Shifting paradigms of practice in *Interpretación Gestual*: Integrating bodymind training with Michael Chekhov’s acting techniques within the context of training professional actors in Spain

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This thesis examines the implementation of an actor-training programme in the context of Spanish drama schools during 2004-2005. Reflecting through the student’s practice as well as my own practice as a teacher, actor and director, I investigate how a bodymind training based on martial arts disciplines and designed by Phillip Zarrilli may contribute to understand the theory and the practice of an actor’s use of the imagination as Michael Chekhov proposes it. Core questions arise from the evaluation of what is the professional knowledge that the integration of both systems of training brings to the students. The action of research is placed in how the process of learning such competencies take place and become informative of both the research and the acting practice. The concept of acting is being analysed by looking at the significance of the actor’s imagination from a phenomenological rather than a psychological perspective. The discussion includes the challenge that developing a new pedagogy in a drama school brings up to a better understanding of contemporary paradigms of theatre practice and education.

*Interpretación Gestual* is since 1992 an established branch in the *Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Madrid* (RESAD). Acting in physical (gestural) theatre conveys some problematic issues concerning its theory and practice within both professional and pedagogical contexts. Implementing a new and specific teaching programme for the preparation of professional actors in the context of the RESAD urges me to clarify in-practice certain issues about these two different approaches to actor training, as well as their presence in today’s education within the curriculum of official drama schools in Spain.
# Table of Contents

**Abstract** .............................................................................................................................. 3

**Table of Contents** .............................................................................................................. 5
  - List of illustrations ............................................................................................................. 7
  - List of accompanying material ....................................................................................... 7
  - Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... 9

**Chapter 1: The Introduction** ............................................................................................... 13
  1.1. Practice as Research ................................................................................................. 18
    - Performative Research ................................................................................................. 20
    - Further methods & questions of research .................................................................. 22
    - Documentation ............................................................................................................ 25
  1.2. Sources and Context of Research ............................................................................. 28
    - Sources of practice ..................................................................................................... 29
    - RESAD’s physical theatre branch ............................................................................... 34
    - Pedagogical circumstances ....................................................................................... 37
    - The performance projects ......................................................................................... 41

**Chapter 2: Training the Bodymind** ................................................................................... 47
  2.1. Experiencing Breathing, Energy and the Bodymind .................................................. 50
    - Significance of breathing ......................................................................................... 50
    - Spatial awareness ...................................................................................................... 55
    - Residual awareness .................................................................................................. 56
    - Energy ....................................................................................................................... 58
    - Dynamic breathing ..................................................................................................... 60
    - The quality of energy ................................................................................................. 62
    - Acting intuition .......................................................................................................... 64
    - Active images ............................................................................................................ 67
  2.2. Experimenting the Relationship to the Doing ............................................................. 72
    - Actor as creator .......................................................................................................... 74
    - The Journey ............................................................................................................... 76
    - The Object .................................................................................................................. 82
    - Looking ahead ............................................................................................................ 86
    - The Other ................................................................................................................... 90
  2.3. Exploring an Actor's Disposition .............................................................................. 97
    - Patience and commitment ......................................................................................... 102
    - Origins and inner conviction .................................................................................... 103
    - Emotion .................................................................................................................... 105
    - Determination ........................................................................................................... 106
    - Inner coherence ........................................................................................................ 107
    - Stage language .......................................................................................................... 109
    - Courage ..................................................................................................................... 110
    - Images ...................................................................................................................... 111

**Conclusion** ....................................................................................................................... 116

**Chapter 3: Dynamics of the Imagination** .......................................................................... 119
  3.1. The Atmosphere in the House of Bernarda Alba ...................................................... 126
    - Preliminaries: sensations versus emotions .................................................................. 126
    - Beginnings: A sensitive membrane. ........................................................................... 128
    - Into the midst of the technique of Atmospheres ....................................................... 136
    - Chekhov’s movement qualities: what and how ......................................................... 142
    - Spatial awareness in the technique of Atmospheres ................................................ 146
  3.2. Imaginary Bodies in García Lorca’s Play .................................................................. 150
    - The technique of the Imaginary Body ....................................................................... 150
    - Searching for the body .............................................................................................. 153
    - The grotesque body .................................................................................................. 157