordic temperament, natural antipode to the exuberance of our Brazilian psychology, could know how to penetrate so profoundly the soul of our most representative type. ...To see Yat Malmgren in "Malandro" is to feel all the Afro-Brazilian erotism..."*

Laban recognized him immediately and proceeded to invite him to his newly founded "Laban Art of Movement Studio" at Addlestone, near Weybridge in Surrey. Following a demonstration, Yat Malmgren was asked to give classes at the Studio, beginning with the Summer Term of 1954 and continuing throughout the 1954/55 session. To this day, Yat Malmgren remembers with gratitude the help given by Laban at a time when he was still struggling to establish a second career.

At Weybridge classes started at eight even during the dark winter mornings. On such a morning, probably in late 1954 or early 1955, Laban met Yat Malmgren on his way to give a class and summoned him to his study. Laban was agitated, obsessed by the idea that, as he put it: *"everything he had achieved was going to be lost"*. William Carpenter, his close collaborator for the previous year had just died and Laban had convinced himself that all his work until then had only been a *"beginner's trifle"*. In the absence of the work he had been doing with Carpenter, he was going to leave to posterity only an incomplete and unsatisfactory picture of his ideas. He then proceeded to show Yat Malmgren a pile of recently made notes: the product of his collaboration with William Carpenter.

Carpenter himself is an elusive figure, perhaps the least known and least acknowledged of Laban's collaborators. His role in the evolution of the Laban-Malmgren system was crucial, however. A tall, dark, very thin man who spoke with a slight Irish accent[1], he came from a very different background than the artists who surrounded him at Addlestone.[2] A successful engineer and businessman, he seems to have had a number of nervous breakdowns in middle age and to have undergone therapy with a Jungian analyst at the Withymead Centre near Exeter, an institution run by Dr. and Mrs. Champernowne, two of the most active members of the incipient "Laban Art of Movement Guild". They recommended to all their patients to

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[1] so Geraldine Stephenson remembers him

[2] Information on William Carpenter's life and work is limited to hints contained in two unpublished sources: a text written by Laban, entitled "In Memoriam Bill Carpenter", dated 1955, presumably destined to serve as Preface to a book based on Carpenter's manuscripts and notes; and a brief autobiographical passage contained in the Introduction to "Conflict and Harmony Between Man and Woman - A Study in Movement Expression" by W. M. Carpenter - the typescript of Carpenter's unfinished *"fragment of a book"*, as Laban calls it.

THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT CENTRE

Established by Deed of Trust

WOBURN HILL
ADDLESTONE, SURREY

Telephone:
Weybridge 2464

October 5th, 1955.

My dear Malmgren,

My recent absence for a much needed holiday has delayed this letter.

For a long time I have desired to express my great satisfaction and pleasure that you have found in my theories such a solid basis and inspiration for your activities as a dancer and dance teacher. You have contributed surely to the extension of our common ideas concerned with the inner qualities of movement and their application in art and life.

I was so glad to see, that these ideas can be mirrored and developed by an independent personality to fruitful practice. It is admirable how, in spite of the struggle which always accompanies the activities of a pioneer, you have remained so valiantly faithful to your convictions. I am proud that my ideas were one of the basic sources of your inspiration.

In your work at the Studio the practical application of your educational gift has certainly contributed to the good development of the students. It was a great help, not only in achieving skill but also an integrity of purpose, which in my opinion, is so essential for the future dance teacher. The development of the students' artistic taste in the lines of such integrity has also become clearly evident.

It is unfortunate that the present circumstances do not allow of your active participation in this year's School work here, but I hope very sincerely that this will be a temporary interruption only.

I do not think that you need a stimulus to your perseverance in your excellent strivings but it is always good to know that one has a friend who appreciates your ways and who is convinced of their intrinsic values.

I hope to see you again soon and if you ever feel the need to communicate with me, please do not hesitate to call on me.

With my very best thanks and good wishes.

Yours very sincerely,

Rudolf Arnheim

G. Malmgren, Esq.,
1, Belsize Grove,
LONDON, N.W.3.

patients to take some movement classes with Laban and his associates as part of their treatment. Carpenter became obsessed with Laban's ideas and by the early fifties had sold his remaining assets and lived in a caravan in the grounds of the Laban Centre. There he spent most of his time trying to translate Laban's *"movement-language"* into words. In particular, he attempted a synthesis between his intimate interest in Jungian psychology and Laban's ideas on movement expression. A passage in an unfinished typescript left by Carpenter implies that the two men observed systematically the movement patterns of other former Whithymead patients present at Weybridge and drew conclusions from the relationship between their psychological problems and their physical expression.[1] He also seems to have played a part in the architectural and financial planning of the Laban Centre at Weybridge.[2]

There is little doubt that Carpenter was above all an enthusiastic amateur. His contribution to the evolution of the system is so important, however, and his collaboration with Laban acknowledged so little, that I feel an extended quotation from the Introduction to his unfinished book might help the reader to place the man in his time as well as give a flavour of the messianic attitude he adopted towards Laban and his work:

"During the writing of this book my frequent consultations with Rudolf Laban have been a constant inspiration...The privilege of working in this harmony, in this exposition of the theories and philosophy of one of the great men of our time is granted to few. In return I can only hope that these efforts and the future training of selected students together with further lecturing on the harmony of mind and body will lead to a wider understanding of Laban's agogic of Movement and Behaviour; for I believe that his work will be no less important than that of Freud, Adler and Jung in contributing to the knowledge and contentment of mankind.

For myself it suffices to say that for nearly 30 years I held an Executive position in Industry. At the end of this long period the emotional problems derived from the increasing materialism of my life became too great a penalty to pay for an ever rising standard of living; for

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[1] cf. "Conflict and Harmony", Ch. 1, p. 19
[2] cf. "In Memoriam" p. 7

materialistic comfort is no substitute for inner contentment. I then turned to the hard work of a working farmer but, though the farm grew to be an island of green fertility, my problems remained. Realising at last that I could no longer refrain from learning about myself I turned for guidance to the Withymead Centre at Countess Weir, Exeter, where I received an unstinted wealth of kindness and understanding, and where also I benefited greatly from the shrewd wisdom of a woman Psychologist who taught me to be aware of myself and of the motives which activate us and cause us so often to hold illogical opinions. There also I gained my first experience of Movement under a Laban-trained Instructor and...I joined a Summer School of Modern Dance under Lisa Ullmann and Rudolf Laban. The revelation of the narrowness of my previous physical and emotional experiencing came with startling clarity in a class for men conducted by Laban personally; and my life's course was transformed in that single session." [1]

Like the dancers with whom he worked, Laban seems to have been reluctant to have his ideas described in words. When he did write them down they tended to assume - even in English - a florid, romantic tone similar to that of his early German writings.[2] Carpenter, on the other hand, had the doggedness of the engineer and a British obsession with clarity and detail. Above all, Carpenter was motivated by a belief that *"language dances"* and that words could be made to express what hitherto could only be intimated through sensation. In practice, Carpenter's writing was heavily indebted to Jungian psychological concepts and in particular to the English translation of "Psychological Types" from which he derived a large part of his terminology. But this appealed to Laban, who had already encountered Jungian ideas with interest.

There is some conjectural evidence that Laban and Jung might even have met during the First World War, when Laban paid regular summer visits to

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[1] "Conflict and Harmony", pp. 3-4

[2] Laban's early (German) books are more the *"manifestos of an artist...written in the very special kind of metaphoric German which was then a fashionable means of expression."* (Roderick Lange: "Philosophic Foundations and Laban's Theory of Movement", *LAMGM*, No. 43, Nov. 1969, p. 9). Even in his later, English, books one would be hard put to find the *"clear and strict statement of findings"* assumed by Lange. (ibid.)

Switzerland. Unfortunately, as John Foster shows[1], no positive proof has emerged so far. Interestingly, however, Foster quotes an interview with Diana Jordan, one of Laban's main collaborators in England, in which she mentions the possible existence of a correspondence between the choreographer and Jung.[2] The correspondence, if preserved at all, has not yet come to light. On the other hand, I have found evidence of another significant link with Jungian ideas. From 1949 onwards, one of the stalwart 'Associate Members' of the emerging Laban Art of Movement Guild was Dr. Rolf Kosterlitz, a qualified, practising Jungian analyst.[3] In 1950, Dr. Kosterlitz gave a lecture to the Guild, dealing with the possible application of Laban's movement principles in the treatment of psychiatric patients[4]. A few months later this (unacknowledged) dialogue was resumed by Laban, who lectured at a summer dance course on the 'obverse' of Dr. Kosterlitz's subject, namely on the "Psychological Effects of Movement".[5] In his lecture Laban all but quotes Dr. Kosterlitz verbatim. There is little doubt that by the early fifties, whether through direct contact with Jung or through associates in England, Laban had become familiar with Jungian ideas and terms.[6] Through Carpenter's diligent, if not always accurate, reading of Jung, Laban's own earlier

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[1] cf. FOSTER, John: *The Influences of Rudolf Laban*, London, Lepus Books, 1977, p. 52

[2] op. cit., p. 51

[3] a biographical note in the LAMG 'Newssheet' (the precursor of the Guild Magazine), no. 8, March 1952, pp. 4-5, links Dr. Kosterlitz to Laban through the former's attendance at Laban's movement classes in Berlin before the war. At the time Dr. Kosterlitz had only qualified as a physician, but following his emigration to England in 1938, he trained as a therapist and went on to practice psychiatry in Cheltenham. He eventually became a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and lectured at University College Hospital and Oxford. He remained a close associate and supporter of the Laban Guild, in constant contact with Laban and his entourage.

[4] Rolf Kosterlitz: "The Application of Movement to the Treatment of Psychological Disorders", *LAMG Newssheet*, No. 5, Oct. 1950, pp. 6-7 (an account *"by M.K.B."* of a lecture given by Dr. Rolf Kosterlitz at the 'Easter Conference' of the Guild).

[5] Rudolf Laban: "The Psychological Effects of Movement", lecture given by R.L. at the Modern Dance Holiday Course, August 1950, reported by H. Irene Champernowne in *LAMG Newssheet*, No. 6, January 1951, pp. 5-6

[6] It must be said that Jungian terms do not appear in Laban's published work. Although terms such as conscious/subconscious, introvert/extravert and so on feature heavily in Carpenter's typescript, the only place where Laban himself makes direct and consistent reference to them is in an article published two years after his death. ("Light-Darkness", in *LAMGM*, No. 25, 1960, p. 14)

interest was taking root. The confluence of two major intellectual traditions - Jung and Laban - had begun to bear fruit, as evidenced by the notes which Yat Malmgren was carrying with him on the train back to London.

The notes turned out to be a loose collection of sketches and diagrams relating to a classification of human types according to their psychology and the way in which this was reflected in movement. Even on first examination, Yat Malmgren remembers being fired by what he saw: he felt certain of holding in his hands the beginnings of a 'psychology of movement' - an explanation of the content and form of movement expression and of the relationship between them. When, a few days later, Laban asked what the younger dancer had made of the notes, Yat Malmgren found it easy to express enthusiasm for the potential of the work, but put forward two areas of concern:

The first related to Carpenter's efforts to express in words the sensations experienced by dancers 'inside', before they come out as visible movement. Yat Malmgren's main concern revolved around what the notes called the "Interpretations" - concentrated descriptions of the sensations associated with certain psychological states. To the younger man's surprise, Laban agreed - these were William Carpenter's attempt to pin down the most elusive of sensations, an attempt which he, Laban, had also felt was doomed. The "Interpretations", they agreed, were only of limited use and had to be treated with caution.

Yat Malmgren's second objection was of greater importance to the evolution of the system. His experience of working with actors and directors led him to believe that Carpenter's notes were less suited for dancers - either as tools of movement analysis or for teaching purposes - and more appropriate for the theatre. Apparently Laban did not object. One can only speculate as to the motives for Laban's impulse which entrusted a dancer of only casual acquaintance with what he clearly regarded as important material. But one reason at least must be that Yat Malmgren's interest in applying movement ideas to the theatre had met with thoughts already alive in Laban's mind.

As I mentioned already, the ideas introduced by Michael Chekhov were still very much in the air during Laban's stay at Dartington, even though the two never actually met. Laban could not but respond to these ideas: they were, after all, very close to his own preoccupations. Both men were engaged in a search for the "inner movement" inherent in a given action or spatial relationship. In his book on the technique of acting, Michael Chekhov defines four types of expressive movement[1] whose very terminology echoes Laban's early work. Dorothy Elmhurst, a member of Michael Chekhov's class at Dartington, recalls him asking his pupils repeatedly to *"find the gesture in everything"*.[2] This gesture was an *"inner quality"*, a source of expression to be found equally in animate and inanimate objects - precisely the kind of thought which exercised Laban throughout the post-war years. Moreover, Michael Chekhov suggests a link between the elements of movement and inner experiences which I think attempts a relatively crude correspondence between Laban-inspired elements of movement and Stanislavskian acting concepts.[3] It is difficult to ascertain who influenced whom, but I think there is some evidence that the influence exerted by Stanislavski's teachings, through Michael Chekhov and Dartington, found its way into some of Laban's thought.[4]

I stress the fact that Laban came into contact with ideas on acting because this is an area often neglected by his contemporary critics. Yet immediately after the war, A. V. Cotton, the ballet critic of the Daily Telegraph, thought of Laban as primarily a theatre, not a dance thinker.[5]

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[1] *"moulding, floating, flying and radiating"* (Michael Chekhov: To The Actor, On The Technique of Acting, New York, Harper and Row, 1953. p. 13)

[2] Bonham-Carter: "Dartington Hall", p. 133, emphasised in the original

[3] *"So we may say that the strength of the movement stirs our will power in general; the kind of movement awakens in us a definite corresponding desire, and the quality of the same movement conjures up our feelings."* (Michael Chekhov: *To The Actor, On The Technique of Acting*, New York, Harper and Row, 1953, p. 65)

[4] A few passages in Rudolf Laban's: *Mastery of Movement*, MacDonald & Evans, London, 1971 (1950), for example, attempt to define the ideal actor. One can hear Laban comparing mentally the physical restraint of English actors with the expansive, if less disciplined, Russian and Central European traditions. He rejects both the lack of expressiveness of the English stage at its most stilted and the undisciplined continental and American expansiveness. He calls for an actor who is not only adept in terms of physical skills, but also imbues his acting with high moral and aesthetic *"values"*. (op. cit., p. 7)

[5] *"Laban is one of the little appreciated thinkers in the past fifty years of theatrical history; it is probable that he will be reckoned as*

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Since then, Laban's interest in theatre has been largely forgotten. Written material concerning this aspect of Laban's work is almost nonexistent, while the literature concerning Laban's ideas and practice of dance and movement education is considerable.

Nevertheless, Laban had had personal experience of theatre work. The choreographer Geraldine Stephenson, who studied with Laban in Manchester in the mid-forties, remembers him teaching acting students at the drama school founded by Esme Church in Bradford[1]. In its relatively short existence the school produced some excellent actors, Bernard Hepton among them. Not only did Laban - known as *"uncle Rudi"* by the acting students, in spite of his formidable physical presence - take movement classes for actors there, but he choreographed a number of 'Movement Scenes' involving speech, movement and music. These grew eventually into fully-fledged 'masques' which Laban and his collaborators organised for several seasons with the participants of the Saturday course they held at the YWCA in London in the mid- to late-fifties. Unfortunately, after Laban's death in 1958 his interest in extending his ideas to theatre was not developed by his principal collaborators. Thus, although Laban's main book was originally entitled *"The Mastery of Movement for The Stage"*, after Laban's death, his editor dropped *"for the stage"* from the title of later editions. Theatrical applications were driven out to pockets of enthusiasts: partly to people working at Joan Littlewood's "Theatre Workshop" and partly to Yat Malmgren's Studio.

Yat Malmgren stopped teaching at Weybridge at the end of the 1954/55 session. His interest in Laban's and Carpenter's ideas was undiminished, however. As a consequence, in the years that followed his fateful second encounter with Laban, Yat Malmgren began incorporating elements of Carpenter's notes in the classes he gave to actors at his Studio. He began to 'dig' doggedly under Carpenter's succinct definitions, trying to assimilate the latter's thought and apply it to his own work with actors. He also sought more material relating to Carpenter's work and eventually

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historically important as Delsarte, Appia and Stanislavski." ("The New Ballet", London, 1946, p. 9)

[1] Interview 6.5.1995 ; Geraldine Stephenson was eventually brought in to cover his classes when Laban fell ill with typhoid in the winter of 1948/9, and was then kept on as his assistant.

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page 32a

obtained, with Laban's permission, copies of the former's unpublished and unfinished material. This included three main items, all in typescript:

a. A "Glossary Of Terms As Used In Movement Psychology", dated February 1954. This sets out the terminology of the system in dictionary (A to Z) form. The "Glossary" was to be appended to the book on which Carpenter was working at the time of his death, a book intended to reflect the last and most advanced stages of Laban's thinking. It presents in list form some of Laban's work described in "Effort"[1] and "The Mastery of Movement" and it adds, without explanations, the new notions of Inner Attitudes and Externalized Drives.

b. A set of "Charts Of The Inner Attitudes", also dated February 1954 and bearing Laban's and Carpenter's joint signatures. This document establishes in diagrammatic form the links between notions already familiar from Laban's earlier, published writing, such as Shadow Moves and Working Actions, and the new concept of Inner Attitudes. A version of these charts was later included by Lisa Ullmann into the second and subsequent editions of "The Mastery of Movement", published after Laban's death.[2] In the same editions we encounter a tabulation of what Laban himself calls: *"an attempt to attach each 'mental effort' to one of the motion factors"*[3]. This, together with the tables containing the names (but very little on the nature) of the Inner Attitudes, is as much of their joint work as Laban and Carpenter seem to have recorded. As they are, both the tables and the attendant attempts at "Interpretations" are too vague to be helpful in practical work without further explanation.

c. A copy of Carpenter's unfinished typescript entitled "Conflict and Harmony Between Man And Woman (A Study in Movement Expression)", undated, but bearing the address of the "Art of Movement Studio" at Addlestone, Surrey. This typescript contains a Preface and the first five chapters of the book on which Carpenter was working in 1953/54. The Preface and Chapter 1 ("Introduction to Movement") constitute an overview of Laban's principal concepts, linking in general terms the physical and psychological aspects of Movement. Chapters 2-5 deal with the physical dimensions of Weight, Time and Flow and their links to Jungian

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[1] Rudolf Laban: *Effort*, London, MacDonald & Evans, 1947
[2] Laban: "Mastery of Movement", pp. 85-87
[3] op. cit., pp. 126-127

psychological functions. One can only assume that Chapter 6, listed in the Index but not titled, was intended to cover the concept of Space. It is the loss of this last section which so upset Laban when, meeting Yat Malmgren on the morning following Carpenter's death, he bemoaned the lack of *"the most important chapter - that on Space"*. The most significant development brought by Carpenter's typescript is the explicit link made between Jungian psychological concepts and their correspondences in movement.

However, this is far from being the cool, 'scientific' account one might have expected from someone of Carpenter's background. On the contrary, the typescript is written in the style of an enthusiast's call to arms, as a tract designed to popularise the idea of therapy through movement or art.[1] As such it is based upon, but not primarily concerned with, Laban's late work. As a consequence, the part of interest to us is not the body of the book, but its Introduction (which contains a summary of the basic concepts of the system) and the two appendices Carpenter managed to write, namely the "Glossary" and the "Charts of the Inner Attitudes". Carpenter promises other appendices, probably covering refinements of Laban's ideas as well as chapters on therapy, but illness and death prevented him from completing these.

The genesis and ownership of this unfinished typescript are somewhat confused. Among the pupils attending Laban's classes at Weybridge was William Elmhurst, the scion of the Elmhurst family of Dartington Hall fame, whose mother Dorothy had been herself an amateur pupil of both Laban's and Michael Chekhov's in the thirties. A highly strung young man given to ardent interests, William sought to continue the family tradition by using his inheritance to support artists in whose work he believed. He seems to have 'sponsored' financially the work done by Carpenter and thus may have had a claim on the typescript of "Conflict and Harmony". However, between 1955-1958 the fragment remained with Laban and his collaborators

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[1] *"Previous experience and practice of Movement, through which we have trained our bodies to express each Element of Motion as we may need it, will aid us to make the first conscious effort to be creative. When once we have experienced the transfiguration of alchemising depression into sound, colour or movement, then when next we are stricken we can the more easily convert our conflict into creative effort."* (Chap. 5, p. 25)

and one gathers from a hint in Laban's "In Memoriam" that the master hoped for yet another of his pupils to continue Carpenter's work.[1] This hope did not materialise and William Elmhurst turned to Yat Malmgren, going as far as to make a small covenant in Mr. Malmgren's favour, designed to help with his research. Finally, after Laban's death in 1958, William Elmhurst acquired Carpenter's fragment and passed it on to Yat Malmgren, thus completing the trio of written sources for what was to become the Laban-Malmgren system.

Carpenter's book is clearly a pamphlet destined to promote a model for an *"integrated"*, fulfilling life. In this it reflects, naturally, Carpenter's own path towards Laban's work. His book was never intended as a specialist dance, industrial or movement work like Laban's earlier writings. On the contrary, one feels that Carpenter saw himself as a disciple shouting from the roof tops the merits of his master's miracle cure to a public interested in therapy and general self-improvement. The content of his book is therefore often obscured by this prophetic, exalted tone.[2] Paradoxically, this is the only form in which Laban's late thoughts were recorded in all their complexity. Yat Malmgren's work consisted therefore in re-extracting Laban's concepts from Carpenter's typescript and applying them in turn to an area secondary, if closely allied, to Laban's main preoccupations.

It must be stressed, therefore, that neither "Conflict and Harmony" nor the "Glossary" contain any applications to character analysis for the theatre. It was left to Yat Malmgren, working with and for actors, to

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[1] cf. "In Memoriam" p. 4: *"Michael Leonard, an architect and colleague of Carpenter at the Studio, has offered to complete this fragment in editing a chapter on "Movement in Space".*

[2] *"Thinking, Sensing and Intuiting have an immense economic importance in this world of distorted values. But who attempts to value Feeling? We have gone so far down this road that we have become a "Where? What? and When?" people who hardly ever ask "Why?"... Having disclosed this malady of our civilisation, we must seek for the remedy which lies surely in the field of Movement since if our Working Actions are the prose of life then Dance Movements are expression of life's poetry...It is thus that Modern Group Dancing achieves such seeming miracles in liberating people from the tensions of our 20th Century for with Flow substituted for formality we are free to relate ourselves to the lead of the Teacher and to adapt our Feelings and the Flow of our movements to our companions, who, in their turn, reciprocate by adapting to us."* (Chap. 5. pp. 14-16)

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develop these hints into a coherent, useable whole. Carpenter sees his synthesis between Laban and Jung as a journey of the divided self towards integration, aided by an understanding of the laws of movement. He views human personality from the inside, from the point of view of the 'sufferer' striving for balance. Yat Malmgren on the other hand, dealing with theatre character, is confronted with an apparently unitary personality: the character revealed through his actions. The main thrust of his work is to split the character and its actions into components so as to uncover the psychological truth hidden under the veneer of the actions.

As we saw, Yat Malmgren began by teaching the rudiments of the system at his Studio. Between 1960 and 1963 he taught movement, again incorporating certain early features of the system, at the Central School of Speech and Drama and the R.A.D.A. From 1963 onwards he became Joint Principal and Director of the Drama Centre, London, the school he co-founded. At the same time, he joined the staff of the newly formed Royal Court Studio and was invited by Laurence Olivier to undertake movement training with the company of the National Theatre at the Old Vic, a role which he fulfilled until 1967. In the decades which have passed since, Yat Malmgren developed and taught the system to over thirty generations of actors at the Drama Centre, as well as the State School of Drama in Gothenburg, the Royal Dramatic Theatre School in Stockholm, the University of Gothenburg and at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco.

As a result of its application to acting and actor training, the system has evolved considerably. A number of amendments and additions were made to Laban's and Carpenter's original concepts and in one significant respect Yat Malmgren struck out on his own: he linked their work to Stanislavskian notions of objectives and action. This development was encouraged by the environment at the Drama Centre, where the teaching has always been resolutely Stanislavskian. While careful to remain critical of the more 'Method' oriented parts of the teaching, Yat Malmgren absorbed into his system essential Stanislavskian concepts, thus moving the system further from its origins in movement and psychology than either of its initiators had thought possible.[1] Thus the system draws on three main

[1] Yat Malmgren's development is by no means the only occasion when Laban's

areas: a realistic acting method, Jungian typology and expressionist movement.

The synthesis of these three major modes of thought could not but be complex and difficult. Yat Malmgren was handed the first principles on that cold morning at Weybridge - he then had to struggle on his own, for many years, with the material Laban had bequeathed him. This he did with a dogged application perhaps matched only by the passion with which Carpenter himself had approached Laban's ideas. *"The Work"*, as Yat Malmgren likes to refer to his theory of character analysis, seems to arouse this sort of obsessive interest in those who come into contact with its ideas. In spite, or perhaps because of its complexity, professional actors and directors trained in the system find that it becomes a second skin, that it affects profoundly their way of thinking about their work and about themselves. Maybe the secret of its fascination lies precisely here: because of its basis in a recognised branch of psychology, the system offers not just a coherent method of work, but also the tools for understanding oneself and others a little better. This strong driving force must have compelled Carpenter until his death, then Yat Malmgren for so many decades, and even myself in the years of writing this account, to try and understand, describe and explain an edifice which never stops yielding new findings to all those who enter its many rooms.

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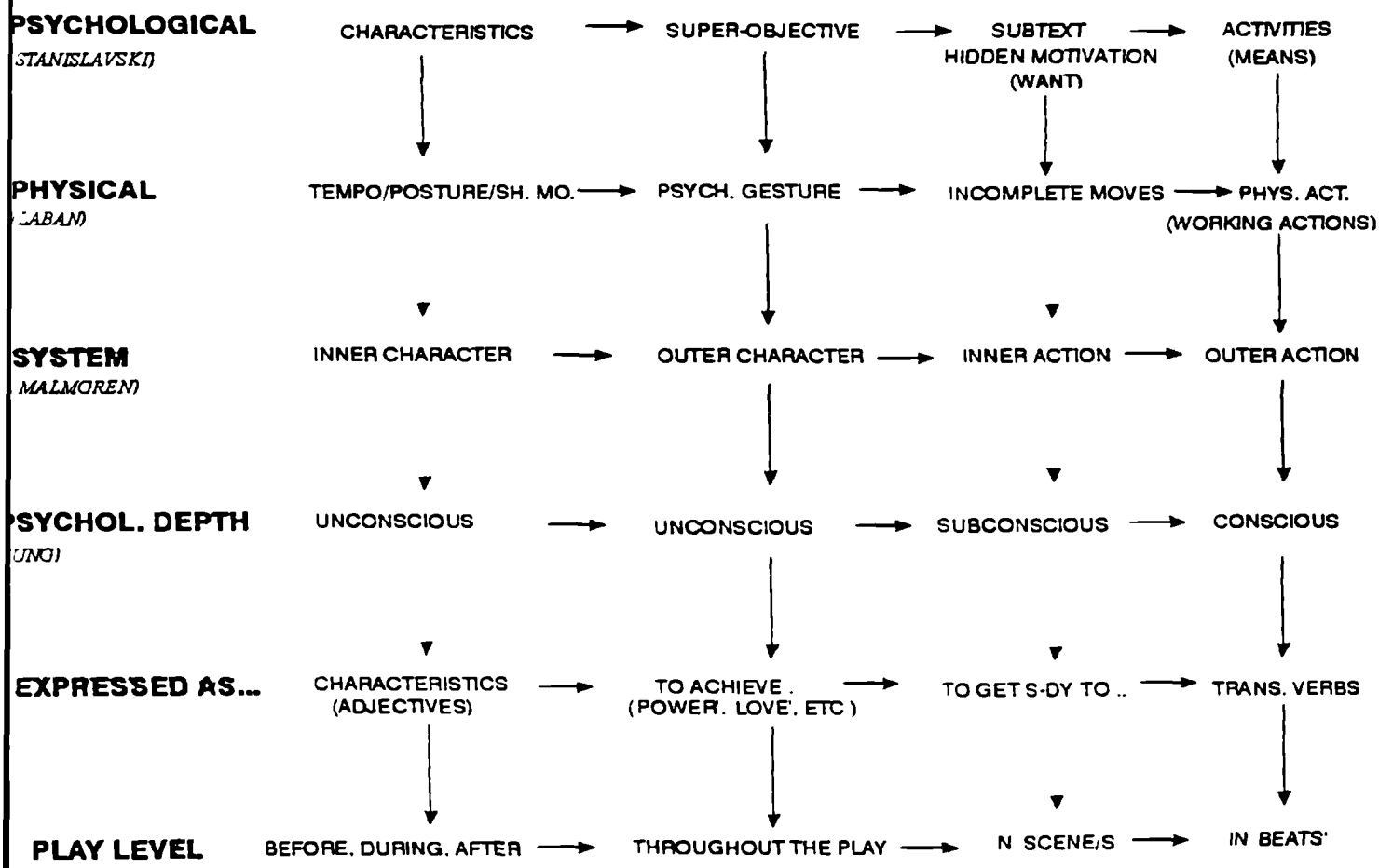
ideas have been taken out of their original context and applied to a new field. It is indeed one of the paradoxes of Laban's work that its most fruitful applications were in fields other than dance: movement education, job interview techniques, personality assessment (developed by Warren Lamb) and the theatre. (cf. Foster: "Influences", p. 3)

C H A P T E R III

T H E T H R E E P I L L A R S O F T H E S Y S T E M

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES



CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN THE ELEMENTS OF THE THREE SOURCES OF THE SYSTEM

THE THREE PILLARS OF THE SYSTEM

In the middle of *Qui Va La*, Peter Brook's theatrical essay on "Hamlet" and the actor's art[1], a moment of magic comes to pass. Yoshi Oshida speaks this passage from Stanislavski:

"All your energy is concentrated in your heart. It's like a little ball of mercury. Let it roll down your left shoulder. Now all your energy is in your shoulder. Further, in your elbow, your forearm, your wrist, down your fingers. And back. It goes down to the leg, the knee, into each toe. Comes back, rolls down the right shoulder, the arm. Until the index - the end of the index."

As the words of a fellow actor resound, indifferent to time and distance, something stirs in the depth of the actors' bodies. For a few seconds, for an eternity of stage time, one can see something travelling through the shoulder blade, the shoulder, the arm, the elbow, the hand, the fingers and finally, marked by a thin chime from the percussionist, out and up, across the air of the stage, high above, towards a fairy-tale watery moon. *"Look at the moon.* - Zeami now speaks through the actor's mouth - *I can indicate the movement. But from here to the moon, it's up to you."* The words have been made flesh.

The pages which follow are an attempt to put into words the process by which such magic is brought about. They chart the journey of the *"little ball of mercury"*, of that intangible yet perceptible concentration of energy from its awakening as impulse, see it amplified by different layers of the psyche, then realized as a physical act, taking flight towards the spectator.

The task is not easy. Unlike most theories about acting, this one is not about the reason why theatre is necessary. It is not a book about the 'why' of drama. Neither is it a book about the 'how'. Although much of what follows can be and is used to teach actors, this is not primarily a

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[1] Bouffes du Nord, Paris, 1996

text about acting techniques. It is about the 'what' of acting - an attempt to describe what happens when one of us **becomes someone else**[1].

Yat Malmgren approaches Laban's and Carpenter's legacy in a state of mind which I can only describe as meekness. He sees himself as the servant of *"The Work"*, whose complexities and potential applications transcended the understanding of any of its originators. He has therefore spent his life digging into Laban's ideas in order to extract the meaning and relevance of the pithy formulations he had inherited. At some basic level this was a struggle with language - words had been given imports other than their ordinary meanings and his task was to 'translate' them for his pupils. He took up this charge with the wonder of the foreigner trying to penetrate the fog of a new language. No wonder for years he took his best examples from "Twelfth Night". *"What country's this? It is Illyria..."*. He travelled through his Illyria guided more by intuition than through logic - logic depends on words and the words were foreign.

My attitude to Yat Malmgren's own work is very similar. In his teaching he uses not only the changed English terms bequeathed by Laban, but a myriad other terms he has charged with his own personal meanings. He talks of 'tempo' and 'organic', of 'expressive', 'energy', 'imagination', 'extraversion' and 'introversion' and a host of others. The words are familiar - their meaning in terms of the system, however, are altered beyond recognition. Like Bottom, they are *"translated"*. Somehow, in the overall context of studying at the Drama Centre, most of these terms fall into place intuitively. When they are set down on paper, however, they begin to raise quite a number of questions which Yat Malmgren's teaching - focused on Laban's system, naturally - often does not answer. I have therefore had to 'dig' myself. First into the three main sources of the

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[1] cf. Simon Callow: *"Yat's work was... puzzlingly difficult. Nevertheless I had no doubt, and have none now, that what he was saying expressed the profoundest truths about acting. His work addresses itself directly to the very nature of acting: not 'What it is for?' or 'What are the conditions which give rise to it?'. It attempts to say what it is...it amounts to a praxis of character in action, an account of the physical embodiment of character and impulse."* ("Being An Actor", p. 39, emphasised in the original) For Barba, on the other hand, energy is a 'how', not a 'what'. Yet even Barba agrees that performers find it useful to think of their energy objectively, as a 'what'. These, he says, *"are efficient figments of imagination"*. ("The Paper Canoe', p. 50)

system, whence most of these concepts hail. Then into my own and other actors' and directors' practice of applying the system. Finally, into aesthetic and philosophical areas which help to place the system into a wider context. These three areas I call the 'three pillars' on which the system rests. Crowning them is an airy span made of words - the system is a language.

These introductory chapters are therefore an attempt to elucidate the main concepts which inform Yat Malmgren's teaching, alongside the terminology and ideas left by Laban and Carpenter.

At no point must one forget, however, that at the beginning and the end of the teaching is the body. The Laban-Malmgren system is first and foremost a physically-based understanding of acting. It establishes a lexicon for the purpose of describing the **sensations** of movement. In the process, it reduces theatre communication to a pattern of movements. It measures these movements according to specific dimensions. It then seeks to define the psychological roots feeding the movements. In the end it describes that most elusive of concepts - artistic **expression.**

Can one talk about sensations? A doctor's anodyne question turns us to bewildered babes about our own aches and pains. How much more difficult to talk about those of another. Yet this is the task Yat Malmgren set himself, perhaps only half consciously, on that fateful train journey from Addlestone when he could not take his eyes off Laban's notes.

Four decades later this task is well advanced and the results are described in detail in the central section of this thesis. But in the maze of new concepts and connections which follows we should not lose sight of one simple fact: the system is about sensations. About how to allow them to rise powerfully in the dulled spirit with which most of us come to rehearsals. How to become conscious of their presence by naming them. How to discern recurring patterns in the entanglement of our impressions and by so doing relate them to things beyond ourselves. How to differentiate between allied yet distinct senses. How to convoke them to the acting feast at will. How to sharpen them, make them into physical realities.

Ultimately, how to connect them to their most profound source in ourselves - psychic energy.[1]

[1] [1] *"...this Agogic dealing with the psychological implications of Movement Expression..."* is how William Carpenter puts it. ("Conflict and Harmony", Preface, p. 6, my underlining)

THE FIRST PILLAR - ENERGY

Last run before the Dress Rehearsal. The play drags, the lines come stilted, acting is artless. Lunch. The slough of despond! An hour later, a 'speed run' (what in English is called, reasonably, 'an Italian run' and the French call, for reasons unknown even to them, a 'Spanish'). People run about. The director waves his hands. The tragic characters put on funny accents. Even the designer laughs (designers never laugh). The play flies! After that, at the first Dress, the lines flow, people 'give and take', acting is free and easy. Yet on the timepiece hanging on the neck of the hard put upon DSM the timing is the same - no difference on the clock between the dregs and the heights. Why? What has happened during the 'speed' run that makes such a difference? No one can measure it, tell you its colour or taste, but we know it when we feel it in our bones - energy was unleashed[1].

The awareness of the actor's energy (or energies, as Yat Malmgren would rather think of them) as a physiological fact is central to the system. Energy may seem a cloudy concept in artistic endeavour. But Carpenter was a scientist by formation. He brought to Laban's earlier work the scientist's frame of mind. He also brought Laban to Jung, another scientist who ended up dealing with the nebulous region between science and art. One thing struck me powerfully when reading Carpenter's typescript, which is anything but 'scientific'. He is trying to speak to 'artists' and that leads him to be 'inspirational' and muddled. But precisely because Carpenter's typescript is so hazy, I tried to think through his ideas in the way in which he thought commonly: as a scientist

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[1] cf. Peter Brook: *"Occasionally in the theatre what one loosely calls chemistry, or luck, brings about an astonishing rush of energy, and then invention follows invention in lightning chain reaction."* (Peter Brook: *The Empty Space*, New York, Avon Books, 1968, p. 17) Barba's terminology for these two states of energy arousal differentiates between a normal or *"daily"* state and a heightened or *"extra-daily"* form appropriate to the stage. ("The Paper Canoe", p. 15) The latter involves a wanton *"wasting of energy"*, like that display by my director hopping mad and waving his hands in the air. In Japan, Barba recalls, spectators thank the performers with one of the loveliest expressions I have encountered in the theatre: *"otsukaresama"*. Literally translated this means: *"You have tired yourself for me"* (*apud* "The Paper Canoe", p. 16). Barba surveys the concept of energy in the Far Eastern theatre traditions on pp. 64ff.

bringing scientific perceptions to the arts. I am now convinced that energy is best understood by means of a scientific parallel.

To the scientist energy is not vague. He can measure it using basic instruments, in widely accepted units of measurement. The universal presence of energy is a basic postulate of science, as is its production or, more accurately, its transformation from one form into another. Energy is primarily a physical event. It exists potentially in all matter, and can be measured by the universal formula: Potential Energy = mass x gravity x height. Organisms, ourselves among them, ingest it in the form of food and oxygen and their bodies turn it into active forms - kinetic (movement of the muscles), thermal, electrical, chemical.[1]

I believe Carpenter brought Laban to think in the same way about artistic energy:
a. what is the **food**, the passive form of energy taken in by the performer from the environment? - he asked.
b. what is the **mechanism** through which it is turned from physical to psychological forms and then transformed back into physical expression?
c. how can it be **measured** when it has been expressed?

Looked at in this way, one might say that the Laban-Malmgren system considers artistic endeavour as a sort of energy exchange. The artistic 'soul', 'mind', 'psyche', no matter what we call our inner faculties[2], feeds itself on the world around it. Through a psychological 'metabolism' it turns energies coming from the physical world into psychological energies. The 'enzymes' of the imagination transform these energies back into physical expression. Finally, the expression, in the form of movement and sound, is measured with physical 'units', the equivalent of the joules and calories of the physicist. Basic principles of physiology are thus

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[1] cf. Barba: "The Paper Canoe", p. 55

[2] to avoid confusion, I shall use the terms 'psyche' in the sense in which it is used by Jung: *"By psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious. By soul, on the other hand, I understand a clearly demarcated functional complex that can be best described as 'personality'.* (C.G.Jung: *The Collected Works*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971. Volume 6: Psychological Types, p. 463, my emphasis) Frieda Fordham draws the same distinction in relation to the term 'mind'. (Frieda Fordham: *An Introduction to Jung's Psychology*, London, Penguin Books, 1991 (1953), p. 15)

transposed to the realm of psychology. But the physiological roots are never forgotten. The system recognizes that there are two ways, with parity of esteem, of inciting and measuring creative energy: through the body and through the psyche.

In his work developing Laban's thoughts, Yat Malmgren draws on the three sources of the system in order to answer each of these questions in turn: From Stanislavski he takes an understanding of the way in which the actor starts his creative process through interacting with the Given Circumstances - the '**food**' of the character. This shows how physical realities are 'ingested' and activate psychological sources of energy. Jung provides the answer to the psychological processes - the '**mechanism**' - through which the energy is turned back from psychological to physical: from impulse into movement. Finally, Laban offers the means of '**measuring**' the physical energy when it comes out as expressive movement on stage.

The system takes from its *"ancestors"*, to use Eugenio Barba's term[1], a number of fundamental concepts. At times these are changed, reinterpreted, re-assessed. In the pages which follow I shall try to define the most important concepts underpinning the details of the system.

[1] "The Paper Canoe', p. ix

a. Energy Aroused (Stanislavski)

Yat Malmgren's teaching cannot be separated from that of Stanislavski. Stanislavski is a constant point of reference and I am convinced that Yat Malmgren based his initial teaching on a very careful reading, and assimilation, of Stanislavski's writings. I can picture him in the early days of his teaching, when he was finding ways of adapting a dancer's vocabulary to that of actors, pouring over Stanislavski's books. By the time of his recorded lessons (1991) these readings have become subsumed into his own practice and discourse to the point where he himself is probably no longer aware of the origins of many of his statements. But the spirit and the letter of Stanislavski's teachings breathe out of every page of the system and Yat Malmgren would be the first to acknowledge his debt. I therefore point the reader in my notes to the description of the system towards the main points of contact and the echoes found by Stanislavski's teachings in the Laban-Malmgren system. In doing this I have no intention of diminishing Mr. Malmgren's contribution. The originality is in the synthesis, not in the discovery. There are also a number of points at which Yat Malmgren diverges from Stanislavski's teaching. These I try to signal in the pages which follow.

i. Contacts

The most immediate route from the physical to the psychological is the creation of inner images or, to use the term preferred by Yat Malmgren, of contacts. Because most of our reactions, at least in the first instance, are visual, the term 'image' is used to describe the mental reactions of the actor to a textual or physical stimulus. The idea of 'images' is the first of the important concepts the system takes from Stanislavski and amends to suit its own ends.

Let us look at what happens to an actress working on the first line of a well known passage, say Viola's "ring" speech in "Twelfth Night". It reads: *"I left no ring with her, what means this lady?"*[1] At first reading, the actress may identify with Viola's immediate emotion: her sense of wonder. This will then be tinted - depending on the interpretative line

[1] op. cit., II, 2, 18.

taken by the actress - with more cerebral (**thinking**) responses: suspicion, perhaps, or ironical amusement. Were she to **act** Viola's line, as opposed to reading it, she will move a step further. She will need to react to the stimuli offered by, on the one hand, the physical presence of the ring, and on the other by the images evoked in her mind by Shakespeare's words. Both *"ring"* and *"lady"* have therefore a double power of suggestion: once through their concrete presence (the metal band supplied by the properties department, the physical reality of the fellow actress playing Olivia) and once - crucially - through the associations the words *"ring"* and *"lady"* arouse in the mind of the actress. The heart of the matter is in the difference: the actress adds to the general emotions and thoughts of the reader a level of personal **sensuous** engagement with the words which is unique to her craft. This sensuous approach is not to be confused with the reaction aroused in all readers by the rhetorical values of a literary text (its rhythm, rhyme, assonances, etc.). The latter also contribute to the power of the words spoken on stage, but they are not specific to the acting process, as anyone used to read poetry aloud can testify. What is specific is the use of **memory**. Through it the actress gains access, using the concrete reality of the words provided by the writer, to their echoes in her own psyche.[1] Our mind deals with reality by turning it into a narrative - we tell ourselves 'stories' in order to assimilate daily occurrences into our consciousness. As a result, whenever faced with the need to recount an experience, our brain rolls the film of images it associates with different aspects of that experience.[2] To the literary

[1] cf. C.G.Jung: *Analytical Psychology, Its Theory and Practice. (The Tavistock Lectures)*, London, Ark Paperbacks, 1990 (1968). p. 22: *"The function of memory, or reproduction, links us up with things which have faded out of consciousness, things that became subliminal or were cast away or repressed. What we call memory is this faculty to reproduce unconscious contents, and it is the first function we can clearly distinguish in its relationship between our consciousness and the contents that are actually not in view."*

[2] this, at least, is the view Stanislavski took from the psychologists who influenced him directly: Ribot and Pavlov. In the nineteenth century most early psychologists interpreted the way our minds work in terms of associations. They tried to prove, through experiment as well as deduction, that the mind functions through linking its contents together, either by similarity or contrast. These *"associanist theories"* were at the root of Pavlov's well known principle of conditioning ('Pavlov's dog') *"which essentially depends upon one stimulus being associated with another."* (Anthony Storr: *Jung*, London, Fontana and Collins, 1973, p. 25). This is the basis of Stanislavski's belief in personal images merging with those of the character.

minded the actor's 'images' will seem banal, trivial. What is the actress's memory of her granny's ring compared to the subtle ambiguities of Shakespeare's text? It is true that the very nature of the process involves bringing rhetoric down to the level of the individual who is speaking the words. After all, it does not matter one bit once the rehearsal process has taken its course - images need only be potent for the actor, never for the audience. Their value lies precisely in their intense personal nature and not in their general appeal. Images must remain the secret tools of the actor at work.

In real life each image precedes by an infinitesimal fraction of a second the utterance of the words which describe it. Part of the process of realistic acting involves the **reproduction** of this procedure in relation to words and experiences which belong to someone else. This is the difference between an actor's response and that of the general reader. The sensuous evocation of images involves the actor in a time sequence radically different from that of the reader: while the latter hits on the images of the text **after** the words have been spoken, the actor needs to bring to the fore his images a split second **before.**[1]

Stanislavski was the first to connect this basic psychological observation to the acting process:

"Nature has so arranged matters that when we are in verbal communication with others we first see the word on the retina of the mind's eye and then we speak of what we have seen. If we are listening to others we first take in through the ear what they are saying and then we make the mental picture of what we have heard.
To hear is to see what is spoken of, to speak is to draw visual images. To an actor a word is not just a sound, it is the evocation of images."[2]

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[1] There is a school of thought which argues that what it calls *"projecting"* an image *"demands that the actor speak and see it simultaneously"* (L-S. Johanson: "The Inner Life of the Character", *Dramatics*, March 1992, pp.2-28, p.24; see also Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 16). I do not see how this is possible. Looked at from the point of view of the system the sequence looks like this:
ACTOR <-feeling <- thinking <- **sensing** -> thinking -> feeling = ACTION
The process takes place, albeit with the lightning speed of the mind, before the visible expression is directed towards partners and spectators.
[2] Stanislavski: *Building a Character*, translated by E.R. Hapgood, London,

Stanislavski's contemporary followers speak of *"imaging"* and of the joining together of several such images in an *"inner monologue"*.[1] Unfortunately, this identification of the inner life of a character with visual *"imaging"* has often led to a reduction of the inner life to the psychological function of thinking. In the process, the difference between cerebral and sensuous responses becomes obscured. *"The inner technique* - says Johanson - *refers, essentially, to the thinking an actor does in character... Creating an inner life on stage is almost totally dependent on one thing - thinking."*.[2] This point of view ignores the fact that, strictly speaking, Stanislavski's *"images"* are not thinking but sensuous responses (*"image"* involves, by definition, the use of the sense of vision). Even when this confusion of terms is cleared, we are left with the question of the order in which an actor engages his or her psychological functions. As we saw, the actor reverses the order of responses experienced by the reader: the sequence emotion - thought - sensation is turned upside down and starts with the **sensuous** recreation of images. Only when the actor has brought his or her own images to bear on the words of the text, can questions of feeling and thinking arise again. This time, however, feelings and thoughts are anchored in the solid ground of personal sensation. The use of images is there, as Stanislavski put it *"because it is necessary for our creative natures, our subconscious"*.[3]

Once a bridgehead towards the unconscious has been established, other forms of psychic energy are released and brought into action. The point made repeatedly by Yat Malmgren, and central to his system, is that the 'images' are sensuous. Sensation is the entry point to all other faculties brought into play in acting. The sensuous 'images' of the text reverberate in the psyche of the actor. They arouse his memory which produces, through association, another set of sensuous images. These release specific forms of energy which eventually colour the expression. Above all, they release emotion. The 'images', being concrete, first trigger, then crystallize

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Methuen, 1968 (1950), p. 118
[1] Johanson: "The Inner Life", p. 24.
[2] ibid.
[3] "Building a Character", p. 119

diffuse emotional contents.[1] The whole process is the psychological equivalent of the biological ingestion of 'food'.

Stanislavski's emphasis on *"visual images"* can lead, if wrongly read, to a further unfortunate reduction. *"Visual images"* is in itself tautological, but Stanislavski and his translators felt the need to distinguish this type of psychological reaction from the gamut of responses the actor experiences on stage.[2] Yat Malmgren substitutes the term **contacts** for images in order to emphasize that the actor responds to stimuli with a full panoply: through the 'mind's eye' as well as through the sensory recall of sound, taste, touch and smell. The term comes from Stanislavski himself, but seems somehow to have been overwhelmed by the widespread use of 'images'. Stanislavski speaks of being in *"contact with some object"*[3] as an essential means of *"mental communication"*, of what his American translator calls *"communion"*[4]. By this I think he means a "contact" with a physical object on stage which is transformed by the emotional attributes with which the actor endows it. Grotowski extends the idea to make it expressive: *"By his controlled use of gesture the actor transforms the floor into a sea, a table into a confessional, a piece of iron into an animate partner, etc."*[5] Yat Malmgren extends the meaning of the word further, to include the memory of objects, as well as the concrete *"communion"* on stage. The term 'contacts' as used by Yat Malmgren covers the entire gamut of inner reactions experienced by the actor in response to an outside stimulus, be it the words of the text, the actions of the partners or any other stage event.

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[1] cf. Frieda Fordham: "An Introduction", p. 136: *"[Jung] found that if he could crystallize an image, i.e. find a psychic representation for his emotion...the image gave him some means of understanding what gave rise to the emotion or what it meant."*

[2] Stanislavski does not insist on 'images' being exclusively visual. Indeed, he speaks of *"visual, audible or other images"* (C. Stanislavski: *Creating A Role*, trans. by E.R. Hapgood, London, Methuen Drama, 1994, p. 20) and only mentions the fact that, as an actor, he himself responded mainly to visual stimuli (ibid.). *"To the fact that we see such images with inner vision he added that the same was true of our sense of hearing, smelling, touch and taste."* (C. Stanislavski: *An Actor Prepares*, trans. by E.R. Hapgood, London, Methuen Drama, 1986, p. 87)

[3] "An Actor Prepares", p. 193

[4] ibid.

[5] "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 21

ii. Objectives

The second trigger for the actor's energy recognised by the system is a refinement of Stanislavski's idea of motivation and Objectives.

For Stanislavski the source of acting energy lies in the arousal of the actor's *"will"* to perform the actions demanded by the text.[1] In order to arouse his will to perform an action, the actor needs to know why the action is necessary, to discover the motivation which lies behind it. Only then the character's actions become one with those of the actor.[2] In order to arrive at a source of energy, a motivation common to him and the character, the actor identifies the latter's Objectives. Among these, the deepest layer of motivation is that of the Super Objective, a notion as central to the Laban-Malmgren system as it is to Stanislavski's. The Laban-Malmgren system reinterprets Stanislavski's notion, however. Since this is an area of considerable confusion for students of acting, I think it may be worth examining the similarities as well as the differences between the two systems in some detail.

One of Stanislavski's clearest examples of Super Objective occurs in his description of his work on the main character in "Woe From Wit", the classical Russian verse comedy by Griboyedov. Chatsky, an eighteenth century nobleman, is desperately in love with Sophia, a young coquette. After three years spent abroad, he rushes home on an impulse to propose to her. He finds her surrounded by other suitors. Stanislavski's reasoning is:

"What is it that will give me, as Chatsky, such faith in my objective that I shall have the strong wish to go into action? Is it the sight of charming, helpless, inexperienced Sophia at the side of that pitiable nonentity Molchalin or coarse-grained Skalozub? But these people do not as yet exist, at least I do not as yet see them either in actuality or in my imagination. I do not know them. Yet I do know of my own experience the feeling of pity, humiliation, aesthetic outrage at the thought of any fine

[1] see "An Actor Prepares", Chapter 12: "Inner Motive Forces", pp. 244ff. and especially pp. 245 & 247.
[2] cf. Jean Benedetti: *Stanislavski: A Biography*, London, Methuen, 1988, p. 172

young girl (whoever she might be) sacrificing herself in a marriage with a coarse fool, like Skalozub, or with a shallow opportunist, like Molchalin. The prospect of such an unnatural and unaesthetic union would arouse one's instinct; the desire to stop an inexperienced girl from taking a wrong step would be alive in any one of us. For the sake of such a desire it would never be difficult to stir one's impulses, which in turn would enkindle genuine desire, and action itself."[1]

I quote Stanislavski's argument in its entirety because it shows better than any definition the nature of his understanding of the concept of Super Objective. It is clear that he thinks of it as a surge of *"desire"*, a powerful impulse to act. At the same time, the motivation for the desire seems very **generalised** ("To save *any* girl from contracting an unsuitable marriage") and somewhat sentimental. True, in the continuation of his reasoning, Stanislavski makes the motivation more **personal** to Chatsky by changing what he calls its *"inner tone"*[2], that is its emotional content and intensity. This new *"key"*[3] in which the character plays changes from the general "to save any girl from a bad marriage" to the more personal and passionate "to come home to declare my love to Sophia". But this refinement, as Stanislavski himself writes, does not alter the basic objective. It only changes the *how*, the intensity and tempo with which the objective's actions are executed.[4] The change, while making the objective more specific and emotional, still leaves unanswered the question: 'what is it in Chatsky that makes him fall in love with a girl of fourteen, cultivate this passion for three whole years from thousands of miles away, then rush home on a mad impulse expecting to find his passion reciprocated?' In other words, what are the sources of the immediate motivation **in the character make-up?**

Yat Malmgren's teaching encourages the actor to look for a deeper layer of psychological motivation, for a more personal desire, one which is connected intimately to Chatsky's **psychological characteristics.** Chatsky, he would say, is an idealist, a dreamer and an enthusiast. He is fascinating, yet dangerous to his society, whose stability he threatens.

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[1] "Creating a Role", p. 53
[2] op. cit., p. 64
[3] ibid.
[4] op. cit., p. 65

Sophia's reaction to his attempt to 'save her from herself' is to declare him insane. Dreamers like Chatsky are hurt when their idealism is rejected. They swing perilously between the need to withdraw into their shell and the need to emerge in agitated bouts of self assertion. Chatsky has already 'withdrawn' into an exile which lasted three years. As Stanislavski himself points out at length, the play starts with his frantic rush to Moscow, to the girl at whose feet he is going to deposit his heart:

"...beside myself,
Two days and nights on end, and never closing eye
I travelled fast over the many hundred miles, through wind and storm,
In turmoil, many times I fell.."[1]

The play ends with Chatsky's equally precipitated departure from Moscow, a gesture of rejection and defiance against the pettiness of Muscovite society. The pendulum swings - the idealist, who had emerged from his shell for a characteristic moment of self assertion, retires back into it, hurt.

The immediate goal that animates Chatsky upon his entry is indeed *"to see Sophia"*. But, while Stanislavski stops here, the system looks deeper. For it, the Super Objective is the force which animates the character throughout its whole life, regardless of the particular circumstances of that part of its life which constitutes the play. If Chatsky's Super Objective is "to save Sophia from an unsuitable marriage", or even "to make Sophia marry me", as Stanislavski states, then these must come to an end with Chatsky's departure from Moscow. The system contends, however, that the vital force which animates him will continue in Paris, Venice or Baden-Baden, wherever his life-long 'grand tour' takes him. His deeper motivation lies more in the realm of 'to change the world in my image' or 'to find kindred souls in order to change the world in our image' than in the immediate motivation of his passion for Sophia. The point is again one of energy: in the view of the system, the immediate goal ('Sophia!') triggers the deep-seated motivation ('to change the world in my image') and the motivation arouses the energy which propels the character through

[1] quoted in "Creating A Role", p. 65

life. The immediate goal is a concrete, sensuous reality, part of the Given Circumstances. It is not the motivation, which is an inner event, determined, as we shall see, by the psychological inclinations of the character.

Indeed, Stanislavski himself seems to have moved some way towards this idea.[1] In the continuation of his exploration of the notion of Super-Objective, Stanislavski says:

"This is the inner essence, the all embracing goal, the objective of all objectives, the concentration of the entire score of the role."[2]

These kinds of statement have been a source of confusion for generations of beginner actors. I think this is because Stanislavski tries to unite three different meanings into the one word - Super Objective. On the one hand he thinks of the Super Objective as the *"inner essence"* of the character, its supreme motivating force. On the other hand, he refers to the Super Objective as *"the all embracing goal"* of a role. He then goes on, in the next sentence, to talk about the Super Objective of a play.[3]

The psychological considerations which inform his system lead Yat Malmgren to separate the three strands of Stanislavski's thinking. The notion of a Super Objective of the play, in the sense of its governing idea or theme - the widest sense in which the term has come to be used[4] - is set to one side. Important as it is in the interpretation of a play, it is not seen as being immediate to the roots of the acting process. This leaves the two other possible meanings.

Objective, in English, is synonymous with 'goal', 'aim', 'intention', 'action' and a host of others. Indeed, most of these terms have been used

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[1] one must remember that "Creating A Role", the book in which these ideas are discussed at length, only represents a collection of manuscripts left by Stanislavski at the time of his death and not finalised for publication.

[2] ibid., p. 78, my emphasis

[3] *"If for the writer this through action is expressed by the progression of his Superobjective, then for the actor the through action is the active attainment of the Superobjective."* (ibid., p. 78)

[4] cf. Jean Benedetti: Stanislavski: An Introduction, London, Methuen, 1982, p. 42

by Stanislavski's followers in trying to define what the master's original Russian word meant. Their variety reflects the dual meaning Stanislavski himself had in mind. 'Objective', 'goal', 'target', 'aim' and so on presuppose a focus on something outside the character. For Chatsky, Sophia is the 'aim' to be attained, the 'target' to be hit. 'Intention', 'want', 'desire', on the other hand, are internal events, to do with the character's psychological motivation. Chatsky's unconscious desire 'to change the world in his image' is an inner force, a personal source of energy, the engine which drives the character forward. More, it is the defining characteristic of the role, a life-long motivating force.

This overwhelming desire can exist, in latent form, regardless of a particular Objective. And, by extension, it can be aroused by a number of suitable Objectives. Indeed, the character constantly seeks opportunities to bring his secret motivation to light.[1] The outer Objective acts as the catalyst of the inner motivation. It first arouses it, then it becomes its target. This circular route of energy is crucial to Yat Malmgren's understanding of the Super Objective. Indeed, in a little noticed passage in the Appendix to "Creating a Role" Stanislavski actually confronts the idea of the Super Objective as both motivator and target:

"The Superobjective requires complete surrender, passionate desire, unequivocal action....Try to understand and fix in your minds to the best of your ability this line: From the Superobjective to desire, effort, the through line of action, and back to the Superobjective."[2]

For Stanislavski, the two aspects cannot be separated. For Yat Malmgren, however, they have to be distinguished, if only for as long as it takes to

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[1] *"Thus a miser seeks in everything that occurs to him the secret bond with his aspiration to enrich himself, an ambitious man with his thirst for honours, an aesthete with his artistic ideals. Often, in life and also on the stage, the through line will manifest itself unconsciously. It will become defined only after the fact, and its ultimate goal, the Superobjective, will have been secretly, unconsciously, exercising a pull, drawing to itself our human aspirations."* (Stanislavski: "Creating a Role", p. 79)

[2] op. cit., p. 259; This is what Eugenio Barba calls in an illuminating passage the *"hermaphrodite"* nature of the expression 'to be decided' - the nearest verbal equivalent of the state of engagement which merges action and passion - the two poles between which flows the *"current of life"* represented by the Super Objective. ("The Paper Canoe", p. 76)

dwell on the psychological roots of the character's motivation. Talking about what makes Chatsky tick, Stanislavski says: *"To define love from the scientific point of view is a job for the psychologists."*[1] Precisely! This is where Stanislavski leaves off and the Laban-Malmgren system takes over. It places a much greater emphasis than Stanislavski on Super Objectives as inner sources of motivation and energy. It wishes to 'psychologise' even further Stanislavski's understanding of acting.

[1] "Creating A Role", p. 66

b. Energy Defined (Jung)

Objectives and contacts are like stones thrown into a lake. They cause ripples of psychological energy. The substance of the ripples is not determined by the stone, however, but by the water. Objectives and contacts are 'irritants' which provoke the energy. To define the nature of this energy the system turns to Jung[1]. It adopts some important Jungian concepts and adapts them, sometimes radically, to serve its own, theatre-related, interests.

Before describing the similarities and differences between Jung's psychology and the system, I ought to make it clear that very little of what follows is incorporated in Yat Malmgren's actual teaching. Indeed, Jung's name is rarely mentioned, if at all, after the initial, introductory sessions of his course. There is no reason for it to be - teaching actors is very much a matter of developing intuition through practice; an extended theoretical discourse can hinder the praxis. The system does, nevertheless, use Jungian terms such as conscious and unconscious, extraversion and introversion, attitudes and psychological functions. Yat Malmgren received these notions from Laban's and Carpenter's notes. They themselves had taken them on board somehow 'on trust'. Jung's was an overwhelming presence in the thought of the twentieth century and Laban must have been captivated by Carpenter's suggestion that the ideas of the Swiss psychologist matched his. This, I think, is the way in which these concepts were integrated into the system: they simply fitted, miraculously. They seemed to confer legitimacy on Laban's thoughts as well as extend their scope beyond the worlds of dance and movement education. The system is thus built on Jungian foundations almost by default.

Laban and Carpenter neither defined the terms they took wholesale from Jung nor substantiated the way in which these terms fitted with their own. Here, I feel, is the rub. Viewed from the perspective of four decades,

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[1] The account of Jung's ideas on energy is based on "On Psychic Energy", CW 8, pp. 3-66. The account of his character typology which follows is based primarily on his seminal book on "Psychological Types" (1923) and on his London lectures of 1935 published as "Analytical Psychology (The Tavistock Lectures)".

some of the connections make one uneasy. They will appear even more questionable to a reader who has not been trained in the system. It seems as if the 'legitimacy' needs to be proved afresh. I therefore set out to do what none of the fathers of the system had felt the need to do before, namely to explore systematically those key Jungian concepts which are woven into the fabric of the system. I wished to ascertain to what extent the psychological assertions of the system were based on what Jung had actually written. The result is a journey across the Jungian landscape in search of the true quality of the 'psychology' included in the Laban-Malmgren system.

i. The nature of energy - the four functions

To understand the interplay between the system and Jung a brief account of the latter's ideas on typology is necessary. This is addressed to the reader without extensive knowledge of Jung's work in this area, a category one imagines most theatre people will find themselves in. It can be skipped without loss by those familiar with the theory of psychological types.

Let us return for a brief moment to the actress playing Viola. We imagined two of the possible choices for her response to *"what means this lady?"* She may respond emotionally - fear of the consequences of the caprice of a great aristocrat on the fate of a poor orphan in disguise. She might respond through her intellect - a wry amusement at the poser brought about by the success of her disguise. Again, she might respond intuitively - looking for an instant answer to the puzzle, then almost discarding it with a shrug, before coming back to it from another angle. She might even respond through her senses, her entire being concentrating on the sensations of Olivia's ring she turns and turns in her hand. In theory all these responses are possible, though in practice some make more dramatic sense than others. How will our Viola decide?

In his effort to distance himself from what he saw as the reductionist preoccupation with sexuality, hunger, power, etc. as the source of all impulses which characterised the work of his predecessors, Jung asks

similar questions of the generality of human experience.[1] He asks whether individual differences between people can be attributed to their reactions to the objective world. If so, do these common traits fall into any discernible patterns? Could one bracket such individuals, across time, distance and cultures, into groups with a common psychological way of looking at the world? Are we all just individuals or does each one of us also belong to a greater 'tribe'?

To answer these questions Jung undertakes a wide ranging survey of modes of thought across three thousand years of Western and Eastern civilisation in his seminal book on "Psychological Types".[2] On the basis of his analysis of this **empirical** evidence he declares that our psychological ways of dealing with reality fall into a small number of categories. We are defined by a fundamental inclination towards dealing with the world in certain ways rather than others. Jung distinguishes between two primary typological categories: two **attitude-types** and four **function-types.**

The *"function-types"* are so called because they are determined by one of the four psychological functions which make up the human psyche according to Jung. These are the **sensation, thinking, intuiting and feeling** functions.[3]

Jung's basic psychological functions are the four ways through which our conscious psyche (the subject) relates to the world (the object). A function is *"a particular form of psychic activity that remains the same in principle under varying conditions."*[4] The functions are divided into two pairs: thinking and feeling are *"rational"* functions, while sensation and intuition are *"irrational"*. Sensation and intuition are *"irrational"* because through them we expose ourselves to continuous experience (we 'absorb' the environment) without stopping to assess what we perceive or

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[1] cf. Frieda Fordham: "An Introduction", p. 139
[2] Parts I-IX
[3] cf. Jung: "Psychological Types", chap. 10: "General Description of the Types", pp. 330ff.; "Tavistock Lectures", pp. 11-14.
[4] "Psychological Types", p. 436; Jung continues: *"I can give no a priori reason for selecting these four as basic functions, and can only point out that this conception has shaped itself out of many years' experience. I distinguish these functions from one another because they cannot be related or reduced to one another".* (p. 437)

to take decisions about these perceptions. Thinking and feeling, on the other hand, are *"rational"* because through them we make judgments and take decisions. In order to do this, however, we need to suspend temporarily the collection of data from the environment through our *"irrational"* functions.[1]

In developmental order, sensation comes first. *"By sensation* - says Jung - *I understand what the French psychologists call la fonction du reel which is the sum total of my awareness of external facts given to me through the function of my senses... Sensation tells me that something is: it does not tell me* ***what*** *it is and it does not tell me other things about that something; it only tells me that something is."*[2]

Having perceived reality through sensation, we engage our thinking to give our perceptions names. We turn these into abstract concepts and make rational judgments about them. Thinking tells us **what** a thing is.[3]

Intuition is a slightly more elusive concept. Fundamentally, for Jung intuition is our capacity to *"see around corners"*, to *"have hunches"*. Like sensation, intuition is a function of perception: the perception of signals from the environment *"so feeble that our consciousness simply cannot take them in"*[4]. Unlike sensation, however, intuition is *"perception via the unconscious"*[5] - we are not aware consciously of detecting these *"feeble"* signals.

Finally, feeling is - controversially, as we shall see, - the second *"rational"* function. Unlike thinking which was concerned with naming the object, feeling, says Jung, is the function through which we assign *"value"* to things, *"in the sense of acceptance or rejection."*[6]. *Feeling*

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[1] cf. Ann Neel: *Theories of Psychology*, London, University of London Press, 1971, p. 226
[2] "Tavistock Lectures", p. 11; emphasised in the original
[3] cf. ibid., p. 12
[4] ibid., p. 15
[5] "Psychological Types", p. 463
[6] ibid., p. 434. Hillman cautions, however, against taking this statement in the narrow sense of 'like or dislike': *"The feeling function...is a process, as Jung says. To reduce feeling to mere like-dislike is an intellectual devaluation; it would be similarly unjustified to reduce all thought processes to the true-false dichotomy... We may separate, analyse,*

tells you whether a thing "is acceptable or agreeable or not. It tells you what a thing is ***worth...***"[1]

To the question whether the functions are a product of nature or development Jung does not give an unequivocal answer, although he inclines towards the view that they are inborn and self-activated[2]. For him a function is primordial or, to use a Jungian phrase: *"a pre-conscious psychic disposition".*[3]

Jung further observes that people are inclined to react to the environment through one of these functions, in preference to the others. *"People who have a good mind prefer to think about things and to adapt by thinking.*

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examine, describe; but reduction belittles because it cuts down the wholeness of an event, the existential reality of just now, what it feels like, which is always complex. This complexity is given by feeling. Feeling records the specific quality and value. And just this exploration and amplification of shadings and tones, this reversal of reduction, is a function of feeling." (James Hillman and Marie-Louise von Franz: Lectures on Jung's Typology, Texas, Spring Publications, 1986. pp. 112-113, my emphasis). Precisely because feeling is so specific and 'holistic' a function, it is so important in acting. Acting is a process of judgment on the totality of the character's and the play's experience. Yat Malmgren stresses the overwhelming importance of feeling in the creation of a Super-Objective.

[1] "Tavistock Lectures", p. 12, emphasized in the original.

[2] The question as to whether the functions are 'biological' or 'formative' has exercised psychologists ever since the publication of Jung's "Psychological Types" in 1923. Jung's own writings seem to incline towards the 'biological' explanation, but do not present enough convincing scientific evidence. For those of Jung's followers who subscribe to this opinion, the functions are predispositions akin to the instinctual *"innate releasing mechanisms"* described by Tinbergen, which enable animals to respond to their environment without any prior learning. (*apud* Storr: "Jung", pp. 49-50) Marie-Louise von Franz, one of Jung's closest collaborators, assigns the *"differentiation of types"* to *"very early childhood"*. According to a series of lectures she delivered in 1961, the attitudes of introversion and extraversion can be seen in a child as young as one, while by *"kindergarten age"* one can already observe the development of a (main) function in preference to the others. (Marie-Louise von Franz: "The Inferior Function", in "Typology", p. 5) But, while she reviews Jung's 'biological' examples of attitudes in the animal kingdom, and adduces newer zoological evidence, her final answer to the question of what determines the original basic disposition is that *"we don't know"*.(op. cit. pp. 8-9). The 'innate' nature of the functions thus remains a working assumption.

[3] E. Jung and M-L. von Franz: *The Grail Legend*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971 (1960). p. 36

Other people who have a good feeling function are good social mixers, they have a great sense of values; they are real artists in creating feeling situations and living by feeling situations. Or a man with a keen sense of objective observation will use his sensation chiefly, and so on. The dominating function gives each individual his particular kind of psychology."[1]

This preference is the basis for his classification of personalities into *"types"*: Jung therefore talks of sensation, thinking, intuiting and feeling *"psychological types"*.

Adapting these notions to the analysis of theatre characters, the Laban-Malmgren system can therefore speak of a *"feeling character"*, a *"thinking character"* and so on. These are the four 'lakes' open to our Viola, who will decide by using her strongest function, by putting her *"best foot foremost"*[2]. If she is a feeling type she will react through 'fear', if a thinking type through 'wry amusement' and so on. In Jungian terminology the preferred function is designated as the *"superior function"*. But human nature is usually more complex. In real life one would be hard put to find 'pure' types, dominated entirely by one of the functions. All one can usually say is that a person is predominantly sensitive, or a thinker, or has the weighty presence of a sensuous type. More often than not human beings combine their superior function with a second function, less prominent in their psychological make up, but just as important in determining their reactions to the world. Jung spoke of his description of types as *"somewhat Galtonesque family portraits"*[3] to stress their inevitable tendency to oversimplify human nature. However, such reductions are necessary if one is to accept the two underlying principles behind the theory of functions:

a. that in any individual one and only one of the functions is fully developed, while the other three are in various states of underdevelopment.

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[1] "Tavistock Lectures", p. 16

[2] *"This means that we usually develop our best function, be it thinking or intuition, feeling or sensation, and at the same time have a strong tendency to conform to what is expected of us, to respond to education and social pressures to behave in an accepted way."* (Frieda Fordham: "An Introduction", p. 47)

[3] ibid., p. 45

b. that the functions are in a dynamic relationship, either opposing or helping each other.

In consequence Jung and his disciples establish a hierarchy between the functions present in the psyche of a given individual. According to their preeminence in the reactions of the psyche to the environment the four functions are designated thus:

a. the **superior**, dominant or primary function is the most developed function, the one which the individual will bring most into play. It determines the *"type"* of the individual.
b. the **auxiliary** function. The superior function is characterised by confidence, stability, aplomb. Alongside it comes a *"helper function that is slightly unconscious"*[1]. It is less developed than the superior function, but *"nonetheless accessible and useful to the person in his or her daily life."*[2]
c. a **tertiary function**. This is not strictly speaking Jung's term. He tends to refer to the second and third functions in one breath under the generic term *"auxiliary"*. However, contemporary Jungian theorists point out that this third function is rarely developed sufficiently to 'help' the superior function and thus warrant the name of auxiliary. The term *"tertiary"* is therefore preferred, linking it to...
d. the fourth or **inferior** function. This is the function diametrically opposed to the superior function. In a thinking type, feeling is the inferior function; in a sensation type - intuition, and *vice versa*. The inferior function lies deepest in the conscious psyche and is therefore laden with unconscious contents, in particular with emotion or *"affect"*.[3] This function is not open to the person in a conscious way - on the contrary, it tends to play havoc with the order established by the superior function and to bring into it vitiated perceptions. It is enormously important, however, as an engine for personality development. According to Jung, its integration with the superior function is one of the goals of psychic development.

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[1] Angelo Spoto: *Jung's Typology In Perspective*, Illinois, Chiron Publications, 1995 (1989), p. 80
[2] ibid.
[3] cf. Jung: "Tavistock Lectures", p. 17 and von Franz/Hillman "Lectures on Jung's Typology", p. 39

The Laban-Malmgren system appropriates this theory, with some significant modifications. The functions represent four different kinds of inner energy which, when mixed in different proportion within one character, give it its precise psychological make-up. But in the process of adapting them to theatre character, the system simplifies Jung's ideas considerably. Only the two functions which are immediately 'useful' in the character's interface with its Given Circumstances are retained: the superior and auxiliary functions. Moreover, unlike Jung, the system does not consider that certain functions are in total opposition and thus incompatible with others. It creates a typology of theatre character based on combinations of two functions at a time, across the rational/irrational divide. By considering that any of the functions can be the superior function and combining it with any of the other three, the system arrives at a total of six possible 'types' of theatre character. These Laban named his six **Inner Attitudes** - each composed of two of Jung's functions, but given a name specific to the Laban-Malmgren system. They are usually presented as pairs of opposites:

a Sensing/Thinking[1] character type called **Stable**
an Intuiting/Feeling character type called **Mobile**

a Sensing/Intuiting character type called **Near**
a Thinking/Feeling character type called **Remote**

a Sensing/Feeling character type called **Adream**
a Thinking/Intuiting character type called **Awake.**[2]

This classification, while based on Jung's idea, nevertheless constitutes a significant innovation:

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[1] the / indicates that the two functions are interchangeable. A Sensing/Thinking type (sensation - superior function and thinking auxiliary function) can also be, as far as the system is concerned, a Thinking/Sensing type (Thinking - superior function and sensation auxiliary). There are differences of detail, but they both belong to the general category or 'Inner Attitude' of Stable.

[2] cf. "Mastery of Movement", tables on pp. 85-87; Carpenter: "Glossary", pp. 1-2; "Book": pp. 16ff.

Near is a combination of both irrational functions - intuition and sensation. This is not possible in Jungian terms, because the functions either side of the rational/irrational divide are supposed to be opposed to each other and therefore incompatible. One is supposed to be the inferior function of the other.

Remote is equally unorthodox from a Jungian point of view as it is a combination of both rational functions (thinking and feeling).

Mobile, Stable, Adream and Awake are combinations of one rational (thinking and feeling) and one irrational function (sensation and intuition). Again, though these are theoretically possible from a Jungian point of view, this is not a merger which Jung himself envisages, as he describes types defined by one function alone and qualified by the further categories of 'introvert and extravert.[1] These last two concepts are discarded by the Laban-Malmgren system in terms of character classification.

Carpenter's typescript does not argue theoretically in favour of his innovations and simplifications. One feels that Carpenter and Laban try to avoid being submerged under the weight of Jung's wealth of detail and speculation. As we shall see, their main interest is in connecting certain aspects of physical movement to some of the concepts presented in "Psychological Types". Anything not relevant to this connection is ignored, perhaps in the hope that 'real' Jungian psychologists will take on board and amplify Laban's and Carpenter's insights and square them fully with the totality of Jung's theory.

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[1] It is true to say that Jungians acknowledge the possibility of *"developed"* individuals embracing effectively more than one function. cf. F. Fordham: "An Introduction", p. 47; see also Marie-Louise von Franz: "Lectures on Jung's Typology", p. 21: *"Many people, moreover, develop two superior functions so well that it is very difficult to say whether the person is a thinking-intuitive type or an intuitive type without the thinking, for the two seem equally good. Sometimes sensation and feeling are so well developed in an individual that you will have difficulty in ascertaining which is the first. But does the intuitive-thinking person suffer more from knocking his head on sensation facts or from feeling problems? Here you can decide which is the first, and which the well developed second function."*

Their innovation is also made possible by the fact that the system reinterprets the nature of two of Jung's functions, namely feeling and thinking. Since these constitute significant departures from Jungian orthodoxy, I think it is important to clarify the precise meaning assigned by the system to these functions.

i. Feeling or Emotion?

As we have seen, for Jung, feeling is a rational function dedicated to assigning values to our perceptions.[1] Moreover, Jung intimates that these values are not only based on utility (on what we like or dislike) but have a moral basis. In describing the neurosis of a young patient who lives off the earnings of an older woman whose affection he exploits, Jung says: "*He has no right values, he is inferior in his feeling-life. That is his problem.*"[2] For Jung feeling seems therefore a function of discrimination between good and bad, even if the good and the bad are determined by the standards of the individual himself.[3]

For Laban and Carpenter, on the other hand, feeling is identical with emotion[4]. This runs against one of the most dearly held Jungian assumptions, according to which emotion is not a function of the conscious psyche, but the perception of a physiological reaction to the environment: *"Emotions... are involuntary conditions which override the intentions of the ego...*[and]*... are identical with certain physical conditions and are thus deeply rooted in the heavy matter of the body."*[5] For Jung the

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[1] "Psychological Types", pp. 354ff.; "Tavistock Lectures", p. 12; cf. also *"A Psychological Theory of Types"* in Jung: *Modern Man In Search Of His Soul*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1947 (1933), p. 105

[2] "Tavistock Lectures", p. 100

[3] cf. Frieda Fordham. op. cit., p. 40; These standards, of course, are profoundly affected by those of the society in which the individual lives and Jungian *"feeling types"* have a strong sense of history and tradition as well as profound religious attachments. I am left wondering, therefore, whether this understanding of feeling is not too socially determined to be an *"innate"* function?

[4] The first words of their definition in the "Glossary" spell this out unequivocally: *"The emotion of liking or disliking, interest or disinterest, etc."* (op. cit., p. 2)

[5] "Tavistock Lectures", p. 154; cf. p. 24: *"emotions and affects...are clearly not functions any more, they are just events, because in an emotion, as the word denotes, you are moved away, you are cast out, your decent ego is put aside, and something else takes your place".*

difference between feeling and emotion consists in the fact that *"feeling has no physical tangible physiological manifestations, while emotion is characterised by an altered physiological condition."*[1]

In making these assertions, Jung bases himself on one of the best known (and most controversial) of the early psychological theories: the so-called James-Lange theory of affect.[2] For most contemporary psychologists, this theory - enormously influential in its time - has become of mainly historical interest. I think, nevertheless, that - seeing how important the understanding of the role of emotion in the creative process undoubtedly is, and how much Carpenter and Laban depart from Jung's ideas in this area - it is important to explain its basic principles, especially for the benefit of the reader without a background in psychology.

William James' theory proposes that emotions are physiological in nature. They are based on vasomotor reactions, that is reactions which affect the circulation of the blood and can be observed in our blood pressure, the tension of our skin, the depth and speed of our breathing, etc. They also entail - as we now know - significant chemical changes, such as the release of larger than usual quantities of adrenaline into the blood stream. Our bodies react to external stimuli in this physiological way - whether they be the anticipation of pain or of pleasure. Contrary to common belief, says the James-Lange theory, we do not first feel 'love' or 'anger' and then the body reactions follow. On the contrary, our physical reactions come first, we perceive the changes which occur to our body and only then we give 'names' to these changes to suit the circumstances. Only when we have christened the physiological changes as 'fear' or 'pity', do we 'feel' that particular emotion. We only get really emotional when we become aware of the physical changes which take us over.[3] In other words, emotions are not an innate function of our conscious psyche, but a matter

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[1] ibid., p. 26

[2] The James-Lange theory of emotion was enunciated around the beginning of the century by William James (the father of American psychology) and, simultaneously and independently by the Danish physiologist C. G. Lange and in consequence bears both their names. (cf. ibid., p. 26, n. 1 & p. 35; and Neel: "Psychological Theories", pp. 59ff. on which most of what follows is based.)

[3] cf. "Tavistock Lectures", pp. 26-7

of perception, *"the perception of behaviour caused by vasomotor reactions to external events."*[1]

Throughout the enunciation of his theory of types Jung bases himself on this assumption. Yet the James-Lange surmise had been the object of controversy in psychological circles almost as soon as it was put forward. Indeed, precisely because it was so controversial, it spawned experiments and counter-theories which in themselves helped to establish psychology as a science. The psychological counter-arguments are too specialized to be of interest here. The strongest objections, however, came from the physiologists themselves. As early as 1906 C. G. Sherrington severed the spine of dogs, thus stopping all motor responses, but continued to observe physiological and behavioural evidence of emotion. A generation later, in the late 1920s, W. B. Cannon removed portions of the autonomic nervous system in animals - the very system which, according to James, produced the patterns of vasomotor activity interpreted as emotion. Cannon continued to observe fear and rage responses in the incapacitated animals. The James-Lange theory also predicted that specific physiological response-patterns corresponded to specific emotions. In a further study, W.B. Cannon was unable to isolate even one physiological response specific to a particular emotional state. These experiments, as well as the introspective psychological evidence, lead contemporary academic psychologists to conclude that *"it appears more and more likely that the James-Lange theory was in error, or at least that some modification is indicated".*[2]

And yet Jung quotes it as widely accepted in his Tavistock Lectures, delivered as late as 1935. Moreover, none of the participants in the wide-

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[1] Neel: "Psychological Theories", p. 61; In the same way, emotion is considered by 'scientific' psychologists - as opposed to psychoanalysts, whether Jungian or otherwise - as an **arousal** which is basically chemical in nature. Experiments were carried out in which people were injected with adrenaline, felt 'aroused' and were told then that they were 'angry' or 'upset' about something and became convinced of it. This type of experiment fits in with the James/Lange theory. It is the naming of the sensation of arousal which triggers and, say the behaviourists, constitutes, the emotion. For the behaviourists (Guthrie in particular) emotion is a name given to a physiological phenomenon which arises from inter-human relationships.

[2] ibid., p. 59

ranging discussions which followed the lectures, all of whom were members of the London Institute of Medical Psychology (some of the most eminent clinical and theoretical psychiatrists of the period) raised any objections to the adducing of this theory in support of Jung's distinction between emotion and feeling. I find it inconceivable that neither Jung nor his specialist interlocutors had any knowledge of Cannon's experiments, published in learned journals only a few years earlier. And yet the James-Lange theory was taken as read and accepted, without comment, by the participants.

It is useless to speculate as to the reasons for this acceptance. What matters to us, however, is that Jung's relegation of emotion outside the realm of the functions is by no means based on a scientifically proved theory. Thus Carpenter's use of the word 'feeling' to describe emotion (and the subsequent identification by the Laban-Malmgren system of feeling with emotion and not with a rational 'value-giving' function), while departing from Jung's understanding of the terms, is by no means unfounded. It must also be said that even Jung himself sometimes talks of the two concepts as if they were one and the same.[1] The system also retains James' association of emotion with motivation. Yat Malmgren's similarly understands emotion to be the 'deepest' of the functions in terms of motivation: emotion leads into the other functions and eventually motivates action, but (unlike Jung) Carpenter, Laban and Malmgren consider it to be one of the functions, without pretending for one moment to greater scientific status for their assertions than that conferred by years of observation of actors and dancers at work.

Perhaps the key to understanding Carpenter's 'misreading' of Jung's notion of feeling is to be found in the way in which Jung himself defines the relationship between feeling and emotion. Under pressure from one of the participants in the Tavistock discussions to define the relationship between "affects and feelings", Jung declares it to be *"a matter of degree."*[2] He then goes on to say that all mental processes have physiological outcomes, but that only those produced by emotion can be measured because they are large enough. It is easy to understand why

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[1] see "Tavistock Lectures", p. 156, for example
[2] op. cit., p.27

Carpenter ignores the Jungian distinction between emotion and feeling: he and Laban were primarily interested in expression, that is in the physiological outcomes of the psychological functions. A function which could not be perceived, like Jung's feeling, was useless for their purpose. Moreover, they set out to demonstrate that, through their association with specific physical dimensions, the other three functions were also 'large enough' and could be therefore perceived through their physiological outcomes. They therefore chose - whether the choice was deliberate or based on Carpenter's rather vague, second-hand understanding of Jung is not important in itself - to give the word Feeling, as far as the system is concerned, the sense of **emotion**, with its attendant physiological outcomes. There is therefore no doubt in my mind that the system uses the term 'feeling' to denote precisely what Jung termed emotion or affect.

The question nevertheless remains: is it legitimate, in either psychological or acting terms, to talk of feeling/emotion as a psychological **function**? It must be said that Jung himself is in something of a minority in his understanding of feeling as a rational, conscious function. Neither Bleuler nor Freud, the two psychologists who most influenced him, separated feeling from emotion or associated concepts like passion and affectivity. Until this day, feeling is still framed in the general category of affectivity in most psychiatric and psychological literature[1], despite the more than seventy years which have passed since Jung counted it among the rational functions. This seems to support Laban and Carpenter's understanding, although it must be said that there is no evidence that their refusal to dissociate feeling from emotion was based on anything other than instinct. For Jung himself, the two are clearly distinguished:

"I take emotion as affect, it is the same as "something affects you". It does something to you - it interferes with you. Emotion is the thing that carries you away. You are thrown out of yourself; you are beside yourself as if an explosion had moved you out of yourself and put you beside yourself....But when you have feeling, you have control. You are on top of the situation and you can say, 'I have a nice feeling or a bad feeling

[1] cf. Hillman: "Typology", p. 101

about it.' Everything is quiet and nothing happens. You can quietly inform somebody 'I hate you', very nicely. But when you say it spitefully, you have an emotion."[1]

The quotation echoes almost word for word the terms in which Yat Malmgren describes the effect of his understanding of Feeling: an overwhelming force which *"sweeps you away", "throws you off centre".*[2] Clearly, for Jung this is not a function of the conscious, because functions can be controlled by the ego through will-power, whereas emotion cannot. The key criterion of distinction therefore seems to be one of control. The answer lies, I think, in a more sophisticated distinction between the three concepts of feeling, emotion and affect drawn by latter-day Jungians.[3]

Hillman, for example, agrees with Jung that affects are a *"primitive reaction"*, the kind of *"primordial, partial, one-sided release dynamisms"* which Jung regarded with such suspicion and would not allow into the clear light of consciousness. Affect does indeed lower the mental level and thus

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[1] "Tavistock Lectures", pp. 26-27; The opposition between emotion and thought has an ancient pedigree. As early as 1755 the philosopher and psychologist *avant la lettre* Moses Mendelssohn had written: *"Wir fuhlen nicht mehr sobald wir denken"* ("We no longer feel as long as we think", *Philosophische Schriften*, Berlin, Ben Christian Friedrich, 1777. p. 8.) Feeling, thus closer to affect, became one of the three pillars of classical (eighteenth century) psychology, alongside willing and thinking and is still taught in these terms in traditional continental Universities. (cf. Hillman: "Typology", p. 95) The trinity of will, thought, emotion influenced Stanislavski's thinking significantly.

[2] Tapes: 15-6 & 17-5

[3] Jungians are by no means the only psychologists to confront the thorny questions raised by feelings and emotions. Three major symposia have been held this century, dedicated exclusively to this subject. The first took place at Wittenberg in 1927 and gathered some of the most eminent psychologists of the day: Adler, Bekhterev, Brett, Janet, Pieron. After the war, in 1948, a new generation of psychologists, among them Margaret Mead, Gesell, Buytendijk, Gardner Murphy held wide ranging discussions on feelings and emotions organized by the University of Chicago. The third symposium took place at Loyola in the autumn of 1968. The discussions are included in three volumes which encompass the range of views available on this fraught subject:
Feelings and Emotions: The Wittenberg Symposium, ed. M. Reymert, Clark University, 1928
Feelings and Emotions: The Mooseheart Symposium, ed. M. Reymert, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1950
Feelings and Emotions: The Loyola Symposium, ed. M. B. Arnold, New York and London, Academic Press, 1970

affects all the conscious functions, not only feeling.[1] Affect is closely connected with physiological expression because it is inseparable from physical innervations, whether one subscribes fully to the James-Lange theory or not.[2] But affect is only part of the picture. The other part is feeling, which Hillman also considers to be a *"partial function associated with consciousness".*[3] And the concept which unites affect and feeling in a continuous whole is **emotion**. Thus Hillman draws a distinction not only between affect and feeling, like Jung, but also between affect and emotion, which Jung had regarded as synonymous.[4] Emotion, Hillman maintains, is:

"a total event of the personality, based perhaps in affect or having an affective component, and containing a feeling dimension. Many levels are activated, and consciousness becomes transformed through an emotion to a symbolic kind of consciousness. Emotions are highly significant states. They provide depth. They give and bring meaning; they disorder and create at the same time, and they present the experience of body-consciousness. In a nutshell: emotion embraces both affect and feeling and more as well..."[5]

Taken in this comprehensive sense, emotion is crucial to the Laban-Malmgren system. It is both the state of involvement of the actor in the situation (affect) and the almost instantaneous **appraisal** of this involvement by the actor who remains 'cool' in the midst of passion. It is the process by which an actor participates in the immediacy of the circumstances, yet at the same time transcends them and thus gives them a higher meaning - he causes the stage events to make a point, to **express** something.

In acting practice, therefore, the concepts of feeling and emotion are probably closer than in psychological theory. In acting we acknowledge the 'use' of feeling in the action - the 'cool' use - while emphasizing

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1 *"Affect lowers the mental level to what Janet has called the inferior part of a function."* (Hillman: "Typology", p. 104)
2 cf. Jung: "Psychological Types", p. 412
3 "Typology", p. 105, my emphasis
4 "Psychological Types", p. 411
5 "Typology", p. 105

throughout the need for the actor to develop emotional range and control. The difference in the end is one of priorities: for Jung emotions are dangerous, anti-social, have to be controlled through the rational function of feeling and are best avoided whenever possible. For the actor emotion is the tool, and his priority, far from avoiding emotional states, is precisely to enlist them, like an artificer making use of a controlled explosion.

ii. Two Ways Of 'Thinking'

The system also reinterprets, though to a lesser extent, the Jungian function of thinking.

Jung defines thinking as the function which connects ideas.[1] He distinguishes, however, between active and passive thinking. The former is *"an act of the will"*[2], while in passive thinking connections between ideas establish themselves of their own accord and the resulting *"judgements"* may lead the 'passive thinker' to contradictory or unexpected conclusions. Conclusions which are arrived at in this way, says Jung, do not fit the purpose for which the thinking function had been engaged in the first place - they are not *"consonant with the aim"*[3] of the thinker. Once reached, however, they can be recognized, clarified and assimilated through a voluntary act of active or *"directed"* thinking.

The difference between directed (active) and what Jung calls *"intuitive"* or passive thinking echoes forcefully in Yat Malmgren's teaching. In terms of acting he considers that thinking is only valuable in its passive state. Logical, directed, systematic thinking driven by the will is the province of the intellectual and, Yat Malmgren maintains, inimical to the creative process. Thinking which 'drifts', like clouds in a blue sky, which *"reflects"*[4] reality shimmering like the deep, dark wells of the Alhambra reflecting the cypresses around them - this kind of thinking is

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[1] *"the psychological function which, following its own laws, brings the contents of ideation into conceptual connection with one another."* ("Psychological Types", p. 481)
[2] ibid.
[3] ibid.
[4] Cf. Carpenter: "Glossary", p. 5: *"Thinking...formation of ideas through intellectual reflective reasoning."*

conducive to creative jumps. Yat Malmgren's interpretation of thinking is closer to what Jung calls *"intellectual intuition"*[1], which, unlike directed thinking is an *"irrational function"*[2] because it follows rules and norms of which the conscious mind is not aware. Yat Malmgren himself sets great store on the difference between, on the one hand, thinking as the simple faculty of making logical connections between facts; and on the other hand 'creative' Thinking (with a capital 'T'), which he considers to be the ability to see things in an unexpected light.[3]

This kind of thinking is aroused by a kind of trick the actor plays on his unconscious. We saw above that the system embraces Stanislavski's idea of Objectives. Breaking down texts into units and objectives and determining the character's Super Objective are analytical processes involving precisely the kind of directed thinking of which Jung is so fond and Yat Malmgren so wary. Yet Yat Malmgren often points out that in practice the initial decisions, in particular the selection of the character Super Objectives, are proved wrong by the time rehearsals have reached their term. The act of creation involves a process of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. It is necessary to concentrate the attention of the directed thinking and feeling functions, of the rational part of our consciousness, towards a goal in order to lull the unconscious into a false sense of security. So tricked, the unconscious 'relaxes' and makes the intuitive feeling and thinking connections which actors need in order to identify with the essence of the character. This is precisely Jung's thinking which is not *"consonant with the aim"* of the thinker - yet the only thinking truly useful in the artistic process.[4]

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[1] "Psychological Types", p. 481

[2] ibid., p. 482

[3] On the same lines, Eugenio Barba distinguishes between *"wishful thinking"* and *"concrete thinking"*. ("The Paper Canoe", p. 89)

[4] The process of creativity 'by default', whether in scientific discoveries or artistic jumps, is described in detail in A. Koestler: *The Act of Creation*, London, Pan Books, 1977; cf. also Grotowski: *"But in order to get the result - and this is the paradox - you must not look for it. If you look for it you will block the natural creative process. In looking only the brain works; the mind imposes solutions it already knows and you begin juggling known things. That is why we must look without fixing our attention on the result."* ("Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 245)

I therefore conclude that the system takes Jung's typology, but reinterprets the two rational functions. It makes them more flexible and gives them a wider compass. In so doing it adapts them to the needs of artistic activity: it underplays the cerebral and emphasises those sides of the psyche to do with emotion and 'lateral thinking'. In the process, however, ideological or speculative mental activities are weakened, even frowned upon. This is a fundamental choice which gives the system its focus: it is a source of strength, because it endows Yat Malmgren's teaching with a clear vision of what theatre 'should be' and therefore an ideology on which to base the training of actors. Like all ideologies, it is also a limitation. This has led some former students of the system to criticise this bias towards the sensation/emotion aspects of acting to the detriment of the cerebral[1].

The Jungian notion which the system adopts without hesitation, however, is the thought that the functions have their own peculiar, characteristic energy[2]. The energy, says Jung, derives from our conscious self, from our *ego*. The *ego "has a certain amount of energy, and that energy is the will-power".[3] The ego* is positioned, as it were, at the centre of the four functions and directs its energy, its will to act, to engage with the world, towards its preferred function. A thinking type directs its energy into thinking, a sensing type to sensation, and so on.[4] In uniting the worlds of Stanislavski and Jung, the system gives a psychological basis to the former's idea of the *"will"* as the first step of the actor's psychotechnique.

Viola's process of decision is itself a matter of the way in which this energy circulates between her and the world around her. Let us look again at that first line: *"I left no ring with her, what means this lady?"* The line is clearly divided into two: grammatically by the two subjects and

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[1] see "The Application of the System in Professional Practice", pp. 195ff.
[2] *"Psychological functions, like the sense functions, have their specific energy. You cannot dispose of feeling, or of thinking, or of any of the four functions. No one can say, 'I will not think' - he will think inevitably. People cannot say, 'I will not feel' - they will feel because the specific energy invested in each function expresses itself and cannot be exchanged for another".* (Jung: 'Tavistock Lectures", p. 16)
[3] ibid.
[4] ibid.

verbs; rhetorically by the caesura; psychologically by the direction of Viola's thought. When the line is spoken I am yet to see an actress who does not instinctively point (whether with her hand or the turn of her iris, it matters little) towards herself on the *"I"* and away from herself, towards an imaginary Olivia on *"what means this lady"*. The energy of the thought, of the emotion behind it, of the whole panoply of associations aroused by the ring, moves first inwards, then outwards.

ii. The Direction of Energy - Libido

Jung conceives of the psyche as a dynamic system. The psyche is in constant motion, pulled, like the spring of a clock, by a number of opposing levers and counter-levers, weights and balances. The spring produces the visible movement of the hands. The inner movement of the psyche produces a form of energy, which Jung labels "psychic energy" or **libido**[1]. This is not Freud's understanding of the term. For Jung the libido is not generated exclusively by the sexual drive, it is not even a specific form of energy. It represents the intensity of the sum total of the energy generated by the psyche.[2]

The libido *"flows"*[3] like electric current between the negative and positive poles. It ebbs and flows between extremes Jung refers to as *"the opposites"*[4]. The further apart the opposites are, the greater the energy. Moreover, the opposites are the precondition of the existence of energy - no opposites, no noticeable energy.[5] The opposites exist at various levels

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[1] "On Psychic Energy", pp. 37ff

[2] *"Psychic energy is the intensity of a psychic process...I do [not] understand libido as a psychic force, a misconception that has led many critics astray. I do not hipostatize the concept of energy, but use it to denote intensities or values. The question as to whether or not a specific psychic force exists has nothing to do with the concept of libido. I often use 'libido' promiscuously with 'energy'."* (Jung: "Psychological Types", pp. 455-6) As Frieda Fordham points out *"the Latin word libido has by no means an exclusively sexual meaning (though it is frequently used in this way) but has the general sense of desire, longing, urge."* ("An Introduction", p. 17, n.1)

[3] Jung: "On Psychic Energy", p. 31.

[4] ibid., p. 32.

[5] cf. Barba ("The Paper Canoe", pp. 9, 17 & 23) who identifies through an analysis of the postures and movements of Japanese performers physical *"tensions [which] generate extra-daily energy, a quality which renders the body theatrically 'decided', 'alive', believable."*

of the psyche: consciousness is opposed to unconsciousness, thinking to feeling, extraversion to introversion. From our point of view the most important of these oppositions is the natural movement of the libido backward and forward between subject (the 'I') and object (the world outside the 'I'). Psychic energy moves forward from the 'I' to the environment in order to furnish the needs of our consciousness. Jung calls this direction of movement ***"progression"***. The energy moves backwards, away from the environment and towards the psyche in order to fulfil the needs of the unconscious. This movement Jung calls ***"regression"***.[1]

The direction of the flow of energy is crucial to the Laban-Malmgren system as it affects the relationship between characters and their Given Circumstances. At a fundamental level, people, according to Jung, display a preference for one or the other directions of energy, just as they incline towards one or the other of the functions. These basic inclinations divide mankind into **extravert** and **introvert** categories[2], the two *"attitudes"* which for Jung determine personalities in addition to the *"functions"*.

The words extravert and introvert have gained common currency since the publication of Jung's book on "Psychological Types". They are based on the two directions of the flow of psychic energy, but they refer primarily to two distinct ways of relating to the world. They are, in Jung's words, *"processes of adaptation"*.[3] They are, in other words, broad categories of personality, broader than the four functions and arching above them.[4] Jungians therefore speak of an *"introvert thinking type"*, *"an extravert sensing type"* - eight such types in all.

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[1] *"Progression is concerned with the active adaptation to one's environment, and regression with the adaptation to one's inner needs."* (Frieda Fordham: "An Introduction", p. 18)

[2] The categories do not exclude each other: *"When you call somebody an introvert, you mean that he prefers an introverted habit, but he has his extroverted side too. We all have both sides, otherwise we could not adapt at all, we would have no influence, we would be beside ourselves."* (Jung: "Tavistock Lectures", p. 33)

[3] "Psychological Types", p. 331

[4] Jung considers them to be biological in origin. (ibid., p. 331 and Spoto: "Jung's Typology in Perspective", p. 29)

As we have seen, the Laban-Malmgren system also divides characters into groups, but bases them only **on the function-types.** The general division into extravert and introvert **attitude-types** is not taken up by the system, which is only interested in the direction of the flow of energy at **brief, individual moments** in the life of a character on stage. As we saw from Viola's line, a character experiences both an inside->out and an outside->in flow of energy: attention, emotion, sensation can all be directed either **towards** or **away from** the Objective. The time span between turns, the 'frequency' with which the energy turns back on itself, varies from the split of a second it takes to move between words, to the length of entire speeches. But at any given moment, the energy flows in either of these two directions - to use a dancer's terms, the character either 'gathers' or 'scatters' her energies. These two directions of energy the system calls, somewhat loosely in strict Jungian terms, the 'extravert' and 'introvert' movement of energy. The system therefore speaks of **extravert energy** directed away from the character and towards the objective and **introvert energy** directed away from the objective and towards the character. This in itself corresponds to the primary sense in which Jung used extraversion and introversion as directions of the libido.[1] As they are aspects of the same ebb and flow, the system also establishes a relationship between them. Introvert energy **precedes** extravert manifestations. In order to hammer a nail, the hand must first come up in a movement away from the nail. In order for Viola to relate to Olivia's ring she has to 'go inside herself' for a brief moment and check the new experience against her existing knowledge, her current image of the way in which reality is ordered. When the new element of reality has been assimilated, the energy *"recovers"* as Carpenter puts it, back into an introvert direction. After the blow on the nail, the hand returns[2].

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[1] *"Extraversion is an outward-turning of libido. I use this concept to denote a manifest relation of subject to object, a positive movement of subjective interest towards the object."..."Introversion means an inward-turning of libido, in the sense of a negative relation of subject to object. Interest does not move towards the object but withdraws from it into the subject."* (Jung: "Psychological Types", pp. 427 & 452)

[2] Peter Brook determines a similar flow of energy which he analyses in terms of the relationship between rhetorical devices (*"consonants"*) and meaning, carried by *"meaning's bearer, images"*. ("The Empty Space", p. 111)

iii. Energy in Movement - Inner Participations

Here, however, the system places an emphasis which makes the relationship between these elements of the psyche different from that proposed by Jung. For the latter the functions are part of consciousness[1], they are conscious ways of dealing with reality through sensation, thinking, etc. Consciousness for Jung is the **product** of a large expenditure of energy which causes conscious functions to emerge and separate from the amorphous unconscious.[2]

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[1] *"Consciousness, for Jung, can be thought of as an individual's awareness of his or her own personality."* (Spoto: "Typology in Perspective", p. 33)

[2] *"I would say the thing that comes first is obviously the unconscious and that consciousness really arises from an unconscious condition. In early childhood we are unconscious; the most important functions of an instinctive nature are unconscious, and consciousness is rather the product of the unconscious. It is a condition which demands a violent effort. You get tired from being conscious. You get exhausted by consciousness. It is an almost unnatural effort."* ("Tavistock Lectures", p. 8) As we have seen, the system subscribes to Stanislavski's idea that the senses are the start of an exploratory route into the unconscious. In this Stanislavski is closer to Freud as he considers that the unconscious is a repository of forgotten or repressed material, rather than an *a priori* entity which generates consciousness, as Jung postulates. This, indeed, was one of Jung's main objections to Freud: that for the latter the unconscious was a product of the consciousness. Freud's attitude, says Jung, can be summed up in the formula *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu.* ("There is nothing in the mind that was not in the senses" "Tavistock Lectures", p. 8; cf. Leibniz: *"Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain"*, Bk.II, Ch.I, sec.2 in response to Locke.) For Freud, therefore, the unconscious is dependent on the conscious and is in some way a fixed entity, which can grow but not change its position relative to the conscious. For Jung:
"...unconscious things are very relative. When I am unconscious of a certain thing I am only relatively unconscious of it; in some other aspects I may know it. The contents of the personal unconscious are perfectly conscious in certain respects but you do not know them under a particular aspect or at a particular time.
How can you establish whether the thing is conscious or unconscious? You simply ask people. We have no other criterion to establish whether something is conscious or unconscious...When I am asked if I know a certain man I may say no, because I have no recollection of him and so I am not conscious of knowing him; but when I am told that I met him two years ago, that he is Mr. So-and-So who has done such-and-such a thing, I reply: "Certainly, I know him". I know him and I do not know him." ("Tavistock Lectures", pp. 63-4, emphasised in the original); cf. also the intervention a few moments later of a Freudian critic:
"Dr. Eric Graham Howe:
'I understand from Professor Jung there is...only a relative unconsciousness which depends on a relative degree of consciousness. According to Freudians there is a place, a thing, an entity called the

Laban and Malmgren do not concern themselves with the relationship between the functions and the unconscious. Their interest lies in the relationship between the psychological make up of the character and the Objective. They want to know what the relationship is between the character in a passive state, before it has responded to the attack of the Objective, and the character activated in pursuit of the Objective. Their main distinction is between the character who is and the character who does, between the still waters of the lake and the ripples.

A similar distinction appears in Jungian psychology, but it is made explicit mainly in the work of Jung's followers. I assume that Carpenter and Laban hit the problem in their work during the early fifties, but did not yet have an advanced Jungian vocabulary upon which to draw. They therefore invented one of their own, which, unfortunately from a purist Jungian angle, does not fit exactly with the accepted psychological terminology. Indeed, comparing the two sets of terms can be mightily confusing. In a nutshell, the substance of the distinction is between the amorphous, passive and haphazard contents of the psyche on the one hand and the organization, shaping, interpretation of these contents through a function on the other. As one of Jung's most prominent disciples puts it:

"Functions as ways of operating differ, too, from contents. One may have feelings, thoughts, perceptions, but only a conscious organization can perform with them. A thought may come through the mind, but this is not thinking; one may sit under sad feelings all day but this is not feeling. Let us conceive these functions as four modes of organizing and suffering life."[1]

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unconscious. According to Professor Jung...there is no such thing. He is moving in a fluid medium of relationship and Freud in a static medium of unrelated entities". (op. cit., pp. 64-5)

[1] Hillman: "Lectures on Jung's Typology", p. 92; The complex question of the relationship between functions and 'instincts', 'drives', 'goals' and all the other notions used by contemporary psychology to describe the source of psychic energy, is still a matter for debate between different schools. The accepted, neutral view seems to be, like Hillman's above, that the functions can be seen as forms of management and regulation of the raw energy: *"While natural drives such as sex or power initiated activity, the functions formalized and channelled the activity into certain actions, toward specific goals. They were the basis of all social and personal attitudes about these goal objects."* (Neel: "Theories of

A function is therefore defined by the fact that the psyche has emerged into consciousness of itself, into the *ego*[1]. The ego organizes reality through its subjectivity. In so doing energy is expended. Contents, on the other hand, do not involve the exercise of energy, they are latent, still, like the waters of a mountain pool.[2]

These latent entities the system calls **Mental Factors.** Their active counterparts are called **Inner Participations.** The confusion arises from the fact that Laban and Carpenter gave their individual Mental Factors the names of Jung's functions, and created new names for the energy laden entities, the Inner Participations. Thus, we have:

the four Mental Factors which correspond to Jungian **contents**, but are given names like those of the Jungian functions (Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting and Feeling)
and
the four Inner Participations which correspond to Jungian **functions** but have names of their own.

The confusion of terms is regrettable. But once signalled from the point of view of the theory, in practice the concepts are very similar.

In the system the Mental Factors are passive, or more accurately **latent** forms of energy. They are only the fertile ground from which energy grows, not its product. They are inactive until moved into action by an Objective. An Objective 'attacks' the Mental Factor which is most developed - a thinking type reacts through thought, a sensing type through

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Psychology", p. 221)

[1] *"The important fact about consciousness is that nothing can be conscious without an ego to which it refers. If something is not related to the ego then it is not conscious. Therefore you can define consciousness as a relation of psychic facts to the ego."* ("Tavistock Lectures", p.10)

[2] This distinction is a logical outcome of Jung's concept of function as distinct from psychic content. As Hillman points out *"feeling as a function differs from feelings. One can have feelings without being able to do much with them, without being able to function feelingly."* (op. cit., p. 105, emphasised in the original). Hillman goes on to extend the difference between *"having"* and *"following through to conclusion"* to the thinking and intuition functions as well.(ibid.)

sensation and so on. When the Objective has acted as a catalyst, the latent factor is roused into an **active** form of energy which enables the character not only to react to, but also to act upon the Given Circumstances. The character not only **is**, but also **participates** in the world around him.

I must make it clear that the distinction between two 'phases' of the psychological functions - one 'latent' and one 'active' - belongs exclusively to the Laban-Malmgren system. It seems, however, to be a legitimate extension of Jung's own distinction between passive and active **apperception**. This psychological concept covers the process I described when discussing the use of Stanislavskian 'images', namely the way in which the psyche assimilates new contents by linking them to existing, similar contents until the new impression is clearly understood[1]. When we observe carefully an object or think systematically about a logical problem, for example, the apperception is active. We apprehend **consciously** a content towards which we have turned our attention as an **act of will**. The energy comes from the *ego* and is directed towards the object. In passive apperception, on the other hand, the activity lies entirely with the object: a new content imposes itself upon our consciousness either through the senses, from the outside world or from the unconscious, from within. The new object *"forces"* itself upon our consciousness and *"compels apprehension"*.[2] Laban's and Carpenter's innovation of the Inner Participations may have arisen, I think, as a branch of the active form of apperception. Though not Jung's, it is thus rooted in solid Jungian soil. The difference, however, is that for Jung active apperception revolves ultimately around consciousness, whereas the Inner Participations do not require that the *ego* be permanently and constantly conscious of their activation. Inner Participations are **not** subject to the will. Viola cannot say 'I will now feel about this ring', or 'think about Olivia's gesture'. She will feel and think whether she likes it or not. The distinction is between her in a passive feeling state, as a 'feeling type' in general, and her being actively engaged in feeling. For Jung this distinction is not necessary - his real patients were perforce engaged in some active exercise of their functions, otherwise they would not have been alive. For

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[1] cf. Jung: "Psychological Types", p. 412.
[2] ibid., pp. 412-3

Laban and Malmgren, however, this is an important difference: characters have to be understood as they are, outside any circumstances, if the actor is to stand any chance of analysing their psychological make up. Only then do characters engage with an Objective and the actor, having decided which functions the character puts forward first and foremost, engages with the Objective through the appropriate Inner Participation. Inner Participations are still subliminal - what distinguishes them from Mental Factors is the fact that they are active forms of energy, energy in movement.

* * *

After studying the parallels between Laban and Jung, I am convinced that Carpenter was right - their ideas do fit. Not necessarily in the simple way in which Carpenter had originally imagined. Or, for that matter, strictly in the sense in which Jung first defined some of his concepts. But, as I tried to demonstrate above, Carpenter's intuition, based mainly on a scientist's common sense, led him onto the correct path. The work done by the younger generations of Jungian psychologists as well as Yat Malmgren's application of these joint Jung/Laban ideas to theatre character seem to confirm that, as so often in the history of intellectual advances, what may have started out as incomplete or even erroneous readings, produced a valid discovery.

The Inner Participations describe the way in which a character participates in the world of the play through a specific energy. This has a quality we perceive in terms of psychological and physical characteristics. To name and measure these characteristics the system uses the tools designed by Rudolf Laban.

c. Energy Measured (Laban)

Throughout his career Laban was concerned to identify the relationship between physical movements and the inner forces which generate them. In so doing he drew the crucial distinction between 'motion' and 'movement'. All objects are subject to *"motion"*. A lump of coal sliding down a chute is in motion. Movement, however, is a quality found only where inner intention and physical action are both present. A cat sliding down a slope and the lump of coal rolling down next to it, says Laban, are both in motion. But only the cat has *"an attitude"*, a desire not to fall, or perhaps to increase its speed in pursuit of prey. The cat, therefore combines several motions into a wilful action.[1] The goal of this action is the equivalent of Stanislavski's Objective. Thus Movement, which Laban spells with a capital M, is a psycho-physical process which incorporates both the physical motion and the inner quickening of energy which generates it. In order to understand the nature of Movement Laban undertakes a sort of 'chemical analysis'. He studies the various 'molecules' and 'atoms' which make up Movement with the aid of four 'instruments': four fundamental questions to be asked of Movement.

i. The components of movement

The questions are:

a. which part of the body moves and what relationship exists between it and those parts of the body which remain still?
b. what is the duration of the movement and in what relationship does it stand to other movement durations around it?
c. how much muscular power is exerted in effecting the movement?
d. which direction in space is the movement leading towards or away from?[2]

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[1] cf. Rudolf Laban: "The Psychological Effects of Movement", pp. 5-6.
[2] cf. Rudolf Laban: "Mastery of Movement", pp. 25ff on which the description below is based; see also P.A.C. Hecht: "Kinetic Techniques for the Actor. An analysis and comparison of the movement training systems of Francois Delsarte, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and Rudolf Laban", *A Dissertation for PhD.*, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1971, p. 236.

The questions derive from Laban's observations, over many years, first of dancers, then, during the war years, of factory workers carrying out tasks to which they were not used.

Laban observed that in order to lift a heavy weight the muscles strain to overcome the force of gravity. Equally, lifting a light object necessitates only the lightest of muscle exertions. Thus, Laban declares, one of the four components of movement is its **Weight**, which, according to the intensity of the energy deployed, can be either Strong or Light.

Movements also have a direction in **Space**. Someone hammering will go as cleanly as possible between the raised arm and the nail - the movement is Direct. But a coachman whipping his horses will raise the whip, move it first to the left of his head, then to the right and only then crack it forward. The movement is convoluted, roundabout, Flexible.

Movements take place in **Time**. Here Laban points out that the important factor is not whether the movement is slow or quick, but how slow or quick in comparison with the movements around it, either of other parts of the same body or of different objects. Thus a movement is said to be Quick or Sustained not in an absolute way, but in comparison with its surroundings.

Finally, effective movements involve a degree of co-ordination: they are either free and easy or halting and tight. This Laban defines as the **Flow** of movement which can be either Free or Bound.

The four 'units' into which all movement can be measured, or 'factored', are called by Laban his **Motion Factors**.

As we have seen, Movement is determined by the body's ability to generate energy and takes place both internally and externally. There is a 'movement' of the nervous system as well as of the muscles. The ebb and flow of such movement, its *"pulse"*, is created by continuous *"rhythmical dislocation of strain and relaxation [which] takes place in the nervous system"*[1] and less intensely in the muscular system. Once activated by the muscular system, however, the human body becomes *"subject to the laws of*

[1] Laban: "Effort", p. 60

inanimate motion". Weight follows the law of gravity. Distances and directions in Space are reached by the skeleton's *"system of levers"* activated by muscles. The nerve-centres which control these muscles are constantly bombarded by a stream of internal and external stimuli. Their reaction to these stimuli determines the Flow of movement. Finally, movements take a *"degree of Time which can be exactly measured"*. The *"purely physical character of the production of energy and its transformation into movement"*[1] is self evident for Laban.

The components of movement rearrange themselves constantly: now one, now the other occupying the foreground, while the others take a supporting role. When a movement is expressive, the components are *"in harmony"*.[2] The harmony of the components of physical movement is an indication of the harmony of the inner being. By extension, an inability to give physical expression to one's innermost feelings and sensations is a sign of inner conflict. In extreme cases it can lead to an *"un-balancing"* of the personality.[3] This points to an unmistakable link between the psyche and physical expression. The nature of the link is defined in Laban's crucial concept of **Effort**.

ii. Effort

In his published works Laban does not provide a clear-cut definition of the term, although he gives a number of descriptions of Effort in practice. But Lisa Ullman, Laban's close collaborator in the last years of his life and the editor of "Mastery of Movement", feeling the need for an explanation, defines Effort thus: *"The inner impulses from which movement originates are in this and other publications of the author called 'effort'"*[4] As far as Laban before his work with Carpenter is concerned,

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[1] "Mastery of Movement", p. 22
[2] cf. Laban: "Psychological Effects", p. 6
[3] cf. R. Kosterlitz: "The Application of Movement", p. 6
[4] "Mastery of Movement", p. 10, n. 1

the relationship is linear: Effort is an inner impulse which gives rise to movement[1], it is the *"psychical correlative"*[2] of gesture.

Carpenter brings to this understanding a Jungian perspective. As we saw, for Jung energy is the by-product of fundamental tensions in the psyche.[3] But Jung balances this idea with a further concept - that of self regulation or *"homeostasis"*[4]: the aspiration towards balance which governs the workings of our bodies, and by extension, of our minds. This idea of conflict and conflict resolution, of harmony following discord, is the starting point of Carpenter's description of Laban's work, as the title of his typescript indicates. Tension and balance are compensatory: one depends on, indeed is a precondition for, the other.[5] *"Physiological*

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[1] cf. "Mastery of Movement", p. 24: *"It is useful to give a name to the inner function originating such movement. The word used here for this purpose is effort. Every human movement is indissolubly linked with an effort, which is, indeed, its origin and inner aspect."*; Eugenio Barba uses the term *"sats"* to describe a similar, if more physical, concept of *"the impulse towards an action which is as yet unknown and which can go in any direction..."* ("The Paper Canoe", p. 6, see also pp. 56-7)

[2] Gordon Curl: "A Critical Study", p. 50

[3] *"Man was both flesh and spirit; reason and emotion; saint and sinner; and, in Jung's view, the whole energy of mental functioning sprang from tension between these opposites."* (Storr: "Jung", p. 80)

[4] Since this idea of balance and *"harmony"*, to use Carpenter's key word, is so important to his understanding of Effort (and indeed to the whole thrust of Laban's thinking upon which the system is based), it may be useful to quote as clear an explanation of the concept as I could find: *"Since the time of the physiologist Claude Bernard, scientists have been perfectly used to accepting the idea that the body is a self-regulating entity. Human physiology is governed by an internal system of checks and balances which ensure that any tendency to go too far in one direction is compensated by an opposing swing in the other. Thus, if the blood becomes too alkaline mechanisms are set in operation by which the kidney excretes more alkali and retains acid, thus ensuring that the chemical composition of the blood does not stray too far from its proper mean. The endocrine system is a highly complicated arrangement of self-regulating mechanisms. For example, the pituitary secretes a hormone which stimulates the thyroid gland to produce its own hormone, thyroxine. The more thyroxine there is in the blood, the less will the pituitary produce its thyroid-stimulating hormone. In the terminology of cybernetics, this is a negative feed-back, aimed at ensuring that the right amount of thyroxine is always in circulation. Sometimes the mechanisms go wrong, as in thyrotoxicosis or other diseases; but on the whole, the physiology of man is wonderfully well arranged so that his 'internal environment' keeps constant in spite of fluctuations in, and varying exchange with, the world outside. In physiology the tendency to seek equilibrium is known as 'homeostasis'."* (Storr: "Jung", p. 69)

[5] *"many of the physiological systems of the body are set in motion as compensatory devices, just as fatigue compels sleep, or a lowered blood*

activity springs from imbalance yet centres around a balanced mean, constantly sought, departed from as soon as achieved, hardly definable, yet omnipresent in the background."[1] I believe that these ideas, current in Laban's circle at the time of his collaboration with Carpenter, affected the two men's re-formulation of the concept of Effort which in turn informs the Laban-Malmgren system. It became essentially synonymous with energy, at one and the same time a result of contradictions and the unitary centre into which the contradictions seek to be resolved. Effort, says Yat Malmgren, is all pervasive, determining the quality of movement like the blood circulating through the body. Like blood, it is in turn passive and active - recipient of outer influences and initiator of outer actions. It affects movement and is affected in turn by movement. It is Movement.[2]

But here Yat Malmgren places a different emphasis on Laban's idea. In his last phase Laban was concerned to stress the overall unity of impulse and gesture. Yat Malmgren, on the other hand, is more concerned with defining the different qualities of Effort. Where Laban's concept of Effort united, Yat Malmgren's teaching discriminates. This is why in his teaching the concept of Effort plays a relatively small part. For him what matters above all is that Effort represents a direct and mutually reinforcing correspondence between physical and psychological energies. This implies that the variety of modes of physical expression indicates a similar array of psychological energies. If I might take the analogy a little further, one could say that there are varieties of Effort, just as there are different blood groups. A particular Effort determines the nature of a particular character. Moreover, Yat Malmgren is keen on Laban's idea that Effort is not of one piece - that it can be split into a number of

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sugar causes food-seeking." (ibid., p. 80)

[1] ibid.

[2] *"...effort, with all its manifold shadings of which the human being is capable, is mirrored in the actions of the body. But bodily actions performed with imaginative awareness stimulate and enrich inner life."* (Laban: "Effort", p. XI); This idea is then reinforced by Carpenter: *"Laban believes that the balance of our inner and outer lives depend[s] upon the harmonious interactions between body and mind and that, if we restrict our bodily movements and particularly the range of our expressive gestures, then we equally restrict in our emotional life the corresponding range of our moods and inner attitudes..."* ("Harmony and Conflict", Preface, p. 3)

components, whose positions relative to one another determine its precise *"quality"*.[1] In order to determine this quality the system moves from the outside in: if the nature of physical movements can be defined and measured - Laban and Malmgren say - then through it one can also infer the nature of the inner energy.

iii. The Integration of Energy

One can therefore measure through the Motion Factors of Weight, Space, Time and Flow not only the visible, physical movement but its psychological correspondents as well. Indeed, the act of watching a performance involves the basic assumption that the inner life, motivations and decisions of the characters are revealed to the audience through movement, including the movement of the organs of speech. Laban assumes that through movement the unconscious 'speaks'. Equally, its messages are 'heard' at a subliminal level:

"Unconscious effort-reading is the explanation for our belief that we can see the thoughts and feelings shown in facial expression, in body carriage, and in the almost imperceptible expressive movements of hands, shoulders and so on."[2]

Instead of looking for possible links between the **manifestations** of the psyche and the physical, Laban looks for links between their **essence**. He links the elements of movement, the Motion Factors, with the 'elements' of the psyche, his Mental Factors or Jung's four psychological functions.[3]

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[1] *"A person's ability to change the quality of effort, that is the way in which nervous energy is released, by varying the composition and sequence of its components, together with the reactions of others to these changes, are the very essence of mime."* (Laban: "Mastery of Movement", p. 13)

[2] Laban: "Effort", p. XIV. This is put on a measurable basis by Jung: *"All our mental processes probably cause slight physiological disturbances which are so small that we have not the means to demonstrate them. But we have a pretty sensitive method by which to measure emotions, or the physiological part of them, and that is the psychogalvanic effect."* ("Tavistock Lectures", pp. 27-8 This assertion is based on Jung's experiments in his early career, which were concerned with methods of measuring physiological changes brought about by altered inner states. (cf. CW2: "Experimental Researches")

[3] The link between inner impulse and outer movement is made explicit in "The Mastery of Movement", Laban's major book on the subject. Laban had been searching for such a link for a long time. In a little known lecture

One must assume that, through Carpenter, Laban had confirmed his idea of the direct relationship between psychological phenomena, emotion in particular, and physical sensations. Affect, which Jung considers synonymous with emotion[1], is characterised precisely by the presence of *"physical innervations"*[2]. Affect is therefore inextricably linked to sensation. Jung sees affect and sensation as inseparable and mutually enhancing.[3] If affect is so closely linked with sensation, if indeed, as Jung continues to say, *"pronounced affects"* are to be assigned to the sensation function, then this connection is crucial in physical expression. It confirmed, for Laban, the mutually reinforcing connection between the body and emotion towards which his whole thinking was leading.

By the time he incorporates Carpenter's contribution into his thinking, Laban has expanded this idea to the other psychological functions and is proposing a full equivalence of his four Motion Factors with Jung's four functions. Thus he declares that:

"The Mastery of Movement", Laban's major book on the subject. Laban had been searching for such a link for a long time. In a little known lecture dating from 1939 (the year of Laban's stay at Dartington, where Jung's ideas were much in evidence), Laban plays on words to make a tentative connection of this sort:
"...the word emotion... seems to express the necessary psychological counterpart of a process described by the word motion. Motion-emotion: the words fit marvellously...Motion and emotion form a unit." ("Laban Lecture" - Report of a 1939 speech given at Dartington Hall, in *LAMGM*, No. 26, 1961, pp. 11-24, p. 15) Here Laban establishes two possible sources for the gesture: in the senses or in emotion. Movement can be an immediate reaction to a sensuous stimulus, coming from the outside - the immediate reaction experienced in improvisation or in performance when 'attacked' by a partner or a physical object on stage. Movement can also be triggered internally, by the memory of sensuous experience or the recollection of emotions. In either case, movement can be either *"voluntary or involuntary"*. *"Each phase of movement, every small transference of weight, every single gesture of any part of the body reveals some feature of our inner life. Each movement originates from an inner excitement of the nerves caused either by an immediate sense impression or by a complicated chain of formerly experienced sense impressions stored in the memory. This excitement results in the voluntary or involuntary inner effort or impulse to move."* (Laban: "Mastery of Movement", p. 22)

[1] "Psychological Types", p. 411

[2] ibid., p. 412

[3] *"I regard affect on the one hand as a psychic feeling-state and on the other as a physiological innervation-state, each of which has a cumulative, reciprocal effect on the other."* (ibid.)

Weight *corresponds to* Sensation
Space *corresponds to* Thinking
Time *corresponds to* Intuition
Flow *corresponds to* Feeling[1]

The links are purely empirical. There is no proof, apart from that offered by his observations, which told him that a person's 'weighty presence' is associated with her sensuous engagement with the world; that a 'thinker' tends to go 'in and out' of his inner space in order to solve a problem. Indeed, his journey to this conclusion was fraught with hesitations.[2] There is little doubt that one of Laban's reasons for hesitating is the lack of theoretical support for the link, in itself a major jump in his and Carpenter's thought. Carpenter himself even sounds a little defensive on this topic when he writes:

"When we are asked 'How can you prove that, say, a movement in Space reveals Thinking and Attention', we must reply that our proof is empirical and that it is based on long continued observations. Psychological theory is based equally on empiricism and is not invalidated thereby."[3]

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[1] "Book": p. 2

[2] In "Effort" Laban rejects the suggestion of a link as unfruitful (pp. 57-9). In "Mastery of Movement" (pp. 126-7) he links Motion Factors to embryonic active forms of psychological energy (*"attention, intention, decision, precision or progression"*). One can only speculate about the possible influence of Laban's Jungian trained collaborators (Dr. Kokeritz, whose work we mentioned before, and Carpenter) at this junction.

[3] "Conflict and Harmony", ch. 2, p. 3; Carpenter seems to assume that the connection is there *"for all to see"* and skirts over it in a single paragraph. This is worth quoting in full, as it illustrates both the purely empirical approach taken to this problem by the fathers of the system, and the way in which the link is taken for granted by Carpenter and, one can only assume, by Laban himself:
"During man's long search for knowledge of himself and of the world about him, great minds have often worked concurrently along similar lines of thought. It is thus no accident that the number of these Motion Factors is four, since Rudolf Laban and Carl Jung are contemporaries and while Laban studied man's movements and saw that they could be defined, observed and assessed in terms of four factors, Jung was defining his concepts of four mental factors to define character. Our Movement research demonstrates, as this book records, that these Laban and Jungian concepts are in harmony for in our Shadow Movements we express Sense perception in Weight of movement, Thinking in patterns of Space, Intuition in Time and Feeling in Flow of Movement". ("Conflict and Harmony", Chap. 1, pp. 3-4)

Elsewhere in his typescript he elaborates a little on the nature of the observations which led Laban to make this significant leap:

"In our research into this relationship between bodily movements and inner emotion, we have been aided by students who had had an Analysis for a relatively long period under the Freudian or Jungian methods before joining us for training in Movement. In every instance the information obtained by the Movement Analyst from a study of the student's movements, has corresponded with the findings of the Psycho-Analyst...It is mainly through the comparison of such coupled findings that we arrived at the co-ordination of Flow & Feeling, Time & Intuition, Space & Thinking and Weight & Sense Perception."[1]

In "Mastery of Movement" Laban provides a dry, schematic tabulation of what he calls the: *"attempt to attach each of these [four phases of Mental Effort or Inner Participations] to one of the motion factors and consider them not only as preceding an action but also as accompanying it."*[2] Laban was well aware of the need to flesh out his tables, but he was not ready to do this at the time of publishing "Mastery of Movement", presumably because the ideas which found their way into Carpenter's typescript were only beginning to germinate.[3] It was therefore left to Yat Malmgren to develop these hints into the all-important, complex relationship between inner and outer energies expressed through Mental and Motion Factors respectively.

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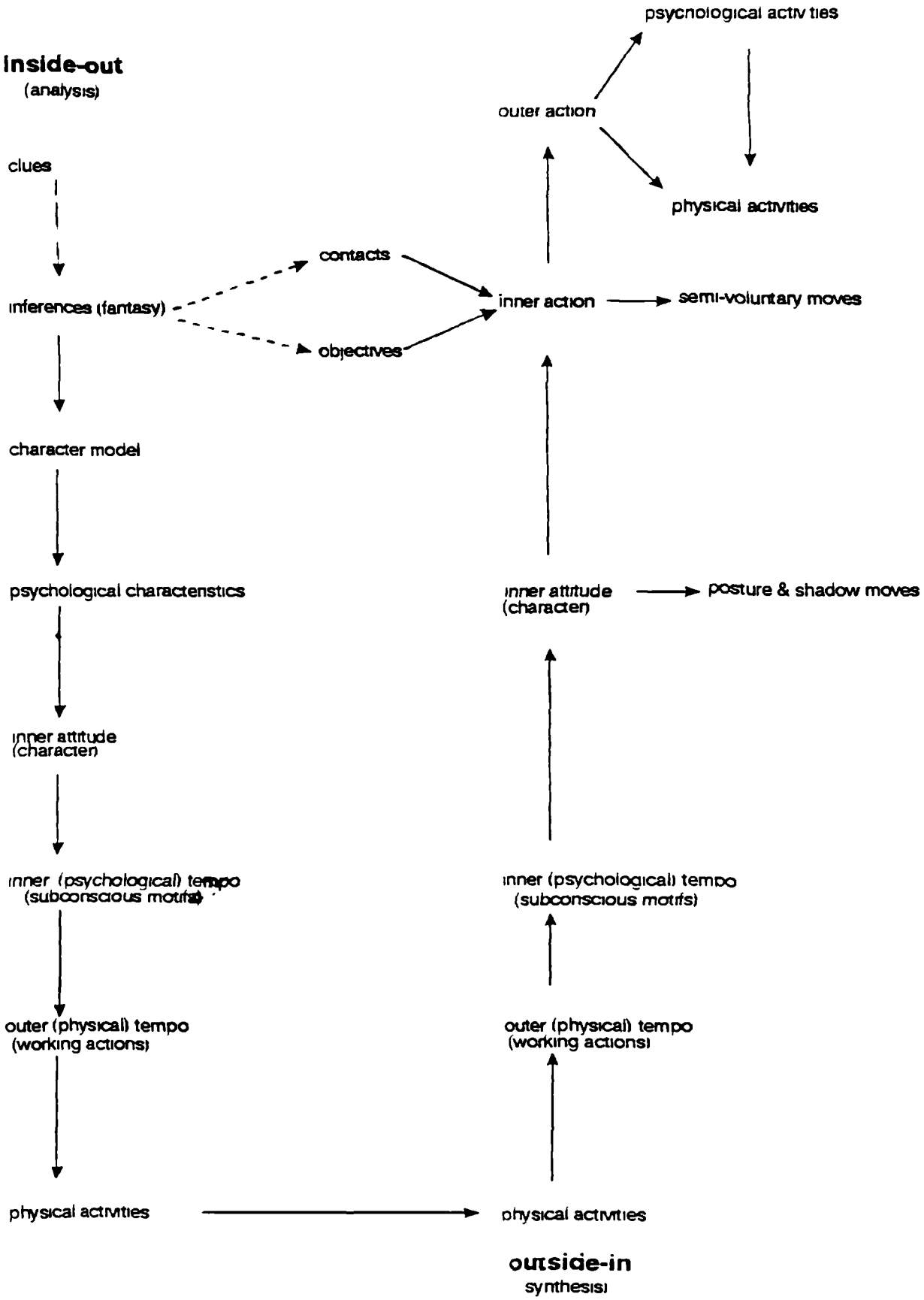
[1] "Conflict and Harmony", Ch. 1, p. 19.
[2] op. cit., p.126; cf. Table VII on p. 127
[3] *"This will be done in tabulatory form as the obviously needed detailed explanations, particularly about the significance of movement and its complex ramifications in human expression, cannot be dealt with here."* (ibid.)

The way of transformation



THE SECOND PILLAR - TRANSFORMATION

Yat Malmgren's re-assembling of the elements taken from his three sources amount to an original working method for the actor. His teaching cannot be separated, in this respect, from the other strands of teaching at the Drama Centre. Much of what he says, and even more of what he feels he has no need to say, relies on knowing that other teachers, in other rooms, cover areas which complement his own. The net result, for those students able to integrate his classes with the rest of the teaching, and in particular with the Stanislavski-based acting classes, is the emergence of a clear, physically-based approach to character and role.

In the pages which follow I shall try to show how the ideas of the system are translated into a practical acting methodology. I must make it clear from the outset, however, that this is not a prescriptive 'step-by-step manual'. Actors trained in the system usually work within its spirit, but apply it in their own individual way. There are therefore as many ways of practising the system as there are actors. Because of this, the following is not intended in any way as a 'recipe' for acting. It is only one possible way of applying the lessons of the system in practice. It is based, inevitably, on my own practice of directing and teaching, but I have gone somewhat beyond my own method of work in order to give as comprehensive a view as possible of the manner in which the system can operate. The practical applications also raise some fundamental theoretical questions which I explore on the way.

The system is above all, a personal technique for working on **character**. This work starts with the question 'what is the role?' At the most primitive level, it is made of words on a page[1], of 'facts' about the character: its biography, deeds and decisions. The actor extracts, almost mechanically, the clues about character offered by the text. To go back to

[1] I assume, to simplify, that the part exists in a written play. Devised and improvised material, whether starting from the point of view of character (the 'Mike Leigh' method), of situation or of theme (in the traditional T.I.E. mode, for example) raises much the same questions when it is looked at solely from the point of view of the actor working on a character.

an earlier example, from the narrow point of view of her biography, Viola is young, orphaned, one of a pair of twins, unmarried, the well-educated, well-travelled daughter of a rich merchant. So far, so obvious.

a. From Fantasy to Attitudes

At this point the actress begins to draw **inferences** from the raw data: she asks herself what it means to have a twin brother, to have been brought up in the household of a Renaissance merchant, to live at Court? Here her **fantasy** comes into play for the first time.

The concrete clues provided by the text arouse a set of *"memory-images"*[1] in the psyche of the actor. These are **associations** activated by the details of the play. They belong to the actor - they are no longer 'of the play', but 'of the actor'. The *"memory-images"* release in turn unconscious contents in the form of fantasy: *"a complex of ideas that is distinguished from other such complexes by the fact that it has no objective referent."*[2] Fantasy therefore is a purely subjective state, leaving behind its connection with the objective reality of the play.[3] But this is no idle day-dreaming. The actor's fantasy is **active**. It is an **attitude** - the conscious direction of psychic energy towards the perception of unconscious contents. It involves a state of mind which Jung defines as *"an intuitive attitude of expectation"*.[4] Moreover, says Jung, active fantasies *"are the product of intuition."*[5] Insofar as intuition is *"perception via the unconscious"*[6] one can say that fantasy is the primary route by which the actor connects the play with sources of creativity in the unconscious. The link between the play and the actor's unconscious therefore looks like this:

clues -> memory-images (associations) -> intuition = fantasy

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1 "Psychological Types", p. 427
2 ibid.
3 *"Although it may originally be based on memory-images of actual experiences, its content refers to no external reality; it is merely the output of creative psychic activity, a manifestation or product of a combination of energized psychic elements."* (ibid.)
4 ibid., p. 428
5 ibid.
6 "Tavistock Lectures', p. 14

For fantasy to work creatively for the actor it must not be gratuitous. On the contrary, it is the purposeful, concrete search for connections with the world of the character. It only works if the fantasy results in concrete, detailed **actions.**

To imagine myself as Tamburlane is a possible source of acting energy. I can conjure up *"memory-images"* of state business, of horse riding, of physical fights. The pictures feel concrete, sensuous and above all lead to my doing things: I can engage on stage in Tamburlane's actions. To indulge in the delusion of being the ruler of the world, on the other hand, belongs to the realm of wishful reverie and cannot be brought to bear on the acting process. It does not push me to **act.** Yet actors who attempt to 'think themselves into the part', or strive to 'believe in the absolute reality' of a scene, before and beside the actions performed on stage, often confuse the two. This kind of generalized day-dreaming is sterile in terms of acting, for good psychological reasons. To say to myself that I **am** Tamburlane, or that the boards on which I tread **are** the flagstones of Elsinore is an imposition on my sense of reality. It will be perceived as a threat to the integrity of my personality as a whole, it will arouse unconscious fears and inhibitions. It will therefore be rejected as irrational by that part of my psyche whose function is to test reality, by my *ego.* On the other hand, engaging in a process of imagining concrete actions, like those triggered by Stanislavski's *"magic if"* - 'if I were Tamburlane, what would I do?' - will arouse my curiosity and be welcomed as a pleasant and creative *"game".*[1] The exercise of an actor's fantasy is both concrete and active.[2] Equally important, however, is the requirement to **project** the inferences about character away from the actor's own psyche and into an imaginative, 'real' world. The actors find, and having found, use creatively, a **character model.**

fantasy -> magic 'if' -> character model

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[1] cf. Stanislavski: "An Actor Prepares", p. 47 & Donald Freed: *Freud and Stanislavski,* New York, Vantage Press, 1964, p. 30, who elaborates on Stanislavski's observation.
[2] cf. Stanislavski: "An Actor Prepares', pp. 58-9, where he describes games for arousing the imagination based on the *"magic if".*

Here fantasy enters the picture once more. The character model can come from any number of sources. It may be a real person or a combination of characteristics from different people stored in the memory of the actor. It might come from literary sources, from paintings or sculptures[1]; it might consist of humanizing the characteristics of animals or even those of marionettes and cartoon characters. Whatever its sources, the model takes shape before the inner eye of the actor[2]. Once established, it can be observed, put to work, taken 'shopping' or 'for walks'. It can be projected, as it were, on an imaginary blank screen and contemplated. This is an act of fantasy, similar to that involved in the use of inferences. Unlike them, however, it is firmly anchored in the object. The model enables the actor to build a clear-cut image of the character and describe it through a comprehensive list of characteristics. He can decide on similarities and differences[3] between his own and the character's personality. The process of merging the life of the actor with that of the character can begin.

An equally rich seam of fantasy is opened by the character's decisions in the play. The fact that Viola decides to stay in Illyria, to disguise herself as a boy, to join Orsino's court and so on, should help the actress make some fundamental choices about the character. These, like those derived from the biography and the model, are couched in terms of psychological characteristics expressed through adjectives. Viola's decisions may lead the actress to think that she is adventurous, brave, inquisitive, nonchalant, refined, and so on. Or, on the contrary, her need to disguise herself may point to a Viola who is timorous, unsure of herself as a woman, who wants to get lost in a crowd, a shy, delicate, sensitive Viola.[4] The actress needs to choose *"this and not that"* as Brecht puts it.

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[1] cf. Richard Boleslavski: *Acting - The First Six Lessons*, New York, Theatre Arts Books, 1969 (1933), pp. 78-9
[2] cf. Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 104
[3] cf. Michael Chekhov: "To The Actor", p. 86
[4] The reader objecting to these 'perverse' choices may wish to recall that some of the most interesting interpretations of classical characters are derived precisely by going against the immediate reading. Fiona Shaw played Katharina, in Jonathan Miller's production of "The Taming of the Shrew" (Old Vic Theatre, 1990) not as the traditional fiery, independent young woman, but as a deeply disturbed neurotic, swinging between bouts of autism and frenzied outbursts. Unusual as it may have been, it fitted the

Here the psycho-physical approach of the system comes into its own. The deeper the actress digs in search of her 'true' Viola, the closer she gets to fundamental psychological notions. Inevitably, at some point in her 'excavation', the actress will have to ask herself whether Viola's presence is strong or light, whether she is direct or convoluted in her intellectual dealings with the world, quick or sustained in her thoughts and decisions, free or bound in her emotional reactions. A 'brave and adventurous' Viola will more than likely have a strong presence, be flexible in thought, quick in her inner tempo and free emotionally. A 'timorous' Viola might be light, direct yet close in her thoughts, cautious and therefore slow in her decisions and fearsome, withdrawn emotionally. A more sophisticated look at the character might combine the elements differently still: a 'shy' Viola might have strong Weight, under-played at first, then gradually revealed. The system does not prescribe an interpretation - it simply gives the actress an analytical vocabulary with which to reach her own conclusions. In particular, it enables her to infer from concrete data the psychological make-up of the character. If Viola is adventurous and brave, her sensation function will be put forward in her dealings with the world. Her reaction to Orsino, her attachment to her brother, her sympathy for Olivia, all point to a strong emotional capacity as well. She may be a combination of sensation and feeling, with the first being the superior function. If, on the other hand, Viola is 'shy' and 'timorous', then her bound emotions come to the fore. Her sensation function is weakened - feeling is the superior function. By translating the data of the play into psychological characteristics, then connecting those to the psychological functions, the actress deduces the character's **Inner Attitude.**

data -> psychological characteristics -> functions -> inner attitude
biography
model
decisions

'facts' of the character and threw an unusual light on other characters, especially on Petruccio. Marowitz's Shylock was perhaps less convincing as a dour Irgun terrorist leader (Open Space Theatre, 1977), but also stayed within the bounds of the 'data' on the character.

Attitude, a crucial Laban-Malmgren concept, is derived from classical psychology. There the term attitude is synonymous with a **predisposition** towards reacting in one way or another in relation to the world. This may be an innate predisposition of the body to react to a stimulus in a certain way or an unusual habit induced by training. Jung expands this concept to include any *"readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way".*[1] This readiness is innate and involuntary, akin to animal instincts.[2] Jung's attitudes are an *"a priori orientation to a definite thing, no matter whether this be represented in consciousness or not."*[3] They are first and foremost taken for or against preconscious, archetypal *"virtual images"*[4] (for or against the image of the mother, for example). These attitudes, in turn, determine the further development of the individual on certain lines in terms of psychological functions.

This idea of the unconscious attitude is adopted by Laban and Carpenter in their concept of **Inner Attitude**[5]. For them, as for Jung, this is a combination of psychic elements which ordains that the subject either acts *"in a definite direction"* or reacts *"in a definite way"*[6] to stimuli,

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[1] "Psychological Types", p. 414

[2] Whether these are genetically transmitted or the product of the early experiences of the infant remains a much debated point. Jung's inclination is Lamarckianist, towards inherited characteristics. He does admit, however, the possibility of such characteristics emerging from early experience. (cf. Storr: "Jung", p. 40)

[3] ibid.

[4] Jung: "Two Essays On Analytical Psychology", CW7, p. 188

[5] Carpenter takes Jung's preference towards inherited characteristics without criticism: *"Just as we inherit part of our physical characteristics from our father and part from our mother, so we inherit a tendency to use two of the four Motion Factors with greater control than we use the remainder. Thus we are born with a predetermined disposition to express, as we pass from adolescence into adulthood, one Inner Attitude more frequently than we express the rest of them".* ("Conflict and Harmony", Chap. 5, p. 21) He and Laban then link psychological bias to exaggeration in movement: *"All these factors...result in a unique physiological mechanism which causes us, as we grow out of childhood, to move with our own personal lopsidedness and thus our range of Inner Attitudes tends to be limited by an inherited range of kinaesthetic expression."* (Chap. 5, p. 22) This ignores, however, the possibility of acquiring professionally or socially specific characteristics. These need not be inherited - they are acquired, 'by osmosis', through subliminal assimilation of the typical moves common to a peer group. Yat Malmgren sets great store on such characteristics, because they can communicate at a glance the social and professional background of characters.

[6] "Psychological Types", p. 415

whatever the circumstances. Applying this concept to theatre, Yat Malmgren conceives of the Inner Attitude as the basic psychological orientation of the character, determining its type. The Inner Attitude is the psychological essence of the character - in other words, it is the character.

Most of Yat Malmgren's method of training actors consists of a systematic exploration of the different Inner Attitudes or character types. This is done at first through short acting exercises based on relevant, mostly ordinary, episodes from the actors' own experience. It is then enlarged to include devising longer character monologues which embody the six types in individual, dramatic creations[1]. As a result, actors develop a number of personal points of reference with which they can associate characters. They can match their inner 'feel' for the character types with the objective data filtered through their fantasy. Ultimately the actor is left with a **personal sensation** of the character types. This sensation Yat Malmgren calls the **tempo** of the characters. He therefore talks of the six Inner Attitudes as so many **tempi.**[2]

actor's self exploration -> inner attitude <- character data + fantasy
tempo

b. Tempo

The term is adapted from Stanislavski, but is given both a wider meaning and a different function in the work of the actor. Tempo, of course, means first of all speed: how quick or how slow are the movements of the character's energy. Stanislavski combines tempo with the more elusive idea of rhythm, (the *"inner beat"*[3]) and talks about the *"tempo-rhythm"* of a movement or a sequence of movements.[4] The terms are borrowed from music

[1] this process is described in detail in the section on "The Application of the System in Actor Training", pp. 172ff.
[2] The idea of tempo as an all-encompassing physical event is found in other Stanislavskian disciples. (see, for example, Boleslavski: "Acting - The First Six Lessons", p. 114, who speaks of the tempo's *"elements: tone, movement, form, word, action, colour - anything a work of art can be made from."*)
[3] Robert Lewis: *Method or Madness*, with an Introduction by Harold Clurman, London, Heinemann, 1958, p. 54
[4] *"tempo is the speed or slowness of beat of any agreed upon units of*

and the effect of *"tempo-rhythm"* is indeed similar to the effect music has on the emotions. *"Tempo-rhythm"* for Stanislavski, is a magic means of arousing emotions[1]. In the last months of his life, though bed-ridden, Stanislavski was even experimenting with a wheel of electric bulbs, lit and painted in different colours. He had an assistant turn it at different 'tempi' and noted the effects the colour and movement had on his emotions.[2] This is an impression far removed from the Stanislavski of the 'Method', exclusively preoccupied with the inner life.[3] By 1930-33, when Stanislavski wrote the "Othello" section of "Creating A Role", his emphasis had shifted radically towards the theory of *"physical action"*. This is a **chain** of physical activities - walking to a door, listening for noise, banging on it to attract attention - which, by the very fact that it engages the actor's full attention, induces his unconscious to believe *"of its own accord"*[4] in the reality of the Given Circumstances and of the Objectives. Most interestingly from the point of view of the system, the chain of physical actions is used to arouse a tempo. Through the tempo the actor lights the spark of an emotional state, which then becomes the entry point into character and action.

But, while Stanislavski is exercised by the truth of the actor's own feelings, Yat Malmgren is concerned with identifying through the tempo the essence of the **character, outside the actor's personality.** The system analyses the tempo of characters in terms of Weight, Space, Time and Flow.[5] Characters depicted in adjectives such as 'dynamic', 'relaxed', 'powerful', 'indecisive' and a myriad others, are ultimately defined in terms of Light or Strong, Sustained or Quick and so on. The physical life of the character, its speech and gestures, Stanislavski's 'chain', is boiled down to essentials. Speech is refined to its rhythms, to its

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equal length in any fixed measure...Rhythm is the quantitative relationship of units - of movement, of sound - to the unit lengths agreed upon in a given tempo and measure." (Stanislavski: "Building A Character", p. 183)

[1] "Building A Character", pp. 189 & 243

[2] cf. Robert Lewis: "Method or Madness", p. 54

[3] This wide-spread perception relies to a large extent on statements in "An Actor Prepares", his earliest book, where he dismisses methods of arousing the inner through physical means as *"stage hysteria"* (op. cit., p. 26) It is, however, a gross simplification.

[4] Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 134

[5] see above: "Energy", p. 43ff.

musical 'patterns'. Gestures are reduced to their common denominators and ultimately distilled to their 'spirit' - their tempo.

This is the advantage of using the system: it gives actors, through training, a personal sensation of character types. It also allows them to identify characters objectively from inferences drawn from the text. Both are described using the same terminology. The common language offers the actor an efficient route for matching the objective characteristics with his own experience. The meeting point is encapsulated in an overall tempo. And tempo is movement[1] - through it the inner experience is made objective, concrete, corporal.[2] Tempo has physical dimensions: it can be measured in beats per second, it can be realized through the body. Anyone asked to 'show' slow or quick will move hands and feet in a definite way. The inner tempo is the common denominator between the actor and the character; its physical realization is the key with which the actor unlocks the character. In this respect the system builds upon Stanislavski's hint: *"if a part does not of its own accord shape itself inside an actor he has no recourse except to approach it inversely, by proceeding from externals inward."*[3] Not only does the soul affect the body, the body affects the spirit as well. We speak of the **psychosomatic effect of gesture**[4]. One can imagine how congenial Yat Malmgren, who was coming from a dance background, found Stanislavski's idea of tempo. However, the two approaches differ in one important respect.

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[1] *"Wherever there is life, there is action; wherever action, movement; where movement, tempo, and where there is tempo, there is rhythm..."* ("Stanislavski: "Building A Character", p. 198)

[2] *"That is something material, tangible, it responds to orders, to habits, discipline, exercise, it is easier to handle than elusive, ephemeral, capricious feeling which slips away."* (Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 149)

[3] "Creating A Role", p. 149; also: *"The spirit cannot but respond to the actions of the body, provided of course that these are genuine, have a purpose, and are productive."* (ibid., p. 150)

[4] Stanislavski uses the word *"reflexive"* to describe the effect of gesture on emotions. (ibid., p. 237 and elsewhere). This central preoccupation of Stanislavski's final period was picked up and developed by some of his disciples. Michael Chekhov, in particular, talks eloquently of inner and outer tempi. ("To The Actor", p. 83)

Stanislavski determines three *"masters"* of the actor's *"inner motive forces"*[1]. These are:
feeling
mind
will

They have equivalents in three of Jung's psychological functions, as interpreted by the system. *"Feeling"* for Stanislavski corresponds to emotion, in the same sense as that given to the term by Laban and Carpenter. *"Mind"* means directed, focused thought - the equivalent of Jung's active thinking. *"Will"* is defined by Stanislavski as first and foremost the actor's intention to play the part, his drive. This is connected by Laban to sensation.

The function not listed is intuition. Stanislavski, who is not always clear in his psychological references, seems to identify intuition with the unconscious as a whole.[2] For him access to intuition/unconscious is provided by feeling. Intuition is therefore a by-product of emotion[3], aroused through *"tempo-rhythm"*. Stanislavski's process looks like this:

Tempo-rhythm -> Feeling -> Intuition (Unconscious)

Yat Malmgren also places intuition in a special role. But for him the process is reversed: he sees intuition as the catalyst for the active engagement of the other three functions, not as their end product. Their basis in Jung allows Laban and Malmgren to see intuition as a separate psychological function, distinct from feeling. In consequence, tempo, the key to the springs of creativity in the unconscious, provides access to

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1 cf. "An Actor Prepares", Chapter 12, pp. 244ff. for this and the definitions which follow.
2 *"the realm of the unconscious, of intuition, which is not accessible to mind but is to feelings, not to thought but to creative emotions."* (C. Stanislavski: "Creating a Role", p. 81)
3 *"...let our feelings seek out fresh stimulants to enthusiasm, let them call on intuition to search out and find more and more bits of live material, parts of the spiritual life of the role, things which are not reached by conscious means...You must search everywhere for creative stimuli, leaving it to your feelings and their intuition to choose whatever is most appropriate for their enterprise"* (ibid., pp. 10-11, my emphasis)

intuition, not feeling. In the Laban-Malmgren system feeling, important though it is, is not the end-all and be-all of the acting process. It is triggered and brought into play, alongside thinking and sensation, by the arousal of intuition through tempo. The Laban-Malmgren process looks like this:

Tempo -> Intuition -> Sensation/Thinking/Feeling

This has practical consequences. Stanislavski's application of *"tempo-rhythm"* is mainly concerned with speed. In "Building A Character" he describes an exercise in which actors speak and move at speeds set by metronomes and scenes change according to the speed at which these are set.[1] At points in his career Stanislavski even had assistants 'conducting' live performances from the prompt box. Even in the seventies the well-known Russian director Yuri Lyubimov used to 'conduct' the pace of actors performing in his productions from the back of the auditorium with the help of a small torch.[2]

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[1] loc. cit. pp. 184-7. The reader familiar with the question of rhythm applied to the theatre may wonder why the name of Jaques-Dalcroze does not feature amongst those who influenced the system. It is because Dalcroze's work on *"eurhythmics"*, although it became immensely popular in the years after the First War and affected both Stanislavski and Meyerhold, had little bearing on the development of Laban's ideas in this area. Kurt Joos, for example, is adamant that *"the influence of Dalcroze on Laban was nothing"*. (Curl: "A Critical Study", Appendix 2, p. IX) This is even more remarkable since the two men met at least twice: first at Hellerau in Germany, then working in close geographical proximity in Switzerland during the First World War. Indeed, their most significant connection is that two of Laban's best known disciples, Mary Wigman and Suzanne Perrottet, became his dance pupils after studying first with Dalcroze. (cf. Hecht: "Kinetic Techniques", p. 211 and Preston-Dunlop: "Rudolf Laban - The Making of Modern Dance, Part I", *Dance Theatre Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1990, pp. 11-16, pp. 14-16) Their shift of allegiance is significant - they obviously found in Laban's approach, based on the inner, a more congenial medium than Dalcroze's exercises which were mainly a musician's adaptation of rhythms to movement. Ironically, therefore, Dalcroze's influence is felt in the system not directly through Laban, but through the way in which his ideas were filtered by Stanislavski in his own concept of *"tempo-rhythm"* (Stanislavski was one of a long procession of visitors to Dalcroze's school at Hellerau, which included Paul Claudel, Max Reinhardt and Shaw,). In particular, Stanislavski seems to have taken from Dalcroze the view that rhythm, that is an organization of time, is a *primary force* which releases outpourings of emotion.

[2] Private communication from Ms. Barbara Berkery.

Yat Malmgren's understanding of tempo is wider. For him tempo covers variations of Weight, Space and Flow, as well as Time. The different tempi inherent in all aspects of the acting process[1] are produced by the infinite combinations of the four Motion Factors. Tempi change in strength, direction and flow as well as speed. A strong, direct and quick movement, like that of a man chopping wood with an axe has the tempo of a 'punch'. At the other end of the scale, a feather 'floats' down, in a light, flexible and sustained movement. In between these two extremes are several other physical tempi. Laban calls these combinations the **Working Actions** into which all human movement can be broken down and analysed.

In his typescript Carpenter extends this notion from the physical to the psychological.[2] He declares that to each physical Working Action corresponds an identical Movement of **psychological energy**[3] which he calls a **Subconscious Motif**. The name suggests a musical 'motif', melody or tempo composed of the three 'notes' of Weight, Space and Time.[4] From his point of view this development of Laban's work is all-important. It implies that every physical gesture derives from a corresponding inner tempo. Yat Malmgren therefore speaks of inner and outer tempi, corresponding to the Subconscious Motifs and the Working Actions respectively. A character's **physical tempo** thus expresses its **inner psychological make-up**. We have unbroken links between:

psychological characteristics <-> inner impulse <-> physical expression.
(subcon. motif) (working actions)

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[1] cf. Stanislavski: *"Every human passion, every state of being, every experience has its tempo-rhythms. Every characteristic inner or external image has its own tempo-rhythm."* ("Building A Character", p. 198)
[2] cf. Laban: "Effort", p. 59
[3] Artaud makes a very similar suggestion, probably following Delsarte: *"The muscular movements of physical exertion are a likeness, a double of another exertion, located in the same points as stage acting movements."* (*The Theatre and its Double*, trans. by Victor Corti, London, Calder, 1995 (1970), p. 88)
[4] *"Just as orchestral music can be heard as phrases consisting of chords and notes, and just as language can be broken down into sentences, words, and letters, so the stream of our Shadow and Working Movements can be analysed into Motifs, Motion Factors and Elements of these Factors."* (Carpenter: "Conflict and Harmony", Chap. 1, p. 2); Stanislavski was also often likened to the conductor of an orchestra and *"employed musical terms"* in his work with actors. (Benedetti: "Biography", p. 253)

Based on this relationship Yat Malmgren devises a simple way of using the Working Actions in order to arouse the inner tempo of a character. If our imaginary Viola is 'forceful' and 'outgoing' then her physical expression will reflect that. She will naturally express herself through strong Working Actions: 'punches' and the like. In his practical exercises Yat Malmgren reverses the process: the actress seeking to access Viola's tempo can prepare for a speech or entrance by using a 'punching' gesture. To make the Working Actions specific, they are translated into concrete physical actions. To achieve a 'punching' tempo, our actress might prepare through the **repeated**[1] use of movements expressed by verbs like *"to butt", "to pummel", "to spike"*[2], and so on. Indeed, other acting exercises taught around the system (mostly derived from the teaching of Uta Hagen and involving working with objects, garments, through animals and songs) are ultimately concerned with arousing an inner tempo through physical means. Whatever the practical means of inducing a character tempo, the principle invoked is the same: the psychosomatic effect of gesture. As Stanislavski puts it: *"The body is biddable, feelings are capricious."*[3]

In practice, therefore, the actor engages in physical **actions** in order to arouse the character's inner life. But here Yat Malmgren departs significantly from his sources. He reinterprets radically the concept of **Action**.

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[1] cf. Artaud: "The Theatre and its Double", p. 93: *"When an exhalation is rehearsed seven or twelve times it prepares us for the subtle quality of an outcry, for desperate soul demands."*

[2] cf. "Book": pp. 69ff. It contains lists of such physical activities for all the Working Actions.

[3] "Creating A Role", p. 154; Artaud speaks in a similar vein of emotion being *"substantial, subject to the plastic vicissitudes of matter"* ("The Theatre and its Double", p. 90)

c. Actions and Attitudes

For Laban, action is the same as physical motion.[1] For Stanislavski, it is a sequence, a chain of physical events. Yat Malmgren, on the other hand, subdivides it into an Inner and an Outer Action.

The **Inner Action** denotes the thought-process of the character, its 'stream of consciousness'. It is therefore a **psychological** process, an internal layer through which the impulse passes before emerging into physical gesture. In Stanislavskian terms it is synonymous with the 'inner life' of the character.

The **Outer Action** consists of the 'doings' of the character. These include the **psychological** as well as the **physical** activities the character plays on other characters. They are the means by which the character achieves its desires - the Objectives.

Thus Action involves:
a. the merger of the inner life of the character with that of the actor into an Inner Action.
b. a change in the conscious physical and psychological means of expression, away from the actor and towards the character, designed to achieve the Objectives of the character.

i. Inner Action

Inner Action represents the **secret thoughts** of the character, its inner monologue. The nearest equivalent to Yat Malmgren's idea of Inner Action is what Stanislavski calls the *"inner tone"*[2]. This is the emotional content which determines not what the outer action is but the 'how', the way in which an action is carried out as well as its intensity[3]. The *"inner tone"* relates to the character's conscious but **hidden** motivation; to the motive for action which the character acknowledges to himself, even though it is not disclosed to anyone else[4]. Stanislavski gives a telling

[1] cf. "Book": p. 1
[2] "Creating A Role", pp. 62ff.
[3] cf. ibid., p. 228
[4] Stanislavski's example is Chatsky in "Woe From Wit" being motivated

example of such thoughts passing through the minds of members of Brabantio's household at the moment when they are roused with the dreadful news of Desdemona's elopement. It shows the Inner Action in a moment of silence, when the physical action is 'suspended', just before a turning point in the play:

"This pause is the transitional step leading the actors to the dramatic scene if they feel it logically and consecutively, that is, if they visualize Desdemona in the embraces of the black devil, the room she had as a young girl now empty, the effect of the scandal that has fallen on the family and its repercussions in the whole city. If Brabantio sees himself compromised in the eyes of the Doge himself and all the Senators, sees those and all the other things that can upset a man and a father... As for the nurse, she may be thrown out or even haled into court."[1]

Whatever the visible actions of the characters are after this, they will be informed by the secret Inner Action. The nurse[2] might 'bewail' the loss of her charge, but her anguished cries are tinged with the studied 'to save my skin'. Brabantio may 'take measures' and give vent to his anger, but the display of emotion is coloured by furtive calculations regarding his own status as a Venetian Senator. The outer actions are a 'cover' for the inner calculation[3].

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towards Sophia as:
a. a friend
b. a lover
c. a patriot
(ibid., p. 77, n.1)
The idea of two layers of action is similar to that of a character with two identities: one the public facade, the other a secret one known only to the character. This was part of Delsarte's legacy at the Paris *Conservatoire*, where Stanislavski saw at the end of the last century exercises *"which required actors to play characters who were at contradiction with themselves - a queen who is, in fact, a beggar-woman who sells matches, a devoted wife who is forced to send her beloved husband to the war."* (Benedetti: "Biography", p. 30) Jouvet draws on the same tradition when he says that *"on the stage the actor should hide what he feels and show what he doesn't"*. (*apud* Lewis: "Method or Madness", p. 97)

[1] "Creating A Role", p. 200

[2] an imaginary character introduced by Stanislavski into Brabantio's household

[3] for the idea of outer actions 'covering' see also "An Actor Prepares", pp. 225, 228 & 231-2.

In my practice I have come to call the Inner Action the **ulterior motives** of the character. I find this way of thinking particularly rewarding when approaching acting with an 'epic' attitude. I have come to believe that in Brecht's plays in particular, the difference between the 'sincere' (*"Aristotelian"*) and 'epic' (*"alienatory"*) modes lies precisely in the relationship between Inner and Outer Actions[1]. In 'sincere' acting, the character 'wears his heart on his sleeve': he acts in unison with the inner motivation, which is transparently that suggested by the action. Melodrama villains do **genuinely** villainous deeds and ingenues are **earnestly** fainting or throwing themselves at their fathers' feet. In 'epic' forms of acting, which allow for a realistic, that is materialistic, view of motivation, the relationship between Inner and Outer Actions is more sophisticated. More often than not, the visible action hides an ulterior motive. This need not be a transparent 'lie', like Regan and Goneril protesting their undying love for Lear. Mother Courage may well agree to tear up her good shirts for bandages; but she does this, under overwhelming pressure, not out of altruism or pity, but because it is more efficient - by doing it herself, she has a chance to save at least one of the shirts.[2] The Inner Action is illuminated through the 'gestus' with which Brecht meant the scene to end: Mother Courage lifting a looted fur coat she has grabbed as compensation for her losses.[3]

Seeing the Inner Action as the secret motivation may help to explain the concept of 'alienation' in practical acting terms. There is no doubt that Brecht's revolutionary idea bears rich fruit in terms of dramaturgy and staging. What interests me here, however, are the difficulties encountered when *verfremdung* is applied to acting. The idea of the actor 'criticising' his actions as he does them seems to me impossible to realize in practice.[4] A total refusal to identify with the character in order to keep

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[1] cf. Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 236 who assigns this attitude to the whole of *"realistic"* theatre.
[2] "Mother Courage", Sc. 5 in: Bertolt Brecht, *Plays: Two*, trans. by John Willett, London, Methuen, 1987, pp. 144-153
[3] cf. Brecht's notes: *Collected Plays: Five*, London, Methuen, 1995, p. 304
[4] This whole area has been the subject of a major debate between the supporters of empathy (*einfuhlung* in German) (notably Herder, who originated the term, and at the beginning of the century Th. Lipps and Volkelt) and its latter-day detractors, like Croce and Lukacs. The latter, in the second volume of his "Aesthetic" discusses at large the question of alienation, disagreeing with Brecht's assertion that 'catharsis' is a form

a distance from its actions only leads to acting with no credibility. Coming out of character, through songs, monologues directly addressed to the audience and so on, is perfectly possible - but these are essentially dramaturgical means of alienation. The usage of Brecht's own company, Helene Weigel's in particular, shows that constant 'self-criticism' of the character by the actor was not practised either. What was practised was a re-assessment of the motivations of characters from a materialistic point of view. I firmly believe that alienation in acting is achieved not by the actor who distances himself from the character, but by the character **distancing himself from its actions**. The actor continues to play the character through a process of identification; at the same time the actor is aware that the character is capable of 'judging' his own actions. In other words, the epic actor displays a higher level of consciousness than the 'sentimental' one - unlike his 'sincere' counterpart, the epic actor not only has a motivation, but is aware of its 'low', materialistic nature. This self-reflective quality, when made transparent through the playwright's work[1], provides the character (not the actor, who is only invited to take such decisions on behalf of his character, as it were) with the sense of cool irony, of self-deprecation, which is the hallmark of the epic construction of character.

This way of looking at the relationship between character and action illustrates the crucial Malmgren notion of **Action Attitudes**, his original addition to Laban's Inner Attitudes. For Laban the Inner Attitudes referred to different states of mind or inclinations within the same, real, person. They were supposed to generate action in a 'direct' way: a certain Inner Attitude would find expression through its corresponding Working Actions. 'What you saw was what you got'. In applying these concepts to acting, Yat Malmgren separates character from action and determines a more sophisticated relationship between them. For him the Inner Attitude denotes the core of the character, its psychological

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of empathy. However, basing himself on Diderot's "Paradox", Lukacs also affirms the 'objective' relationship of the actor towards the role. As I say above, these theoretical assumptions seem impossible to realise in practice.

[1] see, for example, Mortimer's speech to King and Parliament, one of Brecht's major changes in his adaptation of "Edward II" by Marlowe. (B. Brecht: *The Life of Edward II of England*, trans. by Jean Benedetti, in Collected Plays, vol. I, London, Methuen & Co., 1970, pp. 195-7)

essence. Action, on the other hand, is a **cover** for the character's real self. The more 'feeling' our Viola is, the more 'blustering' or 'thoughtful' her actions. And *vice versa*, the more sensuous a character she is, the more 'intellectual' or 'feeling' her behaviour towards other people. Yat Malmgren's contribution to the system is to describe this **dialectical contradiction** between character and action, between the Inner Attitude and the Action Attitudes. The latter are psychologically based descriptions of the **quality** of a character's actions. Thus a character like Mother Courage, whose Inner Attitude is fundamentally materialistic and therefore based in sensation, appears at times to act **through** feeling (the tearing of her shirts) or thinking (the calculation of the 'odds' against the burning farm house falling on Katherine in the same scene).

The Action Attitudes describe through the vocabulary of Jung's functions on the one hand the Inner Action (thought-process and motivation) and on the other the Outer Action (immediate desires, Objectives) of the character. In the system the Action Attitudes bear the same names as the Inner Attitudes. But, while the Inner Attitudes are totally unconscious (the character cannot do anything about its inclination to act in a certain way), the Action Attitudes **can** be subject to a critique on the part of the character, who can either play them 'sincerely' or through an 'ulterior motive'. When played 'sincerely' the Action Attitudes are **involuntary**, a natural consequence of the basic inner inclination. When played because of a conscious 'ulterior motive' the Action Attitudes are **deliberate**. The actor has a choice: he can either 'allow' his character to identify unreservedly with his actions; or he can decide 'on behalf of his character' to criticise his actions from a materialistic point of view.

In this case I like to think of the character as having an 'attitude' towards its actions. This results in a 'cooling' of the emotion with which most actions are suffused in 'sincere' forms of acting. In this sense, I see Brecht's idea of alienation not as being in opposition with Stanislavskian identification, but as building upon it. The character who has an 'attitude' towards its actions operates at a higher level of consciousness than the character who 'shoots from the hip'. This corresponds to the development of the personality towards higher degrees

of function integration and the evolution of the Self. Jung says about a person who has achieved such a higher state of development: *"One certainly does feel the affect and is shaken and tormented by it, yet at the same time one is aware of a higher consciousness looking on which prevents one from becoming identical with the affect, a consciousness which regards the affect as an object and can say, 'I know that I suffer'."*[1]

This, I think, is an accurate description of what happens in the course of what Brecht calls *"gestic delivery"*[2]. In his article "On Rhymeless Verse With Irregular Rhythms", Brecht analyses the way in which Luther's Bible had translated the phrase: *"If thine eye offends thee, pluck it out!"*. According to Brecht the thought is expressed in three 'movements':
- a premise - *"If thine eye offends thee..."* - which I would equate with Stanislavski's idea of motivation, of the cause for action.
- a conclusion - *"pluck it out!"* - which Brecht calls *"the devastating proposal"*[3]; clearly the equivalent of Stanislavski's action.
- in the middle is what Brecht endearingly calls a *"little pause of bewilderment"*[4] If the actor acknowledges this little hiatus, stops for an infinitesimal moment, allowing the character to pose a mental question mark over the action, he achieves the theatrical equivalent of Jung's *"higher consciousness"*. By allowing himself the fraction of a second in which the question mark is raised, the actor gives his character a chance to act not on impulse, but as a result of a consciously taken decision. The character could do other than what he is enjoined to do. The fact that he chooses to *"pluck it out"* is now a decision to do **this** in the full consciousness of the alternatives, and **not that**.

I would like to suggest that Diderot's famous paradox might be usefully revisited in this light. Commenting on Garrick's portrayal of Richard III, Diderot talks of the *"passionate performance"*[5] coming from an actor who remains detached and in control. To this Shchepkin's *dictum*, so beloved of

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1 Commentary on *"The Secret Of The Golden Flower"* in "Alchemical Studies", CW 13, p. 15.
2 "On Rhymeless Verse With Irregular Rhythms", in J. Willett, ed.: *Brecht On Theatre*, London, Eyre Methuen, 1964, p. 116
3 op. cit., p. 117
4 ibid.
5 Diderot: *The Paradox of Acting*, trans. by W. Pollock, London, Chatto and Windus, 1883, pp. 8-9.

Stanislavski, according to which the actor *"begins by wiping out his own self...and becomes the character"*[1] is deeply opposed. But the circle is squared if we allow that on the modern stage the actor has to identify with the character, but can permit the character to distance itself from its actions. This process I call the character's taking of 'attitudes' towards its actions.

Thus the meaning of the term 'attitude' evolves a little further from Laban's original sense. In acting, the term has several connotations:

- Inner Attitude is the basic inclination of a person to respond to the world through a combination of two psychological functions.
- Action Attitudes are:
a. descriptions of the character's motivations - Inner Action Attitudes
b. the deeds of the character in both psychological and physical terms - Outer Action Attitudes.
The separation of motivation from action (Inner Action from Outer Action Attitudes) opens the way for:
- the 'attitude' of a character towards its actions. This describes the element of 'alienation', the self-critical, ironical view the character has of itself and its deeds.[2]

The degree of consciousness of the character towards its own deeds determines, I believe, the acting 'mode'. In 'sincere' acting (the kind of acting I think is wrongly labelled 'realistic'), the character is at peace with its actions - the relationship between its personality (Inner Attitude) and its motivation and deeds (Action Attitudes) is unencumbered. In 'epic' mode (the true 'realism'), the character is conscious of the

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[1] letter to Alexandra Schubert of 27.3.1848, quoted in Benedetti: "Biography", p. 16

[2] this way of looking at attitude is foreshadowed by Meyerhold when he describes how *"The actor's attitude to his part was conveyed through an eloquent succession of poses, gestures and acrobatic tricks, all accomplished with the casual dexterity of a circus clown."* (*Meyerhold on Theatre*, trans. by Edward Braun, London, Eyre Methuen, 1969, p. 185) This, however, is the actor's attitude to his part, not the character's attitude to his actions. Significantly, in order to achieve it Meyerhold's actor moves into circus, or perhaps into what today might be described as 'performance art' - both modes of performance outside the scope of my discussion.

materialistic motivation behind its actions and carries them out in full consciousness of the alternatives: Mother Courage **could** help in the rescue of the baby from the burning farm; she **could** volunteer to tear up her shirts and so on. The fact that she does not do so is, in true 'epic' mode, a **conscious** decision to act one way and not another. In the terms of the system this process is described through the relationship between **two** sets of Action Attitudes: the Inner Action and the Outer Action respectively. Thus a character may **think** 'I want to rescue what is left of my shirts' (Inner Action) but act as if she **felt** like 'helping the wounded peasants' (Outer Action). The outer feeling **covers** the inner thinking. And both are informed, indeed determined, by the basic psychological make-up of the character, based in sensation. The relationships between character, motivation and action are expressed in psychological terms thus:

inner attitude -> inner action -> outer action
(sensation) ***(thinking)*** ***(feeling)***

The concepts of inner and outer action constitute a significant development from Laban's and Stanislavski's original ideas. They both have what one might describe as a nineteenth century idea of expression. For them, the inner finds a direct, 'guileless' route to the outer. This relationship is epitomised by Laban's idea of the *"kinesphere"*:

"The normal stretch of our limbs, when they stretch away from our body without changing stance, determines the natural boundaries of the personal space or 'kinesphere' in which we move. This kinesphere remains constant in relation to the body even when we move away from the original stance; it travels with the body in the general space."[1]

If this referred strictly to the physical space surrounding the body, it would merely state the obvious. But we have seen that for Laban there is an unbroken connection between inner and outer. Thus Laban's performer carries with him a rigid 'bubble' of expression, corresponding to a fixed inner state. The inner impulse and the outer expression are to all intents and purposes identical. Yat Malmgren, on the other hand, sees outer

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[1] "Mastery of Movement", p. 38; see also Newlove: "Laban for Actors", pp. 22-3

expression as a constantly changing pattern of different signs which, while being generated by a 'fixed' Inner Attitude, revolve around this core with the maddening speed of wave/particles inside the atom. Yat Malmgren introduces into Laban's system the notion of permanent change, thus bringing an 'ordered' nineteenth century outlook into the twentieth century.

ii. Whose Inner Action? - Personalisation

Before moving on to analyse Yat Malmgren's concept of the Outer Action, I must clarify the psychological process involved in the creation of the Inner Action. As we have seen, Inner Action is arrived at by creating what Stanislavski calls a *"subtext"*: the *"web of innumerable inner patterns inside a play and a part woven from 'magic ifs', given circumstances, all sorts of figments of the imagination, inner movements, objects of attention..."*[1] Unfortunately, Stanislavski's all-encompassing concept is ambiguous. His *"inner pattern"* (a term repeated throughout his writings[2]) describes the totality of the actor's as well as the character's reactions to the Given Circumstances. The subtext is at one and the same time the inner monologue of the character and the actor's *"imaginative extensions to the words of the author"*[3]. The subtext of the character therefore amounts to the succession of thoughts passing through its mind, its *"inner stream of images"*[4]. But Stanislavski's definitions do not clarify whose images he is talking about - those of the actor or those of the character? Are the *"images"* used by the actor his or hers entirely, or are they derived from, and confined to, the world of the character?

Stanislavski himself seems to come down on the side of the imaginative use of character images:

"... our inner vision must bear a relationship only to the life of the character being played and not to the actor who does the portraying, because unless his own personal life is analogous to that of the part it will not coincide with it.

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1 "Building A Character", p. 113
2 see "Creating A Role", p. 173 and elsewhere
3 ibid.
4 Stanislavski: "Building A Character", p. 124

That's why when we are on stage, our chief concern should be to reflect at all times in our own vision the things akin to those which our character would have in his. This inner stream of images fed by all sorts of fictional inventions, given circumstances, puts life into a role..."[1]

I have emphasized *"when we are on stage"* because I believe that, while Stanislavski rejects the use of personal images in favour of an imaginative recreation of the character's historical and individual Given Circumstances, he does so in relation to the actor who is actually playing. Before he reaches this stage, however, the actor finds in his own experience equivalents to the events, relationships, desires, Given Circumstances experienced by the character. This Uta Hagen calls the process of **personalization**[2]. Yat Malmgren considers it essential in drawing the play close enough to the actor's own experiences for it to become his own. In this respect Yat Malmgren follows Hagen in stressing the need for the actor to recognize his own contacts and Objectives before projecting them onto those of the character.

Personalization is not simply a matter of finding any personal correspondences to the data of the play. In order for it to work, the actor must find **significant** personal equivalents. The data of the play need to vibrate with those parts of the actor's psyche which are potent with emotion. These are the deepest layers of the psyche, the realm of Jungian archetypal images or, if one prefers a 'nurture, not nature' explanation, of what Kleinians call *"introjection"*. Significant images derived from an infant's earliest experiences (parents, for example), are 'introjected', that is absorbed and fixed within the psyche. They are then supposed to affect a person's subsequent experience of the external world, in particular his or her relationships with others.[3] Jung, on the other hand, postulates that we carry within us a set of archetypal references

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[1] ibid., my emphasis

[2] Uta Hagen: *Respect For Acting*, with Haskel Frankel, New York, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973. The process, if not the word, is found in Stanislavski. (see, for example, "Creating A Role", p. 28) He, however, wants the actor to find in his own experience images and objectives which are *"personal yet analogous to those of the character"*.("An Actor Prepares", p. 119). This seems a tall order. I think Uta Hagen's notion of personalization is more open, flexible and therefore more workable.

[3] cf. Storr: "Jung", p. 43

which come into play when reacting to the environment. Jung calls these internal points of references *"fantasy-images"*. They are not the simple reflection of an external object in the psyche, but, says Jung, poetical images, *"figure[s] of fancy... related only indirectly to the perception of an external object."*[1] Through fantasy the actor 'ingests' the objective data of the play, which touch either *"fantasy-images"* or introjected contents. This is not, I hope, too fanciful an extension of these concepts. True, the modern Freudian school, of which Melanie Klein was a prime exponent, assumes that, unlike Jung's archetypes, the introjected images of the infant lose their potency as the adult establishes solid, gratifying relationships with real people. Both schools agree, however, that such *"images"* (whether 'archetypal' or 'introjected', it matters not) are laden with emotion.[2] This emotion seeks an outlet. The process of personalisation, I would say, is just such an opportunity for the emergence of emotionally charged unconscious contents.

The data of the play, therefore, echo in the unconscious and activate it into fantasy. The resulting *"image"* appears suddenly, abruptly. It is experienced as a creative jump, like a cartoon 'bulb' lighting up at the moment of revelation. Thus personalization, much used in Yat Malmgren's teaching, describes the psychological mechanism which leads from trite contact to an internal image rich in emotion and from there to the imaginative leap. Personalized contacts and objectives are essentially a synthesis of object and subject. Although they arise from the unconscious, they only represent those unconscious contents which are relevant to the data which triggered them. To use the Jungian term, certain unconscious contents are *"constellated"* momentarily by the trigger.[3]

In practice the projection of the actor's unconscious contents into those of the character works because our minds operate by association and not in the linear, mathematical mode of a computer. The to-and-fro between our own associations and the Given Circumstances provides the key to what Stanislavski calls the *"truth of the imagination"*[4] which in turn opens the

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[1] "Psychological Types", p. 442
[2] cf. Storr: "Jung", pp. 44-5
[3] cf. "Psychological Types", p. 443
[4] "Building A Character", p. 119, cf. also: *"we filter through ourselves all the materials that we receive from the author and the director; we*

door to a creative approach to character and role. The actor connects the personalized contacts and Objectives to the character's Given Circumstances in order to create, out of the symbiosis of both worlds, the character's Inner Action.[1] When the process is complete, actor and character become one.

iii. Outer Action

The character interlocks on stage with others. This interaction Yat Malmgren calls **Outer Action.**

On the psychological level the Outer Action consists of those activities which the character plays on its partners. These are expressed in terms of transitive verbs. Thus, in the scene which precedes her 'ring' soliloquy, Viola might 'cajole' or 'challenge' or 'excite' Olivia. She will also carry out functional physical activities: opening the door, bowing, pulling a chair, etc. Her most important physical activity is, of course, her speech - the movement of the organs of speech, their tempo, is the most sophisticated expression of the inner impulse. The Outer Action consists therefore of two layers: psychological and physical activities in a direct relation to one another.

The physical characterization is no less important than the inner, psychological layers. It is made of all the physical **signs**[2] which create the overall impression of a character: posture, gait, small unconscious moves, nervous tics, deliberate gestures. The attention paid to different types of movements is an important factor taken by the system from Laban.

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work over them, supplementing them with our own imagination." ("An Actor Prepares", p. 52)

[1] *"'To whom will these actions then belong? To you or to your role?'*
'To me!'
'The physical being is yours, the movements also, but the objectives, the given circumstances, these are common to you both. Where do you end and where does your character begin?'" (C. Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 231)

[2] cf. Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 39: *"The elaboration of artificiality is a question of ideograms - sounds and gestures - which evoke associations in the psyche of the audience...a sign, an ideogram, which either instantly conveys the hidden motivations of the actor or polemizes against them.'*

Laban first classifies certain movements as *"subjective"*. These are *"vague gestures having no definite practical significance but which are done for movement's sake."*[1] A second category are gestures with a definite meaning such as pointing, nodding, winking which are meant to replace words. These Laban calls *"conventional gestures"* - they are part of a person's conscious means of communication. Finally, he lists the existence of *"functional actions"*, such as those we use when working, eating, travelling, etc. These are linked to the most immediate needs of the mover.[2] This classification concerns movements in daily life. It is therefore not directly relevant to the system, which focuses on expressive Movement. However, the system retains from Laban's initial classification the concern with the different degrees to which gestures are conscious or involuntary. Indeed, by the time of his work with Carpenter, Laban had come to think that all **expressive** gestures involved a *"degree of conscious volition"*.[3]

The generation of movement analysts which followed reconsidered Laban's classification. Marion North, the director of the Laban Centre in London, also distinguishes between three components of the overall *"movement picture"*, but connects them to individual personality traits. These distinctions are directly relevant to the system.

Marion North observes that when assessing a person's demeanour, we take in first and foremost *"the **body carriage** - the heavy sagging - airyfairiness - the narrow nearness (self contained and restrained, or timid) - the broad expansiveness of communicative benevolence - the twisted avoidance or embarrassment - and so on."*[4]

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[1] "Mastery of Movement", p. 116

[2] cf. Michael Chekhov: "To The Actor", pp. 76-7, who also classifies gestures into mundane and revelatory (*"natural and usual"* and *"archetypal"*). In view of their near overlap at Dartington Hall, it is interesting to see the meeting of minds between Laban and Michael Chekhov on the subject of the classification of gesture. It is not clear who influenced whom, but the similarities are striking. I find it surprising, therefore, that the link was not picked up by people like Eugenio Barba, whose understanding of Michael Chekhov's work is profound. (see, for example, "The Paper Canoe", pp. 78ff.)

[3] "Book": p.1

[4] Marion North: "Scientific Penetration Gives Basis For Guidance And Treatment", *LAMGM*, No. 21, Nov. 1958, pp. 13-18, p. 15, emphasised in the original. Meyerhold deduces from the fact that posture can *"identify the*

The body carriage, the **posture**, is the expression of the core part of a character's personality, its psychological essence. It is the one constant in the ever changing flow of movement expression. Posture, or 'silhouette' as it is sometimes called, links the individual character with a general type. We recognize the miser, the old lecher, the young spark from their deportment[1]. In terms of the system the posture expresses the Inner Attitude.

In action, however, characters move in a variety of different ways. They might be *"precise and useful - rough and haphazard - fumbling and awkwardly nonchalant, etc."*[2] These **physical activities** (Laban's *"functional actions"*) reveal the overt intentions of the character, its Objectives. These are purposeful gestures carried out consciously: opening a door, picking up an object, standing up. They exist in order to fulfil the psychological part of the Outer Action, which is expressed as **Psychological Activities**. A variation on these moves are the half voluntary gestures (a sideways glance, a flicker of the wrist quickly retrieved) which reveal the hidden Inner Action. The latter are planned consciously by the actor, but occur 'in spite' of the character. Finally, there are those unconscious, natural gestures: the *"seemingly meaningless movements of the body...: eyes searching, mouth twitching, shoulders*

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character completely at his first appearance" ("Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 191) that the need for the gradual revelation of the character disappears. (cf. "Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 67.) This is not a conclusion to which the system subscribes. In the Laban-Malmgren system characters are indeed revealed through posture in general, but are developed through the inferences the audience is invited to draw from their physical actions throughout the play. Grotowski also stresses the importance of what he calls the *"gait"* of the character. He refers mainly to the character's way of walking, but, as he makes clear when describing his exercises, *"gait"* involves changing the character's centre of gravity, the parts of the body which 'lead' the movement, and what he calls *"physical dynamics"*: psychological characteristics and states like *"phlegmatic, bellicose, nervous, sleepy"*. I think these various elements extend the idea of *"gait"* towards the more comprehensive *"posture"*. ("Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 144)

[1] *"All the actors use gestures, positions, and rhythms borrowed from pantomime. Each has his own silhouette irrevocably fixed. The result is a depersonalization of the characters. When the individual traits are removed, the actors become stereotypes of the species."* (Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 77)

[2] North: "Scientific Penetration", p. 15

shrugging, toes tapping, etc."[1] Laban called these **Shadow Moves**, since they *"accompany movements of purposeful action like a shadow".*[2] They are not definite enough to express directly one of the psychological layers, but their overall tempo reveals, alongside the posture, the Inner Attitude of the character.

We thus have the following relationship between Attitudes and their expression in movement:

the Inner Attitude is revealed through:
a. posture
b. shadow moves

the Inner Action is revealed through:
semi-voluntary moves

the Outer Action is revealed through:
a. psychological activities
b. physical activities

The relationship between the different types of movement determines the style of acting and the size of the characterization. The film actor might rely more on Shadow Moves than on the concrete physical activities which are the prime concern of the actor in farce, or the definite gestures used in epic acting. Similarly, the *commedia* performer brings to the fore the posture of his character and either underplays or exaggerates Shadow Moves. But the system, at least as taught by Yat Malmgren, is concerned primarily with realistic forms of acting. It therefore establishes a relationship between inner and outer described as **expressive** and **organic.**

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[1] ibid.; cf. Laban: "Mastery of Movement", p. 12
[2] ibid.

d. Expressive and Organic

Whenever the question of expressiveness in acting is brought up, the common reaction is to think of large, studied indication. Long forgotten images of melodrama come to mind: the back of the hand to the brow, the rolling eyes, the knees buckling in terror. Yet most of us would not deny an Olivier or an Ashcroft the epithet 'expressive'. The essentially realistic tradition which informs the system must again be emphasized here. Unlike Meyerhold, say, for whom *"every movement is a hieroglyph with its own peculiar meaning"* and who believes *"the theatre should employ only those movements which are immediately decipherable"*[1] for Yat Malmgren the complex intention -> gesture conveys messages **subliminally.**[2]

Yet neither Laban nor Yat Malmgren fall prey to the modern fallacy which equates acceptable stage behaviour with common conduct. Throughout his teaching Yat Malmgren tries to establish the position of his system in the age-old debate between 'natural' versus 'artificial' acting styles. The meaning of these terms is not absolute, of course. Each age judges its actors to be more or less 'natural' only in relation with the acting style of their predecessors and contemporaries and not by relating them to everyday behaviour. The history of the subject is vast and can be traced back to Quintillian's book on oratory[3] and his Renaissance imitators. For our purpose, however, the pattern of the debate matters more than its details. To paraphrase Arthur Koestler, we can hear throughout theatre history the ticking of a pendulum swinging between 'natural' and 'formal' ways of achieving 'good acting'. Koestler uses the metaphor to describe the swings between the *"all is body - all is mind"* extremes of the ontological debate[4]. In theatrical terms the problem can be summed up thus: does one believe that the 'right thought or emotion' will **naturally** give rise to a specific and aesthetically apt physical expression (gesture), as limitless as human nature itself? Or does one hold to the

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1 "Meyerhold On Theatre", p. 200
2 cf. Eugenio Barba, who talks of communication via the *"kinaesthetic sense"* of the spectator. (("The Paper Canoe", p. 57)
3 Quintillian: *Institutes of Oratory*, trans. by Rev. J. S. Watson, London, G. Bell & son, 1931
4 A. Koestler: *The Sleepwalkers, (A History of Man's Changing Vision of the Universe)*, London, Penguin Books, 1964, p. 29

opposite view: that the repertory of expressive gesture, although varied, is ultimately limited and therefore stage movements are capable of being classified, studied and precisely imitated, with or without experiencing the emotional state attached to each of them?

The two positions are not mutually exclusive. But discovering the nature of an actor's approach is often rendered more difficult by a paradoxical contradiction: actors who in their theoretical pronouncements call for one type of acting, seem peculiarly inclined to practice its opposite. Two eighteenth century cases in point:

The generation of actors of the 1740s, the period of Cibber and Garrick, was the first in modern times to believe in acting based on an *"easy, natural style"*[1] - the 'natural' expression of an apt thought or emotion. Its chief theoretician was Aaron Hill, who laid down in his "Essay on the art of Acting" the principles he had applied in practice in his role as Cibber's acting coach.[2] A generation later, the pendulum swings and Charles Macklin appears in his writings, and in particular in his "Art and Duty of an Actor" (1799) as, literally, a 'reactionary', an advocate of the 'old fashioned' rhetorical rigidity Garrick had sought to eliminate for ever from English acting. In his search for classifications and categories of gesture designed to be imitated rather than felt, however, Macklin uses for the first time the language of the Natural Sciences, thus opening the way for a 'scientific' approach to acting:

*"Unless the actor knows the **genus**, and **species**, and characteristic that he is about to imitate, he will fall short in his execution. The actor must restrict all his powers and convert them to the purpose of imitating the **looks, tunes,** and **gestures** that can best describe the characteristic that the poet has drawn, for each passion and humour has its **genus of looks, tunes, and gestures, its species** and its individual characteristics."*[3]

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[1] John Russell Taylor: The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre, London, Penguin Books, 1966, p. 105

[2] Aaron Hill: "An Essay on the art of Acting (1746)", in *The Works of the Late Aaron Hill, Esq.,...* London, printed for the benefit of the family, 1754.

[3] Charles Macklin: "The Art and Duty of an Actor", in T. J. Kirkman: *Memoires of the Life of Ch. Macklin, Esq.,..* Vol. I, London, Allen & Co., 1799, pp. 363-4, emphasised in the original.

And yet, from contemporary accounts it is clear that Macklin's peers considered him a prime exponent of a 'natural' style of acting[1], even when compared with the *"easy, natural style"* of Garrick and his generation. It is this relativism which has made any theoretical distinction between 'natural' and 'formal' styles of acting so difficult.

Similarly, one might expect someone as concerned with classifying and legislating on movement as Delsarte was to advocate the artificial or 'stylized' type of acting he must have seen daily on the Parisian stages of the 1850s. Yet, somewhat surprisingly, Delsarte comes down in favour of a restrained style of acting, with aspirations towards the 'natural'. In his "Literary Remains" Delsarte postulates that the actors: *"should never let their gestures reveal more than the tenth part of the secret emotion that they apparently feel."*[2]

Laban and Malmgren both seem sometimes to have the same difficulty. For Laban the expressive art *par excellence* is mime, in which he sees a *"differentiated language of gesture."*[3] Not modern mime, but the ancient art of the pantomime whose disappearance Diderot laments:

"Nous parlons trop dans nos drames; et consequement, nos acteurs n'y jouent pas assez. Nous avons perdu un art dont les anciens conaissaient bien les resources. Le pantomime jouait autrefois toutes les conditions, les rois, les heros, les tyrans, les riches, les pauvres, les habitants des villes, ceux de la campagne, choisissant dans chaque etat ce qui lui est propre; dans chaque situation, ce qu'elle a de frappant...Le pantomime joue, et le philosophe, transporte, s'ecrit: 'je ne te vois pas seulement, je t'entends. Tu me parle des mains."[4]

With all his aspiration towards realism, Laban finds the embodiment of this ancient ideal of expressive movement in modern times only in the excessive acting favoured by actors in silent movies.[5] This is not to say,

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[1] cf. Hecht: "Kinetic Techniques", p. 40
[2] loc. cit,. p. 526, quoted by Hecht: "Kinetic Techniques", p. 83
[3] "Mastery of Movement", p. 101
[4] Denis Diderot: "Entretiens sur le fils naturel", in *Paradoxe sur le comedien*, precede par Entretiens sur le fils naturel, Paris, Garnier-Flammarion, 1967, p. 48
[5] cf. "Mastery of Movement", p. 101

however, that Laban favours an exaggerated, emphatic style of acting. When it comes to combining this ideal with the spoken word into a performance for the theatre, both Laban and Malmgren reject not only the rigid codification of emotion in gesture characteristic of the melodrama, but also the dominating 'natural' style of his (and our) time, with its inherent lack of expressivity in movement.[1]

It is clear that the position of the system is a median one. Neither the formal rigidity of melodrama or ballet, against which, as choreographer and dancer, Laban and Malmgren are both reacting strongly.[2] Nor the *"immobility"*, the tendency to act 'from the neck upwards' from which English actors so often suffer. But a recognition of what Laban calls *"the almost invisible finer movement tensions between people"*, sharpened and defined enough to make clear expressive statements, while still remaining within a realist mode. Diderot's classic passage contains the two demands: the actor needs to find that which is apt, believable and appropriate (*"propre"*), but at the same time look for that which is memorable, telling, striking (*"frappant"*). These two conditions Laban and Malmgren both struggle to satisfy in their intimations of 'expressiveness'. On the one hand there is an aspiration towards the natural flow of movement imitating daily life; on the other the search for significant gestures which reveal an inner, hidden content. For Yat Malmgren, acting at its best seamlessly combines the two.

Both 'natural' and 'expressionist' gestures are based on the underlying 'laws' of Movement. These are expressed as overall tempi, not localised in individual parts of the body expressing particular impulses. It is not as if one deduces psychological characteristics solely from the fact that the movements of a character are 'quick' or 'strong'. In this the system

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[1] *"It is not so long ago that the fashion in acting suddenly changed from pompous gesticulation to a naturalism devoid of any movement expression at all. Playwrights, actors and producers became bored with the dancelike over-acting of an epoch saturated by melodramatic sentimentality and turned to the imitation of everyday life on stage. But they were unable to appreciate the almost invisible finer movement tensions between people conversing in everyday life and the immobility which they cultivated gave birth to a dead style of acting."*("Mastery of Movement", p. 102)

[2] Both Laban and Yat Malmgren, who underwent a similar 'abreaction' against his own early training, see in ballet the same disease: rigid outer shape destroying the emotional content.

differs considerably from previous attempts, such as those of Delsarte or Artaud, at codifying the relationship between inner and outer. Delsarte (1811-1871) the Professor of Oratory at the Paris Conservatoire, whose work was a major influence on a number of modern theatre people, including Laban and Grotowski[1], was probably the first to assert that the *"exterior gesture [must be] only the feeble echo of the internal gesture which gave it birth and governed it".*[2] He also tried to deduct the inner from the outer movement and went as far as to formulate a *"thermometric principle"* according to which certain parts of the body are gauges for particular states of mind. The shoulders were said to convey feeling, the wrists - resolutions or acts of will, the elbows - affective states, etc.[3] This mechanistic attempt at determining a 'one-to-one' relationship between inner states and physical dimensions was bound to fail. It inevitably led to formalistic and artificial gestures, ultimately to cliches, as would a practical application of Artaud's similar suggestions[4]. The Laban-Malmgren system, on the other hand, stresses the importance of the underlying dimensions of movement, as opposed to specific gestures. It teaches that the combination of different Motion Factors creates the link between inner and outer. The actor gains a subliminal, yet physical impression, 'in his bones', of the tempo of the character, reflected in the latter's physical life. Through it the spectator gains an intuitive understanding of the

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[1] Kurt Joos, Laban's most illustrious dancing pupil, traces Delsarte's influence on Laban through the intermediary of a a teacher at the Paris Opera who had been a pupil of Delsarte's and who might have taught Laban during his stay in Paris in the early years of the century. (cf. "Abstract from recorded interview with Kurt Joos, Director, Dance School, Folkswagschule, Essen-Werdem", Appendix 2, p. IX in Curl: "A Critical Study"; see also Laban's own reference to Delsarte in his early book "Gymnastick und Tanz", Oldenburg, 1926, p. 130; for Delsarte's influence on Grotowski cf. "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 16)

[2] Mackaye: "Large French Notebook", p. 37 quoted by Hecht: "Kinetic Techniques", p. 84

[3] For a description of Delsarte's 'laws' see ibid., pp. 87ff.

[4] In his article entitled "An Affective Athleticism", Artaud intimates that certain emotions are 'localised' in certain parts of the body. These he takes from the pressure points of Chinese acupuncture. (loc. cit. in "The Theatre and its Double", p. 94; the ideas are revisited in "Seraphim's Theatre", in the same volume, pp. 95ff.) While these are rather mechanical and simplistic compared to Laban's 'laws', they do bring back into twentieth century performance theory the Delsartian notions of introvert/extravert directions of psychological energy, which are picked up not only by Laban, but by Brook and Grotowski as well. (cf. Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 206)

personality of the character. At no point are inner and outer tempi connected in a cerebral, linear way.

Expression can take place through deliberate gestures, of course. But the system is much more interested in expression through Laban's 'shadow' moves and, above all, through imperceptible changes in the strength of breathing, the electrical resistance of the skin, and the frequency of the pulse-rate - the famous and often maligned 'vibrations'.[1] This is, to use Simon Callow's dictum, *"what acting is"*.

In realistic theatre - unlike formal modes of communication like ballet or the ritual postures of Far Eastern theatres - the expression itself is mostly spontaneous, a *"reflex of sound and gesture"*.[2] The system therefore describes the various stages of a process which is primarily intuitive. Once the intuition has played its part, consciousness takes over. In order for instinctive Movement to become gesture, it needs to be *"articulated"*[3] - that is to become definite enough to communicate the impulse from which it arose in the first place. By communicating, they acquire **meaning**. Gestures must also have a **purpose**, to be carried out wilfully[4], for a reason. This needn't be conspicuous - the nervous crunching of knuckles in the middle of an important conversation is not directed at the interlocutor. Yet it has meaning (it conveys, subliminally, the inner state) and purpose - the relief of inner tensions. Definition, meaning and purpose are the three determining characteristics of deliberate

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1 Before embarking on the path of analytical psychology which made him famous, Jung carried out an important series of experiments in this area, demonstrating the measurable correlation between emotion and physical manifestations. - see CW, vol. 2 "Experimental Researches", especially Jung and Peterson: "Psychophysical Investigations with the Galvanometer and Pneumograph in Normal and Insane Individuals" (1907) and Jung and Ricksher: "Further Investigations on the Galvanic Phenomenon and Respiration in Normal and Insane Individuals" (1908).

2 Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 38;

3 ibid.

4 Stanislavski was greatly influenced in his early work by the ideas of the French clinical psychologist Theodule Armand Ribot. (see, for example, "An Actor Prepares", p. 166) From his notes in the margins of Ribot's books one can discern his emerging realization of the difference between *"the automatic action [which] is apparent in the daily routine of life"* (Benedetti: "Biography", p. 175) and the purposeful, conscious actions in which actors are engaged on stage. Laban and Malmgren take from Stanislavski the idea of expressive movement being conditional on the movement being done with a *"conscious volition"* ("Book": p. 1).

expression. In translating Laban's codification of gesture to the purposes of theatre, the system simplifies it into two main categories: instinctive, subliminal movement and deliberate gestures. They are both subject to the same 'laws', both consisting of a direction of energy from inner to outer. The difference is in the degree to which they have:
- definition - size and clarity
- meaning - communicating subliminally or overtly, to the extent that the meaning can be translated into words
- purpose - whether they are there to relieve an inner tension, affecting the character, or turned outwards, affecting others on stage.

Indeed, the system encourages the actor to think of the possibility of extending 'natural' movement towards overtly expressive gestures. There is nothing to stop a shadow move from becoming such a definite gesture. By giving it enough definition, overt meaning and purpose a 'natural' movement can be refined to the point of becoming Michael Chekhov's *"psychological gesture"*, a gesture which, repeated at key moments in the development of the role, expresses the very essence of the character, its attitude to life and its Super Objective[1]. Michael Mears, one of the most successful British actors to use the system consistently, describes how, working on a character in "The Double Dealer" by Wycherley[2] he started from the Working Action of 'dabbing'. This led him to the image of a boy trying to keep a balloon in the air, which in turn gave him a tempo and a key into the character. At this point, however, he felt confident enough to extend the dabbing preparation moves into deliberate Shadow Moves: light and flexible wrist movements, removing his fringe from his forehead and so on. Here the Shadow Moves were not a direct by-product of the inner, but deliberate character choices made by the actor. The system opens the door to this sharpening of naturally occurring Shadow Moves into deliberate gestures. Whether deliberate or involuntary, however, the choices offered by the system imply a relationship between inner and outer which is at all times organic.

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[1] "To The Actor", p. 63
[2] see below "The Application of the System in Professional Practice", pp. 195ff.

This is one of those well-worn Stanislavskian terms which has almost lost its meaning with years of use and abuse. Since, as a concept, it underlines much of Yat Malmgren's teaching, it should repay a brief visit.

In "Creating A Role", Stanislavski defines the organic process thus:

"The creative process of living and experiencing a part is an organic one, founded on the physical and spiritual laws governing the nature of man, on the truthfulness of his emotions, and on natural beauty."[1]

Organic acting is therefore:

- based on *"laws"*, that is logical and coherent;
- *"truthful"*, that is imbued with emotions genuinely experienced by the actor;
- based on *"natural beauty"*, which for Stanislavski means aesthetically pleasing in a northern European classical sense: measured, balanced, restrained.

Above all, organic means natural, that is something which has **evolved gradually**[2], gestated sufficiently, then, grown through the appropriate phases. A character born 'organically' does not arise in one piece, but grows slowly from psychological characteristic to impulse to expression. Both Stanislavski and the Laban-Malmgren system acknowledge a natural **journey of energy** between character, impulse and action. This is 'organic' because it is not imposed by the brain as an artificial construct, but follows the 'laws' of natural growth. Thus an organic action on stage is subject to what Eugenio Barba calls *"numerous logics"*[3]: not only the logic of the inner impulse or of the context, but also that of the physical action itself. The painter puts on canvas, says Barba, not only his images, but also *"the quality of motion which has guided the brush"*[4]. In the same way the actor expresses not only the meaning (emotion, thought, sensation) which gives rise to the impulse, but the physical quality of the gesture itself. And the latter is always subject to the (immutable)

[1] op. cit., p. 44, emphasised in the original
[2] cf. Barba: "The Paper Canoe', p. 67
[3] ibid., p. 92
[4] ibid.

controls of Weight, Time, Space and Flow. Organic expression arises from *"the dialectic between order and disorder"*[1].

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The way of working proposed by the system takes the actor on a return journey: from the assimilation of the play's data by physical means, to the unconscious and then back from psychological impulse to physical expression. Underpinning the entire process is the fundamental distinction between **Inner and Outer.** The relationship between them has been the subject of considerable debate throughout the evolution of twentieth century acting. It might be useful to see where the system stands in relation to this debate.

In the summer of 1950 Laban gave a lecture in which he outlined to his English followers the way in which he saw the relation between the physical and the psychological aspects of movement. Laban posed a question: 'Do psychological processes give birth to movement' - he asked - 'or is it that movements excite psychological states'? At that stage, Laban could only formulate the question and note the constant interchange between the two. In the words of H. Irene Champernowne, who recorded the talk: *"He pointed out that life was an alternation between inner states of mind and outer action. There is interaction - but which is the chicken and which is the egg, is an unanswered question."*[2]

The answer he had reached by the time of his work with Carpenter was that a form of activity occurred at both levels. Both inner and outer could be seen as forms of Movement and the relationship between them was circular. As Carpenter records, Laban had come to believe that:

"The movements of man are the link between his inner emotional world and the world of practical reality...The unity of mind and body cannot be evaded in the study of man's movements. Life is the art of weaving threads between mind and body and... the inner attitudes of our minds are expressed by our bodies in a complex language of gesture and unconscious

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[1] ibid., p. 93
[2] Laban: "The Psychological Effects of Movement", p. 5

movement which is based on a system as beautiful in its ordered conception as the table of chemical elements."[1]

I believe, therefore, that the system is fundamentally neutral in the debate which has tyrannized modern acting since Meyerhold's schism from the Moscow Art Theatre: the argument which rages still between those who see performance as mainly the product of the 'inner' and those who stress the 'outer'. The current fashion for what is loosely called 'physical theatre', for example, is itself a reaction to the emphasis on inner psychological truth in British mainstream theatre. Seen from the angle of the Laban-Malmgren system, however, the quarrel looks somewhat manufactured. After all, both Stanislavski and Meyerhold describe the way in which energy, in the form of reactions and actions for the first, of *"excitation"* for the latter, is aroused by physical, 'mechanical' means.[2] In the end, as Laban came to acknowledge, it is all a matter of emphasis. There must be both a *"chicken"* and an *"egg"* - which comes first is a matter of personal, perhaps also of stylistic, choice. This is the position inherent in the system.[3] It is reinforced constantly in the practical exercises set by Yat Malmgren to his students.

Seen from the point of view of the system, therefore, the question is not whether gesture comes before or after impulse, but how **conscious** it is. Meyerhold, to whom many of the proponents of 'stylised' or 'physical' theatre look for inspiration, based his theatre on the idea that gesture

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1 "Harmony and Conflict", Chap. 1, p. 1

2 *"All psychological states are determined by specific physiological processes. By correctly resolving the nature of his state physically, the actor reaches the point where he experiences the* ***excitation*** *which communicates itself to the spectator and induces him to share in the actor's performance: what we used to call 'gripping' the spectator. It is this excitation which is the very essence of the actor's art. From a sequence of physical positions and situations there arise those* ***'points of excitation'*** *which are informed with some particular emotion. Throughout the process of 'rousing the emotions' the actor observes a rigid framework of physical prerequisites."* ("Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 199, emphasised in the original) This, incidentally, is the closest theatrical equivalent I have found for the James-Lange theory of affect.

3 cf. Stanislavski: *"In every physical objective there is some psychology and vice versa. You cannot separate them....The division between them is vague. Do not try to draw too fine a line between physical and spiritual nature. Go by your instincts, always leaning a little towards the physical."* ("An Actor Prepares", p. 121; a similar statement is repeated on p. 140)

was part of a process of *"conscious stylization"*[1]. The Laban-Malmgren system could be extended to encompass this approach by pushing the Working Actions beyond 'natural' moves. While possible, it would not be, I believe, an extension which the fathers of the system themselves would welcome. The Stanislavskian alternative is to see movement as essentially organic - the *"natural"* (that is unconscious), restrained outcome of the inner impulse. I think that ultimately these opinions reflect fundamental attitudes towards the role of the body in expression.

Two such attitudes are possible:

One sees the ultimate acting achievement in the disappearance of all barriers between the actor and the spectator. The actor's body itself becomes a nuisance. The ultimate achievement is total 'relaxation' on stage allowing the actor's reactions to be transmitted without interference. Thought and feeling are those of the actor in the circumstances of the character and nothing must stand in their way[2]. Grotowski would *"eliminate [the] organism's resistance to the psychic process. The result is freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent: the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of variable impulses."*[3]

This is not the way of the system. For it the body is no obstacle in the way of the soul. On the contrary, it acknowledges with great interest the possibility of an outer related to, yet distinct from the inner. Acting energy is filtered through several psychological layers before emerging as a physical movement. More - the outer is there to cover the inner with a protective shell. Like most shells, this one has its own beauty.

The two approaches result in very different understandings of the idea of character. I believe that the first leads inevitably to a lessening of the character as an entity separate from the actor. The actor is so

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1 "Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 36.
2 *"What is the role?... It is an instrument for making a cross-section of oneself, analysing oneself and thereby re-establishing contact with others..."* (Grotowski: "Towards A Poor Theatre, p. 221)
3 ibid., p. 16

preoccupied with transmitting his own impulses without impediments that he inevitably draws the character towards himself. He is the only inner and the character a transparent veil. This can be done with stunning effect, as stars from Garbo to Gielgud bear witness. Another sort of actor acknowledges the existence of a character separate from himself. He journeys towards it through rehearsals and, if successful, moulds himself into its physical and moral shape. Here the character is the inner and the actor the vessel into which the character is poured. Stanislavski was such an actor, Olivier another, Brando a third. This is the idea of transformation inherent in the system and actively promoted by Yat Malmgren in his teaching.

For Laban and Malmgren the body is not therefore, as for Meyerhold, a mere 'instrument' to be played at will according to the intellectual interpretations of author and director. Neither is it an obstacle to the revelation of the soul, as it is for Grotowski. Nor indeed is it an automatic follower of the soul, as viewed by Stanislavski. Their attitude is that the body incarnates impulses, but then refines them to the point of defined gestures. Like Michael Chekhov, Yat Malmgren would like *"psychological gestures"* to arise organically from the inner life of the character and then be refined consciously by the actor. This, I believe, is where the theory of the system, as well as the tastes of its founders leads to[1]. It is essentially an **expressionist** view of the relationship between impulse and gesture. It emphasises the high emotional content which underpins expression through movement - a moderate, modern version of the expressionists' call for *"ecstasy"*[2] Expressionist ideas were widespread aesthetic currency in Germany at the time of Laban's first period of artistic success in the twenties.[3] Moreover, Laban's interest in

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[1] Laban wrote to his collaborator Suzanne Perrottet as early as 1912, during his Munich period: *"The 'psychisch' in movement has to be studied to add to the rhythmical elements of the movement."* (quoted in Valerie Preston-Dunlop: "The Making of Modern Dance", part I, p. 15)

[2] cf. Foster: "The Influences of Rudolf Laban", p. 43

[3] John Foster seems to think that Laban came into contact with Expressionist aesthetics through *"an involvement with Dadaism"*. ("The Influence of Rudolf Laban", p. 67) This is not borne out by other sources, however. Valerie Preston-Dunlop traces the expressionist influence on Laban to his contacts with Ellen Tels' dance work in Munich in 1912. Ellen Tels' war cry was *"from impressionism to expressionism"* and it led Laban to devise his own, characteristically mathematical, slogan: *"exercise + rhythm = expressionism"*. (cf. Valerie Preston-Dunlop: "The Making of

what psychoanalysis has to say about creativity can also be traced to the influence of the expressionist dance school, which was said, in Regna's famous phrase, to have been *"founded more on psychoanalysis than on aesthetics"*[1]. Expressionism is primarily concerned, however, with the unfettered expression of inner contents. To the expressionist forward thrust of energy Yat Malmgren adds the idea of transformation and of an outer 'shell'. Above all, he adds the need for the mind-body entity to 'tell a story', to impart to an audience the **meaning** of gestures and words. The system belongs to those *"extra-daily"* techniques which *"put the body into form, rendering it artificial/artistic but believable."*[2] Thus the system can be said to be expressionist in intent and realistic in realization.

'Realistic' does not mean 'naturalistic'. The 'reality' promoted by the system is a reality of signs; a 'reality' specific to the stage, not a vain attempt at photographing life. The body in movement, the 'shell', is dissected into a series of units (signs) which are the same regardless of the meaning imparted them by inner content or context. In themselves a 'punch' or a 'dab' can be considered independently of the intention which generated them. They are no less 'real'. As Eugenio Barba has shown, at the moment of the *"creative 'pre-condition'... it is not yet the meaning of what one is doing which is essential, but rather the precision of the action which prepares the void in which an unexpected meaning can be captured."*[3] Students of the system often find it difficult to separate its lessons from their roots in Stanislavskian 'realism' - yet Yat Malmgren is clear that the *"quality of the actors' energy"*[4], the same outer forms (the 'signs' of Weight, Space, Time and Flow) can and do represent a wide variety of inner impulses or 'meanings'. Stanislavski himself knew that: Toporkov, one of his pupils from the *"physical action"* period, describes an exercise in which Stanislavski experiments with the tempo of a scene and by changing one dimension (Time) of the **same** physical actions (buying a newspaper in a railway station) he alters radically the meaning of the

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Modern Dance", Part I, p. 12; for a different view on the Expressionist influence on Laban see G. Curl: "A Critical Study", p. 176)

[1] F. Regna: *Concise History of Ballet*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1965, p. 185

[2] Barba: "The Paper Canoe", p. 16, emphasised in the original

[3] ibid., p. 87

[4] ibid.

scene.[1] In following this path, the system aligns itself with the tradition of 'modernist' performers and directors like Pitoeff, Michael Chekhov, Evreinov, Tairov, Reinhardt and Copeau who were intensely exercised by questions of form.[2] Yet for us their tradition is firmly 'realistic'. Because, as Barba shows, their form was that of a *"living but re-invented body...of a naturalness which is the fruit of artificiality"*.[3]

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To sum up, the Laban-Malmgren system seeks to determine the mechanism by which the psyche unleashes different forms of energy and transforms them into expression. This is essentially an **analytical** process by which the data of the play are defined, codified and 'ingested' in the form of physical movement. The system also concerns itself with the opposite process: with the way in which psychological energy is aroused through movement. This is a **synthesis** of the combined resources of character and actor.[4] The system is thus subject to two different pulls: one towards

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[1] V. O. Toporkov: *Stanislavski in Rehearsal*, New York, Theatre Arts Books, 1979, p. 63

[2] cf. Barba: "The Paper Canoe", p. 103 who also notes that *"their way of playing was sometimes called 'puppet-like'."*

[3] ibid., p. 104

[4] We have seen to what extent the process is indebted to Stanislavski. It is interesting to note that Meyerhold proposes a very similar codification of the acting process. He calls acting energy *"the capacity for **Reflex Excitability**"*. This is essentially the capacity to 'ingest' outside data, whether coming from the text, the director, designer or other artistic collaborators of the actor. The *"**manifestation of excitability**"* takes place through *"**acting cycles**"* comprising three invariable stages:
1. INTENTION
2. REALIZATION
3. REACTION

*"**The intention** is the intellectual assimilation of a task prescribed externally by the dramatist, the director, or the initiative of the performer.*
***The realization** is the cycle of volitional, mimetic and vocal reflexes.*
***The reaction** is the attenuation of the volitional reflex as it is realized mimetically and vocally in preparation for the reception of a new intention (the transition to a new acting cycle)..."* ("Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 201, emphasized in the original)
These three concepts correspond to Yat Malmgren's idea of Action:
Intention is the Inner Action
Realization is the Outer Action (physical and psychological activities)
Reaction is the transition to a change, presumably as a result of an obstacle provided by the Action of a partner. But the concept of **character**, as separate from the actor in action, is nowhere mentioned in

division and detail, the other towards integration. These are the two ends of the road I call 'the way of transformation'.

Meyerhold's codification. In its overwhelming emphasis on the idea of character the system departs significantly from almost all its predecessors.

THE THIRD PILLAR - THE IDEA OF CHARACTER

In his teaching Yat Malmgren analyses numerous examples of characters. These are almost entirely taken from classical plays: English Jacobeans, French neoclassicism and Spanish *sieglo de oro*, Russian and Scandinavian realists. The choice is largely dictated by the fact that this material is complex enough to repay analysis in terms of the system. It is also coloured by the classically-minded taste prevalent at the Drama Centre. And to a large extent, by the fact that these characters are assumed to be familiar to Yat Malmgren's interlocutors.

Something strange happens during these discussions: characters familiar from repeated lectures and visits to productions of plays by Shakespeare, Ibsen or Chekhov are talked of as if they had a 'real' existence. Viola, Edmund, general Gabler's daughter, colonel Prozorov's family are almost the subject of gossip. We know that Hedda has put up new, lined curtains; we see aunt Julie's dreadful new hat, we groan with Tesman under the weight of the books which had to be carted all the way from Berlin. These are no longer characters on a page, they are neighbours, relatives, school mates, opponents.

We know very well that these are still fictions, printed dots on paper. We talk of characters as if they were 'real', yet find ourselves duty-bound to remain within the confines of what the texts permit. Our imaginary actress trying to puzzle out Viola's feelings and thoughts about the ring moves to-and-fro on a triangular trail: between the text and herself, the text and 'Viola', herself and 'Viola'. Here is the puzzle: somewhere **outside both actress and text**, there is a 'Viola'. 'It' floats somewhere in the spiritual aether, hovering, waiting to be summoned to pour itself into the actor's body, to fill the vessel, to take over. I have come to call this notion the **independent or 'ectoplasmic'[1] character**. I know the

[1] *"To use his emotions in the same way as a boxer uses his muscles, [the actor] must consider a human being as a Double, like the Kha of the Egyptian mummies, like an eternal ghost radiating affective powers. As a supple, never-ending apparition, a form aped by the true actor, imposing the forms and picture of his own sensibility on it."* (Artaud: "The Theatre and its Double", p. 89). I prefer to think of the energy flowing the other way, however: the Idea of the character stamping its

idea of a universe populated with the ghosts of characters waiting to descend upon us will seem fanciful. Yet I believe that, absurd or not, for the actor it is a legitimate way of looking at character. The character exists outside the text - actors routinely perform improvisations outside the immediate circumstances of the play: Hamlet at Wittenberg drinking with Rosencrantz and Guilderstern, Laertes in Paris. The character also exists outside the actor, who reduces the complexity of his personality to focus on a certain characteristic at a time: 'hesitant', say, or 'jovial'. The character is neither subject (actor) nor object (text). It constitutes a 'third force', a category Karl Popper calls *"the third realm".*[1] This is, moreover, a logical, inevitable outcome of the approach to character implicit in the system.

The point of this approach, its ultimate achievement, is **transformation.** The system creates a ladder of acting procedures whose steps are solid, physical, material. Yet with every step he takes, the actor moves closer to an ideal model he has created for the character. Yat Malmgren's teaching is insistent on this point: there is no question of the actor 'existing' within the Given Circumstances of the character, with the role becoming an extension of the actor's personality. The character is a separate, distinct entity which the actor's body and soul must accommodate. The actor is called upon to **embody** the character, literally. The process described above, together with all the other techniques at his disposal, serve only one purpose: to empty the actor of anything which might stand in the way of the character and thus prepare him to be 'taken over . The actor is a medium, the character the spirit speaking through his mouth.[2]

I do not wish this 'call for transformation' to sound too doctrinaire. It is not my intention to exclude from the legitimate reaches of the

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character' onto the actor, rather than the actor *"imposing his own sensibility on it."*

[1] Karl Popper: *Objective Knowledge,* London & Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979; "Two Faces of Common Sense", pp. 73-4

[2] Grotowski, in his quasi-religious approach to theatre, talks about a *"striking theatrical transubstantiation".* ("Towards A Poor Theatre", p. 21). This is Yat Malmgren's call for transformation pushed to its extreme. It is surprising, nevertheless, how close Grotowski is to the underlying principles of the Laban-Malmgren system, in this and other respects.

profession the myriad actors who perform, and perform very well indeed, mainly on the basis of their own personality. To try and exclude them would be risible, anyway - they form the bulk of the profession, certainly in the West-European theatre traditions. Moreover, most television and film work has little use for transformation; indeed it encourages the refined display of fascinating personalities. There is even a school of thought to which many film stars subscribe according to which training or the formal acquisition of theatre 'technique' is inimical to the very essence of their success: the unfettered access the camera is allowed into their inner being. 'Technique', certainly in the sense given to the word by the system, means 'self-awareness'. And self-awareness is often an impediment to the self-assurance and, to use Kleist's words, to the *"innocence, bliss and spontaneity"*[1] which is the essence of the able, talented personality actor.

Transformation remains an ideal towards which many aspire, especially in the earlier stages of their careers, but which is given to relatively few. There is a lesson in this: one cannot assign this state of affairs only to commercial pressures or the tendency to exploit personalities which is endemic in the 'entertainment industry'. No, I think most theatre people are relatively willing participants: in the end, whatever the ideals of their youth, they discover that transformation acting only suits certain people. The old division, still to be seen in the pages of casting directories, between 'character' (transformation) and 'leading' (personality) actors reflects the preferences of the performers themselves as well as the needs of the business. And I would be the first to acknowledge that some of the most exciting and successful contemporary actors base their success on a combination of personality and technique. Above all, the personality side of the equation is summed up in one winning asset: 'charm'. This *"indefinable, intangible quality"*[2] opens innumerable doors. Stanislavski, ever the realist, knew that actors with charm could permit themselves anything, *"even bad acting"*[3]. Neither is Yat Malmgren immune to the fascination of charm. On the contrary, he extols its advantages and encourages his students to understand its roots in

[1] H. von Kleist: *On the Theatre of Marionettes*, trans. by Gerti Wilford, London, Acorn Press, 1989, pp. 7-8
[2] Stanislavski: "Building A Character", p. 245
[3] ibid.

personality. Charm (or grace) are explained - insofar as they can be explained at all - through a certain emotional disponibility, an openness to the world which is derived, in the terms of the system, from Free Flow.[1] This is the quality which makes actors receptive to stimuli, including the learning of new ideas and techniques. It is therefore a desirable trait in study as well as stage work and is promoted as such by Yat Malmgren.

When it comes to confronting the idea of character with the miracle of charm, however, the attitude promoted by the system is that the actor who relies on charm alone somehow impoverishes his craft. From the point of view of the system such an actor replaces the psychological make-up of the character with his own personality[2] - his charm fulfils the role of character essence or Inner Attitude. Such an actor always performs out of one and the same Inner Attitude (a 'free-flowing' Adream), disregarding the possibilities offered by the other five character types.

Ultimately, the ideal promoted by the system is that of a combination of personality **and** transformation. The great models to whom Yat Malmgren refers his students, Olivier in particular, display precisely this combination of charm with the ability to transform. His most successful former students (Anthony Hopkins, Simon Callow, Pierce Brosnan, Frances de la Tour, Colin Firth and others) all, in their own ways, have idiosyncratic, 'charming' personalities as well as a developed sense of character. The evidence of the actors trained in the Laban-Malmgren system seems to indicate that the choice is made mainly in respect of the medium in which they perform.[3] Roles for television, which are based mostly on tiny adjustments of personality and on displays of 'charm', do not lend themselves to transformation and to bringing into play the psycho-physical methods of the system. Working on more complicated roles, in particular those in classical plays, which benefit from a greater distance between actor and audience, longer rehearsal periods and, above all, which require complex, gradual revelation of the character essence, does benefit from

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[1] Flow is the 'unit of measurement' for Feeling - see above, p. 91
[2] cf. Stanislavski: "Building A Character", p. 22
[3] see below: "The Application of the System in Professional Practice", pp. 195ff.

the system. In the end it is a matter of 'horses for courses', of knowing when and where to use the appropriate approach.[1]

Whatever its practical implications, the idea of transformation certainly implies, *a priori*, a difference between actor and character. In other words, it allows the character an existence outside any individual actor's personality, yet able to reveal itself only by taking over the actor. The idea of transformation implies that there is something for the actor to transform into. This 'something' is like a Platonic 'Idea' of the character, which exists independently and becomes flesh through the actor.

This might seem less far-fetched if we recall that at the very basis of the system lies a theory of types. Applied to theatre, Laban's Inner Attitudes encounter an ancient tradition of characterisation. This tradition spans the stock characters of the New Comedy and the *farsae attelanae*, the three types of the Noh stage[2], Jonson's 'humours', the characters of the *commedia*, and, in more recent times, Delsarte's[3] and even Meyerhold's attempts at classification.[4] In some of these traditions

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[1] Stanislavski himself knew that. He was extremely impressed by the *"economy of effort"* displayed by the Italian actor Ermete Zacconi, who spent most of his working life on tour. In his work, *"there were moments of psychological truth, moments when the role was experienced, there were others of technically masterful imitation, moments when the role was represented."* (Benedetti: "Biography", p. 256). In 1931 Stanislavski actually told one of his pupils that *"it was probably not possible to experience an entire tragic role truthfully, but that there had to be moments when representation took over."*(ibid., p. 305)

[2] *"Par les trois types, j'entends les personages types de la mimique...les trois types sont: le type du vieillard, le type de la femme, le type du guerrier."* (Zeami: *La tradition secrete du No suivie de Une journee de No*, Traduction et commentaires de Rene Sieffert, Paris, Gallimard, 1960, p. 143)

[3] Delsarte establishes the following classification of *"temperaments"* and their relationship to expression:

vital	*"tends to intemperance of expression"*
mental	*"tends to give subtlety and nervousness to expression"*
moral	*"tends to give calm temperance and restraint to expression."*

To these he adds three more 'laws' of characterisation representing social dimensions which affect the basic psychological type: *"occupation, education, social position"*.
(cf. Steele MacKaye, "Laws" in the "Delsarte Collection", Department of Archives and Manuscripts of Louisiana State University; see also Hecht: "Kinetic Techniques", pp. 93-4)

[4] cf. Nina Gourfinkel: *Vsevolod Meyerhold - Le Theatre Theatral*, Paris, 1967, pp. 185-9 where she quotes extracts from Meyerhold's classification

the word 'type' refers to the actor's personality. He it is who refines some of the attributes of his personality to the point where they become recognizable in themselves and for themselves. These have been codified over the centuries in a number of categories or *emplois* into which all actors are said to fall. Realistic writers and directors like Antoine and Ostrovski[1] were using these categories in the second half of the nineteenth century. As late as the 1880s, Stanislavski still thought of himself and his fellow actors in terms of these traditional *"role-types"*: 'romantic lead', 'heavy', 'comedian', etc.[2]

But 'types' were mostly attempts at grouping characters according to shared characteristics. The tradition starts with Plutarch and Theophrastus, who group their 'lives' and 'characters' according to moral dimensions. The 'military hero', the 'lover', the 'courtesan' are given (sometimes extensive) portraits designed to tease out their *mores*, their behaviour and the moral dimensions which inform it. The *mores* separate them from the rest of humanity, yet unite into a category or 'type' those individuals who share them. Plutarch is not interested in historical actions, but in *ethos*, in this context human nature, which he considers to be an entity apart from the actions of his heroes.[3] Type therefore is first and foremost a moral category, a comment on human nature measured against a code of ethics. At its most direct, the moral dimension, the *ethos*, is reflected in the *eidos*, in signs which can be read on the face of the character.[4] On a wider scale, the nature of the character, its 'soul', is revealed through other 'signs': typical modes of behaviour, dress codes and other dimensions which can be recognised socially. It is what the ancients called the *"personae"*.[5]

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into seventeen male and seventeen female character types, published in Russian as *"Employ Aktiora"*.

[1] see, for example, Shchastlivyi and Neshchastlivyi, the 'comedian' and 'tragedian' in Ostrovski's "The Forest".

[2] cf. Benedetti: "Biography", p. 23

[3] cf. Edward Burns: *Character (Acting and Being on the Pre-Modern Stage)*, London, Macmillan, 1990, p. 3. see also: *"Though Theophrastus locates each example in the acts of an imagined individual, that individual is not psychologically or morally accounted for. His acts are not described in order to point to some identifiable self; rather, the fiction of a self is used to organise a set of recognisable instances of a particular mode of undesirable social praxis."* (op. cit., p. 33)

[4] ibid.

[5] ibid., p. 32, Burns who defines them as deriving from *"a schematization*

Type is also a way of using language. Most groups have either an accent, a dialectal vocabulary or a slang by which they identify themselves. In literary and theatre terms this extends to specific patterns, to the 'tempi' of speech which may unite characters of the same temperament across literatures and genres. Old-school voice teachers used to speak to their acting students of the *"breath of life"*[1], by which they meant the frequency with which a character takes in air. This gives the character a tempo of breathing, therefore an inner 'speed' and eventually a distinctive pattern of speech. Actor and spectator enter into a sort of compact, by which the character declares himself through his speech to be 'shy', 'nervous' or 'blustering'. The contract works precisely because, in adopting a certain pattern of speech, the actor declares his character to be in certain ways limited: he includes a small number of characteristics and excludes all those which do not fit his purpose. He communicates through a relatively small number of 'signs'. Their importance lies not in themselves, in their physical reality (speech peculiarities, breathing, accent) but in what they represent. They only work as theatrical 'signs' if they are understood by the audience through a shared language. On the British stage, for example, certain accents are an efficient means of placing characters from the point of view of their social, psychological or even period provenance. Whatever one might think of the wider context of such reductions, they work because they are read for what they are: 'signs', not of material reality, but of other 'signs' - the conventions shared between stage and auditorium.[2]

The compact extends to the physical. In a similar way, the actor restricts the character's vocabulary of movement to what is appropriate to his inner

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of the social codes of 'character'". Strictly speaking the term refers to the mask worn by actors in antiquity and, by extension, to the outer appearance as opposed to the inner essence. (cf. "Psychological Types", p. 465). Jung uses the term in a similar way, as the socially imposed characteristics of an individual. (cf. Storr: "Jung", p. 60)

[1] Kate Fleming, Head of Voice at the National Theatre and the R.A.D.A. in the sixties still used this phrase. (private communication from Ms. Barbara Berkery); the idea is in Artaud ("The Theatre and its Double", p. 89) and was made popular in England through Peter Brook's experiments as part of his "Theatre of Cruelty" season at the McOwen Theatre (LAMDA) in 1964.

[2] cf. Peter Bogatyrev: *Semiotics in Folk Theatre*, p. 33

state. Character, as a term, implies a degree of *"fitness... a correspondence between particular 'signs' and certain categories of human being."*[1] Certain ways of walking, bending, turning are 'in', all others are 'out'. The chaos of the human being is distilled into a few physical characteristics. We are in the presence of a 'cubist' view of human nature.[2] Cezanne says that *"everything in nature is modelled on the sphere, the cone and the cylinder"*.[3] In the same way, Laban sees movement in terms of Motion Factors. Certain motions, he declares, repeated often and early in life in response to the demands of the environment, become ingrained as physical characteristics. In time, psychological traits evolve in response to the physical bias. Personality, therefore, is formed as a result of **restricted movement**[4]. Eventually, it also expresses itself in specific forms of movement. *"Movement*, says Laban, *is man's magic mirror, reflecting and creating the inner life in and by simple trace-forms* (i.e. patterns in space) *and also reflecting and creating the visible trace-forms in and by inner life."*[5] Such movement is biased,

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[1] Burns: "Character", p. 30

[2] In a series of articles dedicated to Laban's early years Valerie Preston-Dunlop points out that Laban lived in Paris between 1900-1906. In 1907 Paris was the venue for the Cezanne memorial exhibition. To coincide with the retrospective the organisers published a collection of the painter's letters. The two elements - paintings and letters - inoffensive while apart, exploded when joined, detonating in the process the cubist bomb. One can safely assume that the echo of the explosion reached Laban, although he had returned by then to Vienna. After all, Laban still saw himself at that time as primarily a painter and graphic artist. Three years later, in Munich, Laban forged close links with the sculptor Hermann Obrist, whose school in the bohemian quarter of Schwabing was next door to Kandinsky's seminal "Phalanx" school. The modernist tendency to reduce everything to essentials influenced Laban's latter thinking about movement. (cf. V. Preston-Dunlop: "The Making of Modern Dance", Part I, p. 12)

[3] *apud* R. H. Wilenski: Modern French Painters, London, 1940, p. 202

[4] *"The variety of human character derives from the multitude of possible attitudes towards the motion factors, and certain tendencies herein can become habitual with the individual. It is of the greatest importance for the actor-dancer to recognize that such habitual inner attitudes are the basic indications of what we call character and temperament."* (Laban: "Mastery of Movement", p. 24)

[5] Laban: *Choreutics*, London, MacDonald and Evans, 1966. p. 100, my emphasis; the idea of movement both affecting and reflecting the forces of personality, popularised by Laban, has gained wide currency and has led to actors and dancers viewing characters in terms of a selection of movements. (cf. Geraldine Stephenson: "Freedom in Acting or the Latest Cliche", article first published in *The Stage* newspaper and reported in LAMGM, no. 24, March 1960, pp. 29-32)

pushed, *"lopsided"*[1]. This is the jump made by Laban and Carpenter in their attempt to match movement with Jungian typology. If people have *"lopsided"* movements, they will have *"lopsided"* personalities[2]. Yat Malmgren's second jump, from this statement about people to an understanding of theatre character on the same terms, is but a short one. Yet in making this leap, Yat Malmgren brings to the surface a creative tension which is at the root of much that his system is about.

From his typescript, it is clear that Carpenter sees the Inner Attitudes as different aspects of one personality, aspects which can be summoned at will under the impact of outside stimuli. He accepts that we have *"habitual"* attitudes, i.e. functions towards which we express an unconscious preference, but the whole argument of his book is for a general education, through movement therapy and if necessary analysis, designed to foster those Inner Attitudes which become under-developed in the natural shaping process of social upbringing.[3] In applying the concept of Inner Attitude to theatre Yat Malmgren assumes that a character is limited to one and only one of the Inner Attitudes. He therefore combines the idea of a personality, however limited, with the fact that, by its very limitations this personality declares itself to belong to a type. Thus character is both individual and type. When the realistic acting school therefore talks of 'rounded' or 'three-dimensional' characters, it does not mean by this the creation of fully fledged real human beings. On the contrary, it means concentrations of characteristics which are complex enough[4], nevertheless, to give the illusion of real life. In this sense characters are a form of *trompe l'oeil.*

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[1] Laban: "Effort", p. 42

[2] *"Indeed we are all lopsided in our movement characteristics and because our movements and emotional activities are so closely correlated we are equally lopsided in the ways in which we use our Mental Factors. The Chapter on Characteristic Types shows how we normally use two Motion Factors and the corresponding two Mental Factors as our primary controlled characteristics but have less control over the other factors."* (Carpenter: "Conflict and Harmony", Chap. 1, p.13) Clearly a chapter on Types had been planned, but never written.

[3] ibid., Chap. 5, p. 24; here Carpenter picks up on Laban's main idea, developed in "Effort", according to which the purpose of movement education is the harmonious integration of the physical functions. (cf. "Effort", pp. 57-8). What Laban considers an unfortunate disadvantage in a real human being becomes an asset in characters.

[4] *"substantive"* is the word used by Burns to differentiate 'real', 'rounded', 'individual' characters from 'stereotypes' or E. M. Forster's

As Edward Burns' illuminating survey shows, the idea of character as 'subject' ('I') is a modern, post eighteenth century, concept. In pre-modern thinking, the only 'subjects' of the theatre are the writer/narrator and the audience/readers who are 'subjected' (in the grammatical sense) to someone else's actions. The *"dramatis personae"* re-act to these actions which provoke them into making choices; but these are not there to 'reveal' the character but to illustrate good or bad elections, morally or politically improving the spectator by example. The point of the play is therefore not to expose the inner nature of people, but to educate the spectator's social responses by showing how others reacted in certain situations. (The reader familiar with Brecht's writing may recognize in this description some of the salient points of his own understanding of the functions of drama and of the role of 'character' within it.) The pre-moderns and Brecht both have in common a view of the 'actors' (literally those who take 'actions') which is interested much more in what is general and socially typical than personal and individualistic.

This emphasis is inherent in the concept of type. An understanding of acting based on type inevitably takes on board the question of the moral and other functions of the character in the play. Yet Yat Malmgren grafts onto this attitude the concern with the psychological essence of the individual which he takes from Stanislavski. This is why he finds Carpenter's connection between Laban and Jung so rewarding: it offers a way of achieving the synthesis between typical and individual which is the main outcome of his teaching. Jung's psychology deals, after all, with the understanding of individuals. Yet it does so by placing each of them in the wider context, be it that of their relationship to a psychological type or to the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Following this approach, *mutatis mutandi*, Yat Malmgren's view of character is at one and the same time as an individual and as a representative of a type.

Historically, characters seen as types always lent themselves to being grouped together and classified. Classifications not only state that types exist, but also attempt to explain the differences between them by referring them to a shared set of criteria. These may be the 'four

"flat characters". ("Character", p. 32)

elements'[1], the Renaissance 'humours' whose relative balance in the body was said to determine four temperaments, *"peculiar qualiti[es]"*[2] or personality types: sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, melancholic. They may be explained in terms of astrology, or by equating character types with animals: 'social types' seen as different breeds of dogs was a well known conceit of Victorian cartoonists. Or, indeed, they may be our own, modern version of such 'scientific' conceits, Jung's four function-types on which the system is based.[3] Either way, a type is a form of imbalance, an **excess** of some *"peculiar qualities"* dominating all others. It therefore implies an activity by which the actor projects these qualities towards the spectator, to the exclusion or eclipse of others.

What does it mean, therefore, for an actor to think of a character as a type? It means asking not only who Olivia is but also **what** she is? If we were to imagine Olivia sitting, as well she might, for her portrait - what would the painter put on his canvas? The lineaments of a young woman in mourning, of a 'coquette', a 'vestal', an 'aristocrat' with dynastic concerns? What is the painter's moral attitude towards the sitter? Indeed, how would Olivia herself wish to be seen? To address these questions is to assume a character. If the eye of the painter is replaced with that of the theatre spectator, then our 'Olivia' will have to decide what sort of an Olivia she is going to present. Yat Malmgren bases himself on the fundamental assumption that characters are representatives of a category: the 'young girl of good family', the 'estate owner' - they are typical, that is their characteristics are common to a type. Yet they also have an individuality - we proceed from the individual to the general. The general is often defined in terms of a *"professional"* or a *"family category"* - Olivia is an *"owner"*, or a *"daughter"* and then she has to decide what sort of owner or daughter[4]. In creating a character the actress **explains** it to the spectator. In trying to explain it, she understands it. The character is neither in what goes out from the actress, nor in what is received by

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[1] earth, air, water and fire
[2] cf. Ben Jonson: Prologue to "Every Man In His Humour", l. 185
[3] This parallel is not to be taken in the sense that one can equate older typological explanations with our own. As Hillman says: *"each age has its appropriate cyphers for expressing this archetypal metaphor, and translations of it violate the context of the symbol."* ("Lectures on Jung's Typology", p. 93)
[4] cf. Tapes: 39-1

the spectator. It is a fiction which occurs in the interaction between them.[1]

It will be said that the 'types' reduce theatre characters to only a few, traditional interpretations. A reaction encountered often is to shy away from a view of personality (whether in real life or in the theatre) which does not acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual. 'People are all different' - we are told - therefore characters must only be seen in their individuality. Identity is all. Yet identity is a relatively modern, and Western, concept. For the ancient Greeks, as for medieval and even some modern Japanese, identity was determined socially, by family and state.[2] Individuals in and by themselves did not have 'meaning' in the wider social context. Plays reflect this ancient wisdom. The classical play format involves an individual breaking the natural balance of the *polis*. By affirming their own, Agamemnon, Elektra, Oedipus break the collective identity. The outcome of their 'passion' is the restoration of the natural balance. Only then, by returning to the collective, becoming part of a recognizable 'type' (father, daughter, wise ruler) does their individuality regain its 'meaning'. The purpose of the character in the play is fulfilled only when the universal is perceived through the personal. Belinski, the Russian critic who greatly influenced Stanislavski's and Chekhov's generation, required the artist to *"see the general in the particular"*.[3] In acknowledging the need for the character to belong to a type, the actor undertakes to achieve a portrayal which is both individual and typical. In so doing he draws from a universal font of experience which is imprinted in the souls of the spectators. Yat Malmgren reflects the dual meaning of the type in his description of character. He sees characters not as unitary, but split into two. In the same way in

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[1] cf. Burns: "Character", p. 2, who talks of a *"transaction"* between actor and viewer. He goes on: *"Conceived of in this way, character is a creative perception, which constructs both observer and observed as its subjects - it identifies them, in other words, as somehow particular, and it does so through an essentially fictive method of selection, organization and exposition."* I find illuminating his distinction between *"character as a process of knowing"* and *"character as individual moral essence"*. (op. cit., p. 6)

[2] cf. ibid., p. 26

[3] *"the poet should express not the particular and the contingent but the general and the necessary, which give the age in which he lives its flavour and meaning."* (quoted in Benedetti: "Biography", p. 36)

which he talks of an Inner and Outer Action, he describes an Inner and Outer Character:

The **Inner Character** is the name given to the innermost psychological characteristics of the character. In particular, it denotes those characteristics derived directly from the character's principal Mental and Motion Factors, those which determine its type: the character is a Feeling, Sensing, Intuiting or Thinking type and its essence is characterised by aspects of either Flow, Weight, Time or Space.
The **Outer Character** is made of those characteristics which derive from the social aspects of the character: its profession, family relationships, upbringing, class, etc.[1] These are said to develop through the stages of growth of the personality into the 'auxiliary' Jungian function. Thus a character is defined not only as a Feeling, etc. type but in terms of two Functions: Feeling/Sensing, Sensing/Thinking, etc. Together these form the character's **Inner Attitude.**

A type is an abstract construct, made by amalgamating and concentrating the characteristics of an infinity of similar individuals, accumulated in the collective experience of the race. They are part of the *"archaic heritage"* which reveals itself to us, occasionally, in dreams.[2] Or in the dream-like state of creativity in which the actor becomes 'someone else'. It is no less 'real' for all that. At least not if we are prepared to allow for the reality of our psyche and its contents.

Insofar as they are *"archetypal"*, types are based on inherited, *"phylogenetic"* material. It is in this sense that characters can be said to be 'independent': their 'meta-real' existence is in the form of archaic categories which are also present in the actor's psyche. By first identifying the category to which a particular character belongs, then

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[1] the division is in Delsarte: see page 140, note 3 above.

[2] Freud states that *"Dreams bring to light material which cannot have originated either from the dreamer's adult life or from his forgotten childhood. We are obliged to regard it as part of the archaic heritage which the child brings with him into the world, before any experience of his own, influenced by the experiences of his ancestors."* (*An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, Standard Edition, vol. XXIII, London, The Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964, pp. 166-7, emphasised in the original)

recognizing those characteristics in himself, by 'tuning into' a type, the actor gives individuality and body to a general truth, which, by definition, exists outside his individual consciousness.

Having said that, clearly the 'Idea of Viola' does not have a material existence until it is embodied by an individual actress. In becoming flesh it acquires some of her characteristics: the colour of its eyes will be that of the actress', as will its feelings. Yet not entirely - the actress selects certain of her own attributes and places at the service of the character only those which she thinks 'appropriate'. Only by having a clear-cut image of 'Viola the Idea' can the actress know which characteristics are 'appropriate'.

This also means that actors contain within themselves many different personalities. This does not imply any pathological 'split' of the personality, of the "Three Faces of Eve" type. Jung argues that our personal, as well as the collective, unconscious contains an infinite number of fragmentary personalities. These he calls *"complexes"*[1], which for him are not to be taken in the popular sense of 'bad feelings about oneself'. A complex is a normal cluster of associations in the unconscious, which possesses its own energy and *"has the tendency to form a little personality of itself. It has a sort of body, a certain amount of its own physiology. It can upset the stomach. It upsets the breathing, it disturbs the heart - in short, it behaves like a partial personality."*[2] Later, he even refers to complexes as possessing *"will-power"* and *"a kind of ego"*[3]. It seems that, as a child, Jung thought of his mother and himself as possessing at least two personalities. By extension, and after observing his patients, he came to the conclusion that everyone had a multiplicity of personalities.[4] One can see therefore how a system based on Jung's idea of psychological types also takes on board the idea of *"complexes"* as the psychological root of the different 'personalities' which the actor has at his disposal. Insofar as they reflect universal realities, such complexes are derived from the collective unconscious. They help the actor situate individual characters in the wider context of

[1] "Tavistock Lectures", p. 80
[2] ibid.
[3] ibid.
[4] cf. Storr: "Jung", p. 28

type and through it, of myth - the part of the story which gives characters their universal meaning. Insofar as they arise from complexes of the **personal** unconscious, characters have roots in the individuality of the actor. The route to transformation predicated by the system helps to make the connection between the two sources.

The actress playing Viola enters into a dialogue with the 'independent' character image. Having visualised it as a model, she can ask any number of questions of it: 'how do you walk in the park on a lazy Sunday afternoon?' - she will ask - 'how do you get angry or hug a baby or dance'? Such dialogues are perhaps the most productive part of the process of gaining access to the unconscious via the conscious. Jung talks of *"archetypal figures"* in the same way in which I talk of the Platonic, *a priori* Idea of characters[1]: the archaic figures of the *"trickster, mother, wise old man, shadow, persona"* and so on[2]. These figures appear in dreams as part of the process of introspection and growth and can be given physical reality through painting, sculpting, literary description or even dance.[3] Jung encouraged his patients to enter into dialogues with such images, or *"figures from the unconscious"*, as if they were real people in the real world. *"Indeed to him, they probably were just as real as the persons with whom he came into contact in daily life,"* say his biographers[4]. Jung's way of thinking about archetypal images is very similar, I believe, to the way the system invites actors to think about characters. As Jungian disciples have observed, *"the language he uses about such figures suggests that, as mediums believe, he thought of them as existing in an "imperishable world" and manifesting themselves from time*

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[1] indeed, in "Psychological Types", written before Jung had formulated in detail his notion of archetype, this concept is equated with Idea and primordial Images. (op. cit., p. 413). In his definition Jung quotes a number of philosophical sources, Plato, Kant, Schopenhauer and Hegel amongst them, in support of the concept of Idea as a *"fundamental, a priori concept"*. ("Psychological Types", p. 439) From a psychological point of view, the Idea *"derives from its precursor - the primordial, symbolic image."* (ibid.) My understanding of character is Hegelian: as a *concept*, that is a **dynamic** process through which the Idea evolves into realization. (cf. Francois Chatelet: *Hegel*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1968, p. 54)

[2] Jung: *Four Archetypes*, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972

[3] it is precisely in search of such realization of his Jungian analysis through dance that Carpenter came across the work of Rudolf Laban.

[4] Storr: "Jung", p. 13

to time through the psyche of the individual."[1] This, I believe, is the psychological argument in favour of the 'independent' nature of character. Whether one believes, like Jung, in the reality of archetypal structures as *a priori*, Platonic Ideas, or, like Melanie Klein, in their presence in the unconscious psyche determined by an assimilation of very early childhood experiences, the fact remains that they have an existence outside our consciousness. The system predicates a form of acting which is dedicated to bringing these archetypal entities to physical realisation, literally to be **em-bodied** using the actor as the 'medium'.

There are, however, several theatre-based objections to this way of looking at character. The first, and closest to the heart of actors, is that any talk of types limits the ability of performers to play **any** characters they wish. The dreaded spectre of type-casting raises its head. There is indeed a danger of ossification in any system based on 'rules'. The Inner Attitudes which define the six 'types' recognised by the system are general "rules", but there are, of course, characters and indeed actors who set themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to provide the exceptions. Shaw's 'bright young things' (Viv in "Mrs. Warren's Profession", for example) are typical of characters who consciously break the mould. Seen from the point of view of the system, however, the art of the actor consists in allowing the general rule to be perceived through the exceptional details. In other words, the actor shows through characterization the norm from which the character departs at the same time as showing how it departs from it. Characters, like all art forms, are patterns[2]. In acting one looks for the universal under the specific in order to portray both.[3]

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[1] *"Jung's... willingness to accept the medium's view of herself as the spokesman through which superior beings from the "beyond" made themselves known. This is an aspect of Jungian psychology which some people find irritating, and which may blind them to Jung's more valuable insights."* (ibid.) But this very attitude makes Jung's work both attractive and useful for actors.

[2] cf. Brook: "The Empty Space", p. 38 and Grotowski: "Towards a Poor Theatre", p. 77

[3] Stanislavski's understanding of the art of the actor was influenced significantly by a number of classical Russian sources, amongst them Pushkin, the actor Shchepkin and Gogol. The latter, in his "To Those Who Would Play The 'Government Inspector' As It Ought To Be Played", asserts the importance of recognising the type through the individual character: *"The intelligent actor, before seizing upon the pretty oddities and*

Having said that, even Stanislavski, the transformation actor *par excellence*, recognises that there are limits to an actor's range. He talks about characters in terms of traditional *"emplois"* or types[1]:

"...some actors do not fully realize the limitations placed on them by nature. They undertake problems beyond their ability to solve. The comedian wants to play tragedy, the old man to be jeune premier, the simple type longs for heroic parts and the soubrette for the dramatic. This can only result in forcing, impotence, stereotyped, mechanical action."[2]

The tools provided by the system can be used to detect such natural limitations. In detection often lies the cure. The very fact that limitations of type are expressed in psychological terms maps a possible route towards personal growth and subsequent enlargement of an actor's range. Indeed, by promoting the ideal of transformation, the system encourages actors to transcend their limitations. This is the major difference between its attitude to type and the traditions of the commedia dell'arte, pantomime, circus clowning and their modern counterparts, from Meyerhold down to the personality-driven Hollywood actor. For Meyerhold, for example, the ideal actor discovers his 'emploi' as early as possible. Good acting then consists, like that of a John Wayne or Tom Cruise, in refining the natural type until it becomes a recognizable 'commodity' in its own right, regardless of character.[3] What Meyerhold calls the *"actor-histrion"* is the equivalent of the *"clown propre"* so beloved of mime-based modern schools such as those of Lecoq and Decroux. Stanislavski's use of *"emploi"*, on the other hand, implies that a range of characters is available to the actor within his broad psychological make-up. For the

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superficial peculiarities of his part, must strive to capture those aspects that are common to all mankind. He ought to consider the purpose of his role, the major and predominant concern of each character, what it is that consumes his life and constitutes the perpetual object of his thoughts, his idee fixe." (*apud* Benedetti: "An Introduction", p. 10)

[1] *"It is extremely important, in our art, for each actor to find his particular type."* ("An Actor Prepares", p. 159)

[2] ibid., p. 295; cf. Brook: "The Empty Space", p. 94: *"..every actor wants to play everything. In fact, he can't: each actor is eventually blocked by his own true limits, which outline his real type."*

[3] cf. "Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 154

personality-based schools, once the actor has discovered his type, his own *"idiosyncratic"*[1] persona, he can bring all characters to himself, or rather to this reduction of himself. Indeed, the ultimate consequence of this attitude is the play devised by actors, through improvisations based on their particular types.[2]

If the system suits certain actors better than others, can one also say that it suits certain characters better than others? Is it equally appropriate, for example, to pre-modern theatre and to contemporary film work. Can one apply it with equal success to Sophocles and Beckett?

There is a current of opinion which considers that the idea of transformation, and its twin notion of character, are essentially modern, that is post-1870, concepts. Proponents of this view point out that the plays of Shakespeare's time, say, were written in 'parts', that is as pieces of dialogue handed out separately to individual members of a company and only assembled into a whole in rehearsal. Moreover, the writers were commissioned to write 'parts' for known members of the company, to suit individual performing strengths. The parts were written for the clowns Kempe or Tarleton, for 'leading men' like Burbage and Alleyn, and so on. These were, says this view, 'types' of actors, who supplemented with 'charm' the idiosyncrasies for which they were known to the public. Their 'parts', therefore, were simply different aspects of their personalities. They could not be any other way, seeing the fact that many were asked to play a multiplicity of parts in the same performance, thus coming in and out of 'role' at frequent intervals. Such actors (and their counterparts after the Restoration who played an astonishing number of roles in one short season, often with little rehearsal) were said to *"produce a multiplicity of 'characters' of his or her self."*[3] Does the modern actor, faced with the same literary material, approach it in this historical spirit? If not, does he run the risk of rendering some classical parts *"unplayable"*? Edward Burns cites in this context a telling case: one and the same actor in "King Lear", he points out, is called upon radically to change identity, to play two distinct parts, as it were:

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[1] ibid.
[2] cf. "Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 170 where he calls for just such devised plays.
[3] Burns: "Character", p. 123

Edgar and Poor Tom. *"Modern actors, searching for Stanislavskian wholeness or 'character', blur and make unnecessarily puzzling such moments in Shakesperean texts - they are, quite rightly, seen as an embarrassment to 'correct' modern acting..."*[1] Burns submits that the actors of the Elizabethan stage were 'rhetoricians' who assumed 'parts' distinct from each other, without looking for psychological connections between them. As a refinement of this thesis, he proposes the idea of the specialist actor whose *persona* is a fixed character essence in itself, a 'type' from which he plays variations throughout his career.[2]

Not so from the point of view of the system. Seen in the light of an 'independent' character, the question for the actor is not how to find a through-line across the two identities, but how to find in Edgar's psychological make-up the source of his transformation into Poor Tom. Seen in terms of the methodology of character I describe earlier, Edgar is a feeling type, a bookish dreamer who, in his loneliness, plays 'roles' in his often overwrought imagination. He thus has the psychological background to transform himself successfully into Poor Tom. We are presented with three layers: a versatile, open actor playing a character (Edgar) who in turn plays another 'character' (Poor Tom). As long as the actor accepts the existence of an 'independent' character, analyses its psychological essence, then proceeds to make use of his own inner resources in the process of transformation, this approach works equally well regardless of the period or style in which the characters were written. Even in extreme cases such as that of Edgar/Poor Tom, far from being an embarrassment, the idea of a character playing a character offers a wealth of possibilities of internal comment, as the main character can adopt an 'attitude' towards his secondary impersonation.[3] Thus, while the

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[1] "Character", p. 124

[2] seductive as this conclusion is, I cannot help feeling that it does not square the circle between Edgar and Poor Tom? Was the role played by a Poor Tom 'specialist', a clown wishing to try his skill at light 'juves', or by a 'melancholy juve' out to experiment with eccentric comedy?

[3] this process comes to the fore in certain plays which require the characters to adopt a series of 'masks'. In Brecht's "The Measures Taken", for example, we have an even more complex chain of characterisation: actor -> main character (European communist International agitator) -> disguised as Chinese -> assuming various identities (coolies, merchant, policeman, etc.) including that of the Young Comrade. (The "Caucasian Chalk Circle" also lends itself to such an approach.) In practice, of course, there is a limit to the amount of 'attitudes from one level to another which can

historical argument in favour of personality-led acting is often supported by literary sources[1], it begs the question of actual contemporary practice. In practice the actor can only either play from his personality or from a character essence. I accept that the distinction may not even have occurred to the Jacobeans, for whom acting was essentially an extension of rhetoric. The historian therefore seems to come down in favour of personality-driven acting[2] for plays written before 1800. But the contemporary actor cannot rely on historical precedent: the expectations in terms of characterization built by acting practice over the last hundred years or so have to be confronted. So, perhaps unlike his pre-modern 'ancestors', the contemporary actor has a choice: to rely on personality and charm, or to create an 'independent' character. Both choices are valid in the eclectic practice of the modern stage, but a choice must be made. I believe this choice goes to the heart of what acting is all about.

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Does acting need character? In my discussion so far I have taken it for granted that it did. Yet some of the most influential figures in contemporary theatre have challenged this assumption, alongside related ideas about the nature of narrative, relationships and the other ingredients of traditional drama. It is therefore legitimate to ask to what extent the system still represents a valid approach to acting and therefore to acting training? The diverse works of writers like Beckett or Heiner Muller, of directors like Robert Wilson and Peter Sellars and of

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be expressed effectively.

[1] see Webster's description of "An Excellent Actor" (in Sir Thomas Overbury's collection of "Characters" - 1615, p. 43): *"All men have beene of his occupation; and indeed, what he doth fainedly that do others essentially: this day one plaies a Monarch, the next private person. Heere one acts a Tyrant, on the morrow an Exile; a Parasite this man to-night, tomorrow Precision, and so of divers others."* Similarly, in his "Induction" to "Antonio and Mellida" Marston spells out that 'characters' have to obey certain rules of construction ('conventional' portrayals easily recognised as social 'types') while actors are expected to play multiple roles, some of them very different from each other. John Marston: *Antonio and Mellida*, London, Edward Arnold, 1965. "Induction", pp. 4-10

[2] Burns inclines towards the idea that pre-modern actors relied on charm as their main source of acting energy - thus that charm was the essence of all the characters they portrayed. (cf. "Character", pp. 122-3)

the entire 'performance art' school, make one wonder whether a character-based system is relevant to much that is happening on today's stages. I shall therefore examine a few samples of the most telling challenges posed to the Idea of character by such contemporary theatre developments.

One of the most interesting European productions of the year 1996 was based on an imaginative reconstruction of Aeschylus' lost play "The Danaides". Presented in French by a Romanian company, "Les Danaides" was conceived by its author/director Silviu Purcarete[1] on the basis of the Greek myth. Purcarete used a tiny fragment from Aeschylus' lost play and built his show from a compilation of other texts by the same writer. The extensive European tour[2] of the show aroused a range of reactions, some more favourable than others, but all commenting on the arresting theatre experiment at its centre. It is this concept which makes the show an interesting case for our discussion.

Purcarete deliberately reverses the normal relationship between chorus and protagonists. He employs two choruses, one female (the daughters of Danaos) and one male (the sons of Egyptos), each numbering fifty participants. In his show the choruses are the protagonists - it is their story which is told. The female chorus in particular became the true 'actors', those who act and who suffer. The commentator's role of the usual Greek format was assumed by a group of seven actors giving highly individualised performances as diverse Olympian gods: Zeus, Poseidon, Hera, etc. The story of the "Danaides" became the story of an amorphous mass being manipulated by forces beyond its control for their own entertainment. The gods thus became both manipulators and *raisonneurs* - *"Suffering leads to learning"* they intoned at frequent intervals.

I say amorphous because the director chose deliberately to have his choruses speak, move and sing in complete unison - no individuality was allowed to break the impression of a multitude acting and breathing

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[1] at the time of writing the Artistic Director of the *"Theatre de l'Union"* in Limoges, France.

[2] I saw it at the "Old Fruitmarket Hall" in Glasgow on 13.10.96. The performance was followed by an hour-long question-and-answer session between Silviu Purcarete and the Scottish audience, chaired by Ian Wallace, the producer of the tour.

together. In the discussion which followed the show Silviu Purcarete explained in some detail that he had sought to create a theatrical equivalent for *"a million people switching their televisions at the same time, of millions of Frenchmen sitting down to lunch at exactly twelve o'clock, of countless English people taking tea at the same hour"* - the collective response from which all individuality had been expunged. The choruses represented the conditioned reflexes which make us pliable and obedient.

A 'relevant' social commentary achieved through the manipulation of an ancient theatrical convention - a thoroughly modern theatre event brought about by eliminating the very notion of character from its core. Yet, as a spectator, I found it impossible to relate to Purcarete's choruses as one unit. My eye was invariably drawn towards individuals, usually because they did something which betrayed unease: an awkward handling of props, lack of motivation behind an entrance or exit, a lack of co-ordination with the rest of the group. This was not poor execution. The choruses had been drilled with military precision. It was, I think, the individuality of one performer after another exerting itself in spite of the collective thrust of the direction. I asked myself for a time whether this was caused by histrionic selfishness. But no, the performers were all young amateurs - no developed egos, no stage *personae* to promote. Moreover, they had clearly bought wholeheartedly into the idea of the production. The *uber-marionette* was trying, but could not help itself. In the absence of individual characterisations, the performers were left exposed - not even as actors, but as individual, ordinary people showing themselves in their naked awkwardness.

I then had to ask whether I was looking for the 'wrong' thing. Perhaps the point of the production was not to involve me emotionally, but to appeal primarily to my intellect through the use of forceful images. Perhaps an 'imagistic' production cannot be judged by the criteria of word-based, character-based drama. Was I looking at modern theatre through ancient lenses, fashioned by my training in Laban and Malmgren? Was the system's concern with conveying meaning through empathy not appropriate to this director's intentions?

Silviu Purcarete came to my rescue. In reply to questions from the audience, he explained that he had had two aims in devising his show:

First he set out to create a *"mosaic"* from Aeschylus' other plays in order to tell a story with *"modern relevance"* - a story which was at one and the same time about: *"the war of the sexes, emigration, the human relation to forces beyond it which nevertheless shape it"* and other related themes. What he called this *"ambiguity"* was the bedrock of his production. Or, to be more precise, this multiplicity of meanings. Ambiguity wishes to leave the statement open, while Purcarete gave the spectator a series of defined but consecutive and sometimes unrelated meanings or *"themes"*. This, he explained, had been his *"ideological"* goal.

His second aim was essentially *"cathartic"* - he referred several times in his talk to the *"emotional"* response he sought from his audiences. He was most insistent that any discussion of his production in detail was impossible, because the *"ambiguity"* had to speak for itself, not to the intellect, but to the emotions.

This effect he did not get. For me the show, otherwise extremely interesting as an essay on theatre, boiled down to a series of illustrations designed to pluck contemporary references out of ancient texts. The images and connections were often striking, but little emotion was aroused. The spectator's involvement was primarily an exercise in deciphering the icons created on stage and tracing the way they related to the original texts. Why was I left so cold? On reflection my answer has to be - because I was not allowed to identify with one or more individuals. Thus the attempt at making theatre without characters failed on its own terms. First because it did not involve the audience in a coherent story, but presented a series of loosely connected images. Above all, because it did not arouse the emotion it declared to seek.[1]

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[1] Silviu Purcarete would acknowledge that at least part of the inspiration for his experiment was derived from the pioneering work on choruses carried out by his well known compatriot Andrei Serban. In the seventies and early eighties Serban, a Brook disciple, directed a series of performances of Greek texts in which the original words had been replaced by a language invented by the actors. The aim was to demonstrate that emotion and narrative could be communicated effectively without a vocabulary shared between stage and auditorium. Serban directed his most

As long as the declared aim of a performance in the theatre is to appeal to the emotions, character is needed. And as long as character is a central preoccupation of the theatre, a system of analysis such as the Laban-Malmgren can be useful.

What then of the writer who sets out to make the playing of individual characters impossible by asking his actors to portray two characters at once, like the interlocking elements of a Russian doll? In his "Hamletmachine", Heiner Muller asks of one and the same actor to play both Hamlet and Ophelia, or rather a Hamlet who declares *"I want to be a woman"* and *"dresses himself in Ophelia's clothes"*[1]. He/she now moves between identities, finally 'revealing the trickery' by taking off make up and costume and speaking in 'his own voice'. Or rather with the voice and words of a character the author identifies as *"The Actor Playing Hamlet"*.[2] What is the actor to do? Does he create two characters, one called 'Ophelia', the other 'Hamlet' and endeavours to portray each fully, while at the same time switching at the speed of light from one to another? Or does he abandon any such thought as futile, reducing his performance to

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interesting productions in New York between 1973-80, first at "La Mamma" ("The Oresteia" - from 1973), then for Joe Papp's "Theatre in the Park", notably his "Agamemnon" - 1977. In his treatment of the chorus Serban was helped by Elizabeth Swados, his long standing movement director. At times, as in their "Agamemnon", they also made use of large numbers of performers (fifty or more) to create startling images and an impression of power and raw, barbaric energy. But Serban and Swados were careful to individualise groups within the mass: entities within the chorus were given specific identities and objectives (old men, warriors, etc.). These split from the heaving mass, assembled and reassembled in complex, highly choreographed patterns. The result was a clearly told story and a much stronger level of emotional involvement for the audience.

[1] Heiner Muller: *Hamletmachine and other texts for the stage*, edited and translated by Carl Weber, New York, Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1984, p. 55. The idea is an update of the principle established by Brecht in "The Measures Taken" - see above, p. 154. But the two writers are animated by different intentions: where Brecht's metaphor of mask and loss of identity is meant to bring home the thesis that in the revolutionary process individuality has to be subsumed to the forward thrust of the mass, Muller is a nihilist - his intent is to destroy. *"My main interest when I write plays is to destroy things"* he declares. (*Theatremachine*, translated and edited by Marc von Henning, London, Faber and Faber, 1995, p. 86). His *"short text"* is there to *"destroy Hamlet"* as a character, as a play, as a myth (for the latter, see "Shakespeare A Departure" in the same volume, pp.100-2)

[2] ibid., p. 56

the enunciation of the lines? If the latter, an awkward question returns to prick us. Who is it that speaks the lines. The 'actor'? If so, which part of him? Does he change intonation, pitch, posture? Does he turn this way for Hamlet and t'other for Ophelia? Does he enhance these thumbnail sketches of the characters with the aid of costumes and props? This is certainly the way Robert Lepage treated the same problem in "Elsinore", his solo performance based on "Hamlet"[1]. Or does he just stand upright, face front and spew the lines? If so, with 'feeling'? With 'understanding'? Whose? I am afraid that, however militant the attempt at denying character a role, the theatre idiom will not allow it. In the final analysis we are left with the same old conundrum: the performance radiates either from the actor's or from the character's personality. There is no way around it. The only thing one can say is that certain modes of performance demand very sketchy characterisation. For such demands, a complex structure like that of the system is not useful. Not because its principles are wrong - it is simply inefficient to work in such detail on characters which may last for a few seconds only.

The performance art group Forced Entertainment has been for more than a decade at the cutting age of experimentation with theatre forms. I asked Tim Etchells, its Artistic Director, where they stood regarding the relationship between character and actor.[2] Forced Entertainment's main concern is with the relationship between the environment and the performer. Theirs is primarily a visual approach, designed to elicit emotional responses from the performers through a lengthy 'creation time' in a chosen space and to convey it to the audience mainly through the medium of theatre games. Character, I thought, would not be particularly relevant to their work. Perhaps I had reached the limits of the system's usefulness. Somewhat to my surprise, Tim Etchells acknowledged that the question 'character or performer' had exercised him and his group for a number of years. After several experiments, they had reached what he called a *"middle"* way; neither a *"construct of the actor"*, nor a full character. In a version of Heiner Muller's idea, they had arrived at a mode in which they shifted frequently between character and performer:

[1] seen on tour at the Tramway Theatre, Glasgow, December 1996
[2] at a discussion which took place as part of the "Second European Theatre Directors' Forum" organised by the Directors' Guild of Great Britain, Maastricht, 12 December 1996.

they *"step up"* into character, as Etchells put it, and *"step down"* from it, sometimes quite fast.

Their 1986 piece "Let The Water Run Its Course" included an episode in which the group *"enacted"* death using tomato ketch-up, trying to outdo each other in a *"game of Bonnie and Clyde"*. In the midst of the game, the performers feel they are *"in character"* - that they are not themselves, in the way in which children playing are 'someone else' for the duration of the game. But there are moments during the 'game of death' when the performers stop and allow the audience to *"see into the real people who are playing this game"*. At first they spaced these 'pauses' out and made them quite definite, but after a while they quickened the pace of the shifts and blurred the distinctions in order to make their performances *"unsettling"*. Nevertheless, the process involved the creation of characters through a conscious method of transformation. Again, in such cases individual performers with a natural inclination for a psychological approach to acting may find helpful some of the tools offered by the system. In this case, as in that of "Hamletmachine" or Lepage's "Elsinore", the relevance of the system is a matter of degree. One cannot expect its entire complexity to be brought into play for every role - actors can take elements from it (such as the quick identification of a character through the 'Inner Attitudes') which are useful in particular circumstances.

A different kind of objection concerns the relationship between character and the play as a whole. Does a 'Stanislavskian' characterization inevitably end up by obscuring the play? Photographs of his own roles show Stanislavski himself as a great 'transformation' actor.[1] But we know that his epigones, especially in the 'socialist-realist' tradition, were often guilty of playing 'types' for their own sakes.[2] Taken in the sense given

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[1] cf. illustrations throughout Jean Benedetti's "Biography"

[2] *"When the curtain falls at the Moscow Art Theatre...one retains only an impression of 'types'. For Chekhov, the characters in "The Cherry Orchard" are the means and not the end. But in the Art Theatre the characters have become the end and the lyrical-mystical aspect of the play remains unrevealed.*
Whereas in Chekhov the director loses sight of the whole by concentrating on its parts, because Chekhov's impressionistically treated images happen to lend themselves to portrayal as clearly defined figures (or types)..."
("Meyerhold on Theatre" p. 29, emphasised in the original)

to it by the social-realists, as a generalization based on emphasising the social 'meaning' of the character, the word 'typical' became a mantra of the Stalinist stage.[1] I should therefore make it clear that when I speak of character revealing its 'meaning', I imply that the actor uncovers its profoundest psychological essence, its bare humanity, not merely a social function. Nevertheless, it is true that an over-concentration on characterisation can obscure the true meaning and tone of a play. As a consequence, the main criticism of the concept of character derived from Stanislavski is that its characters are delineated in ink so thick that, while being clear in themselves, they become ultimately meaningless because they overwhelm the subtle inner structure of the play. This attitude to character, it is said, makes plays heavy, ultimately boring. This was Meyerhold's principal complaint. Its implications for the idea of character are interesting.

For Meyerhold the virtue of characterisation lies in the firework display, in the constant changes through which the actor enthrals with his *"chameleonic"* power. This way of thinking does not allow for the separate existence of a character. Characterisation is an accumulation of *"masks"* which the actor himself provides:

"Khlestakov had a different mask for every situation: Nevsky flaneur, ingenious card-sharper, timorous clerk, imperious general, adroit adventurer. He was all of these plus a Russian Munchhausen who elevated the lie to an art form. Yet on the words, 'Well how are things, Pushkin, old friend?' (Act Three, Scene Six), he lapsed into the melancholic reverie of a solitary poet, and for a fleeting moment one was vouchsafed a glimpse of Gogol himself."[2]

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[1] *"Realism in art is the method which helps to select only the typical from life. If at times we are Naturalistic in our stage work, it only shows that we don't yet know enough to penetrate into the historical and social essence of events and characters"* - such statements were attributed to Stanislavski by collaborators anxious to fit in with the dictates of the time. (N. M. Gorchakov: *Stanislavski Directs*, New York, Minerva Press, 1954, p. 143)

[2] Description of Meyerhold's production of "The Government Inspector" in "Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 214

If then, as Meyerhold insists, the masks are the character, who is Khlestakov? The actor? Or is there an essence underneath the various personae the actor puts forward? If there is not, as Meyerhold would have it, then the actor is not **who** he is, but what he **does** at any given moment. There is no character, only an actor in action. Yet even in this extreme Meyerholdian stance there seems to be, in a moment of intimacy, a *"melancholy self"*. This is identified with the author, always a dangerous thing to do, as Chekhov so colourfully put it when he said *"if you're served coffee, then don't try looking for beer in it."* [1] Meyerhold gives Khlestakov the biography of a gambler[2] - but this still does not answer the question: what kind of a man is he? All we are left with are those aspects of the personality of the actor which fit the text.[3] More accurately, those aspects of the actor's personality which in themselves are interesting enough to become a character once they have been refined and concentrated. They are put into the situations of the play and the skill of the actor consists in revealing these characteristics by means of the script. This leads smoothly to the idea of personality acting. In other words, for theatre thinkers like Meyerhold and his epigones, the only thing which matters is the actor in action.[4] This, as Meyerhold himself declares, is essentially a materialistic attitude to theatre[5],

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[1] letter to Suvorin, quoted by Michael Frayn in the Introduction to his translation of *Uncle Vanya*, London, Methuen, 1987, p. xx.. The quote continues: "*If I present you with a professor's thoughts, then trust me and don't look for Chekhov's thoughts in them.*"

[2] "Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 200

[3] *"The mask which* [the actor] *discovered for himself reflected his own personality plus what he found in Ostrovsky. It was there that he discovered the "merchant's mask"....Sadovskaya was remarkable because she knew how to present herself as a mask."* (ibid., p. 315, emphasised in the original)

[4] *"Arlecchino...is forced to wear a coat with multicoloured patches because of his master's meanness. Arlecchino is a foolish buffoon, a roguish servant who seems always to wear a cheerful grin. But look closer! What is hidden behind the mask? Arlecchino, the all powerful wizard, the enchanter, the magician; Arlecchino, the emissary of the infernal powers. The mask may conceal more than just two aspects of a character. The two aspects of Arlecchino represent two opposite poles. Between them lies an infinite range of shades and variations. How does one reveal this extreme diversity of character to the spectator? With the aid of the mask...This chameleonic power, concealed beneath the expressionless visage of the comedian, invests the theatre with all the enchantment of chiaroscuro. Is it not the mask which helps the spectator fly away to the land of make-believe?"* ("Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 131)

[5] ibid., p. 220

dissociated from Stanislavski's 'idealism . It is supposed to serve the play better, because the play 'is its actions'.

Brecht is also often quoted, on similar grounds, as an argument against an Idea of character. Yet, as Peter Brook shows, the essence of Brechtian characterisation is the speed with which actors change roles within the epic play, not their succession of actions.[1] The episodic structure of epic plays implies that characters appear to the spectator as flickering glimpses, firing his imagination towards filling the gaps.[2] That does not mean that there are no characters - only that the playwright gives the actor minimal means to present them. Character there must be - someone with whom the actor can identify. I feel strongly that the photographic and filmed evidence of Brecht's own productions for the Berliner Ensemble points towards a high degree of realistic identification between actor and character, despite his theoretical pronouncements to the contrary.[3] As I have explained before, I do not think alienation is possible between actor and character, only between character and his actions. Once we allow for the need for character, the inevitable question remains: **who?**

A variant of the same theme is the insistence of many post-war dramatists on *"ambiguity"*. Stephen Rea played Clov in the 1976 Royal Court production of "Endgame", directed by Donald MacWhinnie, with Beckett present throughout rehearsals. At one of these rehearsals, Rea asked Beckett about the meaning of a particular line and was told: *"It is always ambiguous"*. *"For me,* says Rea, *"acting begins at that moment"*[4]. The implication is that the truly Beckettian, and by extension 'modern', actor, has no need to 'interpret', that is to define the meaning of the author, then make it

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[1] "The Empty Space", pp. 68ff.

[2] ibid., p. 72: *"the flash of quick and changing impressions keeps the dart of the imagination at play."*

[3] cf. Brook: *"No actor can play a cipher: however stylized or schematic the writing, the actor must always believe to some degree in the stage life of the odd animal he represents."* (ibid., p.69, emphasised in the original)

[4] Interview in *The Observer,* 15.09.96; It is a characteristic of modern literature, in particular of the novel from Joyce to Robbe-Grillet, that the author is no longer all-knowing in relation to his characters. *"...if you ask Marguerite Duras what her character is feeling, she will often reply, "How do I know?"; if you ask Robbe-Grillet why a character has made a certain action he would answer 'All I know for sure is that he opened the door with his right hand'."* (Brook: "The Empty Space" p. 31)

concrete and thus communicate it[1]. Rea's sole task is to remain 'open', his performance a challenge to the audience to 'guess' a multiplicity of meanings in his actions and demeanour on stage or screen. Readers familiar with Stephen Rea's most interesting roles, as Manus in "Translations" by Brian Friel, for example, or as the doomed hero in one of Neil Jordan's Ulster stories, may recognise this overall approach: a slouching, brooding, enigmatic *persona* hiding much more than he reveals and implying, above all, a thoroughly 'modern', tortured confusion about itself and everything around it. 'Being there' is all there is, says Rea's deportment - an act of physical presence, ambiguous and chaotic as life itself. There is nothing else, nothing 'behind' or 'beyond'. As a consequence, 'character' is irrelevant. There is no 'Inner Attitude', no unitary personality revealing itself gradually by exfoliating the skins of Action. If there at all, the personality is split, fragmented. The actor is 'no one'. In "Attempts on her Life"[2], Martin Crimp, one of the most interesting of the Royal Court writers to emerge from under Beckett's mantle, even creates a character who is literally not there. Anne (Annie, Anny, any?) is a woman, but also a car, a young bohemian, but also a middle aged do-gooder, a revolutionary idealist but also a sentimental *petite bourgeoise*. She never appears, yet the entire play consists of descriptions of her different 'faces', narrated by an undifferentiated company of actors. Ambiguity in the portrait calls for the abrogation of characterisation in acting.

In Beckett's "Play" (to return to the source), there are no bodies, only three mouths. Yet this is one of the most highly characterised of his plays - a play about memories creates personalities through memory. This, indeed, is the fundamental Beckettian thesis on personality: our identities are derived from our histories - we define ourselves in terms of ancestors, tribe, parents, upbringing and experience. Or in terms of

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[1] cf. Jonathan Kalb: Beckett in Performance, Cambridge and London, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 148-9: *"the problem in late Beckett is that the actor is asked to forego all intellectual volition to begin with....the search for a 'privileged subtext', the province of the actor from time immemorial, turns out to be counterproductive because there is no encoded information, no authentic source of truth that the actor is responsible for making available to spectators, except whatever is contained in his or her corporeal state itself."*

[2] op. cit., London, Faber and Faber, 1997

our future: desires, plans, aspirations. Who we are is who we **were** or **will be**. Memory and projection. As soon as either of these develops a fault, our identity, like Hamlet's, falters. All Beckett's characters have problems with their future projects - they cannot leave, are stuck in castles, in sand. Equally, all of them are amnesiac; at best fragments of memory leave them confused, full of doubt.[1]

At the root of this approach to drama is the post war aesthetic of the 'open work'. In a recent television interview about Antonioni's *oeuvre*, Robbe-Grillet gave one of the clearest examples of the difference between 'closed' and 'open' meaning in a work of art[2]: in a film by Hitchcock, the French novelist explained, while the meaning of the pictures is constantly delayed, it is eventually fully revealed. At the end, we understand everything - who the murderer was, why he did it, how opportunity aided his intention. The meaning is **closed**.

In Antonioni's films, on the other hand, the images themselves are crystal clear - we know exactly what we see, nothing is hidden from view. But at the end, the meaning of the accumulation of images remains obscure, given to different interpretations by different spectators - ambiguous. The meaning is **open** - the film is *ecriture*, independent of what its author may or may not have intended.

At first sight the system appears rooted in the tradition of the closed meaning. By explaining so much about the character, by dissecting it psychologically, the actor 'solves' it. We know at the end what the character did and why. In Peter Stein's recent production of "Uncle Vanya"[3], Maddalena Crippa 'solved', in this sense, the character of Yelena. Yelena is often a problem: is she genuinely attracted to Astrov, but too bound by convention to follow her desires? Is she a bored coquette, (*"so drunk with idleness that she cannot walk straight"*[4]) out to

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[1] see, for example, the "Eiffel Tower" and "Lucky's bag" sequences in *Waiting for Godot*, London, Faber and Faber, 1965, pp. 10, 41. Long as well as short term memory is faulty.
[2] "Dear Antonioni", *Arena*, BBC2, 18.01.1997
[3] Teatro di Roma with the Teatro Stabile di Parma, seen at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival, on 31.08.96
[4] Michael Frayn: "Introduction to Uncle Vanya', p. xvi

find entertainment during the long summer months? Is she the confused victim of an oppressive marriage? Crippa's line was crystal clear: Yelena's attraction for Astrov was genuine, her desire imperative, her renunciation harrowing. Her refusal to have an affair, however, was not based on social prejudice or on fear of physical commitment - two of the traditional, unsatisfactory explanations - but on her sense of self-worth. Here was a woman whose Super Objective is *"to keep my self respect"*. But was this 'faithful' to Chekhov's intentions? Who knows? Stanislavski thought he was being truthful to Chekhov when he played Astrov like a martyr, lacerated by the pettiness of provincial life, clinging to Yelena in the climactic scene in Act III *"like a drowning man clutching at a straw"* - yet in a letter to Olga Knipper, who played Yelena, Chekhov is adamant that *"Astrov has no respect for Yelena. In fact, when he leaves the house afterwards he's whistling."*[1] Where is the truth? The acting process through which Maddalena Crippa found her own solution for Yelena is a kind of conversation: a nocturnal tête-à-tête between assumptions about the writer's intentions (based on intimate acquaintance with his writing and the historical context) and the personal views of the actor. Chekhov's text is 'open', in the sense that it offers several clear choices and an infinity of nuances within each option. But the actor 'interprets' - chooses one of these options; the choice informed not by a concern with historical accuracy, but by the actor's own, contemporary, preoccupations.

The 'modern' objection to such interpretations is that by 'solving' the character, the actor also 'closes' it. Our conversation on the way to the bar, the complaint goes, is not about possibilities, but a confirmation that we understood, that we 'got it'. No unnerving ambiguity here - the perceived essence of the modern condition, and therefore the necessary focus of contemporary art - but the satiety which comes with a job well done, with a story well rounded. Can actors respond, within the terms of their own craft, to this constant literary call for ambiguity and openness?

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[1] quoted by Frayn, loc. cit., p. xvii

Typically, in the Royal Court production of "Attempts on her Life"[1] the company never sought to forego the idea of personality. Although the lines of the script are unattributed and the author's only indication is for *"a company of actors whose composition should reflect the composition of the world beyond the theatre"*[2], in performance the actors assumed quite distinct personalities: the story was told now by a 'small man with glasses, clumsy and shy', now by a 'forceful woman', now by 'an elderly gent' - character sketches derived from extensions of the personal 'charm' of the actors. In the same way, we talk about 'the Winnie' of Madeleine Renaud and compare it with that of Billie Whitelaw. Ambiguity or not, in the absence of a distinct character, the actor falls upon personality. At his most extreme - often his best - Beckett actually encourages the emergence of the actor-clown, the supreme personality actor: a character/persona. There is a famous picture of Jack McGowran as Clov in "Endgame"[3] which could have been taken at a latter-day version of the *Grand Guignol*[4]. This is not 'no one' - Jack McGowran has definitely created a 'character' out of an extravagant extension of a personality trait. For him, as for Stephen Rea and all actors, there is no escape from the call of the character - the writer may turn his face against character and succeed brilliantly on the page; the actor is bound to turn and embrace it. This is a condition of acting itself, as inescapable as the need to be present, physically, on the stage. The only real choice available to the actor is between transformation and personality.

In its complex understanding of character as both individual and type, possessing an essence and revealing it through layers of action, the Laban - Malmgren system transcends the ancient quarrel between 'charm' and 'mimesis' as the principal acting tools. The first, neoclassical approach, sees character as the presentation of a *"series of choices, decisions to act and reactions, discrete in themselves, but adding up to a recognisable moral profile."*[5] The other, 'realistic', sees character as the creation of a coherent 'self'. Seen from the point of view of the system, however, the

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[1] first performance at the Theatre Upstairs, West Street, March 7 1997
[2] op. cit., fly leaf
[3] cf. Katharine Worth: *Revolutions in Modern English Drama*, London, G. Bell & Sons, 1972, back jacket; see also Plate 12, p. 147.
[4] cf. ibid. p. 146
[5] Burns: "Character", p. 186

two are not mutually exclusive: in achieving an Inner Attitude, the actor creates a psychologically coherent self. But by the very fact that the Inner Attitude is limited, *"lopsided"*, the actor also acknowledges a moral comment on the person he portrays. Likeness to life and *ethos* are both present.

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The idea of a *"chameleonic"* wearer of masks therefore leaves the fundamental question unanswered. **Who** is the chameleon? Meyerhold will probably say that this does not matter - the chameleon only exists in terms of his adaptation, of his current colour. But the ultimate implication of this attitude is that the personality of the actor shines through all the impersonations[1]. Stanislavski considers that there is a creature - the character - independent of the actor. He was fond of quoting Shchepkin's statement: the actor *"must begin by wiping out his self...and must become the character the author intended him to be."*[2] The satisfaction of the spectator derives not from watching the firework display of another individual's personality, however exciting. The satisfaction is to discover the heart of the chameleon behind the different colours of its skin - it consists in penetrating through to the essence of a human being, and through it, to intuit the meaning of a human existence. Thus the attitude of the system to interpretation goes far beyond the mere technicalities of 'building a character' - it goes to the heart of what theatre is about. When Meyerhold declares: *"For Moliere, Don Juan is no more than a wearer of masks"*[3] he does not tell us who the real Don Juan is. Is this a useless question? A frivolous one? I do not think so. Acting from personality is a selfish act. Transformation means a

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[1] *"The actor can command a thousand different intonations, yet he never employs them to impersonate definite characters, preferring to use them merely to embellish his range of gestures and movements."* ("Meyerhold on Theatre", pp. 131-2)

[2] letter to Alexandra Schubert, 27.3.1848 *apud* Cole & Chinoy, eds.: *Actors on Acting*, New York, Crown, 1970, p. 483; cf. also Benedetti: "Biography", p. 16

[3] *"At one moment we see on his face a mask which embodies all the dissoluteness, unbelief, cynicism and pretensions of a gallant of the court of Le Roi-Soleil; then we see the mask of the author-accuser; then the nightmarish mask which stifled the author himself, the agonizing mask he was forced to wear at court performances and in front of his perfidious wife."* ("Meyerhold on Theatre", p. 133)

rapprochement between actor and character on the one hand; between the embodied character and spectator on the other. Being Don Juan means knowing Don Juan[1]. This common denominator is satisfying to actor[2] and spectator alike. It implies penetrating, through empathy, into another human being. It is, as Grotowski puts it, an answer to our *'solitude"*.

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[1] I think herein lies a major difference between Laban's legacy and the implications of Yat Malmgren's application to theatre character. Laban is interested mainly in **understanding** the meaning of movement patterns. He wishes to decipher them and extract their psychological meaning. The Idea of character implicit in Yat Malmgren's teaching, however, leads to a concern with **knowing**, in the sense of grasping a metaphysical entity in its totality. The first is essentially the attitude of an interested observer. The latter is the attitude of the doer, of the actor. Isaiah Berlin quotes Vico's distinction between 'knowing' and 'understanding'. The latter: *"is more like the knowledge we claim of a friend, of his character, of his ways of thought or action, the intuitive sense of the nuances of personality or feeling or ideas..."* ("The Divorce Between The Sciences And The Humanities", in *Against the Current, Essays in the History of Ideas*, Oxford, OUP, 1981, pp. 80-110, p. 105)

[2] *"Thus a characterization is a mask which hides the actor-individual. Protected by it he can lay bare his soul down to the last intimate detail."* (Stanislavski: "Building A Character", p. 30)

C H A P T E R IV[1]

T H E S Y S T E M I N A C T I O N

[1] Note: The reader is refered to the "Dictionary of Terms used in the Laban-Malmgren System" at the end of this volume (pp. 227ff.) for an explanation of the terms used in this chapter.

THE APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM IN ACTOR TRAINING

It is almost impossible at times to separate the Laban-Malmgren system from its roots in training. Laban's own work evolved through teaching, from early studios in Munich and Switzerland to the position of director of ballet at the Berlin Opera. His socially committed "movement choirs" were not primarily artistic statements, but a learning experience for their members. Echoing Brecht's call for *"art for the producer and not art for the consumer"*[1], they were designed to affect first and foremost the participants and were *"meant to create works of social harmony"*.[2]

This attitude affects to some extent the movement and acting exercises devised by Yat Malmgren for his students. His first class is usually a revelation: he arrives - a dapper, grey-haired figure exuding charm - in the small, wood-panelled room in which he has taught for over thirty years and asks the new arrivals to sit in a circle against the walls, so as to see each other. He then proceeds to introduce, without much explanation, the four Jungian functions and the connections made by Laban between them and the Motion Factors of Weight, Space, Time and Flow. This is it - thereafter he will never return to Jung as such, never expound on the psychological roots of the system. The functions are referred to strictly as Mental Factors and are constantly related to acting sensations. Indeed, the step immediately following this introduction is to ask the students - who, one must remember, know very little of one another at this stage - to look around the room and identify those amongst them who project clearly the sensations of Sensing and Weight, Feeling and Flow, Thinking and Space.[3] At first the students giggle, embarrassed at having to measure

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[1] Introductory Note to "The Measures Taken", p. 6

[2] Kurt Joos, interview quoted by Curl: "A Critical Study", Appendix 2, p. X; In England Laban continued his involvement with education. Soon after his arrival at Dartington he came into contact with the "New Education Fellowship", an organisation promoting progressive education and supported by Dalcroze and Jung. (cf. Foster: "Influences", p. 29) His activity after the war was almost exclusively concerned with teaching, first in Manchester, then at Weybridge. His early influence in this country was felt mainly in reforms to the physical education programmes in schools, based on the ideas summed up in his book on "Modern Educational Dance".

[3] Intuition and Time are not usually dealt with at this stage, both

each other in such an 'intimate' way. Soon, however, they fall under the strange spell of the system: in one short jump they find themselves in possession, for the first time in their lives in most cases, of instruments with which to 'dissect' themselves and each other. What a temptation for aspiring actors! The vast majority fall for it at first sight. At the same time, from the tutor's point of view, plunging straight into the heart of the system declares that he is dealing with something concrete, physical and, above all, personal. It avoids getting bogged down in theoretical arguments - the basic concepts are valued for their practical use alone.

The months which follow are taken up with an introduction to the vocabulary and the grammar of the system: the definitions are explained and the relationship between the concepts explored. I think here Yat Malmgren uses intentionally an old fashioned approach. For almost two terms the students are talked at, copy the definitions of the system one by one and thus assemble their individual copies of the "Book". The dictation is accompanied by extended glosses on the concepts and excursions on related subjects. The water drips endlessly on the stone. The 'efficient' alternative would be to hand out copies of the "Book", explain the concepts succinctly and move on to acting exercises as soon as possible. However, subjecting the students to a gentle yet persistent bombardment of new terms and ideas leads to them being assimilated almost by osmosis. In Yat Malmgren's eyes there is a world of difference between hearing *"Mobile is an idea with which you construct or destroy"* two dozen times in different contexts, and being given this thought once and expected to assimilate it through an intellectual (Yat Malmgren would say 'mechanical') effort to learn it 'in the library'. It is the difference, as he sees it, between mere acquisition of facts and a feeling-driven incorporation of the system.[1] The question remains, however, whether the enforced passivity of the students for almost two terms is productive. One sometimes feels that, paradoxically, Yat Malmgren's discourse at this stage of the teaching suits the more cerebral students best. They often relate better to his literary references and have the inquisitive frame of

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because they are more elusive and because, being the 'catalyst' for the other three, are not given to direct perception.
[1] cf. Tapes: 32-2

mind to engage with the theory and ask searching questions. Most acting students, however, come to their studies in a very different mind frame: they expect, quite rightly, new ideas to appeal to their emotions and their senses. One therefore feels that the part of this phase of the teaching which leaves concrete traces are those moments in which the students experience the basic concepts of the system on their own 'flesh': through physical exercises with the Working Actions, short songs, waving of arms and tapping of feet in certain tempi, etc. Indeed, one of the features of Yat Malmgren's teaching is that he discourages at this stage questions relating to theory. In so doing he compels the students to relate to the concepts physically, as sensations.

Successful as this is in 'selling' the system to actors, shying away from theory does leave lingering questions. These are answered at the more advanced stages of the course, but often only in part. I therefore recognised some of my own experiences in the restless question of one of the students featured on the tapes. Half way through the second term he asked forlornly how long it took to *"understand"* the system. Yat Malmgren's answer, an answer he must have given every year for several decades, is that the system ought not to be *"understood"* in a cerebral way. His aim, he explained, was to get the students to develop a set of questions which they can ask of themselves, the text and the character. Answers to these questions should then arise not intellectually, but sensuously. This approach is for a lifetime - it is a way of challenging constantly the actor's faculties, of eliciting organic reactions to the text and to the ('independent') idea of character[1]. While I subscribe unequivocally to the aptness of this approach to teaching actors, I am also aware that for the reader with a more cerebral interest in the ideas of the system, it leaves some questions unanswered. As I have mentioned earlier, the impetus behind much of my theoretical 'digging' in previous chapters came from a need to settle some of these questions.

One must also remember that in Yat Malmgren's practice the sessions on "Movement Psychology" go hand in hand with the physical movement classes which he taught until recently and which are now taken, on similar lines, by other tutors. The students are therefore invited throughout to link the

[1] Tapes: 42-4

theory with their daily physical experiences. His early movement sessions are called 'floor classes' because, while based on traditional ballet bar work, they are done initially lying down. Yat Malmgren asks his students to connect different *"energy productions"* with the same physical exercise of the legs or arms. These *"energy productions"* reflect the sensing, feeling and thinking functions and give the students concrete sensations of what it means to express different psychological contents by means of the same gesture. By asking his students to focus on their inner life in the midst of strenuous physical exercises, Yat Malmgren contributes to the overall goal of the Drama Centre training - that of 'sensitizing' the students to their own inner processes.[1] The 'floor classes' are basically stretching exercises, but their ultimate purpose is not merely to achieve physical flexibility, but, on the basis of the principle of the *"psychosomatic effect of movement"*, to rid the actor of tensions. In both theory and physical classes the stress is on what Gordon Curl calls *"subjective experiencing"*[2], that is on building an acute awareness, coupled with a conscious analysis of the sensations brought about by movement. The students are constantly asked to engage their Attending (focused thought) in order to achieve active Adapting (openness of Feeling). This type of conscious engagement with one's own faculties marks the difference, as Yat Malmgren is fond of saying, between the 'corps de ballet' and the 'soloist'. The latter brings feeling and thought to the mechanical work, while the 'corps de ballet' actor, though often superior technically, remains 'Near' - all timing and muscles[3].

Thus the students are taught first to recognise their own sensations. They soon learn to observe them in others and then name both using the vocabulary of the system. Having named them, they can place these sensations in the context of general psychological functions and eventually of character types. The whole process is essentially introspective: the outside (characters, partners) is understood because it is **like** an inner experience of which they have become conscious. I have had cause before to mention the fact that Yat Malmgren was strongly affected by his experiences in Brazil.[4] He often refers to himself, only

[1] cf. Tapes: 32-2
[2] "A Critical Study", p. 136
[3] Tapes: 10-3
[4] see "Introduction - The Origins of The System", p. 20ff.

half in jest, as a *"medium"*; certainly as a modest conduit for the *"superior wisdom"* of the system. In order to make sense of the abstractions inherited from Laban and Carpenter, he had to experiment on his own skin. His understanding of others relies therefore on a sustained, *sui generis* form of self-observation. He intuits other people's inner life because he has learnt to make conscious his own experiences. This makes his teaching intensely personal both for himself and his students - a quality which inspires long-lasting, deep affection in those with whom he is in tune.

The starting point and main tool of his teaching is his awareness of the signals given by the body language of others. These he interprets as the 'symptoms' of inner life and 'labels' by identifying them with his own experiences. The linchpin is the fact that both sets of experiences are expressed in the terms of the system. Laban and Carpenter both referred to themselves and their followers as *"movement analysts"* - people who had acquired the ability to infer psychological states from physical clues. Yat Malmgren has taught himself the same skills - he can do this successfully because, over years of applying the 'laws' of the system, he has learnt to associate intuitively certain basic physical manifestations with their inner sources. He knows in his bones that Near creates width, like sitting astride a motorbike; that Awake elongates the kinesphere and makes it flexible, like a tall reed; that Mobile floats, buffeted like a leaf in the wind. Such principles, as well as observations of Shadow Moves, postures and patterns of speech, allow him to 'read' the physical life of his students, sometimes with astonishing results. To newcomers who have their inner thoughts and feelings 'guessed' in this way this skill sometimes seems a piece of wizardry. It is, of course, the intuitive ability of an exceptional teacher. When the subject does not recognize the diagnosis in his own experience, however, this approach can be less welcome. It is, nonetheless, a supremely appropriate mode of teaching actors because it replicates the way in which audiences perceive characters - inferring their inner state from outer signs. More than any other part of his teaching, it is this 'technique' which Yat Malmgren hands on, by example, to his students and which distinguishes his disciples from other actors.

In the process, Yat Malmgren also passes on, througn the numerous examples with which he illustrates his teaching, a certain idea of the theatre, a way of interpreting classical texts and a vision of the personality and role of the actor. In particular, he promotes the ideal of transformation and its corollary, a model of the actor as a creature of sensuality and feeling. Yat Malmgren's ideal actor is 'Adream' (Sensing/Feeling). But, he warns, there seems to be an enemy hidden in the very talent of such actors. Adream has no Intuition or Thinking - two functions with which actors are reluctant to engage naturally, especially when studying, whether at school or working on a role. Acting then tends to become an exclusively emotional experience - unclear, mystifying, vague. This needs to be counteracted. Therefore, the importance of experiencing all the Variations of the Inner Attitudes organically cannot be stressed strongly enough. They widen the inner spectrum of the actor and develop those parts of his personality which nature usually leaves behind: intuition and thought.

As part of this process Yat Malmgren also constantly reinforces the other strands of teaching in the school - above all, the Stanislavskian methodology. He ties in, for example, Mobile to emotional memory, sense memory to Near, etc. His examples of classical texts and historical excursions echo the ground covered by Christopher Fettes, the Principal and co-founder of the Drama Centre, in his own classes. They both promote a deep attachment to the great European tradition, to plays of ideas, to 'serious' theatre, to an actor engaged in and respected by society. Voice is probably the subject least congenial to Yat Malmgren's background and approach. But even here he emphasizes on the one hand the psychological roots of voice production and on the other the way in which technical voice and movement exercises can be used to experience diverse emotional and sensuous contents, thus contributing to the student's self-development.[1]

When this extended introduction has been completed the students begin the second period of the course. This lasts some four terms, during which the students explore Attitude Variations througn acting exercises called Scenarios.

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[1] cf. Tapes: 45-1/2

Scenarios are the main instrument of teaching developed by Yat Malmgren during his years at the Drama Centre. They are short monologues written and performed by the students in front of tutor and colleagues. At first these monologues explore in turn each of the Variations of the 'Inner Attitudes which contain sensing: Near, Adream and Stable. Thus each student is required to produce at least twelve successful Scenarios. Through them they explore an incident which brings to the fore the main characteristics of a certain Variation[1]. The point of the exercise is to recall or imagine in detail a moment in which the performer has experienced the tempo of a certain Variation and replicate it in front of an audience. If the student is successful, he acquires a point of reference for that particular Variation which can serve him for a life time. These exercises are in no way meant to be artistic 'products' in their own right, directed towards an audience. Their one and only value lies in the insight they afford the performer.

The Scenarios are built by isolating a small occurrence, usually autobiographical, whose original circumstances demanded that a certain set of characteristics be brought into play. For the Strong/Bound Variation of Adream the actor looks for 'forceful', 'aggressive', 'dour'; for its opposite Variation, Flexible/Free, the desired characteristics are 'altruistic', 'complicated', 'loving', and so on. Yat Malmgren's earlier commentary on each Variation, together with Carpenter's "Interpretations" (taken with the customary caution) are pointers to the kind of experiences the actor needs to look for. As I said, beginner actors turn for suitable material mostly to their biographies. Thus most Scenarios reflect their everyday experiences: asking the bank manager for a loan, rows with lovers and the like. However, the more experienced the actor, the freer his ability to use creative fantasy, the richer the material for Scenarios can be. Yat Malmgren actually stresses that fantasies are to be preferred: works of imagination which are given flesh are better than the early, primitive attempts which draw on personal experience[2]. But usually the first question the student asks is *"when in my life did I experience a Near, Adream or Stable Objective?"*, because the pursuit of a suitable

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[1] for an explanation of Variations see below, Vol. II, "Attitudes - Introduction", pp. 386ff.
[2] Tapes: 45-4

Objective arouses the sensation of the Variation, its tempo. The principle behind the Scenario is, of course, Stanislavskian: all our acting material lies within ourselves.

The second stage in building a simple Scenario is to imagine and eventually write down a dialogue with the people who featured in the original experience. This is done instinctively, like all creative work: the imagination fires the pen. Only once the dialogue is written do the students shape the Scenario so as to make it fit the rules of the system. The students are asked to write first both their own and the contact's lines. They then take out the lines of the partner and try to reduce their own replies to what is strictly necessary - the words are not meant to explain the situation, but to **react** to the (unheard) remarks of the imaginary partner/s.[1] (The partners' text, which the audience is invited to imagine, is marked by a dotted line.) In addition, spectators are warned not to make the mistake of identifying the 'message' of the little incidents with the opinions of the actor/writer. On the contrary, the point of the exercise is to create a thumbnail sketch of a **character** - independent from the performer in expression, opinions, background... If anything, in enacting this narrow reduction of their personality, students often take an ironic stance towards themselves. In any case, as I said before, literary qualities are not the point; neither are the content or the 'story' - adherence to the rules of the system is.

Here is a typical simple Scenario. It explores the Stable Variation of Strong/Flexible ('Practical')[2] The reader should try to imagine the lines

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[1] Yat Malmgren acknowledges the debt he owes to the great American monologist Ruth Draper, whose show "Ruth Draper and her Company of Characters", made entirely of solo character sketches, considerably affected the construction of his scenarios. In particular, Ruth Draper had established the fundamental principle that all the audible lines in a sketch were reactions, **replies** to the words of the unseen partner/s, whose own lines the audience is left to guess. The actress therefore created not only her own character, but evoked other people, 'present' on stage, though invisible. (cf. N. Warren, ed.: The Letters of Ruth Draper 1920-56 (A Self-Portrait of a Great Actress), London, Hamish Hamilton, 1979; see also M. D. Zabel: The Art of Ruth Draper, New York, Doubleday & Co. and Oxford University Press, 1960; and the set of five recordings, bearing the same name and issued by Spoken Arts - 779, 798, 799, 800, 805)

[2] see below vol. II, "Attitudes - Stable Variations", pp. 487ff.; I am grateful to the actress Kate Sullivan for allowing me to use this early exercise, dating from her period of training at the Drama Centre (1985-8).

said with the cool, matter of fact, controlled demeanour of a Sensing/Thinking (Stable) character. Although some lines appear irritated, even bolshy, there is no emotion inside - only in the Action:

"That's all very well, but I am perfectly happy as I am, thank you...

I'm really not interested...

Well, maybe you could get me to join your Revolutionary Communist Party if it didn't involve so much bloodthirsty Bolshevik fanaticism.

You all speak with so much violence, I'm surprised you have any members at all!

No, I wouldn't say I was complacent.

I understand perfectly well what your ideal is, but talk about hanging people from lamp posts and shooting them is negative and completely destructive; to say the least.

I'm well aware of the unemployment situation and the terrible poverty around me - but what do you propose to do about it?

Oh?

And what will that achieve?

Equality!

You really are deluding yourselves...

Well, I'm afraid I don't agree. I've worked all my life to get what I have now - that was my choice and everyone, no matter where they come from, has that choice too.

I certainly am not bourgeois. My background is working class. My father was a farmer.

Oh now I refuse to be made to feel responsible for the unemployment in Liverpool or Birmingham when I have nothing to do with it...

Nor will I ever be able to change it, and neither for that matter will your Communist Revolutionary Party - or whatever you call it.

I agree it would be wonderful if everyone could have the same as everyone else but a Bloody Revolution is fairytale stuff. Pure idealism!

You people really ought to start looking to the positive, non-violent solutions... perhaps then you might increase your membership."

Scenarios such as these are built on a tight Stanislavskian pattern. The actor decides first of all what the Super Objective of the character is, then its immediate Objective throughout the little scene. The dialogue is then divided into Units, each defined by a psychological activity. Finally, the psychological Activities are translated into physical Activities corresponding to the Working Actions appropriate to the Variation.[1]

Here is how the beginning of the Scenario above can be analysed[2]:

Inner Attitude	Time-stressed enclosing Stable (**Intending/Attending**)
Variation	**Strong/Flexible ('Practical')**
Interpretation	Developing intention to cast or submit to a 'spell-binding power'
Inner Action Attitudes	Remote and Awake
Outer Action Attitudes	Near and Adream
Subconscious Motifs	**Wringing and Slashing**
Main Characteristics	Poised, thoughtful, assertive, bright, weighty, controlled, doubting, quizzical.
Character Super Objective	Serenely to make the world fit with my views.

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[1] see Diagram of "The Way of Transformation" (p. 92a)
[2] for a detailed explanation of the terms used in the analysis see "Dictionary of Terms" below, pp. 227ff. and Vol. II, "Attitudes", pp. 366ff.

Objective in the scene	To make the R.C.P. bore see the error of his ways.
Units are defined by	a. Subconscious Motif b. Psychological Activity c. Physical Activity

The first three Units might look like this:

Sub. Mot. - Wringing Psych. Act. -'to deflect' Physic. Act. - 'swerving'	*"That's all very well, but I am perfectly happy as I am, thank you...I'm really not interested...*
Sub. Mot. - Slashing Psych. Act. - 'to rebuff' Physic. Act. - 'lashing'	*Well, maybe you could get me to join your Revolutionary Communist Party if it didn't involve so much bloodthirsty Bolshevik fanaticism.*
Sub. Mot. - Slashing Psych. Act. - 'to chide' Physic. Act. - 'smacking'	*You all speak with so much violence, 'I'm surprised you have any members at all!*

...and so on until the 'punch line': *"You people really ought to start looking to the positive, non-violent solutions...perhaps then you might increase your membership"* - with its implication that she might have a cause of her own, as befits a Stable character, for which she will now begin 'recruiting'.

The process can undoubtedly be laborious at first. Aware of the difficulties encountered by beginners, Yat Malmgren provides two comprehensive lists at the end of the "Book"[1] which offer the students a selection of sample psychological and physical activities. Although the

[1] see Vol. II, Appendix A

latter describe actions of a purely physical nature and are listed under the names of the Working Actions, one should not be misled: they are meant to be used for their **psychological** value. In other words they are there mainly to provide the actors with Subconscious Motifs suitable for the Variation they wish to explore. In the example, to *"lash"* or to *"smack"* are to be taken as psychological activities, not literal physical contacts with the partner. Moreover, if they are to be effective, the transitive verbs must arouse a **personal** sensation. To bring home what he means by a personal sensation, Yat Malmgren often asks: *"is the sensation of a push Quick and a pull Sustained, for you, or the other way round?"*[1] Once a real sensation has been triggered, the entire character can be created starting from one of these tempi: a 'lashing' character or a 'swerving' one. These 'trigger-tempi' are often described by animal comparisons ("whale-like", "crab-like") because animals have a clear-cut dominant tempo which one can use to arouse characteristics.[2] The actor can amplify the basic tempo by using all the other physical means suggested by the Stanislavskian tradition: garments, accents, songs, and so on.

Analysing a text in this way, especially when you have produced it yourself 'from the hip', is not easy and many students resent at first this part of the work. *"How can I work on a text with all these details,"* - runs a familiar complaint - *"how can I be expected to allocate a transitive verb and a Working Action to every phrase and even to every word? I* - says the student - *usually go through the lines, either in my mind or aloud, and say them 'intuitively' in one way or another. Should I go over them 'intellectually'?"* The dreaded i-word raises its head. Yat Malmgren's answer is that the detailed analysis he requires is there not as a cerebral exercise, but to lay the *"bricks"*, the foundation on which the training is built. By the time the students have gone through this procedure a few times, allocating physical and psychological activities to each line or even part of a line becomes automatic. The students build a whole repertory of such activities in their own mind and, more importantly, in their bones. They come to recognise in themselves the

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[1] Tapes: 50-2/3

[2] Tapes: 48-4/5; Yat Malmgren traces the technique of extracting psychological characteristics from animals to Mary Wigman; it was passed to him by his teacher Gertrude Engelhardt. (Interview - 12.7.93 - p. 6, see Introduction - "The Origins of The System , p. 20ff.)

sensations of 'lashing' or 'swerving' and can pinpoint them on any text. Yat Malmgren is fond of saying that he teaches *"bit by bit"*, that is:
a. he gives his students tools with which to denominate and describe their intuitive reactions.
b. in so doing he *"tunes"* their bodies and souls to the existence of a wide variety of means of expression, which they can then access with precision.[1]

The last ingredient in building a Scenario are the obstacles. These can be either external (the counter-Actions played upon the character by its imaginary partners) or internal - inner resistances which arise from the past history of the character. The 'partners' are the people with whom the actor came in contact during the situation re-enacted in the Scenario. His relationships with them are themselves defined in terms of Attitudes: the Stable character in the example has a Remote relationship to begin with, while she tries to rebuff the proposition of the 'recruiter'. This soon changes to Adream, as she attempts to seduce her partner to her own way of thinking. In Scenarios involving several imaginary partners the relationships vary from contact to contact and change according to the situation, but always use only the Action Attitudes at the disposal of the Character.

As the Scenario is essentially a monologue, it is essential that contacts[2] should be placed precisely in the stage space. Thus, if our Stable Character thinks the contact is on her left, she will turn mainly down stage left. She can at times talk to the right '(over the shoulder'), but her Action is principally to the left, towards her principal contact. All her references during the Scenario are therefore either going towards or away from the main relationship. To take another example, in the simple line: *"Pete, I was wondering if I could borrow your car?"* there are several points of contact: 'Pete' himself, the 'inner space' where the character is *"wondering"*, the car. The actor needs to 'see', both physically and with his inner eye, where these three contacts are and whether the Objective ('to make Pete lend me his car') is played towards

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[1] Tapes: 49-1/2
[2] for a discussion of "contacts', see above: "Introduction - Energy Aroused", pp. 46ff.

the main contact or away from it. The relationship is determined, of course, by the personality of the Character. The 'Character' who wants to borrow Pete's car is Near - defined by his materialistic Super Objective. In pursuit of his desire, he tries to be 'clever' - uses an Awake Outer Action, covering the Adream sensuous longing for the car and the glamour, freedom and sex appeal that go with it. However, a 'shy' character will play this Objective through a Flexible/Sustained Outer Action, *away from* Pete and towards an inner obstacle - embarrassment at having to ask for the car yet again, memories of all those unpaid petrol bills, of the dent left in the left wing last time... A 'bold' character, on the other hand, plays his Outer Action as a Direct/Quick Variation - the energy is *towards* Pete, driven by all those lovely thoughts of cruising down Covent Garden in Pete's shiny TR2.

To recapitulate, a simple Scenario involves the re-enactment of a situation from the actor's experience or fantasy, built to follow the pattern:

Super-Objective -> Objective -> Inner Action -> Outer Action
psychol. activities
physical activities
working actions

Having constructed the Scenario, the actor learns it by heart and eventually performs it, trying to **relive** the incident. Yat Malmgren insists on the need for the actor to **be** the Inner Attitude, not 'act' it. Before beginning to work on Scenarios students often ask: *"how can I **be**, since I am not supposed to 'act' the Inner Attitude? How can I be Near, Adream, etc.? I can see how I can carry out Near Actions, but how can I be it?"* In terms of the system the distinction is crucial: as we have seen the Inner Attitude is a state, a tempo out of which Actions emerge. Thus what the actor **does** are the Inner and Outer Actions, but what the audience sees **through** the Actions is the inner state the Scenario seeks to recapture. Scenarios are designed to concentrate the living experience into an intense moment which the actor experiences as a sensation. He then knows what it is like to **be** Near and act Adream, Mobile and so on. From

the audience's point of view, says Yat Malmgren, the Inner Attitude is perceived as a 'vibration' of Weight, Space or Flow, whose specific wave-length defines the character. The 'vibration' is an **active tempo**, and thus capable of making an impression on the *"silver photographic coating"* of the audience's senses.[1]

Exploring their personal inner life through Scenarios expands the range of Attitudes which the students experience consciously. The educational principle involved is one of **compensation**[2]. The students quickly realise which Attitudes they find easier and which more difficult to achieve. As a rule, areas of difficulty point to resistances to certain aspects of inner life. Concentrating on these areas enables the students to 'work on themselves' and thus expand their acting range. From the point of view of the tutor, a propensity towards one area, and a correspondent lack in another, is immediately visible in a student's movement. Yat Malmgren observes that one can tell a lot about an actor's psychological inclination by the way he reacts to images of Working Actions. If a student always uses the 'extravert' Working Actions when approaching a movement, it is likely that they themselves are inclined towards extravert behaviour and vice-versa.[3] Once recognised, this natural tempo has to be 'released', made expressive. The physical exercises - breathing, movement, voice and speech, etc. - are designed to uncoil the twisted spring inside the students. Once the student has grown to realise, like and expand his own tempo, he is ready to attempt others and extend his opportunities for transformation.[4] It must be said, however, that in pointing out to his students their strengths and weaknesses in terms of Attitudes and Working Actions, Yat Malmgren departs sometimes from the principle that the system must only be used as a tool for analysing Characters, not real people. The application of the system in this way in training can be an asset - the 'compensation principle' is a strength of Yat Malmgren's approach to

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[1] Tapes: 33-2/3

[2] the idea is central to Carpenter's 'therapeutic' argument: *"...by suitable training in Movement and participation in Group Dances, to develop his motoric awareness of the Motion Factors which are secondary to him and to develop the corresponding Mental Factors which are recognized to be less controlled, immature, or even atrophied."* ("Conflict and Harmony", Chap. 1, pp. 13-14)

[3] Tapes: 44-6

[4] Tapes: 51-3

teaching - but it can also leave tutors open to criticism of 'amateur psychology'. I do not think there is an easy answer to this problem, beside stressing the need to use the tools of the system with sensitivity and an adequate sense of proportion. Any psychologically-based vocabulary lends itself to being used for simplistic forms of analysis but, as long as inappropriate claims are not made by either tutor or student, this is something both have to accept with the necessary caution.[1] It is a small price to pay in order to develop enough inner resources to be able to transform.

By the third year of the course, however, an apparent contradiction begins to develop. Throughout his early classes Yat Malmgren stresses the need to transform. Yet, as the course progresses, he is more and more insistent on requiring his students to define their own, personal tempo, to 'find themselves' in the midst of the Inner Attitudes. Bob Hoskins and Sean Connery, Yat Malmgren points out, radiate intensely Near 'vibrations'- they have developed, through natural processes or training, an intense personal Nearness. In the same way Vanessa Redgrave has an intense Adream quality. One of the purposes of the Scenarios is to develop in beginner actors similarly intense 'vibrations': first by teaching them to recognize, later by encouraging them to amplify their own major qualities. Indeed, the degree to which students are able to increase the intensity of their 'vibrations' as well as expand their range is a measure of their progress in the training. This 'vibration' is the ability to be an Inner Attitude rather than merely to mouth lines.

This approach is often a source of confusion. But Yat Malmgren is fond of reminding his audience that Stanislavski and his successors, from whom he derives his inspiration, worked mainly with actors, not students - that is with people who had already developed their own, unique, personal tempo. When these people needed to play character roles, they adjusted their tempo to them. Students, whose personal tempi are not yet formed, often

[1] How understandable the temptation to stray into 'psychology' is, when we read in Carpenter's book: *"We have no need to be afraid of any system of Therapy which widens our present and our future range of Inner Attitudes and which mellows the harmonious interplay of their sequences."* ("Conflict and Harmony", Chap.3, p. 12) The approach is typical of the naive (in the best sense of the word) attitude towards an 'education of the self' which Carpenter found in Laban's circle.

fall into the trap of thinking that they can produce a character out of nowhere[1]. The search for transformation implies therefore not only that there is a character one can transform into, but also that there is a fully-formed actor from whose defined personality the transformation begins. In reality one rarely expects an actor to achieve a character far from his own natural tempo, which is affected by things like age, natural weight, etc. In the context of a drama school one can demand an **attempt** at such radical transformations for the sake of the experience, not of the results. But most actors are cast because of their fundamental, characteristic tempo. From it, however, transformation actors can move into uncharacteristic tempi: 'Quick' out of Sustained, like a pile of jelly quivering; or 'Sustained' out of Quick, like a rabbit frozen in terror. The awareness of one's own fundamental tempo is therefore essential.[2] At its best, Yat Malmgren points out to his students, this is the relationship between 'star-quality' and character acting. Strong, well defined personal tempi, like those of Marlon Brando or Alan Bates, for example, infuse fine character work and can always be detected underneath it.[3] The whole basis of the training can be summed up in the phrase: **recognise your own range, then expand from it.**[4]

Gradually, both writing and performance increase in complexity, until the students perform Scenarios which explore all four Variations of an Inner Attitude. At this stage they create a fully-fledged, three-dimensional character outside their own biography. Here the content begins to assume an increased importance. Yat Malmgren is insistent that these monologues, which now can last up to five minutes, must have a clear social or moral 'theme' or message. They remain, of course, dramatic exercises, not pieces of propaganda. But they must say something to the audience over and above

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[1] Tapes: 29-1
[2] cf. Tapes: 39-5/6
[3] Tapes: 49-2/3
[4] The idea that one's own, innate tempo is a quality to be cherished is in Carpenter: *"...there is no reason why men and women should not reveal habitually any one of the distinctive Inner Attitudes, for each Attitude is equal in value... Never, indeed, should we feel ashamed of our prevailing Attitude for within it we can develop the full range of our personality if we will but widen our ability to experience and express any one of the five other Attitudes, as occasion requires, returning to our spiritual home, as it were, in our habitual attitude."* ("Conflict and Harmony", Chap. 5, p. 7)

displaying the abilities of the performer. They should promote a clear sense of 'values' and thus display the actor's attitude towards the world around him. Eventually, the most accomplished of these 'character Scenarios' are presented every year to an invited audience. In one case at least, such Scenarios have formed the basis of successful plays.[1] But Scenarios remain essentially acting exercises designed to explore the actor's own inner resources. The synthesis between self-exploration and characters usually takes place elsewhere, in rehearsed plays within the school and eventually in professional life, as part of the students' work as qualified actors.

* * *

There is little doubt that the system, as taught by Yat Malmgren, has been an effective tool for training actors. There is also no doubt that much of its success has been tied in with the personality of its founder, with his perceptive powers, insight and experience. It is probably too early to give a considered answer to the question as to whether the system has a life beyond Yat Malmgren. The signs, however, are encouraging.

I think it is fair to say that much of the energy behind the foundation of the Drama Centre was derived from the sense of mission shared by its first tutors and students. The story is rarely told nowadays, but in 1963 the Drama Centre came into being because a large group of acting students from the Central School of Speech and Drama felt sufficiently dissatisfied with the picture of theatre with which they were presented and with their preparation for it to decide to leave *en masse* and join three of their erstwhile tutors in relative penury in a church hall in north London. That revolutionary fervour has informed much of the work at the Drama Centre over the years. As Simon Callow recalls it (with some irony, but also with great affection) in the early seventies *"the Drama Centre buzzed with a*

[1] The plays are "Tomorrow We Do The Sky" (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, "Independent Newspapers Theatre Award" and Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London - 1991, BBC Radio 4 - 1994) and "Soup" ("Edinburgh Fringe First", Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith and BBC Radio 4 - 1995-6). They were written and performed by Michael Mears, a graduate of the Drama Centre from the late seventies. Michael Mears points to his debt to Ruth Draper's monologues as well as to the techniques he learnt from Yat Malmgren. (Interviewed on 18.6.96)

sense that we were engaged in work which was essential to the well-being of society, the survival of the race, and the affirmation of art. It was like being in Intelligence during the war. Deadly serious, semi-secret, requiring 100 per cent commitment and - there's a war on."[1] There is no doubt that the 'war' was waged as much for the general good as against the perceived evils of the British theatre establishment: insularity, a misunderstanding of naturalism, the lack of a governing ideology, an obsession with 'entertainment'. The history of this exciting experiment, with all its twists and turns, is still to be written. I mention it because the training at the Drama Centre was meant, tacitly but I think forcefully, to 'change British theatre'. This, I have to say, it has not done sufficiently for it to be widely recognised. On the other hand, it has had an extraordinary impact on its sister drama schools and through them, on the way actors are trained in this country.

In 1963, teaching rigorous Stanislavskian methodology was still revolutionary. Opening to the students a European classical repertory which included Lope and Calderon, Kleist and Hoffmanstahl, Ionesco and Adamov was eccentric. Teaching a system as complex as Yat Malmgren's seemed plain barmy. Three and a half decades later, the first two of these innovations have become part of the mainstream. I think the drama schools which do not employ among their full time tutors or regular directors former Drama Centre students can be counted on the fingers of one hand. This is not surprising, either - the training at the Drama Centre was both inspired and methodical. At a time when few British actors could boast of having a conscious, established vocabulary to describe their way of working, Drama Centre graduates could access a whole complex of ideas, terms and references. These they put to good use in their own, private acting and directing work, as we shall see in the next chapter. Some of them - many of them - found, sometimes to their surprise, that their skills were also in demand in other drama schools which had also begun to look for a more organised, 'scientific' and methodical way of training their students for a changing profession. As a by-product, elements of the system found their way into their acting classes. They sometimes met with movement teachers who used Laban concepts (mainly the Working Actions) and this added to the appeal the system, offered in its most basic structure,

[1] "Being An Actor", p. 32

was beginning to have for acting students. On the other hand, its complexity, coupled perhaps with the lack of written reference material, has prevented it from spreading as widely as other aspects of the Drama Centre experience. Nevertheless, at the time of writing it is or has been taught as a full course in the following Conservatoires and institutions of Higher Education:

At the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, where Yat Malmgren taught himself for several years in the late seventies, followed for some time by his assistant Margaret Calderon.
At the State School of Drama in Gothenburg where he also held a visiting professorship for many years and whose Principal, Frantisek Veres, was trained by Drama Centre staff.
At the Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, where Robin Barston presented the system in the seventies.
At the 'Beit-Zvi' School, the main drama and film school in Israel, the system was taught for several years by Mira Moldauer.
In Australia, Timothy Robins' Studio, opened in Sydney in 1977 has influenced the work of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), currently under the direction of another former student.[1]
At the Arts Educational Schools, where the Directors of both the three year acting course and the post-graduate Actors' Company are former Drama Centre students. The system was taught there by Robin Barston, one of Yat Malmgren s most methodical and dedicated assistants, until his untimely death. For some years thereafter it continued to be taught by Elizabeth Perry.
At Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama, where I taught its rudiments on the directors' course until 1994.[2]

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[1] cf. Drama Centre Course Document, 1996, no page number, para. 1.2
[2] In addition, most British drama schools number influential graduates of the Drama Centre among their staff and directors. Many of these use at least some of the elements of the system in their teaching:
At the R.A.D.A. the principal acting teacher between 1986-1996 was the late Doreen Cannon, who came to teach there after filling the same position at the Drama Centre for over two decades. She is followed by a number of current tutors and directors, including Joseph Blatchley, Penny Cherns, Dee Cannon and John Buschizza.
At the Central School of Speech and Drama, Alan Dunnett is the main acting teacher.
At LAMDA the Vice-Principal and head of acting is Colin Cook.
At Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama the main acting and directing

Of these, the most coherent approach to adapting the system to new realities was that devised by Robin Barston at the Arts Educational School. He taught in an environment which, though essentially sympathetic, did not allow the system the pride of place it occupies in the school run by its founder. Thus Robin Barston's experience may serve to illustrate a possible route of making the system fit in conditions where it has to compete with a number of other approaches to acting.

Robin Barston had to teach the basics of the system to acting students in a one year intensive course. He therefore telescoped many of the procedures inherited from Yat Malmgren. I quote his scheme in its entirety, because it provides an example of at least one alternative model for using the system in actor training:

"a. First three or four weeks - introduction to the main concepts and terminology of the work, coupled with informal practical exercises, and some formal notebooking [sic].
b. Remaining eight/nine weeks of first term - practical scenarios, using self as subject-doer.
c. Second term - as for the last eight weeks of first term.
d. Third term - completing personal scenarios, move on to the writing and performance of up to six character-scenarios."[1]

In the course of his introductory sessions, Robin Barston also discussed a number of the fundamental acting questions raised by the system:
- the view of the mind-body relationship most helpful to the actor
- energy and its expression through character and action
- basic 'laws' of expression

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teachers are Anne Tyson and Jonathan Martin.
At the Guildhall School Jenny Lipman directs regularly.
At East 15 School Adrian James was Head of Acting for several years.
At the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama the writer is currently Director of Drama.

[1] taken from Robin Barston's teaching notes. I am most grateful to Robin Barston's widow, Ann, and to Mr. David Robson, Director of the Acting Course at the Arts Educational Schools, for allowing me access to the materials left by Robin Barston at the time of his death.

- inner and outer
- the body in space ('introvert' and 'extravert' directions of energy)

He then seems to have started his description of the concepts of the system not in the order of the "Book", but through an essentially physical approach, from the outside-in. He began by getting the students to experience the Motion Factors, linked these to Mental Factors and Inner Participations and then came back to the Motion Factors, this time looking at them as products of inner energies. He then proceeded to introduce the Inner Attitudes by analysing characters from "Twelfth Night". Externalised Drives and the complexities of Inner and Outer Action were only touched upon. This accelerated run down of the basic concepts brought the students to the performance of simple Scenarios within a few weeks. One can only assume that Robin Barston ironed out as many gaps as his tight schedule permitted in his comments on the Scenarios. It is hard to judge whether this way of teaching was effective. One gets the feeling that it left marks in terms of a general attitude to theatre, rather than in the application of the details of the system.

I have mentioned before the strange passion the system often induces in its followers, who feel compelled to 'dig' under it for answers, often to very personal, though work-related questions. I would hope that the wider availability of a written version of the system will help to consolidate the work of those who teach it already and encourage others to start 'digging'.

THE APPLICATION OF THE SYSTEM IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

I have already had cause to mention a few of the actors trained in the system who have made a considerable impact on stage, in films and television work, both in this country and internationally. In addition, the Drama Centre ran, between 1969-81, a Directors' Course whose graduates have achieved world-wide success. Among them are numbered Adrian Noble, the current Artistic Director of the RSC, the directors of the Habimah, Cameri and Khan Theatres in Israel, the directors of the Portuguese and Iranian National Theatres as well as free-lance directors in Greece, Latin America, Europe and Australia.[1]

I set out to establish the traces left by Yat Malmgren's teaching in the work of a number of such actors and directors. I interviewed a number of active professionals who had been trained by him. Without being mechanical about the selection or attempting a statistically representative sample, I tried to reflect in my choice of interviewees as wide a spectrum of experience as possible: directors as well as actors; people who work mainly in theatre as well as those whose experience lies more in television, film or even opera; people who combine their acting or directing with teaching, etc. I also tried to spread the 'sample' across the more than three decades in which Yat Malmgren taught the system formally at the Drama Centre. Among the people who were kind enough to talk to me are therefore former students from the mid-sixties to the eighties. (I did not approach more recent graduates on the grounds that, as several of the interviewees themselves pointed out, it takes a number of years of professional activity for the system to 'settle' into a recognizable working pattern.) I believe that the conclusions which emerge from the interviews, without being reliable in any statistical sense, are nevertheless indicative of the way in which Yat Malmgren's teaching has affected the professional work of the majority of his former students.[2]

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[1] cf. Drama Centre Course Document, para. 2.1, no page number.
[2] a list of the interviewees, with a short account of their professional credits, the dates of their training and the dates of the interviews can be found at the end of this section.

Following the interviews, there is no doubt in my mind that the teaching has left significant marks on the work of most of the theatre people trained by Yat Malmgren. However, it would be absurd to look for a mechanical application of the system in the practice of professionals. As Celia Bannerman observes, actors are wise to set aside most of the formal training in the first years of their career, so as to allow instinct and intuition to flourish. Certainly, intuition is informed by the training, but few actors amongst those to whom I spoke felt the need to refer to their notes or other formalised part of their training while working.

In consequence, it is those aspects of the training which could be assimilated organically which came to the fore in our discussions. One aspect was cited above all, and almost unanimously, as being the most significant remnant of Yat Malmgren's teaching, namely the way in which all his students have learnt to **become conscious of their sensations**[1].

As I described earlier[2], Yat Malmgren asks his students to begin the presentation of their scenarios by establishing an appropriate tempo. The tempo arises from the repeated use of a simple physical action: stroking an imaginary piece of velvet for Gliding, tapping one's fingers for Dabbing and so on. This process, assimilated over the years through endless scenarios performed and observed, seems to have become second nature for almost all the actors to whom I spoke. They therefore often start their work on the text from determining its tempo. This is then expressed in terms of Working Actions, the latter are translated into simple physical activities which, when carried out, induce the tempo required for the character.

This is what Celia Bannerman endearingly calls *"doing a bit of Yat"*, that is **physicalising** the psychological traits of the character as Working Actions. As Kate Garthside puts it, the Working Actions are *"little inspirations"*. These simple exercises are then extended to working through animals, songs and dance steps - in other words through any physical means which can induce the tempo appropriate to a certain inner state. Simon

[1] cf. (Simon Callow: "Being An Actor", p.32): *"Yat's work, though resting on a very complicated and rather beautiful theoretical structure, is at heart a work of identifying and utilizing sensations."*
[2] see "Application Of The System In Actor Training' pp. 172ff. above

Callow finds this use of the Working Actions useful in his directing work as well: he uses Laban's widely known terms regardless of where the actors with whom he works were trained and encourages them to develop a receptive frame of mind in the rehearsal room through adopting a yielding demeanour, by *"lolling about"*. The same way of thinking leads Michael Mears to look on stage for furniture and props which can be used to induce a specific tempo: if a Sustained/Free[1] tempo, for example, is crucial to his character, he might look for a sofa or an armchair, might even suggest one be incorporated in the set. For him the Working Actions are useful above all in physicalizing the *"thought behind the author's lines"*.

This is especially important, he points out, when working in close-up for the camera. There the expression sometimes needs to be so small that it can get lost. Making one's inner life conscious in terms of Working Actions helps to define the expression, regardless of its size. Moreover, adds Patricia Kerrigan, in close-up one has to be more 'technical' with one's physical life than on stage. She finds that knowing exactly on which diagonal of space her eyes are placed is crucial. But in order for the look to be more than the mechanical turn of the pupil, one has to connect it to an inner process: here, Yat Malmgren's teaching on the connections between past and future with "behind" and "forward", between thought patterns and "direct" and "flexible" movement come fully into their own by supporting the 'technical' positioning of the eyes with the thoughts and feelings of the character. Above all, Patricia Kerrigan uses the fundamental concepts of "towards" and "away from" to establish the direction of the flow of energy towards or away from the camera, so important in expressing the inner life of a character when gestures are limited by the magnifying glass of the close-up. In an almost identical way, Michael Mears thinks in terms of the four diagonals of space and of Laban's planes (the 'door', 'wheel', etc.[2]) when deciding ways to physicalize a character.

Michael Mears reiterates, however, Celia Bannerman's warning: this physical approach can all too easily lead to stilted, mechanical acting if it is not allowed to *"sink in"*. One can work intensively through an

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[1] see vol. II, "Attitudes - Mobile Variations", p. 503ff.
[2] see Vol. II, "Basic Concepts - Space", pp. 318ff.

animal, for example, but after a while one has to *"leave it alone"*, to allow it to become subliminal. Only then does the physical work begin to affect the inner life of the character organically. Michael Mears' example of such work is particularly telling: a few years ago he worked on a national tour of "The Double Dealer" by Wycherley, starring Paul Eddington and in which he played a character called "Mr. Brisk". As his name indicates, Mr. Brisk is a busy-body, a buffoon obsessed with fashion, surface and making an impression. From the writing his tempi come across as Dabbing and Flicking. Michael Mears took as his point of departure the image of a boy trying to keep a balloon in the air - an endless series of Dabs. From this simple gesture came a series of Shadow Moves and from them an inner tempo which eventually, after being *"left alone"*, was stitched into the patterns of speech Wycherley had given his character. Sooner or later, says Michael Mears, the tempo must affect the inner.

Being conscious of one's Shadow Moves has further applications. The Shadow Moves, says Michael Mears, *"occur in tandem with the character: they suggest themselves, you notice them, then you begin to exaggerate a little, pull back, eventually incorporate them consciously into the physical life of the character."* Occasionally, two or three such Shadow Moves may be distilled into 'significant gestures' - gestures expressive of the character essence. Simon Callow quotes a recent instance in which he played a character who *"came to him"* as someone who traces convoluted, delicate round Gliding shapes with his fingers. The gesture aroused naturally, as an emanation of his unconscious inner life. He then refined it into a deliberate expression of the essence of the character, to the point where he felt able to say, quoting Michael Chekhov, that *"the gesture was the character"*. A further extension of this concept is offered by Jenny Lipman who also uses, in her acting as well as her teaching work, Yat Malmgren's notion of "professional deformation" as a means towards physical characterisation and ties it in with the national and social background of the character.

Related to the Inner Attitudes is the use of several other components of the system. The Negatives[1] seemed to have made a lasting impression on

[1] see "Dictionary of Terms", pp.227ff. and Vol. II - "Basic Concepts - Negatives", pp. 333ff.

several people, but as both Jenny Lipman and Celia Bannerman point out, they tend to be used more for self-observation that in relation to characters. They are alarm bells for moments in which the role does not unfold well. Celia Bannerman recalls an unhappy experience playing Lady Anne in "Richard III". She got so upset about the way the part was going that she *"played it all in negatives"*. Occasionally, a character finds itself in a similar situation: Kate Garthside had to play a character who had become an alcoholic and was able to approach it through the Negatives of Near - Heavy and Indecisive. She remembers being particularly aware that the character had used Doing throughout the play; depression and alcoholism meant that she had become Heavy, that is she had lost her vital Doing.

Somewhat surprisingly for such a Stanislavskian notion, the Inner Quests were not used to any great extent by any of my respondents. They preferred, as we have seen, to ask physical, rather than mental questions of the character. Similarly, the more complex parts of the system, such as the Externalized Drives and the Attitude Diagrams seem not to have been assimilated. This is, I think, mainly due to the fact that they are taught primarily in the first year of the course and are submerged thereafter in the extended work on scenarios which is based almost entirely on the Inner Attitudes. While still on the course, many students refer to the Attitude Diagrams as a reminder of the possibilities. Thereafter, I feel that a reluctance to endanger their creative acting process with something as 'mechanical' as that, combined with the fact that the diagrams need elaborate explanations which their own notes may not provide, pushes them out of sight and out of mind. Interestingly, the complex concept of Fusions[1] is still used to some extent (again, probably because it occurs often in scenarios). Kate Garthside, for example, recognizes moments of embarrassment in her character as the Fusion of Light/Bound going Light/Free. She recalls deliberately translating such a Fusion into the appropriate Working Actions: the character touched her frock in Dabbing gestures, avoided knocking into the furniture with awkward Flicks, etc.

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[1] see "Dictionary of Terms", pp. 227ff. and Vol. II, "Attitudes - Fusions", pp. 386ff.

The second fruitful, long-lasting seam of acting preparation derived from the system is the analysis of characters in terms of Inner Attitudes. Simon Callow recalls a recent example from his production of "Les enfants du paradis".[1] The part originally played by Arletti in Jean-Louis Barrault's film was taken in this production by Helen Macrory, a relatively recent graduate of the Drama Centre. Because of the vocabulary they shared, Simon Callow was able to convey his analysis of the character in the terms of the system. Surprisingly for the actress, he recalls, he had reached the conclusion that the character was Stable, by analysing it from the outside in, through its Action Attitudes. Both on the page and in Arletti's interpretation the character came across with Action Attitudes in the pairs Adream/Awake (the loving, erotic Outer Action hiding an inner element of calculation) and Near/Remote (the street urchin with a hidden loneliness and a melancholy sense of self sufficiency). This left, Simon Callow reasoned, the Inner Attitude of Stable, with the character constantly "dealing" with the temptation of Mobility. Not an immediately obvious interpretation for one of the most romantic figures of twentieth century drama, yet one which imposes itself upon careful consideration in the terms of the system.

One of the most lucid accounts of this kind of analysis in practice is given by Kate Garthside. She remembers playing the character of Gervaise in an adaptation of Emile Zola's "L'assommoir".[2] The life of the character in the play spans over twenty years and this posed physical challenges. Kate Garthside felt therefore that it might be necessary to take a physical course towards the role. Her first impulse, like that of many actors, was to respond to the character's tragic *emotional* life and approach it as Adream. She then decided to use the system to check on this initial reaction. She approached the question of the character's Inner Attitude from the point of departure suggested by Yat Malmgren: its Super Objective. She realized that the character is determined by her *social* limitations, her working class status. She is a tragic character indeed, but is unaware of her tragedy. Gervaise's supreme aspiration is to own her

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[1] Royal Shakespeare Company, Barbican Theatre, 1996.
[2] at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds in 1992. The play was directed by Sue Lefton and Jane Gibson, two choreographer-directors whose movement-based method of work encouraged Kate Garthside to approach the character from a physical angle.

own laundry - she is completely unaware that she is 'tragic', or a 'heroine': she works and works, 'does' and 'does', but ultimately cannot overcome her circumstances. Even when she fails and takes to drink, she still does not respond emotionally. At no point is she aware that she is pitiful, tragic, etc. She therefore lacks a crucial Adream quality: self-consciousness. Kate Garthside's inescapable conclusion, drawn both from the materialistic Super Objective and the dominant presence of Doing, was that the character was Flow-stressed Near and not Adream as she had first thought.

Her next step was to determine the Near Variations of the character and rehearse her lines using the appropriate Working Actions. Kate Garthside considers herself more "Adream" (that is more inclined towards an emotional response) than the character and therefore found it helpful to rehearse lines which were ostensibly emotional in a Near way. This work came to fruition in rehearsing the climax of the role, the moment when Gervaise is about to lose her laundry. After a long silence, during which she has been watching the men around her discussing her plight, Gervaise bursts out: *"I hate the fucking lot of you"*, she shouts, and gets out banging the door. This one line has to carry the emotional content of the character at its highest point. At first Kate Garthside felt the emotion was *"flying out"* and was *"acted"*, *"over-indulgent"* - an Adream, self-conscious display. She then tried it as a Near Punch. The emotion of Near characters, she remembered from her experience of Near scenarios, 'stops'. The sensation of halted emotion, strangled at birth by the 'spade's a spade' attitude of the character, informed her performance in this episode and, after her 'discovery', for the rest of the role. From this sensation, arrived at through analysis of the Inner Attitude and induced by the physical work deriving from it, she was able to build the reality of the character, the *limitations* of Near for which she had been looking.

It must be said, however, that most actors grasp the character's Inner Attitude in a more intuitive way. The training, and in particular the experience of the scenarios, leaves them with clear sensations of the nature of each Inner Attitude. In consequence, they react to the character which emerges from the page by comparing it with the *"snap-shot images"* of

the Inner Attitudes, as Michael Mears calls them, which they carry within. Mobile, Stable, etc. - he says - are *"pointers, sign-posts"*, triggers for a sensation or image which had been planted in his mind through the work on scenarios. They are like a map - they tell you that *"you are in the right part of the country"*, but *"to find the exact address"* the actor must develop them through imagination.

Many of my interlocutors preferred to use the Inner Attitudes by a sort of *via negativa*, to use Grotowski's phrase. Simon Callow finds particularly useful the idea that a character he is playing is Near by contrast with Remote, *revolving* around the Remoteness from which it struggles constantly to distance itself. Celia Bannerman follows a similar process. She starts by gathering information on a character *"like a magpie"*: Given Circumstances, textual references, the tempi of speech, period details, etc. As part of this early process, she occasionally refers to her observations in terms loosely taken from the system: a character *"has lots of Free Flow, little Weight, might be Adream"*. But then she finds it extremely useful to define for herself what a character is not rather than what it is. Here Yat Malmgren's method of proceeding 'by elimination'[1] is particularly useful. Celia Bannerman decides that the character has not got Flow, or Passion, or Vision and, through the systematic exclusion of the elements of the system arrives at an understanding of the character's Inner Attitude and perhaps even of its Actions. In addition, she uses the system to look at the relationships between different characters in terms of Inner Attitudes. The assumption here is that in a good play *"there are no repetitions of characters"*, in other words that each character represents a different 'type' or Inner Attitude. As a result, Celia Bannerman looks at the position of her own character in this web of relationships and sometimes decides - especially in the case of plays which are less well crafted - to adjust her characterisation so as to provide the strongest possible contrast with other characters.

To directors, as Celia Bannerman explains, the use of Inner Attitudes in this way can be important. Directors can analyse the entire character spectrum of a play in these terms and determine where the points of

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[1] see below, vol. II "Attitudes - Near", pp. 410ff.

conflict and the 'meeting of minds' between characters are.[1] This way of thinking, Jenny Lipman points out, can be very useful in casting, because one compares one's image of the character with the possibilities offered by the actors. One can then decide to cast either to or against type. In the latter case, the director remains conscious of the fact that the actor needs to develop a certain side (Intending, say, or Attending) which *"does not otherwise come naturally"*.

Thinking of a character in terms of Inner Attitude and Action also provides a safety net when, as Celia Bannerman puts it *"I bark up the wrong tree"*. One often finds, she says, that two thirds of the way through rehearsal the character emerges in a 'wrong' way, when it becomes obvious that it is beginning to go against the grain of the writer's intention. This is often due to the fact that the actor plays the inner - naturally, as most actors, in particular those with some Stanislavskian background, concentrate on the inner first. Inner life, emotions, strong sensations are mistaken for behaviour, *"often to the astonishment of director and stage managers faced with a bunch of wildly emoting actors"*. At that point the actors realise that they are displaying their inner life 'on the sleeve', that the Face has no Mask. Even more, the Mask is often mistaken for the Face: the emotion is assumed to hide, for example, a calculating nature rather than the other way round. A simple process of reversal: swapping between the Face and the Mask, between Inner and Action Attitudes, sets things to rights, becoming faithful to the writer's intention, as well as interesting for the audience, who is now allowed a real process of discovery, in which the inner nature of the character is revealed gradually, as the mask shifts and eventually drops.

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[1] see below, Vol. II "Character Diagrams - Inner Attitudes and Dramatic Structure", pp. 560ff. Likewise, Simon Callow quotes Yat Malmgren's analysis of the characters in "Twelfth Night" as an example of how useful such a method can be in mapping out the web of relationships in a play. We now know (see below, vol. II, "Attitudes - Introduction", pp. 366ff.), that Yat Malmgren revised his analysis of "Twelfth Night" following his division of the Inner Attitudes 'of the mind' and 'of the body' in the eighties. In this context Simon Callow makes the interesting observation that Yat Malmgren's teaching, like that of Stanislavski, ought not to be considered as if each successive phase had obliterated its predecessors. For him all the phases of the teaching are valid in themselves, offer rich food for thought and ought to be considered *"simultaneously, not in linear fashion."*

At this stage, Celia Bannerman usually feels confident enough in her own decisions to refer to her notes on the system, checking the character's Actions against the various possibilities shown on the Inner Attitude diagrams[1]. These are particularly useful in ensuring that the character's Actions are played, as both Jenny Lipman and Michael Mears point out, with enough variety and nuances.[2]

Thus the Inner Attitudes are useful to most actors:
First, as an intuitive, immediate route into the character, by associating the impressions emanating from the page with the experience gained from the work on 'scenarios' during their training.
Then, as a 'checking' mechanism: they can refer to the Inner Attitudes to see whether they are playing what the writer intended.

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The first of these approaches implies a certain way of looking at oneself, as well as at characters, within the terms of the system. I therefore wondered to what extent the exposure to 'scenarios' based on their own experience had left the actors and directors to whom I spoke with a particular image of themselves in relation to their acting work.

For Jenny Lipman, performing the scenarios had been at the time *"a tremendously important work"*, through which she arrived at an understanding of her strengths and weaknesses as a performer. To this day, the difficulties she encountered all those years ago in performing Mobile scenarios are a reminder of her tendency to emphasize her Weight when approaching a character. She therefore feels that she has to check carefully whether the character had indeed been conceived with Strong Weight or whether her own nature is leading her away from the author's intentions. I had raised with her and my other interlocutors the question of whether this impression of one's own strengths and weaknesses, formed in malleable years, could indeed be said to be 'objective'. Did they find,

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[1] see Vol. II, "Character Diagrams", pp. 560ff.
[2] Jenny Lipman goes so far as to encourage her students to carry out the physical activities derived from the text *"in eight different ways"* (according to the Working Actions) so as to ensure the maximum possible choice of variations.

I wondered, that the image was valid in the light of years of practical experience; or was it mainly an image derived from the subjective comments of a teacher with an enormous bearing on our development. The question seemed to have exercised most of my colleagues at some point during their careers. Alan Dunnett for one, emphasized that he remembers the Drama Centre training as *"enormously personality driven"*, not only by Yat Malmgren himself, but by all his fellow teachers as well. This did not necessarily have negative connotations - on the contrary, as Simon Callow says, a training which aims at developing creativity must guide the students towards insight into the working of their own psyche. A charismatic guiding hand, when applied with care and discrimination, can be much more effective than the reserved imparting of information. The fact remains that almost all the people I interviewed had formed a certain view of themselves in those years, a view which in most cases was confirmed by subsequent experience. Celia Bannerman, for one, is not surprised by this: she feels that *"Yat Malmgren seemed to have a rare understanding of human nature and was therefore more often than not right about the areas of strength and weakness he observed in his students."* The comments he made after seeing scenarios were therefore taken seriously and in the process students began to think of themselves in the psychological terms of the system. This, she qualifies, does not mean that he was always right - as we know, he changed his mind often about interpretations of characters; he must have changed his mind about acting strengths as well.

This must have happened more often in the case of those students who arrived relatively young to the training. Indeed, most of the interviewees agreed that the knowledge derived from the training varied to a certain extent according to the formative stage at which they found themselves on arrival at the Drama Centre. Yat Malmgren himself is fond of saying that it takes his former students seven years until the teaching is fully assimilated into their working practice. Kate Garthside, among others, shares this feeling. Many things which made sense only intellectually at the beginning, she says, *"fall into place when you have children, have helped friends to cope with someone's death, and so on. You then become aware of your own 'extremes' and so understand better the characters you are asked to play and the way the system approaches them."* For Michael

Mears, who started his course barely past his eighteenth birthday, some of the work felt as if it might yield more than he could fathom at the time. *"I was so unformed"*, he recollects, and the system, as Yat Malmgren often explained, is best understood by experienced actors. Nevertheless, Michael Mears feels that the scenarios gave him a *"clue"* about his own inclinations in terms of acting, a *"clue"* which still holds true. It made him aware that he was disposed towards a light version of Adream and that therefore a lot of his *"work on himself"* needed to concentrate on achieving a greater degree of Free Flow and a stronger Sensing function. As his comments illustrate, studying the system gave the students a vocabulary of self analysis. This, most people felt, was beneficial in terms of their subsequent development.

In a similar way, Kate Garthside discovered that her strengths lay in Adream, more precisely in her tendency towards *"self-awareness, even self-consciousness"*. As she puts it: *"I analyse my actions, therefore I am Adream."* She feels that she might have reached the same conclusion even without the training, intuitively, but that without the vocabulary of the system she would not have recognized aspects of her own personality with *"the clarity of thought"* which enables her to use them consciously when needed in performance. The system gave her intuition the *"definition"* which enabled her to construct characters like Gervaise consciously and methodically. In addition, the way of thinking suggested by the system leads her on occasion to look at other people in those terms as well, *"to recognize patterns in the general hurly-burly"*.

But she, like most of my respondents, is careful to distinguish between the insight necessary for acting (a welcome by-product of the teaching) and more general psychological applications. The consensus seems to be that, while the system is useful for the work of the actor, it would be *"dangerous"* as Celia Bannerman put it, to attempt to apply it to a wider field. She feels that to this day she cannot approach characters from the point of view of their similarities with her own personality because *"we do not really know who we are"*. This is why she prefers to work through differences - the character may be Sustained while you are Quick and that

is as far as it can go. *"It is dangerous to be too navel-gazing"*, as she puts it.

The system does leave one, however, with a set of preferences in terms of what is supposed to be *"better for an actor"*. There is no doubt in my mind that Yat Malmgren promotes, both overtly and subliminally through his comments and examples, a certain 'idea of the actor'.[1] The students are constantly invited to calibrate their own natural ability against the golden standard of role models like Greta Garbo or Laurence Olivier. There is no question of slavish imitation, nor indeed of uncritical admiration. In the general spirit of the system, the students are asked to penetrate to the essence of such great personalities and to find out that which made them supremely adept actors. The conclusion to which Yat Malmgren guides his students is that highly developed Feeling and Sensing Mental Factors are essential. Celia Bannerman retains an image of the qualities desirable for an actor which includes *"passion, energy, emotional disponibility."* As Patricia Kerrigan puts it, in simple terms *"more Flow gets you more work"*. Thinking and Intuiting, important though they might be for the rounded personality, play a secondary role when it comes to acting. At a more sophisticated level, but still informed by the same values, is Jenny Lipman's belief that *"knowing who you are, as an actor, means the ability to release the darker emotional and sensuous sides, the sensations of greed, jealousy, etc. Passionate people are healthier."* Naturally, as most acting students are obsessed with the question *"am I an actor?"*, this model remains one of the strongest marks left by the training. Simon Callow tells a revealing story about his first encounter with it:

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[1] This idea evolved over the decades and its evolution makes interesting reading in itself. In the earliest days of the teaching Yat Malmgren promoted the idea of actors as Remote, on the basis of a purely logical deduction that the qualities most needed on stage were intelligence and emotion. It soon became clear that a 'Remote actor' is entirely incapable of Action. The emphasis then shifted, for a number of years, especially in the late sixties, towards developing as much Mobility as possible in the students, on the grounds that emotion was the condition *sine qua non* of a successful performance. Again, it soon became apparent that emotion not balanced by Action was indulgent. As a consequence, by the early seventies Yat Malmgren had settled on Feeling *and* Sensing as the qualities to be developed in the aspiring actor. In other words, the 'ideal actor', the model which guides Yat Malmgren's training at the Drama Centre is the 'Adream actor', or rather the actor with developed Adream Inner Participations, yet capable of engaging in targeted actions.

He had arrived to the Drama Centre straight from University, with all the intellectual habits of mind of the undergraduate.[1] In his first session on "Movement Psychology" Yat Malmgren introduced the four Jungian functions and asked his new students to think of Laurence Olivier and define his primary quality in these terms. The majority chose Feeling, which only served to elicit scornful noises from Yat Malmgren. His point in choosing Olivier as a model was precisely to promote the idea of the **sensuous** actor. At the time, fresh from University, Simon Callow saw himself as primarily an intellectual, as an 'Awake' personality. With the arrogance of youth he knew that intellectual ability had to be the most important asset for the actor. He recalls Yat Malmgren telling him, to his astonishment: *"Yes, you are like this now, but in two years' time your voice will drop by an octave."* As the years went by it became clear that the training was designed to encourage the students to discover and develop their sensuous faculties. Simon Callow did so to the point where Yat Malmgren would eventually say: *"When you get hold of Simon, you get hold of something"* - a stage presence, an ability to dominate the stage which comes only from Sensing and Weight. Promoting a certain image of the actor inevitably entails the need for the aspiring actors to **change**: first by recognizing points of contact and differences with the 'ideal', then by moving towards it through *"working on themselves"*. For Simon Callow, as for most of the people to whom I spoke, the value of the training lies precisely in this approach: in encouraging aspiring actors to emulate that longing, so evident in the *monstres sacres* of the past, in people like Irving or Laughton, who had *"an innate need to move beyond themselves"*.

This raises the question whether the system benefits most a certain type of actor. Opinion is divided, but most people would agree with Kate Garthside's feeling that, paradoxically, actors with a certain intellectual inclination, albeit on a strong 'Adream' base, are more likely to make the teaching their own. Above all, however, the system suits actors with an innate capacity to **recognize their own sensations**, to be aware of the expressive capacities latent in their bodies. Only when you do it, emphasize all my interlocutors, does the system fall into place. "Doing it" for Yat Malmgren's students means principally engaging

[1] his formative experiences at the Drama Centre are vividly recalled in "Being An Actor", pp. 31-39.

with the scenarios. Through them, apart from the discoveries they make about themselves, aspiring actors are asked to ponder, often for the first time, the possibility of transformation. As Patricia Kerrigan remembers, when she finally completed her Near character scenario, she *"felt for the first time a completely foreign tempo taking hold of me"*. Yat Malmgren's 'idea of an actor' can perhaps be summed up thus: 'Space-stressed Adream' is the foundation, transformation is the objective.

To the 'idea of the actor' Yat Malmgren then adds his 'idea of the character'. I have already discussed my feeling that the whole thrust of the system is towards what I call an 'ectoplasmic' or independent Idea of character.[1] Kate Garthside shares this feeling, but only, she points out, when the characters are well written. For her a character can be said to exist outside the immediate circumstances of the play when it is written with *"a universal intention"*, as a metaphor for something greater than the individuality of the person portrayed. She also feels that the Laban-Malmgren system works best for characters which represent *"extremes"*. Indeed, the very notion of Inner Attitudes implies for her a concentration of characteristics which moves the character outside the mundane. She gives as an example another character whom she needed to approach systematically through the system: Trish in "Unsuitable for Adults" by Terry Johnson.[2] The character is "fragile" - not an individual fragility alone, but the distillation of the fragility of a whole *type* of women. Kate Garthside decided to make her more fragile than the bounds of naturalism permitted: she lightened her voice, acquired a breathy tempo, worked physically almost entirely *"above the ground"*, in the upper reaches of the 'door' plane. She created a character who was Light Weight Adream, radiating to the point where she had almost become Mobile.

Celia Bannerman is also convinced that characters are *"clearer"*, more defined and therefore more set than real people. Yet they are also what she calls *"rubbery"* - they can fit different actors. The term 'ectoplasmic character' is therefore appropriate: the shape it conjures, fluid and at the same time defined, corresponds to the 'existence' of characters outside both text and performer. One has to remember, she adds, that there

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[1] see "Introduction - The Idea of Character", pp. 136ff. above
[2] Library Theatre, Manchester

are Given Circumstances which cannot alter, no matter what the interpretation: Hamlet's father is dead, his mother has married his uncle, etc. A character's 'ectoplasm' will *"waft away"* if one ignores these obvious data: play Hamlet as a Stable ruler and many of the given clues will not make sense. The 'ectoplasm' is flexible, but it still sways between defined boundaries. So - she quotes a phrase of which John Blatchley[1] was fond - *"an intelligent foreigner"* would get similar ideas about Romeo regardless of whether he was played by Gielgud or Olivier.

One is often tempted to forget the audience in this discussion about the relationship between actor and character. The audience, says Celia Bannerman, works hard during a performance - it looks for the clues strewn in the text, in the actions and decisions of the characters, and will spot inevitably interpretations which do not sit easily with these clues. So one might say that the 'ghost' of the character rises in the interplay between author and audience, often regardless of what the actor does. Celia Bannerman remembers directing a stream of episodes of "Brookside" in which the same type of scene would be repeated week after week between the same characters - a 'row' would be written in by successive writers and only the location would change: now a shop, now a car, now a darkened cinema. To director and actors the scenes seemed dreadfully similar, even to the point where they found themselves using the same words. But to the audience, says Celia Bannerman, the scenes were different - they were doing that crucial third of the job and for them the story unravelled **independently** of either actors or director.

The 'ectoplasmic' image formed of the character by directors does not entail a rigid approach in rehearsal. Alan Dunnett, for example, agrees that characters analysed in the spirit of the system or even merely through Stanislavskian means, appear to have an almost 'objective' existence. But he tells a cautionary tale about what he feels is the need to forgo one's own vision of the character when confronted with the reality of a flesh and blood actor. A few years ago he directed Webster's "The White Devil"[2]. He had decided in his preparation that Vitoria was

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[1] Well known theatre and opera director, co-founder and first Principal of the Drama Centre.
[2] at the Central School of Speech and Drama, 1994

best played as a sensuous, almost debauched creature. The actress, however, wanted to play the character like a naughty child, an interpretation with which she felt more comfortable. In the terms of the system, the difference was between his idea of a Time-stressed enclosing Adream (Near dominant) character and her Space-stressed radiating Adream (Remote dominant)[1]. As an *"actor-centred director"* Alan Dunnett felt he had to agree to the passion with which the actress had conceived her character. Given another opportunity, he would still wish to see his original idea realized, because he still feels that *"this is the interpretation"*, in a 'quasi-objective' way. I find it interesting that although the interpretations were different, they still belonged to the same Inner Attitude. As Celia Bannerman puts it, the system does impose a certain view of character, within which there is flexibility, *"but in broad bands"*. Ultimately, the difference is between an 'idea of character' existing outside the actor, which presupposes the need for the actor to transform; and an understanding of character indivisible from the personality of the actor, in which case the preoccupation is with the degree of 'comfort' and 'freedom' experienced by the actor in performance. It is clear that Yat Malmgren's ideal of the "transformation actor" has remained a central concern among his former students.

The fact that Yat Malmgren's ideas remain widely shared even in the light of experience may be interpreted in two ways: either they are the expression of 'objective truths' and have therefore been confirmed by the practical experience of the actors; or they are simply an inevitable consequence of the system itself, so that anybody who studies it can only think in this particular way. I put to my interlocutors the question whether the conclusions we seemed to draw from our analysis of ourselves and of characters could be said to be objectively true or only true within the narrow terms of a subjective, 'closed' system. Was, for example, a realistic mode of performance an inevitable consequence of a system based on psychology?

The overwhelming feeling was that the system was actually 'neutral', that it could be applied to all styles of drama and acting. It is true to say that Celia Bannerman, for example, considers that the training at the

[1] see vol. II, "Attitudes - Near, Adream", pp. 410ff. and 453ff.

Drama Centre encourages actors and directors to assume responsibility for the author's intentions, the play as a whole and the character within it, all essentially realistic or 'Stanislavskian' attitudes. But that did not mean that those applying the system were always going to come up with the same answers. The system could be used, she felt, to analyse characters in any way, as long as one remembers that by changing one Inner Attitude one affects the balance of all the other characters in the play. Beyond that, Celia Bannerman feels that the system in itself does not imply any stylistic choice. Rather the way in which it was taught, the taste which was promoted by the teachers at the Drama Centre, implied a realistic idea of the theatre, a form of theatre one might call a 'theatre of decorum'. This view is confirmed by Robert Carson, who observes that the theatre tradition from which Yat Malmgren drew his ideas is primarily that of the northern European, turn of the century 'greats': Ibsen, Strindberg, Stanislavski. Robert Carson draws the distinction between this approach and the alternatives, be they based on performance, dance or text. For him, insofar as it promotes the actor as the central concern of a production, the system often closes the possibility of responses to other modalities. The work of the director is therefore limited to creating an organic summation of individual performances. For Robert Carson one of the weaknesses of the system is that it invites directors to look at plays not as a whole, but only as the sum total of the performances of the actors, of the position and interaction of characters within it. Yet, he stresses, often productions are moved by interpretative choices which seem *"perverse"* in terms of the system. Fiona Shaw's interpretation of Hedda Gabler, for example[1] revolved around Hedda as a neurotic, visibly preoccupied with her sexuality, without the social veneer which usually covers the frustration and upon which Yat Malmgren's own analysis of the play relies so heavily. For Robert Carson, the play, as it might have been interpreted within Yat Malmgren's vision, *"got thrown out of the window"*. Yet there is no doubt that Fiona Shaw's interpretation could have been analysed in terms of the system. Could it also have evolved from a team trained in the system? Ultimately, Robert Carson feels that, within broad bands, the character delineation is arbitrary. The system itself is neutral, and is, as he put it, *"more flexible than the school"*.

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[1] directed by Deborah Warner - Abbey Theatre, Dublin and Aldwych Theatre, London, 1994-5

In this context Robert Carson is also concerned by Yat Malmgren's recent division between the "Inner Attitudes of the mind" and the "Inner Attitudes of the body"[1]. He feels, unique among my interviewees, that this represents a rejection of the *"intellectual fascination"* of which theatre is capable. He would like to retain the possibility of characters and indeed of entire plays being moved from their very centre by an idea which arouses emotion, in other words by Mobile. One of his major criticisms of the system as it is at present is the fact that it *"drags everything down to Adream"*, thus ignoring the visionary aspects of theatre. As a director, he feels that working within the system sometimes disallows the flights of imagination which characterise some continental theatre, that it compels directors towards a theatre which is *"earthy and to the point"*. In summary, while he feels that the system can indeed be neutral in theory, he fears that in practice it encourages a certain way of looking at theatre derived from its psychological bias.

This view is disputed by Simon Callow, who thinks that assigning undue importance to the psychological influence, and in particular to the Jungian basis, is a *"red herring"*. He points out that Jung's ideas themselves amount more to a *"philosophy than a psychology, that they are more of a parable for the world both inside and outside the human being"*. He is quite resolute in his feeling that the system is not closed, but essentially *expressionistic*, first in the sense that it teaches actors to be intensely aware of their own impulses and second in that it encourages them to create *"bold, large modes of expression"*. For me, the question as to whether either approach depends on the way in which the system is taught or whether it is constitutional to it remains open.

Alan Dunnett relates to the question in terms of the way in which the teaching at the Drama Centre affected his evolution as a director, an experience in many ways similar to my own and that of several of my former director colleagues. He came to the Drama Centre after Oxford, where he had *"done three or four plays in a very 'stylized' way"*. Drama Centre was for him a *"child-like awakening through which I discovered the value of literalism."* Ever since, *"making it real"* has been a constant preoccupation, and he still feels that had he not been trained at the

[1] see below, vol. II, "Attitudes - Introduction", p. 366ff.

Drama Centre, he might have been *"stylistically more eccentric"*. The training has left him impatient of productions in which the director considers 'style' to consist of a 'non-organic' connection between content and form. He sees that the possibility exists for this to happen, indeed that it happened with Meyerhold and happens frequently in the work of some of the best known German, French and East European directors. He can also see that to some extent the system could be used to interpret a play in such a way. But he finds it almost impossible, having gone through the training, not to seek what he calls *"an organic relationship between Inner and Outer"*. In consequence, he finds it inconceivable to direct as a 'gloss on the text', in a way divorced from the immediate *"reality of the author's intentions"*. Occasionally, as in a recent production of "Yerma"[1] he might allow the strange 'feel' of the play to affect design and costumes, which become 'stylized', but never his approach to character and acting. In the final analysis, he feels that the system does allow for stylistic variety, but only insofar as this responds directly to the material: he remembers directing productions of plays by Sam Shephard and Joe Orton[2] with the same acting company and using more or less the same approach to character and relationships, though obviously not to style. Despite the similar approach, his recollection is that both he and the actors responded very differently to the material in terms of the theatre modality. Thus the approach proved neutral *"as long as the style was derived from the writer's material"*. Interestingly, Alan Dunnett tends to think of entire plays in terms of Inner Attitudes, which provide him with a sensation, a feeling for the play as a whole. Referring to his recent production of "Volpone"[3] he talks of the *"tons of Nearness"* in the play, of its lack of Flow. This gives him a personal point of departure in determining the style of his productions. He could even conceive of a grotesque "Volpone", for example, based on an analysis according to the system, because it is in the spirit of Jonson's writing.

Like him, Yat Malmgren's former students use the language provided by the system, in private, sometimes loosely, without referring to the "Book", precisely because the vocabulary is so suggestive. Carpenter, Robert

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[1] Central School of Speech and Drama, 1993
[2] Chesterfield Repertory Theatre, 1983 with Gary Oldman as Sloane
[3] Central School of Speech and Drama, June-July 1996

Carson recalls, *"wanted to make words dance"*. Through Yat Malmgren's work he has succeeded: most of the people to whom I spoke felt, like Robert Carson, that they *"loved the vocabulary"*, which had *"a numinous quality, a power outside its literal value - the words become meaningful outside the enclosed system."* It is important, however, not to allow the words to become devalued, empty of meaning. As Robert Carson says, the secret of their power lies precisely in the fact that they have to be 'translated' anew by refreshing every time the relationship of the words with their sensuous content.[1] *"The terms themselves, outside the closed system, are empty* - Robert Carson continues - *"translating them every time makes them meaningful."*

Statements such as these led me to ask whether, almost four decades after Yat Malmgren began to teach the system, the vocabulary had taken hold as a common theatrical currency. I asked my interlocutors to what extent they felt able to use the terms of the system in their work with other actors or directors. Somewhat to my surprise, the vast majority felt that the system remained a personal tool and that they would be very reluctant to refer to its terms in the company of fellow professionals. There is a widespread feeling that the teaching is perceived by the profession at large as 'esoteric' and that one would alienate fellow company members by using what may seem to be an *"oddly masonic code"*, as Alan Dunnett put it. Even in the company of other actors trained at the Drama Centre there is a reluctance to use the terms of the system for fear of antagonizing the rest of the cast. Patricia Kerrigan is somewhat unusual in having had the opportunity to work quite often with former Drama Centre students,[2] yet she never recalls using the terms of the system, because, as she put it *"other people resent the 'secret language' which makes them feel excluded."* Like her, Kate Garthside has worked on a long-running television series with two former Malmgren students, her near contemporaries at the Drama Centre.[3] She makes the point, however, that

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[1] Some of the actors and directors to whom I spoke find the system works best for them, when they 'translate' the terms into their own, personal vocabulary. Patricia Kerrigan, for example, would rather think of characters as "heads in the clouds" or "feet on the ground" than Adream or Near.

[2] she mentions John Duttine, Rupert Fraser, Roger Frost and Kathryn Pogson, among others.

[3] "All Quiet On The Preston Front", at the time of writing in its third

they are unlikely to use the system on material which is fairly obvious, *"mainly banter"*. When she worked with Robert Carson, playing Isabella in "Measure For Measure"[1], however, they found themselves using the system *"in private, not in rehearsals"*. Like her, Michael Mears considers the system appropriate mainly to complex classical texts and less useful in routine work. Jenny Lipman, on the other hand, recalls a production of "Macbeth"[2] in which she found herself acting alongside Pierce Brosnan and Allan Hendrick, two Drama Centre trained actors with whom she was able to exchange ideas about characters and relationships in terms of the system. When such communication is possible, the system becomes a *"shorthand"* (the word was used by several people) between actors and director or between the actors themselves. Sharing the system with other people leaves, to use Alan Dunnett's phrase: *"a taste like that of forgotten love affairs. Though long forgotten, it emerges when you meet someone who was trained at the Drama Centre. There is something oddly masonic about it."*

The exception to this attitude is Simon Callow. He has no inhibitions about using the vocabulary in rehearsals, and we saw him discussing the character in "Les enfants du paradis" with Helen Macrory in these terms. Moreover, when directing, Simon Callow tends to use the terms of the system even with actors who have not been through the training: *"I use Remote, say, because the word has a suggestive value in itself, even without the specific images created in training."* For him the system offers actors, perhaps for the first time, a language akin to that available to musicians. He looks with envy at the fact that musicians can talk of D major, 4/6 or mezzo-forte and know exactly what they mean. Until the development of the Laban-Malmgren system, such precision was not given to actors. With the advent of the lexicon it provides, he feels theatre people have gone some way towards being able to communicate with each other with a similar degree of precision.

The conclusion seems to be that the measure in which actors use the system 'in public' is mainly a matter of confidence. Yat Malmgren himself often exhorts his students not to talk about their method of work, on the

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series for the BBC. The actors mentioned are Colin Buchanan and Terry Marshall.

[1] Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, 1988

[2] directed by David Thacker; Theatre Royal, York, 1976

grounds that it will not sit easily within the accepted vocabularies and ways of working of the British theatre. This injunction seems to be followed by the majority, and one must therefore assume that it has been reinforced over the years by individual experiences. One must also remember that for many years, the Drama Centre was perceived by the British theatre establishment as a somewhat eccentric school. To a certain extent this is still the case and some of its graduates are worried about the reaction their training might arouse in potential employers and colleagues. The establishment view of the training is largely unjustified, as I hope the pages above have demonstrated. Nevertheless, the nature of the teaching and in particular the very fact that Yat Malmgren's work is largely original, gives the impression of a group of people engaged in an 'esoteric' ritual, with its own language and philosophy. Insofar as there is an original viewpoint on theatre and a special vocabulary, this is true. As Simon Callow points out, Yat Malmgren's teaching is in many ways in the tradition of modern 'esoteric' teachers like Rumi and Gurdjieff[1] whose techniques of self knowledge were also based in movement, dance in particular. As such, Yat Malmgren's approach to teaching is deliberately non intellectual and is based primarily on example and parable. One can therefore see why his students have difficulties in communicating with fellow actors who do not share their training and, above all, why they are shy of an English theatre establishment which is still primarily word-based and cerebral.

Nevertheless, the interviews make me think that the system certainly lives in the minds and acts of a number of British actors and directors. They are, inevitably, few: all the graduates of the Drama Centre in the three and a half decades of its existence number fewer that 500 people, a drop in the ocean of a profession totalling almost a hundred times that number. Knowing the vagaries of the British theatre scene, the impact made on the profession by many of these graduates is actually remarkable.[2]

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[1] the parallel is not at all far fetched when one remembers Laban's connections with Sufi esoteric teaching and in particular with Rumi - see "The Origins of the System", pp. 20ff. above

[2] this is especially noticeable in the field of drama training. For a list of world-wide drama schools where the influence of Drama Centre teaching is present, see "Application of the System in Actor Training" above, pp. 172ff.

The use of the system therefore remains a private affair, with its place firmly in the process of preparation and only occasional forays in the daylight of the rehearsal room. Its terms are certainly not common currency in the British theatre. Whether they will ever become so is still an open question. Several of my interlocutors expressed the need for further study or at least for access to written reference material. As things stand at the moment, the details of the teaching tend to fade. Alan Dunnett finds himself using the Inner Attitudes *"in a casual way, like someone who might have learnt French and uses odd words. I might refer to a character as someone with a lot of Doing, with Nearness, or 'not Adream'."* For him most of the preparation in terms of character work is Stanislavskian: objectives, lists of psychological characteristics and so on. He has come to see the Laban-Malmgren system as a spin-off which gives him occasional points of reference. Celia Bannerman feels that she would welcome, in this context, a *"refresher course"* to renew her understanding of the details. One must remember that most former students only keep the "Book" (perhaps accompanied by their student notes) and therefore most of the interviewees felt they had difficulties relating to the higher echelons of the system, which they often found too complex to use without either Yat Malmgren's constant prompting or a written 'manual' to which to refer.

For a few, like Robert Carson, the system needs to move on from the teaching of its initiator and take on board the various trends which inform contemporary theatre thinking, not necessarily as currently found in Britain. In a school based on Vakhtangov's work, for example, even more emphasis would be placed on the outer expression, with a consequent stress on the Externalized Drives and not on the Inner Attitudes - this, he feels, would return the system to its roots in dance, a development which he would welcome. None of my interlocutors, however, felt anything less than grateful for having been given the vision and profound understanding of theatre which goes with the system.

This conclusion comes across from all my interviewees. The system is a technique, yes. But, as Simon Callow stresses, the meaning of technique (as preached by Yat Malmgren) is not the mere acquisition of a bag of

tricks. It consists in achieving what the French call *disponibilite*, having a keyboard of acting possibilities (the consciousness of one's own experience) and fingers nimble enough to be able to play it in any circumstances. Therefore, he and most of his colleagues feel that the Laban-Malmgren system, unlike that of Stanislavski, which is limited in that it cannot be applied, for example, to the work of Brecht or to Far Eastern theatres, is not closed. It can be applied to all styles and forms of theatre. It is concerned, says Simon Callow, not with *"the DIY ways of acting"* not even with *"craft"*, but with Art, that is with meaning expressed, or, as Simon Callow again puts it, *"with making the word flesh, literally"*.

I am most grateful to the following people who agreed to be interviewed for the purposes of this section:

Celia Bannerman: actress/director. Studied acting at Central School of Speech and Drama and the Drama Centre 1962-5, then returned for a one year course in directing 1977-8. One of the best known actresses of her generation, she has played numerous roles in the West End, in Rep., on TV and film, including Celia in "As You Like It" directed by Tilda Swinton. In the late seventies she began directing, was a producer at the National Theatre and Associate Director at the Bristol Old Vic. She now combines acting with directing on a regular basis. At the time of writing she had just completed a production of "My Mother Said I Never Should..." by Sharman McDonald at the Derby Playhouse and was beginning rehearsals in an adaptation of "Mansfield Park" at the Greenwich Theatre. She was interviewed on 5.6.96.

Simon Callow: actor/director/writer/columnist. Acting Course at the Drama Centre, 1970-3, where he is now a member of the Council of Management. Worked in every medium, including theatre (member of Joint Stock Company, played Titus Andronicus, Arturo Ui, Eddie in "Mary Barnes" at the Royal Court, Mozart in "Amadeus" and Orlando in "As You Like It" at the National Theatre, "The Relapse" and his own adaptation of Goethe's "Faust" at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith); film ("Amadeus") and television ("Chance In A Million"). Directs extensively in Britain and abroad, most recently "Carmen Jones" (Old Vic Theatre) and "Les Enfants du Paradis" (RSC). "Being an Actor", his book on acting, is one of the best known contemporary texts of its kind and includes a number of insightful pages on his experience at the Drama Centre. He has recently published the first volume of a highly acclaimed biography of Orson Welles. Interviewed on 18.6.96.

James Robert Carson: director. Director's Certificate, Drama Centre, 1983-5. Scottish Arts Council Trainee Director, Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh 1988-90, where his productions included "Measure for Measure", "Ghosts", "Fitting For Ladies" (Feydeau), "A Family Affair" (Ostrovsky). Directed "As You Like It" (Greenwich Theatre), "White Bird Passes" (Kesson - Dundee Repertory Theatre) and numerous productions in drama schools, including the Central School of Speech and Drama, Drama Centre, Rose Bruford College, The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Webber-Douglas Academy. He has a special interest in directing opera, has been revival director on "La Clemenza di Tito" (Glyndebourne) and has directed recently "Cosi Fan Tutte" for the Scottish Opera Go Round and "The Rape of Lucretia" at Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh. Interviewed on 12.6.96.

Alan Dunnett: director. Directors' Course at the Drama Centre 1974-6. Worked extensively in community and young people's theatre in the seventies and eighties, and as Writer in Residence for a number of community groups and in prisons. Directed in repertory theatres at Worthing, Chesterfield, Theatre Clwyd, Haymarket Theatre, Leicester, Dundee Repertory Theatre. Commercial productions include work for Triumph Management and Nottingham Theatre Royal. Since the late eighties has concentrated on directing and teaching in Drama Schools, including: East 15 School, Guildhall School and Rose Bruford College. Since 1993 he has

worked as the main tutor in acting at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Interviewed on 4.6.96.

Kate Garthside: actress. Acting Course at the Drama Centre, 1983-6. Worked widely in repertory theatre, including seasons at The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, where she played Isabella in "Measure For Measure" directed by Robert Carson and Adela in "The House Of Bernarda Alba". Other Rep. includes West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Library Theatre, Manchester. Recent television credits include "All Quiet On The Preston Front" and several police series. Interviewed on 6.6.96.

Patricia Kerrigan: actress. Acting Course at the Drama Centre, 1982-5. Theatre includes work at Manchester Royal Exchange (Princess of France in "Love's Labour's Lost"), Hampstead Theatre ("Carthaginians"), seasons at the RSC (Julia in "The Duchess of Malfi" and Helena in "All's Well That Ends Well"), as well as Viola in "Twelfth Night" and Timena in "El Cid" for Cheek by Jowl. She has done over fifteen television series and plays, including: "The Crow Road" and "Flowers in the Forest" for BBC Scotland; "Dr. Finlay's Casebook" and "Taggart" for STV; "Sherlock Holmes" for Granada, "Playing For Real" for BBC and many others. Interviewed on 5.6.96.

Jenny Lipman: actress/director/teacher. Acting Course at the Drama Centre, 1970-3. Worked extensively in repertory theatre, including Theatre Royal, York ("Macbeth", "The Human Voice" by Cocteau), Watermill Theatre ("Private Lives"), Palace Theatre, Watford ("Lady From The Sea"), Liverpool Playhouse and Birmingham Repertory Theatre ("The Miser"). For the RSC she worked in "Children Of The Sun" and "The Greeks". She played Jessica in Charles Marowitz's "Merchant of Venice" at the Open Space. Her numerous television credits include work for the BBC, ATV and Channel Four. On film, she played Peter's Wife in Zeffirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth", Maro in "Tomorrow's Warrior", directed by Michael Papas and Abigail in Bruce Beresford's "King David". Since the beginning of the nineties she has concentrated on teaching and directing in Drama Schools, including: Central School of Speech and Drama, the Drama Centre, Guildhall School, the R.A.D.A., Rose Bruford College and Webber-Douglas Academy. Interviewed on 4.6.96.

Michael Mears: actor/writer. Acting Course at the Drama Centre, 1975-8. Worked extensively in the theatre, including an acclaimed Malvolio/Orsino combination for the Actors' Touring Company and on tour in Australia and the Far East. Seasons in Rep. include: Nottingham Playhouse, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Victoria Theatre, Stoke on Trent, Haymarket Theatre, Leicester, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. At the RSC he acted in Jonson's "The Silent Woman" and "A Clockwork Orange". He appeared in "Conversations With My Father" at Scarborough and the Old Vic Theatre. His television credits stretch from "The Lenny Henry Show" to "Sharpe" (3 series). Film includes "Four Weddings And A Funeral", "Little Dorritt", "Kidnapped" and "The Old Curiosity Shop". He has written and performed in two plays based on 'scenarios' and inspired by Ruth Draper's famous character monologues: "Tomorrow We Do The Sky" (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, "Independent Newspapers Theatre Award" and Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London - 1991, BBC Radio 4 - 1994) and "Soup" ("Edinburgh Fringe First", Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith and BBC Radio 4 - 1995-6). Interviewed on 18.6.96.

C H A P T E R V

A N O T E O N T H E S T A N I S L A V S K I A N T E R M I N O L O G Y

A NOTE ON THE STANISLAVSKIAN TERMINOLOGY

The system takes from Stanislavski the following concepts and terms:

i) The Super-Objective. As we have seen, for Stanislavski this is a word with several meanings. There is no doubt, however, that he considers the Super Objective first and foremost as the overriding idea of the play, or its theme, *"the Super-Objective of the plot"*[1]. But when he comes to give examples, all Stanislavski's instances are of powerful motivations, expressed in terms of verbs preceded by *"I wish"*. Moreover, Stanislavski only refers to the Super Objective in terms of the motivation of the main character in the play.[2] Thus a true S/O only works fully when the central character's emotional motivation fits into the general theme of the play and contributes directly to it.[3] For Stanislavski, Chatsky's ideal Super Objective would run along the lines: *"I want to struggle, not for Sophy, but for my country"*. This, according to Stanislavski, encapsulates both the personal motivation of the character and the political message of the play. Yat Malmgren asks a further 'why?' in order to determine which deep-seated psychological characteristics push Chatsky to struggle for freedom in general through an amorous enterprise (the same question, incidentally, might be asked of Figaro, an example perhaps closer to the Western reader). The answer to the question "why" is given in terms of profound psychological gratification: for *"power"*, for *"inner peace"*, for *"security"* and, in the case of Chatsky, perhaps for *"self-assertion"*. This is the meaning of the notion of the central idea or the Super-Objective of the character, as understood by the Laban-Malmgren system. This approach obviates to some extent the need to match too closely the motivation of all the characters in a play to its perceived theme, a somewhat mechanical exercise. At the same time, the idea of a deeply personal Super-Objective fits well with Stanislavski's idea of the *"counteraction"*[4], that is of Super-Objectives which oppose themselves to those of the protagonist. Indeed, conflict in plays can be defined as that between different psychological Super-Objectives.

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[1] "An Actor Prepares", p. 271
[2] cf., for example, "An Actor Prepares", pp. 272ff.
[3] ibid., p. 301
[4] ibid., p. 279

ii) Objectives: the main wants or intentions of the characters in the **Given Circumstances of the play.** They represent the character's *"desires".*[1] These change from time to time, according to the character's reactions to the stimuli offered by his surroundings. Yat Malmgren is insistent that his students always express their Objectives preceded by "I want to make so-and-so..." or "I want to get so-and-so to...(**do something**). This, he points out, is necessary to ensure that the Objectives are not vague, but focused strongly on affecting another character.[2]

iii) Through-Line - the chain of Objectives, motivated by the Super Objective, which Stanislavski describes as the *"through-going action"*[3]. This represents the sum total of the character's wants in the play: it is essentially a linkage of concrete, sensuous, immediate desires, not a profound source of psychological motivation. If the Objective represented the character's *"desire"*, the through-line encapsulates its *"striving"*[4] to achieve it. It enables the actor to *"keep a broader view of the coherence of his role"*[5].

iv) Actions: what the character **does** in order to achieve his wants or Objectives. In the main Actions are **physical.** In his analysis of the first scene of "Othello", Stanislavski insists that Iago and Roderigo should *"make as much noise as possible to attract attention".* Other characters *"peep at the windows", "find out what is going on", "get dressed", "raise the alarm"* and so on[6]. Where the Objective was *"desire"*, the Through-Line

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[1] Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 80

[2] The term Objective, introduced by Elizabeth Hapgood's translations of Stanislavski's books, has left many unhappy and given rise to a plethora of equivalents in English. Lewis, for example ("Method or Madness", pp. 30 and 70) prefers *"intention".* Boleslavski ("Acting, the First Six Lessons", pp. 62ff.), opts for *"action"* as does Uta Hagen ("Respect For Acting", p. 177). I understand that Stanislavski's Russian term is closer to "target", in the concrete sense of something one shoots at. In the end, they all refer to what the character Wants at a given moment in the play.

[3] "An Actor Prepares", p. 274

[4] Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 80

[5] Benedetti: "An Introduction", p. 42

[6] "Creating a Role", pp. 198; cf. also Benedetti: "Biography", p. 297: *"Stanislavski insisted that the scene in which Desdemona looks for her handkerchief should be dominated by the act of searching and nothing else."*

"striving", the Action is *"attainment"*[1]. This is a crucial aspect of Stanislavski's system. His whole theory of physical action is based on the idea that by carrying out a chain of Actions the character triggers the truth of the role. Yat Malmgren adopts a sideways approach to this idea. The nature of his work leads him to reduce physical behaviour to its component elements and use these as triggers. He uses the term Action to denote behaviour in general: the whole complex of the character's psychological and physical doings. Thus his use of the term Action is wider than Stanislavski's. It is also not to be confused with the use of the term by Uta Hagen or Harold Clurman, for whom Action has come to be synonymous with Objective.[2]

v) Activities or "Means": these are the transitive verbs which describe the minute psychological changes of activity in the character's behaviour towards his partners. Stanislavski himself uses the term "means" several times[3], but Yat Malmgren follows Uta Hagen in using the term Activities. Stanislavski uses nouns and adjectives to describe these, as opposed to his Actions which are always expressed in verbs. Yat Malmgren, on the other hand, insists on using transitive verbs for the Activities: in pursuit of his goal Iago might *"cajole"*, *"flatter"* or *"bully"* Roderigo. Activities change from moment to moment, as the characters react to the Activities played upon them by other characters in the play. The interaction thus created is commonly referred to as the *give-and-take* of the stage traffic.

vi) Adaptations or Adjustments: a crucial, final layer often forgotten by modern Stanislavskians. Stanislavski acknowledges that the means employed by characters in order to achieve their Objectives are designed to hide their true intentions. These he calls *"adaptations"*: the psychological activities which take into account (respond to) the Given Circumstances and adapt to them. More often than not, the Given Circumstances do not permit the character to display his intentions overtly, and so the character has to adapt to the circumstances by engaging in actions which

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[1] Stanislavski: "Creating A Role", p. 80
[2] Uta Hagen: "Respect For Acting", p. 177; Harold Clurman: "On Directing", London, MacMillan, 1972. pp. 268ff.
[3] "An Actor Prepares", pp. 229-31, for example

cover or hide the Objective.[1] I shall follow Harold Clurman in referring to these as Adjustments. Yat Malmgren usually expresses them through turning the psychological activities (verbs) into ad-hoc adverbs: Roderigo raises the alarm "hesitating-ly", Iago bullies him "endearing-ly", and so on.

[1] ibid., pp. 233-5

C H A P T E R VI

A D I C T I O N A R Y O F T E R M S U S E D I N T H E L A B A N - M A L M G R E N S Y S T E M

DICTIONARY OF TERMS USED BY THE SYSTEM

NB. This Dictionary is a quick reference tool for the reader who wishes to find out about one of the specialised terms used in the thesis. It is partly a more accessible substitute for Carpenter's own "Glossary" (which can be found at Appendix B) and partly a way of summarising some of the ideas introduced into the system by Yat Malmgren. Some of Carpenter's own definitions are difficult to fault, however, especially when he deals with descriptions of movement sensations: when this is the case they are reproduced in full. Nevertheless, in any case I felt the reader might appreciate a more accessible explanation of the terms. In consequence this Glossary differs from Carpenter's in three main respects:

- it attempts to put in more accessible language some of Carpenter's more pithy definitions
- it incorporates Yat Malmgren's developments of Laban's ideas, especially in the areas of Attitudes and Action
- it gives simple "images" to create concrete equivalents for the abstractions of the system and illustrates, where appropriate, certain aspects of the system with examples of characters from well known plays. These examples are my own. Terms printed in capital letters have their own entries elsewhere in the Dictionary.

ACTION:
a. a movement (physical or vocal) which expresses the intentions of the character. The system measures all such movements through the four MOTION FACTORS.
b. the outer part of the CHARACTER-ACTION duality. That part of the acting process which nourishes itself on the inner life of the character, is active and perceived in performance through (a) above.

ACTION ATTITUDES: see ATTITUDES

ADAPTING: one the four INNER PARTICIPATIONS. The active form of FEELING.

ADREAM: one of the six "character types" or INNER ATTITUDES. A combination of Intending and Adapting (Sensing and Feeling). Adream contains Intending (Sensing) and is therefore capable of physical embodiment on stage as an INNER ATTITUDE. Typical Adream characters: Medea; Angelo, Edward II, Don Juan, Lovborg, Yerma, Jimmy Porter.

ADRIFT: the NEGATIVE state of ATTENDING. The passive, neutral form of THINKING, in which the forces of Direct and Flexible Thinking are equally poised and prevent the character from active cerebral involvement.

ASPECTS: according to the system, an ATTITUDE is a compound of two INNER PARTICIPATIONS. Within each ATTITUDE, however, one of the INNER PARTICIPATIONS has the upper hand and is said to be DOMINANT. According to their DOMINANT INNER PARTICIPATION, characters are said to have an Aspect:

when INTENDING (SENSING) is dominant the Aspect is ENCLOSING
when ATTENDING (THINKING) is dominant the Aspect is PENETRATING
when DECIDING (INTUITING) is dominant the Aspect is CIRCUMSCRIBING
when ADAPTING (FEELING) is dominant the Aspect is RADIATING

ATTENDING: one the four INNER PARTICIPATIONS. The active form of THINKING.

ATTITUDES: the subconscious combinations of INNER PARTICIPATIONS taken two by two, which define the character types. There are six Attitudes, organized in three dialectically opposed pairs, according to the INNER PARTICIPATIONS they contain as well as to those they have discarded or moved "away from":

STABLE	INTENDING/ATTENDING	(SENSING/THINKING)
MOBILE	DECIDING/ADAPTING	(INTUITING/FEELING)
NEAR	INTENDING/DECIDING	(SENSING/INTUITING)
REMOTE	ATTENDING/ADAPTING	(THINKING/FEELING)
AWAKE	DECIDING/ATTENDING	(INTUITING/THINKING)
ADREAM	INTENDING/ADAPTING	(SENSING/FEELING)

Yat Malmgren distinguishes between CHARACTER (or INNER) ATTITUDES and ACTION (or OUTER) ATTITUDES. The former represent the fundamental psychological make up of the character. They cannot be perceived directly (but see INCOMPLETE MOVEMENTS and SHADOW MOVES) but define the character's personality and its reactions to the given circumstances of the play. ACTION ATTITUDES, on the other hand, define the character's "masks", its persona, its outward patterns of behaviour. Only those Attitudes which contain INTENDING (Sensing) - which "have a body" as Yat Malmgren puts it - can exist in practice, as Characters an actor can embody on the stage. These are: STABLE, NEAR and ADREAM. The other three Attitudes can only come into play as ACTION (OUTER) ATTITUDES. These are formed by combining a CHARACTER ATTITUDE with a STRESS (qv.).

AWAKE: one of the six "character types" or ATTITUDES. A combination of Attending and Deciding (Thinking and Intuiting). Awake does not contain Intending (Sensing) and can therefore exist only as an outer or ACTION ATTITUDE. Characters who display Awake Action Attitudes prominently are: Phormio in "The Captives", Maria in "Twelfth Night", The Fool in "King Lear", Dorinne in "Tartuffe", Trofimov in "The Cherry Orchard", Pavel Protasov in "Children of the Sun", Higgins in "Pygmalion", Reverend Hale in "The Crucible".

BOUND FLOW: the CONTENDING ELEMENT of FLOW (Feeling). The "tightening" and "gathering" and eventual stoppage of the character's emotional flow.

CHARACTER ATTITUDES: see ATTITUDES.

CIRCUMSCRIBING: an ATTITUDE is said to be Circumscribing when one of its component INNER PARTICIPATIONS is DECIDING and the latter is DOMINANT or "overstressed", i.e. it is the stronger of the two components of the ATTITUDE. A circumscribing character indicates an INTUITING PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE.

CONTENDING: the ELEMENTS which "fight against" or "contend" with the MOTION FACTORS of Weight, Space, Time and Flow.

CONSCIOUSNESS: The system follows Jung's understanding of the term. Consciousness is a product of the UNCONSCIOUS. *"In early childhood we are unconscious; the most important functions of an instinctive nature are unconscious, and consciousness is rather the product of the unconscious. It is a condition which demands a violent effort. You get tired from being conscious. You get exhausted by consciousness. It is an almost unnatural effort."*[1] Conscious and UNCONSCIOUS are relative. UNCONSCIOUS contents become conscious when the ego (*"the knowing, willing 'I'"*) turns its attention to them: *"If something is not related to the ego then it is not conscious. Therefore you can define consciousness as a relation of psychic facts to the ego."*[2] see also UNCONSCIOUS

DECIDING: one of the four INNER PARTICIPATIONS. The active form of INTUITING.

DIRECT: The CONTENDING ELEMENT of SPACE (Thinking). The logical, penetrating, systematic form of thinking.

DOING: The EXTERNALIZED DRIVE of exerting and reacting. A fusion of the INNER ATTITUDES of Stable, Near and Awake. The dynamic quality in a character's behaviour. Doing is defined by its lack of ADAPTING (FEELING).

DOMINANT: that ASPECT which is strongest in the psychological make up of an ATTITUDE. ATTITUDES are a compound of two INNER PARTICIPATIONS: the stronger of the two reflects the PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE (see MENTAL FACTORS) of the character and is said to be the Dominant.

EFFORT: Carpenter defines it as "the sequence of INNER ATTITUDES and EXTERNALIZED DRIVES which activate an ACTION."[3] Yat Malmgren rarely uses the term, but in the Laban-Malmgren system it represents the sum of the psychological forces which contribute to the ACTION and denominates the internal journey undertaken by the psychological energy before it emerges into perceptible expression.

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[1] "Tavistock Lectures, p. 8
[2] ibid., p. 10
[3] Glossary, p. 2

ELEMENTS: the subdivision of each MOTION FACTOR into their YIELDING and CONTENDING parts. Yielding Elements "give in", "submit" to physical and psychological forces of Weight, Space, Time and Flow. Contending Elements "fight against", "contend with" these forces. Yielding Elements are: Light, Flexible, Sustained and Free. Contending Elements are: Strong, Direct, Quick and Bound.

ENCLOSING: an ATTITUDE is said to be Enclosing when one of its component INNER PARTICIPATIONS is INTENDING and the latter is DOMINANT or "overstressed", i.e. it is the stronger of the two components of the ATTITUDE. An Enclosing character indicates a SENSING PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE.

EXTERNALIZED DRIVES: the fundamental "quality" or "overwhelming impression" given by a character. The "red thread" which runs through a character's personality as well as its actions. There are four Externalized Drives, each "generated" through a gradual process, by one of the Mental Factors:
DOING is generated by SENSING
VISION is generated by THINKING
SPELL is generated by INTUITING
PASSION is generated by FEELING.
Each Drive is related to three ATTITUDES (see individual DRIVES for detailed list of related ATTITUDES)

FEELING: the emotional MENTAL FACTOR. Revealed in movement as FLOW.

FLEXIBLE: The yielding ELEMENT of the MOTION FACTOR - SPACE. A "reflective movement...in two or more planes of space."[1]

FLOW: one of the four MOTION FACTORS. It expresses FEELING and is subdivided into the ELEMENTS of FREE and BOUND. It is perceived as the "viscosity" (qv.) of movement.[2]

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[1] Carpenter, Glossary, p. 2
[2] ibid.

FREE FLOW: the YIELDING ELEMENT of the MOTION FACTOR - FLOW. A "feeling of streaming, unarrestable fluidity of movement".[1]

FUSIONS: are 'patent lies'. In Attitudes with FLOW, the normal direction is: Free Flow 'scatters' (opens the body out) and Bound Flow 'gathers' (constricts the body). Sometimes this process is reversed in mid-Flow and characters become Bound while desperately wishing to appear Free. The process is said to be of BOUND 'going' FREE. Fusions only occur between VARIATIONS of the same ATTITUDE (e.g. MOBILE Sustained/Bound 'going' Sustained/Free). As a result Fusions provoke a change in the WORKING ACTIONS which express the ATTITUDE: the more 'extravert' WORKING ACTION 'softens' into its 'introvert' correspondent and the 'introvert' WORKING ACTION 'hardens' into its 'extravert' correspondent. (e.g. Pressing turns to Wringing and Floating turns to Gliding.) The character's 'lies' about its real feelings are seen by everyone apart from itself.

HEAVY: the NEGATIVE state of INTENDING. The passive, neutral, "impotent" form of Sensing, in which the forces of Strong and Light Thinking are equally poised and prevent the character from active sensuous involvement. An "inertia"[2] of the senses.

INCOMPLETE MOVEMENTS: motions executed without a definite purpose and in which one of the three MOTION FACTORS is missing. They are important because they reveal the INNER CHARACTER directly, without the "filter" of movements executed purposefully as part of an ACTION. (see also SHADOW MOVES).

INDECISIVE: the NEGATIVE state of DECIDING. The passive, neutral form of INTUITING, in which the forces of Quick and Sustained Deciding are equally poised and prevent the character from active intuitive relating of past, present and future. An incapacity to decide.

INNER ATTITUDES: see ATTITUDES

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[1] ibid.
[2] ibid.

INNER PARTICIPATIONS: the active forms of the MENTAL FACTORS, activated in our subconscious by a Super-Objective. There are four Inner Participations:

Activated SENSING produces INTENDING
Activated THINKING produces ATTENDING
Activated INTUITING produces DECIDING
Activated FEELING produces ADAPTING

INNER QUESTS: see QUESTS

INTENDING: one the four INNER PARTICIPATIONS. The active form of SENSING.

INTUITING: the intuitive MENTAL FACTOR. Revealed in movement as TIME. The subconscious capacity to achieve "insight without reasoning"[1] by relating intuitively the past to the future.

IRRELATED: the NEGATIVE state of ADAPTING. The passive, neutral form of FEELING, in which the forces of Bound and Free Feeling are equally poised and prevent the character from active emotional involvement. An inability to feel.

LIGHT: "the YIELDING ELEMENT of the MOTION FACTOR - WEIGHT. A light sensory muscular exertion which does not involve noticeable change of normal muscle forms."[2]

LINING: in the Character Diagrams the system shows that the ACTION ATTITUDES as well as the CHARACTER ATTITUDES have a STRESS, and therefore an "underlying quality". This secondary quality of the ACTION ATTITUDE is said to be its Lining. For example, a MOBILE ACTION ATTITUDE with a NEAR lining will have a specific sensuous quality, reflecting INTENDING, the dominant INNER PARTICIPATION in NEAR.

MENTAL FACTORS: the four psychological concepts inherited by the system from Jung. The basic components of the psyche: SENSING, THINKING, INTUITING, FEELING, reflecting the four PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPES identified by

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[1] Carpenter: "Glossary", p.3
[2] ibid.

Jung. The system is based on the premise that each of the Mental Factors is expressed (and is therefore perceived and analysed) in movement through one of the MOTION FACTORS.

MOBILE: one of the six "character types" or ATTITUDES. A combination of Deciding and Adapting (Intuiting and Feeling). Mobile does not contain Intending (Sensing) and can therefore exist only as an outer or ACTION ATTITUDE. Characters who display Mobile Action Attitudes prominently are: Ophelia, Romeo, Viola and Sebastian, Belvidera in "Venice Preserved", Sean Boyle in "Juno and the Paycock", Moritz in "Spring Awakening", Blanche Du Bois in "A Streetcar Named Desire", Madam Butterfly, Brick in "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof".

MOTION FACTORS: the four physical "measures" used by the system to gage the inner life of the character through its movements. Each one corresponds to a MENTAL FACTOR:

SENSING is expressed through WEIGHT
THINKING is expressed through SPACE
INTUITING is expressed through TIME
FEELING is expressed through FLOW

Each Motion Factor is subdivided into two ELEMENTS.

NEAR: one of the six "character types" or ATTITUDES. A combination of Intending and Deciding (Sensing and Intuiting). Near contains Intending (Sensing) and is therefore capable of physical embodiment on the stage as a CHARACTER or INNER ATTITUDE. Typical Near characters are: Noah's Wife and Mak in "The Mysteries", The Captain in "Twelfth Night" (I,2); The Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet", Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Volpone and Sir Politic Would-Be in "Volpone", Tesman and his aunt in "Hedda Gabler", Lady Bracknell in "The Importance Of Being Earnest", Yvette and the Cook in "Mother Courage", Cliff in "Look Back in Anger".

PASSION: the EXTERNALIZED DRIVE of constructing and destroying. A fusion of the INNER ATTITUDES of Near, Mobile and Adream. The "enthusiastic",

emotional quality in a character's behaviour, defined by its lack of THINKING.

PENETRATING: an ATTITUDE is said to be Penetrating when one of its component INNER PARTICIPATIONS is Attending and the latter is DOMINANT or "overstressed", i.e. it is the stronger of the two components of the ATTITUDE. A Penetrating character indicates a THINKING PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPES: see MENTAL FACTORS.

QUESTS: or INNER QUESTS, are the questions posed by the character (and the actor in the process of building a character) under the influence of a Super-Objective. Each of the Quests affects one of the MENTAL FACTORS and thus the posing of these fundamental questions triggers the "journey" or "Quest" of the acting energy from the latent MENTAL FACTOR to the active ACTION, through all the layers posited by the system, and ultimately expressed through one of the MOTION FACTORS. The four Quests, with their corresponding MENTAL FACTORS and MOTION FACTORS are:

WHAT? - SENSING - WEIGHT
WHERE? - THINKING - SPACE
WHEN? - INTUITING - TIME
WHY? - FEELING - FLOW

QUICK: "The CONTENDING ELEMENT of the MOTION FACTOR - TIME. An intuitive urge into the future."[1]

RADIATING: an ATTITUDE is said to be Radiating when one of its component INNER PARTICIPATIONS is ADAPTING and the latter is DOMINANT or "overstressed", i.e. it is the stronger of the two components of the ATTITUDE. A circumscribing character indicates a FEELING PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE.

REMOTE: one of the six "character types" or ATTITUDES. A combination of Attending and Adapting (Thinking and Feeling). Remote does not contain Intending (Sensing) and can therefore exist only as an OUTER or ACTION

[1] Carpenter: "Glossary", p.4

ATTITUDE. Characters who display Remote Action Attitudes prominently are: Cassandra in "The Agamemnon", Antigone, Jesus in "The Mysteries", Olivia and Feste in "Twelfth Night", Richard II, Jaques in "As You Like It", Helena in "All's Well That Ends Well", Basilio, the Astrologer King in "Life Is A Dream"; Pierre in "Venice Preserved", Dona Rosita in "Dona Rosita the Spinster", Laura in "The Glass Menagerie", Vladimir in "Waiting For Godot".

SENSING: the MENTAL FACTOR of perception through the five senses (sensory). Revealed in movement as WEIGHT.

SHADOW MOVES: movement of the body performed without the Character's awareness and usually without a functional purpose. To be distinguished from purposeful, often practical, physical activities carried out by the character in pursuit of a conscious goal or Objective. They amount to the character's "body language" and could involve idiosyncrasies such as nervous tics or movement patterns related to a profession or trade. Their importance lies in the fact that they reveal the INNER ATTITUDE of the character without the mitigation of the ACTION ATTITUDES.

SPACE: one of the four MOTION FACTORS. It expresses in movement the MENTAL FACTOR of THINKING. It is the kinetic Motion Factor and is subdivided into the ELEMENTS of DIRECT and FLEXIBLE.

SPELL: the EXTERNALIZED DRIVE of dominating and surrendering. A fusion of the INNER ATTITUDES of Stable, Remote and Adream. The "mysterious", "awe-inspiring" quality in a character's behaviour, notable for its weak powers of decision.

STABLE: one of the six "character types" or ATTITUDES. A combination of Intending and Attending (Sensing and Thinking). Stable contains Intending (Sensing) and is therefore capable of physical embodiment on stage as an INNER or CHARACTER ATTITUDE. Typical Stable characters are: Creon, Fortinbras, Escalus in "Measure For Measure", Titus in "Berenice", The King in "Fuenteovejuna", The King in "Hernani", Cabot in "Desire Under The Elms", perhaps Vivie in "Mrs. Warren's Profession".

STRESS: INNER ATTITUDES are passive psychological entities. For an INNER ATTITUDE to be activated into active ACTION ATTITUDES it needs to combine its component INNER PARTICIPATIONS with one of the two INNER PARTICIPATIONS which it had originally discarded, or moved "away from" in during its formative process. This third INNER PARTICIPATION acts as the catalyst which brings the INNER ATTITUDE into active play. The catalyst is called a Stress and determines which of the CHARACTER's component INNER PARTICIPATIONS is active in ACTION at any given moment during the play.

STRONG: "the CONTENDING ELEMENT of the MOTION FACTOR - WEIGHT. A sensory muscular firmness in any part of the body, involving a considerable exertion of muscles."[1]

SUBCONSCIOUS: see UNCONSCIOUS (PERSONAL)

SUBCONSCIOUS MOTIFS: the psychological form of WORKING ACTIONS (qv.). the equivalent of Stanislavski's "psychological activities" or "transitive verbs". There is a sample list of such "activities" in Appendix 2 of the Malmgren "Book".

SUSTAINED: "the YIELDING ELEMENT of the MOTION FACTOR - TIME. An intuitive clinging to the past."[2]

THINKING: the cerebral MENTAL FACTOR, representing formation of ideas through "reflective reasoning"[3]. Revealed in movement as SPACE.

TIME: one of the four MOTION FACTORS. It expresses in movement the MENTAL FACTOR of INTUITING. It is the rhythmic Motion Factor and is subdivided into the ELEMENTS of QUICK and SUSTAINED.

UNCONSCIOUS (PERSONAL): Jung distinguishes between two types of unconscious, the personal or *"subconscious mind"* and the COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS. The personal unconscious is a product of CONSCIOUSNESS and is, like Freud's, a *"shadow land"* of suppressed and repressed memories

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[1] Carpenter: "Glossary", p.5
[2] ibid.
[3] ibid.

which were once conscious, as well as of subliminal perceptions too feeble to be registered by the conscious ego but which affect the personal unconscious. *"Jung concerned himself less with the nature of consciousness than with what was conscious and what was unconscious. Consciousness included the dominant orientation of a personality and those things upon which this orientation focused. The unconscious was the resting place for all that was in opposition to the conscious orientation. Since the two were incompatible, the normal, healthy forces were pushed into a limbo from which they later departed in exaggerated form, shaped by the dominant structure, distorted by the rest of the unconscious, and deprived of the opportunity to develop beyond a primitive level, until they were caricatures of what they might have been."*[1]

It is important to remember that for Jung CONSCIOUSNESS and the unconscious are relative: *"When I am unconscious of a certain thing I am only relatively unconscious of it; in some other aspects I may know it. The contents of the personal unconscious are perfectly conscious in certain respects but you do not know them under a particular aspect or at a particular time. How can you establish whether the thing is conscious or unconscious? You simply ask people. We have no other criterion to establish whether something is conscious or unconscious...When I am asked if I know a certain man I may say no, because I have no recollection of him and so I am not conscious of knowing him; but when I am told that I met him two years ago, that he is Mr. So-and-So who has done such-and-such a thing, I reply: "Certainly, I know him". I know him and I do not know him."*[2]

UNCONSCIOUS (COLLECTIVE): Jung distinguishes between two types of unconscious, the PERSONAL UNCONSCIOUS or *"subconscious mind"* and the collective unconscious. The latter is signalled by the emergence into consciousness, mainly through dreams, of contents *"of definitely unknown origin, or at all events of an origin which cannot be ascribed to individual acquisition. These contents have one outstanding peculiarity, and that is their mythological character. It is as if they belong to a pattern not peculiar to any particular mind or person, but rather to a*

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[1] Neel: "Psychological Theories", p. 219
[2] "Tavistock Lectures", pp. 63-4

pattern peculiar to mankind in general"[1]. The collective unconscious is the repository of universal archetypes. Accessing these contents often lies at the core of artistic creativity. The Laban-Malmgren system offers a conscious methodology for such access.

VARIATIONS: are "nuances" of character make up or behaviour. They are therefore aspects of ATTITUDES. Variations are derived as follows: each ATTITUDE is a compound of two INNER PARTICIPATIONS. Each INNER PARTICIPATION in turn has two ELEMENTS, one YIELDING and one CONTENDING. When these ELEMENTS combine two by two within an ATTITUDE, they give rise to a Variation of that particular ATTITUDE. The Variations are given "nicknames" - Carpenter's way of identifying their psychological nature at a glance. The Variations and their "Nicknames" are:

STABLE (INTENDING/ADAPTING):

STRONG/DIRECT	"commanding"
LIGHT/FLEXIBLE	"receptive"
STRONG/FLEXIBLE	"practical"
LIGHT/DIRECT	"self-contained"

MOBILE (DECIDING/ADAPTING):

QUICK/BOUND	"unacknowledged"
SUSTAINED/FREE	"acknowledged"
QUICK/FREE	"revealed"
SUSTAINED/BOUND	"concealed"

NEAR (INTENDING/DECIDING):

STRONG/QUICK	"materialistic"
LIGHT/SUSTAINED	"human"
STRONG/SUSTAINED	"warm"
LIGHT/QUICK	"cool"

[1] ibid., pp. 40-1

REMOTE (ATTENDING/ADAPTING):

DIRECT/BOUND	"egocentric"
FLEXIBLE/FREE	"altruistic"
DIRECT/FREE	"sociable"
FLEXIBLE/BOUND	"unsociable"

AWAKE(ATTENDING/DECIDING):

DIRECT/QUICK	"acute"
FLEXIBLE/SUSTAINED	"doubting"
DIRECT/SUSTAINED	"certain"
FLEXIBLE/QUICK	"uncertain"

ADREAM(INTENDING/ADAPTING):

STRONG/BOUND	"sombre"
LIGHT/FREE	"irradiant"
STRONG/FREE	"overpowering"
LIGHT/BOUND	"diffused" ("shy")

VISCOSITY: A quality of FLOW (FEELING). The oil-like property of movement to "flow" freely or "thickly". Carpenter describes it as: "the quality of movement observed in FLOW, varying in feeling from an absence of viscosity in FREE FLOW to an emotional viscidity in BOUND FLOW."[1]

VISION: the EXTERNALIZED DRIVE of ideas and problems. A fusion of the INNER ATTITUDES of Mobile, Remote and Awake. The spiritual, idealistic quality in a character's behaviour, defined by its lack of sensuous involvement.

WEIGHT: one of the four MOTION FACTORS. It expresses in movement the MENTAL FACTOR of SENSING. It is the Motion Factor which responds to gravity; "the impact of receiving or transmitting sensory stimuli".[2] It is subdivided into the ELEMENTS of STRONG and LIGHT.

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[1] Carpenter: "Glossary", p. 5
[2] ibid.

WHAT?: the INNER QUEST which triggers the latent MENTAL FACTOR of SENSING into the MOTION FACTOR of WEIGHT.

WHEN?: the INNER QUEST which triggers the latent MENTAL FACTOR of INTUITING into the MOTION FACTOR of TIME.

WHERE?: the INNER QUEST which triggers the latent MENTAL FACTOR of THINKING into the MOTION FACTOR of SPACE.

WHY?: the INNER QUEST which triggers the latent MENTAL FACTOR of FEELING into the MOTION FACTOR of FLOW.

WORKING ACTIONS: The eight basic actions into which Laban analysed all purposeful, "consciously performed" physical activities. They are the primary tool for analysing a character's conscious movements and thus deducing its ACTION ATTITUDES and their inner motivation. Each Working Action is a compound of ELEMENTS of the three MOTION FACTORS of WEIGHT, TIME and SPACE. The Working Actions are, from the most CONTENDING to the most YIELDING:

PUNCHING	STRONG/DIRECT/QUICK
PRESSING	STRONG/DIRECT/SUSTAINED
SLASHING	STRONG/FLEXIBLE/QUICK
WRINGING	STRONG/FLEXIBLE/SUSTAINED
DABBING	LIGHT/DIRECT/QUICK
GLIDING	LIGHT/DIRECT/SUSTAINED
FLICKING	LIGHT/FLEXIBLE/QUICK
FLOATING	LIGHT/FLEXIBLE/SUSTAINED

While the Working Actions refer primarily to physical activities, the system recognized that a character can engage in equivalent activities on the psychological level. The latter are described and analysed in the same terms as the physical Working Actions. However, when they occur at a mental level they are designated as SUBCONSCIOUS MOTIFS (qv.).

YIELDING: the ELEMENTS which "give in to" or "yield" with the MOTION FACTORS of Weight, Space, Time and Flow.

C H A P T E R VII

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