Tele Psychic Acting
Exploiting the Creativity of the Subconscious Mind in Acting

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The principal objective of this doctoral project is to contribute a new acting technique to enhance the development of forms of creativity for the actor. My research question that drives this project then is: How to control the inner processes of creating the role through a new technique? In fact, I will argue that a deep understanding of the subconscious mind can release creativity in more spontaneous ways. This study will investigate the potential of the subconscious for the actor through an exploration of psychological theories of access to different ‘mind frequencies’, as well as looking at more recent theories generically centred on the concept of ‘mind control’ through thoughts. The output of this research project, carried out in part through my own theatrical practice, is to develop a system for actor training and performance, which is defined, later in the thesis, as ‘The Mind Technique’. More specifically, I proposed tele-psychic acting as a technique that systematically taps into the hidden subconscious power of the mind, which allows the actor a wider scrutiny of roles from different, creative perspectives. This thesis is organised into two sections – these are roughly divided between theory and practice. In the theoretical section, I reviewed a critical examination of the inner processes at work in role creation as pioneered by Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Chekhov, Grotowski, and Zarrilli (Chapter 1), followed by the literature around creativity and acting processes (Chapter 2). To illustrate my idea, I used diagrams which easily present different acting methods and formulas which explain the mechanism of methods of acting. Finally, I provided a reflexive and critical account of my own experiences as an actor engaged in the process of both making and performing work. The practice section of the thesis has been built around the critical analysis of four distinct workshops where I worked with a group of Iranian actors (Case study 1) and around the performance of my version of Medea; (Case study 2). Here we worked on ways of tapping into the subconscious, utilising Alpha frequencies, improvisation, and an open creativity, to try and understand the cumulative function of the subconscious mind in process of creating the role (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 is used to discuss the findings and assess the feedback from earlier workshops in Iran in relation to the Mind Technique, discuss and analysing the process of creating Medea followed by conclusion which explains how the research has helped me to formulate a method for practice and approach the questions from a different perspective (Chapter 5).
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Introduction

This practice as research works against the commonly-held view that the subconscious mind is neither accessible nor controllable. It would appear that there is an absence of methodologies available to the actor for generating subconscious creativity and this is one of the questions at the centre of this practice as research project. In fact, I will argue that a deep understanding of the subconscious mind can release creativity in more spontaneous ways. It seems from my observations of younger Iranian theatre practitioners who act, direct, and stage-design simultaneously that they often fall into a repetitive pattern in role creation based on my twenty years experiences. Their character portrayals are frequently contrived and predictable. The pattern of repetition is evident: the younger generation of directors often re-direct previous shows while younger actors often act in ways that display remnants of characters from productions they were previously cast in. In other words, many of them have not learnt to create their roles creatively and impressively. As an award-winning director and actress, I noticed that there is a marked disparity between acting standards in my generation of actors and the younger ones in Tehran, and this inspired me to identify specific gaps in our acting approaches.

Therefore my research question is: How to control the inner processes of creating the role through a new technique? Other questions are: what is the mechanism of creativity in the inner process of creating the role? Given the wealth of experiences and resources available and accessible to an actor, how can they generate creativity systematically while preparing and creating their roles? Since a lay person’s understanding of creativity is typically constrained by the limitations of human ability, creativity is also restricted by this limitation of human abilities. I hypothesise here however that it is possible to tap into a different level of consciousness to become more creative. In order to perform an exclusive and original role, as well as to avoid any repetitive performing, an actor needs to tap into a subconscious creativity, rather than conscious creativity, during role creation. The difference between conscious creativity and subconscious creativity is that the latter operates through subconscious mind at what are commonly known as Alpha frequencies. Thus I also introduced and explore of the concept of Alpha frequencies as a specific means by which to access the subconscious. Furthermore, the practice component of the practical research provided a ‘laboratory’ setting for investigating questions which arose from the formulation of my hypothesis,
and enables experiment through trial and error, testing and developing my ideas through practice.

Methodology

An important aspect of practice as research as a methodology was to document my processes and interrogate my practice with emerging questions and hypotheses arising from the workshops. To further experiment and test out my hypotheses in creating a role and establishing a connection between the inner and outer processes, I applied a set of techniques in my rehearsal and performance of the Greek classic, Medea. My reasons for selecting this text, and hence the character, were as follows.

Firstly, I wanted the character to be recognised by an audience in my solo performance. I had looked at Antigone (by Sophocles), Macbeth (by Shakespeare, c. 1606), Electra (by Sophocles), A Doll’s House (by Ibsen, 1879), The Stronger (by Strindberg), Play (by Beckett), and Medea (by Euripides, c.431 BC), but among these plays and major characters, I have decided to choose Medea because it is a very popular and well-known myth. The theme of Medea has strong relevance to our Iranian culture. Firstly, the woman in Euripides’ play had been betrayed by her husband, and secondly, it is about a woman who migrated to a foreign country. These are two huge social issues in my home country, especially since a man is allowed to have four official wives. This patriarchal situation underscores the dominance of male privilege over women’s morality, identity, and rights. Also the character of Medea, a foreign woman promised in marriage who is then betrayed has a particular resonance. Audiences who have read Euripides would be able to compare my characterisation with what they have seen or known about the character, which would then allow them to critically appreciate and evaluate what I bring to the characterisation of Medea. Although there is a possibility that some of the audiences have not heard of Medea, it should not pose a problem since I am concerned about my relationship with the audience while creating the role; I am not doing a textual analysis or character study of the role itself but am using the role to explore creative possibilities.

One of the other important factors in my choice of focus for my solo performance was that I wanted to play a strong female character. As such, Medea was a complex role and
a challenging character to embody. According to Karelia Hartigan, “[t]he desire to produce one of Euripides’ dramas must rest, ultimately, on its theatricality and strong character of Medea herself: her great scenes are a challenge for any actress” (Hartigan, 1995: 48). I felt that this role would be challenging from a number of perspectives: not an easy role to create, but one that I felt held a lot of potential in terms of the ways in which I might develop it creatively. In order to demonstrate to younger Iranian actors different ways in which they can also create new roles freely, I decided to rehearse and act in a role that I had not previously acted in. This then allowed me to model an internal process, which might be articulated so that it can offer a kind of template for developing forms of creativity in the preparation and performance of a role.

In terms of working practice, I wanted to consider the relationship of a third eye, an imaginary overseer, when creating this role. I thought that how I could choose a way to show the development of my idea in the process of creating Medea as well as document the process itself. I preferred to choose very simple way that I had tried it before. So for example, during rehearsal, if an idea came in to my mind through the third eye that caused me to create a specific moment, I stopped the rehearsal, and recorded the process. Here I made a note and spoke directly to the camera to explain some of the images or ideas that emerged. If necessary, I jotted ideas down on paper without interrupting the mental flow. I then returned to the rehearsal space quickly and worked on that same feeling. This has been done through the third eye, the imaginary overseer. I replayed the scenes later for further analysis, to examine the changes in body, voice, and emotion, and to find a relationship between my conscious interruptions and subconscious changes in the body.

The original Medea was written by Euripides (480-406 BC), and has been adapted and re-written by many generations of playwrights. It was adapted by Seneca (4 BC-65 AD), followed by Pierre Corneille in 1635 (Lima, 2005: 311); Robinson Jeffers in 1946 (Benne, 2015: 197); Franca Rame and Dario Fo in 1977 (McDonald, 2003:148); and more contemporary playwrights such as Heiner Muller, with the title of Medea material 1985 (France, 2000: 340); Neil Labute, with the title of Bash and Medea Redux (Fantasia, 2013: 25). I wanted to develop my own version of Medea so that I could create a new script freely and spontaneously during my process of rehearsal and observation, for instance, through embodiment, movement, concentration, imagination and meditation. One marked difference was that my script used the device of having a
storyteller who informed the audience all the time that they were watching a play: they act as a kind of conduit between the action and audience. I developed the use of this device in order to bring awareness to the present; similarly Brecht’s alienation techniques are used so as to distance the audience and lessen the likelihood of pure absorption by audience and actors. This open-ended quality in working practice allowed me to test the creative implementation of the “third eye”, which was a sensory awareness of the audience’s presence. (See Chapter 4)

Also, in my script, Medea has two different dimensions of feelings. Medea displays a vindictive ferociousness, as well as tenderness in her role as mother. This psychological tension allowed me enough scope to experiment with her interior processes as a dynamic character.

During the performance, a video camera also recorded my acting on both nights. The performance footages will be compared to the rehearsal footages, and subsequently analysed. The changes in my movements or acting will be observed. Further reflections will help me to articulate and test my hypotheses. I will then continue to theorise and schematise the techniques that I have discovered, in light of the psychophysical acting theories.

My version of Medea was structured as a one-act play, which allowed me to perform it easily compared to the other productions which have the need to consider other technical aspects of a theatre production. In a solo performance, I could manage and observe my progress without depending on someone else. For example, I could stop the rehearsal process and note my reflections without hampering the ensemble work since I would be directing my own process. This self-reflection is, after all, an internal process that governs an actor’s preparation when memorising the lines and developing the character. I wanted to use my body and mind as tools for experimentation, so that I could focus on both my technique and form in creating my role more freely. On a more practical note, I could rehearse anytime and anywhere without a need for a specific time and place, so the research could be an ongoing reflective exercise.

**Reflections on my previous acting experiences**

There is a large body of work that I have done in Iran. In 1993, I directed, acted, and designed a performance *The Endless Conversation of Setareh*, where I was awarded
both the best actress and best play at the International Theatre Festival in Iran (see Image 1). In 1999, I received the best actress award with *Azhdehak* being the best play at the same Festival. In 2003, I directed, acted and designed *Electre*, which is an adaptation of Sophocles’ *Electra* (1979). The play received the best play at the same Theatre Festival (see Image 2).

**Image 1: The Endless Conversation of Setareh (1999)**
Reflecting on my own experience when thinking about a role, my mind is often flooded with ideas to help me create the role. It is a subconscious process. I noticed that when I was thinking continuously about my role, even running errands and doing household chores, my mind is still very active. Even at rest, my mind conjures up images and sensations that help me create that role. This means that my conscious attention in creating a role worked efficiently and effectively for me. My hypothesis is that if we place the actor during rehearsal in a concentrated position of thinking repeatedly of their roles every day at a certain time specifically in pre-sleep, it will cause actors to create their role. In other words, it is possible during the rehearsal to ‘turn on’ the mind in order to activate creativity.
Another observation I have as an actress is what I call the “third eye”. I always feel the presence of an overseer criticising me all the time to help me correct myself in creating a role in the right way. I have felt the presence of an overseer when I was doing a solo performance which I directed, as well as working in an ensemble with a different director. This overseer is like a voice, a thought, or a feeling. Intuitively, I could feel the progression of the overseer’s stage directions not only during the rehearsal, but also during the performances on stage. The overseer, in my opinion, even knows what the audience feels and how they receive the performance. For instance, once, I was playing a solo performance. In my role I had to pronounce a Persian word that was unique and different. One night as I was doing a different movement with my lips, I felt the overseer telling me, “Yes. This is effective.” After the performance, one professional actor came to the backstage and said, “I really liked the movement of your lips, which was awesome”. Since then, I played every night using the same movement; however, the only night that I received a comment from my overseer was the night I received the same comment from an audience member. It showed me that the overseer is also aware of the audience’s feelings. My questions then emerge: Where did this knowledge come from? Did I control the overseer with my thoughts, or was there some kind of overseer watching me from the outside and telling me what the best thing to do on stage, hence making a gesture even more effective?

The overseer, in this research, is the “third eye”. Therefore when there is a relationship between the “third eye” in creating a role, then there is a causal relationship between the body and the mind in creating that role. Also, there is a relationship between repetition and creating the role. In other words, there is a triangular relationship between repetition, the unity of the body and mind, and the “third eye” in creating a character. The hypothesis that is proposed in my case study is the nature of circulation among these variables. As previously mentioned my main research question which also relates to my methodology is: How to control the inner processes of creating the role through a new technique? Here my sub-question is: what is the function of the “third eye” in creating a role?

After acknowledging the presence of the “third eye” in my acting career, I noticed that it kept giving me feedback to correct my characterization, during the performance and even after the show had finished. I still received different ideas to play different moments in the play. It was a psychological, subconscious process that continued on.
This was strange since the play was over. But according to my own experiences I discovered that the ideas generated from this “third eye” were in preparation for another character that I was going to play a few months later. As the new ideas in my mind, after the show had finished were perfectly fit to my new role. My assumption is that when creativity is activated, it does not stop creating. It has an endless reservoir of new messages. Because of these experiences, both in the rehearsal space and the performance stage, I seek to investigate this creative outlet stemming from my subconscious, as well as the presence of the “third eye” in helping me create a dynamic, powerful character which in some respects, has been missing in the younger generation of Iranian actors, according to my observation while I was teaching in the Iran university and also directing various plays in different period of time. For this reason I will now go on to review some of the acting literatures around role creation.
Each section of this chapter presents a straightforward interpretation and articulation of some of the main acting techniques in use since the 19th century. In the rest of this chapter the necessity of acting techniques as a means of assisting actors to attain their characters, developed by Constantin Stanislavsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Michael Chekhov, Jerzy Grotowski and Phillip Zarrilli in their rehearsals, and the pragmatic preponderance of mind as a crucial instrument of actors are assessed. These practitioners developed different acting techniques, each of which tried to eliminate what the practitioners saw as the other methods’ deficiencies.

The title of this chapter, ‘The inner processes of creating the role in different acting techniques’, refers most broadly to analysing acting technique as a method to facilitate approaches to acting. It is important to know that some acting trainers claim that actors must be trained through an adherence to a particular technique. They argue that, as acting is an art of presenting with preparation, thus actors must be technically trained and prepared in rehearsal. Michael Chekhov, who worked closely with Stanislavsky, stated that “it should be reiterated that every art, even the actor’s, must have its principles and aspirations, and its professional techniques” (Chekhov; 2013: 154). On the other hand some argue that, as acting is an innate art, therefore acting is a spontaneous action that requires actors’ own technique that needs practical experience to emerge (See appendix 1, Workshop in Italy, Interview with Sergejs Ostrenko, No 1, time from 02:20 to 02:45).

For instance, Edward Braun said that: “The inspirational actor totally rejects technique of any kind” (Braun, 2016: 156), adding a citation from Meyerhold: “Technique hinders creative freedom is what he always says. For him the only valid moment is the moment of unconscious creativity born of the emotions. If such a moment comes, he succeeds; if not, he fails” (Braun, 2016: 156). Also some respected actors, such as Ian McKellen in his live interview, Inside the actors studio, claimed that “I never went to the drama school and I never accepted any method...there is no technique that I’d like to
I’m not a huge fan of method acting. Yes, I use aspects of Stanislavsky’s method in my own acting, but my own acting is much like Sir Ian McKellen’s: me, me, me, me, action! (say lines) cut!, me, me, me, me.\(^2\)

Regardless of these distinct points of view, this research is seeking to describe an acting technique that enables the actor to create his role under his control without hindering creative freedom or ruining the moment of subconscious creativity. The subconscious creativity means creativity that emerges from the subconscious. For this reason considering the inner process in creating the role in rehearsal, is the initial systematic appraisal of both acting techniques which forms a bridge between theory and practice and practical experience. In an effort to develop a more appropriate means of addressing the distinctive attributes of the acting training, this chapter focuses on the inner process of creating the role in rehearsal with the assistance of a suitable acting technique that does not interfere with the nature of creativity.

In order to examine the assumptions around the needs of actors that is independently substantial to approach their role from the inner process, this chapter analytically articulates acting techniques based on the inner processes of creating the role. The hypotheses raised earlier help to answer my broader research question, which is to investigate the techniques that might control the inner processes, so that actors can control creativity in the process of creating the role without hindering the nature and spontaneity of creativity.

The inner processes of acting have been discussed widely in acting theories and practice. What follows is a critical account of some notable scholars and theatre directors who have, in some way, used inner processes as a way to teach acting. Through this chapter, I argue that these acting methods are based on the function of the third eye/ another “I” either directly or indirectly. To consider this matter I have designed six diagrams in order to compare and analyze the mechanism of creating the role in different acting techniques. As an introduction to this study Constantine

\(^1\)https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqMs2vORPbI (accessed November 23/2015 at 10.30am)

\(^2\)https://directorlife.wordpress.com/2008/01/02/how-to-become-a-great-actor-according-to-sir-ian-mckellen/  (accessed November 23/2015 at 12am)
Stanislavsky’s approach is analysed firstly then those of Vsevolod Meyerhold, Michael Chekhov and Jerzy Grotowski, followed by a consideration of the work of Phillip Zarrilli.

This is not an attempt to comprehensively summarise all their work in any way. Instead I want to draw out their ideas of the conscious in relation to creating a role, focusing on ideas about the third eye. I have looked for different terminologies and lines of thinking, trying to identify these aspects of their work whether they use the same terminology or not.

1.1: Stanislavsky and his system

To explain his system, Constantine Stanislavsky uses the semi-fictional form of one director (Tortsov who presents Stanislavsky) and a group of actors who are in the process of rehearsal. Regardless of his form, Stanislavsky divided the preparatory stage of his system as follows:

The preparatory work on a role can be divided into three great periods: studying it; establishing the life of the role; putting it into physical form. The period of study: First acquaintance with a part, analysis, studying the external circumstances, putting life into external circumstances, creating inner circumstances, appraising the facts. The period of emotional experience: Inner impulses and inner action, creative objectives, the score of the role, the inner tone, the superobjective and through action, the superconscious (Stanislavsky, 1981: 3).

I have formed Stanislavsky’s system into a diagram to show visually what this process might look like.

![Diagram 1: The process of creating the role in Stanislavsky’s system](image-url)
In his system Stanislavsky emphasized *Magic if* and *emotional memory.* The way that he offers the method of *Magic if* and *emotional memory* is to show that how imagination as a tool helps to create the heart of the role. He believed that an actor’s feelings and his body bring the inner and outer aspects of the role but imagination assists him to create his entire role.

What is the nature of the actor’s creativity? He creates using his own feelings, memories, his own body. Feeling and the body bring the inner and outer aspects of the role together while the imagination sketches out the character’s entire life that creates the appropriate atmosphere that shapes (forms and develops) the heart of the role (Stanislavsky, 2009: 96).

He added that imagination can create another person which was later called the *imaginary character* by Chekov: “An actor’s imagination can draw to itself the life of another person, adapt it, discover mutual and exciting qualities and features” (Stanislavsky, 1981: 19). Stanislavsky stressed imagination in his method, although he only uses this notion to embody the life of the character in the actor's mind. Elsewhere he says: “Activity in imagination is of utmost importance. First comes internal and afterwards external action” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 58). He believed that anything that an actor embodies internally and in his mind will be expressed as physical action which is similar to the Mind Technique which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 4.

What is debatable in Stanislavsky’s system is that he realized that there must be something inside the actor that enables him to create the role; however he interpreted this as the nature or instinct of the actor. “The actor creates his imaginary world through his own free will and the creative energy stemming from the raw material in his own mind, which has, therefore, an affinity to his own nature and is not derived by chance from the outside” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 114). Stanislavsky also believes that the actor creates his role with his motives and impulses. He explains the spontaneity of creativity as an inner impulse and not something happening by chance. “He creates it out of the facts and circumstances he has established in accordance with his inner wants and impulses, and not in spite of him through a malevolent fate and chance, as often occurs

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in real life” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 114). This means that he was looking for something that causes the creation of the role inside the actor.

In this regard he stated that: “All action in the theatre must have an inner justification” (Stanislavsky, 2013: 40). Therefore Stanislavsky in his acting technique or system focuses on the inner processes of creating the role and the actor’s natural interior. “The inner attention is of particular importance to an actor because so much of his life takes place in the realm of imaginary circumstances” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 87). Although he suggested his acting technique, he emphasized the natural acting abilities. On this subject Stanislavsky said that: “Naturally and unconsciously put nature to work. And it is only nature itself that can fully control our muscles, tense them properly or relax them” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 106). He also adds:

Yet the most perfectly developed technique cannot be compared with the art of nature. I have seen many famous technical actors of many schools and many lands, in my day, and none of them could reach the height to which artistic intuition, under the guidance of nature, is capable of ascending (Stanislavsky, 1989: 170).

On the other hand he states elsewhere: “To rouse your subconscious to creative work there is a special technique. We must leave all that is in the fullest sense subconscious to nature, and address ourselves to what is within our reach” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 14). This shows that Stanislavsky was looking for a technique that inspires subconscious creativity through the inner nature. Moreover, some key words were important to Stanislavsky: special technique, nature, imagination, creativity and the subconscious. Stanislavsky’s suggested technique to stimulate creativity was the Magic If. Therefore his acting technique is most popularly associated with the Magic If and given circumstances, and in An Actor Prepares, he discusses the importance of imagination and fantasy. In the Magic If technique an actor imagines, for instance, if I was in Hamlet's situation what I would do? This If helps the actor to activate his imagination and imagines himself in Hamlet’s situation.

This method worked for years; however it had some drawbacks, such as: When an actor imagines himself as Hamlet he automatically filters the new character from himself. This means that the new character would be similar to the actor’s own character. In this case the new character would not been created and the actor only learns the lines and plays the role with no any creation. For this reason I am going to offer a method in the
Mind Technique, where the actor instead of using *Magic If* and saying if I was Hamlet, says there is an imaginary character in my mind that he supposes to be Hamlet. The actor imagines the role in his mind without interference from his own personal character. This new character is blank at first and during the process of creating the role will be completed like a puzzle. On the other hand, although Stanislavsky offers *Magic If* as a way of creating the role he refers to the subconscious as a source of creation.

For example he asks: “Will what is given [by the dramatist] paint the character of the dramatis personae and give you all the shadings of their thoughts, feelings, impulses and acts?” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 56) The answer is no. He adds that much of acting is intuitive, and therefore belongs to the subconscious. But because the subconscious is inaccessible, we cannot enter that realm. He explains the predicament: “When your inner nature is in its grip your subconscious process cannot develop normally. You must achieve inner freedom as well as physical relaxation” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 288). Therefore Stanislavsky believed that freedom and relaxation could help to develop the process of creating the role through the subconscious.

Elsewhere he said that: “We use the conscious technique of creating the physical body of a role and by its aid achieve the creation of the subconscious life of the spirit of a role” (Stanislavsky, 1989: 147). Stanislavsky declared that an actor uses the conscious technique to create the physical aspect of the role and then through this process, the creation of the soul of the role is being subconsciously achieved. Hence the function of the acting technique can be described as “Unconscious creativeness through conscious technique” (Stanislavsky, 1989: 56). This acting technique assists an actor not to just create his role, but also to utilize his subconscious to create the role. In the opinion of Stanislavsky the character has two aspects to be created, physical (external) and spiritual (internal) aspects. The substantial point that comes out is that the spiritual aspect of the character cannot be created through the acting technique. Therefore Stanislavsky believed that an actor can only create his role through the freedom of his inner nature together with his acting technique.

Another notion that Stanislavsky used in his method was *inner attention* which means embodying the character with the inner eye, ear and so forth, so helping the actor to create his role. Stanislavsky explains that:
The conscious means of embodying a role belongs with the intellectual creation of an outer image, with the aid of imagination, the inner eye, ear and so forth. This means that an actor strives with his inner eye to see the exterior, the costume, gait, movements and so forth in the character he is to play (Stanislavsky, 2013:87).

In this way the actor creates his role intellectually through his *inner attention*. Stanislavsky did not specifically mention having an imaginary character in the actor’s mind; however he pointed to the inner attention. He further states that “[t]he inner attention is of particular importance to an actor because so much of his life takes place in the realm of imaginary circumstances” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 87). The terms that Stanislavsky used as *inner attention* is a collection of inner eye, ear and etc, and is similar to the term that I use as the third eye. Also the function of *inner attention* for Stanislavsky was leading to an inner creative state and stimulating creativity. “As such, all this preparation helps to train the actor’s inner creative state, to help him find his super-objective and through line of action, which in the end leads him to the region of the subconscious” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 281).

Stanislavsky considered the inner eye and inner ear as tools for imagining the character and stimulating the *emotional memory*. The Stanislavsky system, in fact can be divided in two different stages: The first stage was when he believed that the emotional memory was the best way of activating creativity and creating the role, and the second stage was when he accepted the drawbacks of this method and was looking for a suitable replacement for *emotional memory*. Stanislavsky in his first stage of his system believed that the inner eye and ear or the *inner attention* stimulates the *emotional memory* which results in creating the role. He added:

> The material under discussion consists in living, personal memories drawn from our five senses, contained in an actor’s affective memory, from knowledge he has acquired which is stored in his intellectual memory, from his experience of life. Need I repeat that these memories must always be similar to the feelings in the play and the role (Stanislavsky, 2009: 103).

Building on this idea, the actor should be feeling similar to the feelings of the role character. Therefore if an actor always tries to keep the different feelings of his life in his memory as his *emotional memory,* this can create his role. In contrast, as mentioned before, perhaps everybody has similar feelings in a particular situation; however everyone has his own reactions according to his own personality. Therefore for instance, the actor’s *emotional memory* cannot help the actor to create his role and its
reactions. Parallel to emotional memory Stanislavsky stresses the inner eye or inner attention that helps the actor to stimulate his emotional memory.

We can use our inner eye to see all sorts of visual images, living creatures, human faces, their features, landscapes, the material world of objects, settings, and so forth. With our inner ear we can hear all sorts of melodies, voices, intonations, and so forth. We can feel things in imagination at the prompting of our sensation and emotion memory (Stanislavsky, 1981: 20).

Stanislavsky supports emotional memory while remarking on the inner attention. The inner attention has been used in other acting techniques with different names as I will discuss below. The Mind Technique also pays close attention to the inner eye or the third eye and uses this notion as a technique to lead the actor to create his role. Stanislavsky explains that the technique is how to stimulate creativity from the subconscious through the conscious. In this regard Stanislavsky paid attention to the subconscious as a source of creativity as he made an artistic motto: “In other words, let our unconscious, intuitive creativeness be set into motion by the help of conscious, preparatory work. Through the conscious to the unconscious that is the motto of our art and technique” (Stanislavsky, 1981: 9).

Stanislavsky had found that there was something inside the actor that was related to creating the role. Thus he tried to explain what he perceived in different ways. Sometimes he explained it as an inner eye or inner attention, the subconscious or creative state and sometimes as an inner urge that can cause an inner action that results in an external action. By the same token he described that: “The impulse is an inner urge, a desire not yet satisfied, whereas the action itself is either an external or internal satisfaction of the desire. An impulse calls for inner action, and inner action eventually calls for external action” (Stanislavsky, 1981: 21). Nevertheless he did not rely on any particular acting technique as he suggested:

If I were to assure you that your technique could achieve so much I should be deceiving you. As you progress you will learn more and more ways in which to stimulate your subconscious selves, and to draw them into your creative process, but it must be admitted that we cannot reduce this study of the inner life of other human beings to a scientific technique (Stanislavsky, 1988: 94).

In the first version of Stanislavsky’s system he was looking to access the creative state with no particular acting technique as he believed that technique kills the nature of creativity. In the second version of his System, Stanislavsky explains this as a
reappraisal of the actor’s mind which leads the actor to be inspired and states that this reappraisal is the important part of the psychological technique.

In return, the actor’s state of mind leads to a re-appraisal of the facts each time he is working. The ability to use the ever-changing complexity of random events, to stimulate his inspiration through an appraisal of the facts is an important part of an actor’s psychological technique (Stanislavsky, 2009: 133).

This appraisal of the mind in the Stanislavsky’s system is related to the third eye in The Mind Technique that was discussed earlier. This appraisal of the mind is similar to an inner overseer who leads the actor to create his role through its criticism. Stanislavsky stressed two important key words: “appraisal” and “essence”. In the mind technique these two notions have the same sources whereas in the Stanislavsky’s system they had been considered separately.

Stanislavsky, in acting, believed the nature and discipline of the actor come together. “Of course, if you have thought up to now that an actor relies merely on inspiration you will have to change your mind. Talent without work is nothing more than raw unfinished material” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 90). Elizabeth Reynolds, the translator of Stanislavsky’s book believes that “What Stanislavsky has undertaken is not to discover a truth but to bring the truth in usable form within the reach of those actors and producers who are fairly well equipped by nature and who are willing to undergo the necessary discipline” (Stanislavsky, 1988: v).

Nevertheless he indicates that the source of creativity is hidden in the actor’s mind. This point is important as I am going to consider this hidden part of creating the role. Stanislavsky sees the subconscious as the source of creativity; however he did not bring any valid documentation for this. For this reason, in my case studies, I need to explain the mechanism of creating the role. Concerning this Stanislavsky declared that:

However, the essence, the prime source of creative work, is hidden deep in the actor’s mind, at the very centre of our psyche, in the elusive superconscious, the well-spring of life, the heart of our nature, our secret ‘self’, inspiration. That is where the most important creative material lies hidden (Stanislavsky, 2009: 164).

It can be inferred from this that the subconscious is the seat of creativity. “Only one tenth of an actor’s performance is conscious, nine tenths unconscious or superconscious.” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 224). The source of creativity and its relationship with the third eye, then, is the point of investigation for my research, but how does one
access it? Another important point is that Stanislavsky believed that creative ideas come from the subconscious, and then are judged and given conscious form. Whereas in the Mind Technique the hypothesis is that the creative ideas are evaluated by the third eye, that is to say, the inner overseer that criticizes any idea, action and reaction of the actor. “Unconscious tasks are born of the emotion (feeling) and will of the actor. Created by intuition, the unconscious, they are then judged and given conscious form” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 139). Although Stanislavsky believed that the subconscious is the source of creativity, he also stated that the inner creative state leads the actor in the right direction and enables the actor to create his role.

You know from your own experience the actor’s state of mind on stage. We call it the inner creative state. It combines all the elements into one, makes them alert, and points them in the right direction during creative work. It would appear that this state of mind would enable you to approach a play and a role to study it in detail” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 47).

According to this, the function of the inner creative state is the same as the subconscious; however Stanislavsky uses different names for them. Therefore there must be two different notions with the same source. “We must look for the results in the actor’s once he has created the life of the human body and spirit of a role. Many of you succeeded, either by chance or with the director’s helps to establish the correct inner creative state” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 73). It means that an actor’s inner creative state needs to be led by the director or maybe it seems that Stanislavsky also realized the presence of another inner leader; however he was not sure what this was.

The other point is that in the second form of the system, Stanislavsky was saying that creativity and our feelings cannot be stimulated by simply ordering them “How are we to stimulate our creative will, our wish for action. They cannot be dictated to: ‘Wish!’, ‘Be creative!’, ‘Do something!’ Our feelings can only be coaxed. Then they begin to do what we want” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 138). In contrast, in the Mind Technique, effective thoughts during the pre-sleep, act the same as orders. This will be considered in the next chapter. In the first form of system, even Stanislavsky believed that creating a new character is impossible. Because of his method, Magic if and emotional memory leads the actor to create his role within himself. “I didn’t try to create a new character (which is impossible). I only wanted to answer the question precisely and in human terms” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 71).
Nevertheless in the second form of his system, Stanislavsky thought differently. “You have to create something new, seek out new organic elements in the actor’s mind and the role, and combine them into a new turn of mind which will give you something nearer to the author’s and director’s ideas” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 202). Stanislavsky insisted that by avoiding a cliché, an actor has to create a new character even going as far as talking about giving birth.

The actor’s creative process, like any other creative process, can be viewed as insemination, fertilisation, mental and physical formation, the emergence of will, consciousness, mental faculties, traits, habits, resulting in birth. That is why we talk about the actor giving birth to a role” (Stanislavsky, 2009: 200).

Yevgeny Vakhtangov one of the scholars who was against the emotional memory, suggested a new version of using emotional memory without need of external motivation.

For Vakhtangov, experiencing signified an actor’s ability to relive an emotional experience onstage without any external motivation. In Stanislavsky’s opinion, the emotional life of the actor is motivated by the actor’s faith in his or her character’s given circumstance. According to Vakhtangov, an actor’s faith was motivated by their imagination as well as their self-realization as a creative artist (Andrei Malaev-Babel, 2013: 263).

Vakhtangov tried to eliminate the drawbacks of emotional memory by changing the impulses from the given circumstances to self-realization and imagination. In this case, Vakhtangov’s idea could be used; nevertheless he could not solve the problem yet. On the other hand, Stanislavsky also found that there was a gap between the impulses and creating a role. Therefore his attention had been drawn to the process of sleeping. Subsequently, Stanislavsky noticed the importance of the pre-sleep in the process of creating the role as he said: “When you have gone to bed at night, and put out your light, train yourself to go over your whole day, and try to put in every possible concrete detail” (Stanislavsky, 1988: 88). Stanislavsky said that the pre-sleep was a free time in which to think about the role and recap the daily rehearsal but its function in creating the role is unknown. In The Mind Technique the process of the sleep and pre-sleep will be extensively considered in Chapter 3 as pre-sleep thoughts play a significant role in the process of creating the role. (See appendix 1, Workshop in Germany, No 1, time from 3.00 to 4.40) After this description of the Stanislavsky’s system, I am going to move on to Meyerhold’s acting technique.
1.2: Vsevolod Meyerhold and algebraic formulation

Meyerhold was the first scholar who tried to describe acting technique through an algebraic formulation. “The acting cycle was only possible when, inventing a quasi-algebraic formulation, the actor (N) was able to understand what he had to do (A1) and had the physical capacity to do it (A2). Meyerhold thus created the equation: N=A1+A2” (Robert Leach, 2004: 81). In The Mind Technique I am going to design a formulation in order to explain the hidden part of the process of creating the role, whereas Meyerhold’s formula explains the identity of the actor and his duty. “(Where N= The actor; A1= The artist who conceives the idea and issues the instructions necessary for its execution; A2= The executant who executes the conception of A1)” (Fischer-Lichte, 2014: 28). In The Mind technique, where P (the actor) + A (acting technique) + X (the covert notion) = C (Creating the role). The process of creating the role is, in fact the process of turning P to C:

**Formula 1: The process of creating the role**

\[ P \leftrightarrow C \] or **Formula 1**: \[ P + (A + X) \leftrightarrow C \]

In the Formula 1, the X is hidden and it needs to be considered. The reason that I formulated the process of creating the role is that the method I have sought to explicate becomes a systematic process. With Meyerhold’s formulation Jonathan Pitches explains Meyerhold acting technique which includes three parts:

Each part has a name – *otkaz*, *posil’* and *tochka* – and together they constitute the ‘abe’ of his training method, biomechanics: *Otkaz* is the Russian for ‘refusal’ and describes the preparation an actor makes before any actual action – crouching down before jumping or reaching back before throwing. It’s a kind of gestural prologue, if you like. *Posil’* (the verb ‘to send’ in Russian) is the action itself. Sometimes known as the ‘realisation’, the *posil’* is the actual expression of what was suggested in the prologue, the jump or throw itself. *Tochka* marks the end point of a cycle of action. It is the rest at the end of any movement. You might think of it as a kind of frozen epilogue, but an epilogue which always suggests a new start (Pitches, 2004: 55).

In Meyerhold’s acting technique there are some similarities with Chekhov’s method. In fact Meyerhold’s method had suggested the initial idea of the *psychological gesture* to Chekhov. Zarrilli stated that: “Meyerhold developed a series of Sixteen *Etudes* and pantomimes, which he and Soloviev abstracted from various theatrical cultures. Purportedly, each of the sixteen exercises was designed to teach the students a number
of particular principles of scenic movement” (Zarrilli, 2005: 106). Also Meyerhold described another “I” inside with the difference that the first I is the actor and the second I is the technique that the actor uses to create his role which are joined in the actor’s mind:

One part of him is the performer, the instrumentalist; another, the instrument to be played on. Meyerhold called this duality variously the ‘first I’ and the ‘second I’, the ‘creative process’ and the ‘technique’, or- and this implies a possible definition of biomechanics itself – ‘imagination’ and ‘biomechanics’ (Leach, 1993: 53).

Moreover Meyerhold divided each movement into three parts: intention, action and reaction. With this method, in fact Meyerhold makes a bridge between any action of an actor and the pre-action (intention), action and post-action (reaction). “Meyerhold’s actor, in a state of reflex excitability, received a stimulus to which he reacted with a three-part response. First he determined what to do, the intention; second, he did it, the realisation; and third, he came to rest, the reaction” (Leach, 2004: 81). As previously stated, Meyerhold’s method was the foundation for Chekhov’s method. To support this idea, Leach explains that:

Louis Lozowick, who said ‘biomechanics… meant the study of the physiologic mechanism so that its every gesture and movement might be employed with the greatest efficiency’. And indeed this quasi-scientific approach to the inclusion of the actor’s mind as well as his body was endorsed by Meyerhold himself, who wrote that ‘the formula for acting may be expressed as follows: N=A1+A2 (Leach, 1993: 53).

I illustrate Meyerhold’s technique in Diagram 2 as follows:

Diagram 2: The process of creating the role in Meyerhold’s Technique
To explain his external apparatus, Meyerhold designed some exercises to enhance the balance, rhythmic awareness and responsiveness.

The exercises and études taught three attributes which Meyerhold especially valued: balance; rhythmic awareness; and responsiveness, to one’s partner(s), to the audience, and to external stimuli. The first two of these were addressed initially in the basic movement work – running, jumping, spinning, gradually more advanced gymnastics, all performed to music. Biomechanics also employed stick work, with many variations of tossing and catching the stick, as well as balancing it (Leach, 2004: 82).

Meyerhold was looking to design a technique to lead the actor from his body movement to a creative character who is engaged with other actors and the audience. “In theoretical terms, biomechanics is a fusion of these two ideas. It is an objective system, focusing on the external apparatus of the actor and designed to create a responsive, efficient and productive actor” (Pitches, 2004: 33). In addition, Meyerhold designed his formula to make a connection between the process of creating the role and the created role. “Indeed, Meyerhold’s seamless assimilation of training and text offers us a model of how to relate process to product” (Pitches, 2004: 105).

In the Mind Technique, repetition of effective thoughts as a task for every night is important in the same way as Meyerhold’s method of repetition of physical movements are important. “For Meyerhold, the model for an actor was a factory worker, forced by the repetitive demands of his work to rationalise the working process and eliminate anything superfluous” (Pitches, 2004: 114). The function of repetition in The Mind technique is different from the Meyerhold technique as I will explain in Chapter 4.

In The Mind Technique, repetition is not used in physical movements, it acts the same as emphasising on a particular action or movements in order to activate creativity whereas in Meyerhold’s technique, repetition is used in physical movements in order to rationalize and prune the movements. Furthermore Meyerhold stressed the unity of the actor’s body and the biomechanics technique as a crucial task. “Remember the bio (the living organism) as well as the mechanics and make sure that the external forms of the training are fully integrated into your person” (Pitches, 2004: 150). Meyerhold formed his method through the exercises and études. It means that as the actor works on the exercises he also extends the movements, intention, action and reaction in the form of the étude.
Work on the étude encourages the actor to embody at a deep level the tripartite rhythm of biomechanics – *otkaz*, *posil’* and *tochka*. Thus, the actor is prepared both at an individual level (a gesture or movement) and at a general level (the structure of an act or a whole play) to engage physically with the rhythmic challenges set by the director. (Pitches, 2004: 143).

Meyerhold’s technique was an effective method; however, Chekhov tried to extend and complete Meyerhold’s technique based on Stanislavsky’s system which is explained further in the next section.

### 1.3: Michael Chekhov's rejection of emotion memory

Michael Chekhov’s method is partially in line with Stanislavsky’s system with the difference that he did not want to rely on his *emotional memory* which sometimes caused a lack of engaged acting. For instance, Andrei Kirillov and Bella Merlin explain that: “Instead of taking the actor’s personal emotional experiences, Chekhov based his own method on the capabilities of an ‘ideal’ *imagination*. *Imitating* the imaginary character – which is always ‘ideal’ in its nature – seemed to Chekhov to make a performance more objective” (Chekhov, 2006: 4). The other reason that Chekhov refused using the *emotional memory* as a way to activate his emotion on the stage was that he believed that the actor’s personal emotional memory is different from the emotion of any particular role. Thus if an actor uses his own emotional memories to create the emotion of his role, the actor could not divide his own character as a person from the character of his role as an actor. Kirillov explains that:

> It arose as a natural result of his attempts to overcome the limitations and contradictions that he and the other First Studio actors (Stanislavsky’s pupils) met on their common creative path. The first step towards release was Chekhov’s refusal to exploit an actor’s personal feelings in his art; instead there should be a clear differentiation between the actor as a person and the actor as artist – and these two ‘identities’ belong to fundamentally different realms or dimensions (Chekhov, 2006: 4).

Chekhov noticed the combination of psychology and body and the creativity which emerges from this unity. “First and foremost is extreme sensitivity of body to the psychological creative impulses” (Chekhov, 2013: 2). Moreover he explains his method by creating a mental picture of his role and imitating it physically. “I endeavored to work on the theme of *imitating* the mental picture of the character. I contemplated the picture of Muromsky which I had formed in my imagination and *imitated* it in the
rehearsals. I did not act in the way that we actors generally do, but I imitated an imaginary character, which itself acted for me in my imagination” (Chekhov, 2006: 110).

What Chekhov emphasized is to follow the instructions that are received from the actor inner’s leader. He adds: “Only an indisputable command of his body and psychology will give him the necessary self-confidence, freedom and harmony for his creative activity. They must be reactivated and made resilient” (Chekhov, 2013: 5). Chekhov divided his process of the creating the role in six steps:

[T]he first way is connected with the ‘imagination’, the second with ‘atmosphere’, the third with performing actions with a particular ‘colour’ or ‘quality’, the fifth with ‘embodying’ the character and ‘characterisation’, and the sixth with ‘improvisation’ (Chekhov, 2005: 227).

The most important notion of Chekhov’s acting method is the term that is created by him: The psychological gesture. In this method he tries to think about the role and based on its character uses a collective gesture physically, then he creates an imaginary character as an ideal in his mind and starts to communicate with it, then he tries to imitate the imaginary character physically. For instance, Chekhov asks a question from his subconscious or even demands a duty from his subconscious.

This method is similar to the function of the third eye in the Mind Technique, with this difference, that in the Mind Technique an actor has to avoid making any judgment or giving orders to his third eye. An actor has to be fully obedient and follow his third eye. “You must ask questions of these images, as you would ask questions of a friend. Sometimes you must even give them strict orders. Changing and completing themselves under the influence of your questions and orders, they give you answers visible to your inner sight” (Chekhov, 2013: 23).

Another similarity between Chekov’s method and the Mind Technique is that in both methods the actor has to pose his relevant questions about his role to his inner sight. Chekhov’s method is a unique acting method; however it is difficult to follow it, or be trained in it. The method is more personal with very creative ideas as Chekhov was not a theorist. He just offered his own personal experience as his acting method. As Kirillov and Merlin believed that “he followed his own artistic experiences, his various observations and his teaching of real acting” (Chekhov, 2005: 5).
Michael Chekhov explains that all creation happens by another “I” inside. He argues: “While creating you are two selves, and you are able to distinguish clearly between the different functions they fulfil” (2013: 87). He adds: “Considerable changes which you cannot help experiencing take place in your consciousness under the influence of this powerful other “I” […] it enriches and expands the consciousness” (Chekhov, 2013: 87). This other “I”, in my opinion, can be an overseer that is related to the subconscious and the first “I” or “self” can be the actor himself that is related to the consciousness. It should be noted that everybody has an imaginary character of himself in his consciousness.

Elsewhere, Chekhov “distinguished between our everyday personality or ‘lower ego’ and our ‘higher ego’, which he described as ‘the artist in us that stands behind all our creative processes” (Franc Chamberlain, 2004:15). Chekhov indicates Another I inside. However, the I who is inside is more knowledgeable and can guide the actor in his process of creating the role. I have called this Another I the “third eye”. Other than another “I” inside, Chekhov stressed the subconscious as a source of creativity. It is often said that creativity must stem from the depths of the artist’s subconscious life, but this is possible only if the artist knows how to relate objectively to himself and does not allow his coarse thoughts and feelings to interfere with the work of his subconscious (Chekhov, 2006: 123).

According to Chekhov, the source of the creativity is the subconscious and an actor should not interfere with the subconscious creation. As in his previous comment, Chekhov emphasized another “I” inside, so the question arises, what is the relationship between the subconscious and another “I” inside? In line with my research question and considering the process of creating the role, deliberating the relationship between the subconscious and another “I” inside is important. On the other hand, another “I” inside can be embodied through imagination or can be defined as an imaginary character.

In addition Chekhov strongly suggested using improvisation in acting, which he used as a way to create his role. In this regard Maria Knebel explains that: “I noticed that Chekhov added something new and surprising at each performance without changing text or blocking. I concluded that Chekhov was a genius of improvisation” [(Knebel 1995a: 28) cited from Mathieu and Meerzon, 2015: 199]. Chekov used improvisation not only during his rehearsal to create his role but also in his performance.
As previously mentioned creating the role can be completed in the rehearsal; however it is continued during the performance. Concerning this, Knebel brought an example of Chekhov: “One of the secrets of his art,’ she observes, ‘and, in fact, the most important principle behind creativity, is the actor’s improvisatory state of mind in the role” [(Knebel 1995b: 17) cited from Alison Hodge, 2010: 106], Chekhov used improvisation in the form of etude. “The etude is a test, a quest, a verification, it is a step towards the creation of a role. It is rough draft” [(knebel, 1981: 17) cited from Bella: 2004] Chekhov stressed imagination as well as improvisation. In fact, Chekhov’s technique is based on imagination and improvisation, both physical movement and imaginary embodiment. Hodge explains Knebel’s experience with Chekhov that: “Moreover, she understood that this state of mind springs from the actor’s imagination. In short, Chekhov taught Knebel not only to free her own imagination but to understand how an actor’s fantasy can prompt creativity within the strictures of written texts and tightly directed productions” (Hodge, 2010: 106). Chekhov made a bridge between improvisation and an imaginary character inside.

According to the Chekhov’s idea as previously stated, an actor has to create a new character in his mind based on the original character. It means that an actor has to first create an imaginary character based on the written character and then imitate the imaginary character through his body. For this reason Chekhov improvised and created his role through his another “I” inside. He tried to communicate with the “I” inside, asking questions and following whatever he says to him. This notion, another “I” inside is similar to the function of the third eye in the Mind Technique with some differences that will be considered in the next chapter. Here I set out Chekhov’s method in Diagram 3 below:

Diagram 3: The process of creating the role in Psychological Gesture Technique
1.4: Jerzy Marian Grotowski’s acting technique

Grotowski, however, has a different method in acting. “I believe there can be no true creative process within the actor if he lacks discipline or spontaneity. Meyerhold based his work on discipline, exterior formation; Stanislavsky on the spontaneity of daily life. These are, in fact, the two complementary aspects of the creative process” (Grotowski, 2002: 209). The differences between the Grotowski Method and the Mind Technique regarding relaxation is that Grotowski tried to eliminate muscle tension and I would like to use positive energy to make the body and mind relaxed. In the Mind Technique the function of relaxation goes further than eliminating muscle tension; it also is the first step of the process of creating the role. Relaxation in the Mind Technique helps the actor to access his inner state through the Alpha frequency. (See appendix 1, Workshop in Germany, No 3, time from 04:07 to 07:23) Jaap van Etten defined the Alpha frequency as follows:

The brain waves have a frequency range between 8 and 12 Hz with a peak in activity around 10 Hz. The keywords for Alpha state are relaxation, visualization, and creativity. Alpha is the link from the conscious beta state (focused attention) to the subconscious theta and the higher-conscious delta states (deepest states of awareness) (Etten, 2007: 30).

In the Mind Technique, relaxation and concentration in Alpha frequency helps the actor to approach the high level of concentration and creativity whereas relaxation in Grotowski’s acting method is used to help the actor to leave any distractions of daily life and concentrate on his role. “The actor must have time to cast off all the problems and distractions of daily life. In our theatre we have a period of silence lasting thirty minutes during which the actor prepares his costumes, perhaps goes over certain scenes” (Grotowski, 2002: 214). Another point is that the important question for Grotowski was how to dispel the obstacle blocking engagement, creativity and its resources. This question shows that from Stanislavsky to Grotowski’s time, still there was the problem of blocking engagement, creativity and its resources and yet no certain solutions were found.

What are the obstacles blocking you on your way towards the total act which must engage all your psycho-physical resources, from the most instinctive to the most rational? We must find out what it is that hinders him in the way of
respiration, movement and - most important of all - human contact. What resistances are there? How can they be eliminated? (Grotowski, 2002: 209).

Grotowski, himself offered his suggestion:

I want to take away, steal from the actor all that disturbs him. That which is creative will remain within him. It is a liberation. If nothing remains, it means he is not creative (Grotowski, 2002: 209).

Grotowski was of the opinion that liberation can help the actor to approach creativity and engagement. He understood that liberation not only removes any disturbance or distraction but also helps the actor to engage with his inner sensations and instinct. In contrast with Stanislavsky, Grotowski believed in the effect of instinct rather than the subconscious in the process of creating the role. “It is a serious and solemn act of revelation. The actor must be prepared to be absolutely sincere. It is like a step towards the summit of the actor's organism in which consciousness and instinct are united” (Grotowski, 2002: 210). In Grotowski’s view, the source of creativity is the actor’s instinct. Nevertheless in this research and observing the process of creating the role the source of creativity will be considered.

Grotowski also noticed the importance of the individual rehearsal and he agreed one needed an individual acting technique for each actor. This was because he believed that a certain exercise cannot work for everybody. “The elements of the exercises are the same for all, but everyone must perform them in terms of his own personality. An onlooker can easily see the differences according to the individual personalities” (Grotowski, 2002: 210).

Grotowski perceived the importance of improvisation as he encourages his actors to not rely on the text and just imitate whatever the writer offered them. The text is the basic information for creating a role through the improvisation. “If the actor has the spectator as his point of orientation, then he will, in a sense, be offering himself for sale” (Grotowski, 2002: 213). He also adds, “It must not be said that the role is a pretext for the actor, nor the actor a pretext for the role. It is an instrument for making a cross-section of oneself, analyzing oneself and thereby re-establishing contact with others” (Grotowski, 2002: 212). One of the reasons that Grotowski is concerned about a creative actor and avoiding being an obedient actor to the text is that:

If he is content with explaining the role, the actor will know that he has to sit down here, cry out there. In these somewhat intimate human encounters there is
always this element of "give and take". The process is repeated, but always hic et nunc: that is to say it is never quite the same (Grotowski, 2002: 212).

Regarding my question about creativity of the actor and avoiding being rigid and repetitive which was underlined by Stanislavsky, Grotowski had a different idea. For instance, Grotowski’s question was that how we can find a way for each performance to be in the creative state, and avoid any mechanical acting as well as allowing the actor to be free in creativity and keep the discipline both together. According to this question Grotowski declared that: “It is difficult to reply in a few words, but if you will allow me a popularization I shall answer: if during rehearsals the actor has established the score as something natural, organic (the pattern of his reactions, ‘give and take’), and if, before performing, he is prepared to make this confession, hiding nothing, then each performance will attain its plenitude” (Grotowski, 2002: 213).

Grotowski emphasized that an actor should not alter himself for the audience; nevertheless he/she has to be aware of the audience’s presence in order to create an atmosphere for engagement and interaction. “In short, the actor must not have the audience as a point of orientation, but at the same time he must not neglect the fact of its presence” (Grotowski, 2002: 213). Jerzy Grotowski makes references to an inner process too. In fact, his acting technique draws on Carl Jung’s principles of the collective subconscious, where the actor evokes images from their psyche and transfers it through the body and voice. Sometimes, Grotowski refers to it as “trance”, where the “actor’s powers of body and mind become integrated and ‘emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct, springing forth in a sort of translumination’” (James Slowiak, 2007:46). Translumination is a term coined by Grotowski that means “moving toward a radiant, lucid, and inspiring state of being” (ibid.).

Hence, the technique of trance engages the body and mind to reach a creative state, or even a state of transcendence. However, this psychophysical method is not for creating a role; it is for performing a role which has already been created. For Grotowski, the trance technique is the “ideal state of an actor in performance. Trance (as a potent energetic phenomenon) exists when a different kind of consciousness appears” (Slowiak, 2007:46). Again, the concept of the subconscious, psyche, and trance suggest an area that needs to be further theorised and practised.
Grotowski also analyzes the techniques in traditional ritual dances which are used differently, for example in Iranian dervish whirling, and Zaar, Native American shamanism, yoga, tai chi, African ndlamu, adumu, kpanlogo and martial arts, all of which reflect movements and repose. “Grotowski calls this state ‘movement which is repose.’ The term comes from the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas and is also mentioned in certain Tibetan yoga texts” (Slowiak and Cuesta; 2018: 263). These movements are revealed from within the subconscious.

More specifically, the dancers are given holy thoughts in the given ritual framework in order to dance or move spontaneously. They are free to move with no conscious planning. Here, Grotowski is seeking the source of the mentioned technique in movements and dances, whereas I am looking for the mechanism in creating the moment, movement, and eventually the role. The Diagram 4 describes Grotowski’s acting method:

Diagram 4: The process of creating the role in Grotowski’s Technique

After this brief explanation of Grotowski acting method and its differences and similarities with the Mind Technique I am going to consider Phillip Zarrilli’s method.

1.5: Phillip Zarrilli’s post-Stanislavskian method

Similarly, Phillip Zarrilli discusses acting as “a psychophysical process [that is] equally engaging the inner (psycho-) and outer (physical) dimensions of experience and
embodiment” (Zarrilli, 2013: viii), but that it is “shaped in each historical context by specific cultural, aesthetic, and scientific models, and paradigms” (ibid). In Zarrilli’s perspective, kathakali and Japanese Noh have their own acting techniques because they stem from particular cultures and traditions, as well as the actor’s body. Zarrilli states that he addresses “acting from an intercultural perspective” (Zarrilli, 2013: 8), which, from my perspective, means that the kind of play that can engage with everybody regardless of their nationality as their language is from movement rather than dialogue and is based on traditional form.

Therefore, a combination of both traditional and contemporary acting techniques results in what Zarrilli calls intercultural acting. This psychophysical acting method does not “begin with psychology or emotion, but rather with work on what Eugenio Barba describes as the ‘pre-expressive’ level of performance” (Zarrilli, 2009: 8). He explains that it is a form of training through Asian martial arts and yoga to “attune” the body and mind, and to awaken “one’s inner energy” (ibid.), so that the actor’s awareness and energy can be “put into free play in structured improvisations […] in response to specific dramaturgies” (ibid.).

According to Japanese philosopher Yuasa Yasuo, he proposes that it is “possible to correct the modality of the mind by correcting the modality of the body through the use of breathing exercises” (Shigenori Nagatomo, 1992: 67). Zarrilli states that “[t]he fundamental state of absence of this third eye, aesthetic inner bodymind is witnessed in our everyday relationship to breathing” (Zarrilli, 2012: 56). Zarrilli has brought bodymind as the new word to explain the relationship between body and mind, and, of course, breathing. These key variables show that the technique of breathing is integrated with the body and mind. By this technique of breathing, the body and mind will be connected, which is the ideal state of acting. My question here is: if breathing causes a connected body and mind, and a connected body and mind causes creativity, then what is the relationship between breathing and creativity?

Some scholars such as Kevin Mcfillen believe that Zarrilli has brought a new acting technique which follows Stanislavsky’s System. Mcfillen explains that:

Zarrilli traces the development of this concept of acting as a psychophysical process from the legacy of Stanislavsky to his own experience training in various methods of physical performance and martial arts, including Kathakali dance-drama, the related Indian martial art of Kalarippayattu, the ancient Chinese
martial art of Wu-style taiqiquan, and the *hatha* tradition of yoga, and provides examples of each through the accompanying DVD-ROM by Peter Hulton.4

Based on Mcfillen’s idea Zarrilli shaped his method based on Stanislavsky’s system through the traditional Eastern form of the theatre. Zarrilli himself explains his acting method in three parts. “Part I, reflects on the work of the actor. It considers the underlying philosophical and methodological problems of representationalism and body-mind dualism that vex Western theories and practice of acting” (Zarrilli, 2009: 8). He describes his second part as follows. “Part II, ‘work on Oneself’, provides an account of the approach to the psychophysical process of acting via Asian martial/meditation arts that I have developed in the training and rehearsal studio over the past thirty years since my first trip to India” (Zarrilli, 2009: 9).

Zarrilli’s third part of his acting method is described: “Part III provides a set of in depth case studies. Each chapter describes and analyses how, as a director and actor trainer, I have applied this particular psychophysical approach to rehearsals and performances across a wide range of contemporary dramatic and post-dramatic” (Zarrilli, 2009: 9).

The important principle in Zarrilli’s acting method is that he combines body and mind as a united term and calls it the psychophysical approach that causes an engagement between actors and audiences in order to experience a moment of both together. “I argue that acting should be viewed as a set of psychophysical process by means of which a (theatrical) world is made available in the moment of its appearance and experience for both actors and audiences” (Zarrilli, 2009: 9).

Zarrilli exploits the Asian martial art and yoga in preparation for his method in order to relax the actor’s body and mind together. “Preparation begins with psychophysical training through Asian martial arts and yoga ‘attunes’ the body and mind and awakens one’s inner energy” (Zarrilli, 2009: 8). Zarrilli’s acting method is somewhat close to the Mind Technique because in the same way his method is designed to use meditation and yoga for relaxation. However, Zarrilli’s acting method goes further and deeper in the intercultural theatre than the Mind Technique. For instance, Zarrilli was attracted to the traditional Indian theatre and he attempted to bring their ideas of performing to the

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Western theatre which he called intercultural theatre. As matter of fact, he brings a new style of theatre rather than an acting technique. Moreover his method relies on the Stanislavsky system such that he adds his technique to the Stanislavsky system and he called it post-Stanislavskian approach to acting.

Therefore, psychophysical acting takes a post-Stanislavskian approach to acting, i.e., it does not reject Stanislavsky per se, but rather moves acting theory and practice beyond some of the historical and practical limitations which have informed our understanding of Stanislavsky’s legacy, especially in the US (Zarrilli, 2009: 8).

I illustrate Zarrili’s post-Stanislavskian method in the Diagram 5 as follows:

Looking at the different practitioners from Stanislavsky to Zarrilli, the way of interpreting the actor’s creativity and the process of creating the role were different depending on their view of how to solve the actor’s issues in the process of creating the role. As explained above, many acting approaches dealing with psychophysical work have in many ways been influenced by non-Western forms, as well as intense physical exercises such as yoga, martial arts and meditation. But what we actually understand about the function of rehearsal and the inner work through these theatre directors’ systems remains on the surface. Yet there is much to be theorized about the inner work in an actor’s training. In *Performing Chekhov*, David Allen writes:

The journey in all acting is to unite the internal and external, the psychological and the physical. Gradually, the actors are bringing the two sides together (Allen, 2002:209).

To return to my argument that in these acting methods discussed above another “I” inside/third eye plays a key role in the process of creating the role directly or indirectly
and whether or not that term is used. As the five diagrams show I have identified that there is a progressive process. Every method tries to improve the process by adding or changing something to the previous method in order to eliminate the defects. In each one, the presence of the third eye/another “I” inside becomes gradually clearer. For instance if we look at the Diagram 1 (page 20), Stanislavsky pointed out the need to stimulate creative state to activate creativity. Creative state transforms to another “I” inside in Meyerhold technique (See Diagram 2, page 30), the ‘first I’ as creative process and the ‘second I’, as the ‘technique’, unifying actor with the technique. This additional “I” which unifies actor and technique in Meyerhold’s technique turns to an imaginary character inside in the Chekhov technique (See Diagram 3, page 35). These two I’s which are similar to an inner overseer turns to the united body and mind in Grotowski’s methods concerning the instinct (See Diagram 4, page 39). The united body and mind in Grotowski’s method transforms to the awaking inner energy in the Zarrilli’s Method (See Diagram 5, page 42). This progressive process of creating the role shows the presence of a creative inner energy that can be called the third eye. Each time, this creative energy or imaginary character is named using another name; it still maintains the same function. From these five diagrams, in the next chapter I am going to trace the process of creating an idea in the Mind Technique, in order to show the inner mechanism of creating the role.
CHAPTER TWO: Creativity in the process of creating the role

What this practice as research seeks, therefore, is to understand the inner and outer action when creating a role: What is the relationship between the actor’s body and mind when re-creating a role during rehearsal, and whether the psychophysical processes can be articulated and schematised so as to be more efficient in accessing the interior process, as previously theorized by Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Grotowski, Chekhov and Zarrilli. From this reflection, the process of creating a role as the actor’s main job regarding my research sub-question, which is considering the mechanism of creating the role in acting, and observing the inner process of creating the role, will be examined in this chapter as follows.

2.1: An actor’s duty

An actor should not simply pick up a script, analyze the character, rehearse the blocking, and act. An actor should, instead, find a way to create anew. Michael Chekhov stressed the creativity of the actor and his active contribution to the written word. He wrote:

What the author has given you in the form of written play is his creation, not yours. […] he has applied his talent. But what is your contribution to the writer’s work? (Chekhov, 2013: 26).

Stanislavsky also said that: “[i]n the creative process there is the father, the author of the play; the mother, the actor pregnant with the part; and the child, the role to be born” (Stanislavsky, 1989: 336). The metaphor of an unborn role and the actor giving birth to that role is a highly significant one. Likewise, Grotowski emphasized the creativity as an important task. He stated that: “[u]nlike the other artistic disciplines, the actor's creation is imperative” (Grotowski2012: 128). From some of these theatre directors’ perspectives, acting is arguably synonymous with creating. Creating, or the act of creation, seems to be akin to procreation, a fleshing out or embodiment of something new, young, raw. As such, creating the role is the main duty of the actor. Malaev-Babel, however, explained the actor’s duties somewhat differently. He wrote:

Every role contains a series of ‘tasks’ an author put in it; an actor’s job is to
define and fulfil them. An actor’s creativity lies in beautiful and clear fulfilment of these tasks. Each task consists of three elements: action, desire (motivation), and the way it is fulfilled (adaptation). (Malaev-Babel, 2011: 252).

Commensurate with Malaev-Babel’s perspective, defining and fulfilling the tasks set by the playwright would be equivalent to an actor’s “creativity”. It is the fulfillment of action, desire, and adaptation – which, I believe, is also equivalent to the metaphor of fleshing out a role. Dick Maccaw highlighted this more aptly: “The actor’s job is to make the artistically created play seem as if it were real life” (Maccaw, 2015: 86). In other words, the actor’s job is the artistic creation of the role. Zarrilli’s perspective adds another layer of interpretation to the act of (pro)-creation. He suggests:

The actor’s task is creating signs (images etc.), as well as entering those images/actions with an appropriate degree of psychophysical engagement of voice/body/mind to capture, engage, and direct the audience’s attention (Zarrilli, 2005: 16).

The actor’s duty no longer remains within him, but it needs to enter a space to “capture, engage, and direct the audience’s attention” (ibid). Zarrilli here gives the actor an added purpose outside of himself, because the quality of the creating the role is as important as creating itself. I shall define this ability to engage audiences as perfect creation.

Some actors may create a new character; however, for some reasons the audience cannot engage with this character. It is therefore important for the actor to recognize that acting is a process that can only be completed in the presence of an audience. Sanford Meisner raised a similar argument. He stated:

Verily, acing can be a creation of transforming mentally and physically from an actor to the character in order to engage the audience. “Acting is all a give-and-take of those impulses affecting each person” (Meisner, Longwell, 1987: 62).

Acting is reciprocation between an actor and the audience. Nevertheless, this reciprocation emerges from the believable creation of the actor and the presence of the audience. Thus it is important for actors to create a perfect creation or an interactive character, which will be considered later in this chapter.

Another nuance to acting comes from Stanislavsky’s belief that an actor’s job is to create two dimensions of the role, the external and internal life of the character. He stated that the actor’s “job is not to present merely the external life of his character. He must fit his own human qualities to the life of this other person, and pour into it all of his own soul” (Stanislavsky, 1989: 14). In other words, an actor’s job is to create an
external life using body and voice, and internal life using emotion, thoughts and soul.

In contrast, the actor himself should not or cannot create his role consciously as an actor has to create his role spontaneously. Malaev-Babel wrote: “An actor’s job is not to interfere with his or her creative impulses and yield to them fully onstage” (Malaev-Babel, 2013: 257). In compliance with Malaev-Babel the actor’s job is to construct a base for his role to be created spontaneously without conscious intervention. Stanislavsky also stated that an actor’s creativity is related to his subconscious. “An actor’s creative work, while on the stage, is really, either in whole or in part, an expression of his creative subconscious” (Stanislavsky, 1989: 323). In agreement with to Stanislavsky, “Vakhtangov believed that true motives of an actor’s creative passions lie in his or her subconscious artistic mission” (Malaev-Babel, 2013: 256).

As a result, an actor’s job is to lay a foundation in order to enable the process of creating the role spontaneously. Malaev-Babel added to the opinion of Vakhtangov: “true creativity equals spontaneous expression of an actor’s subconscious” (Malaev-Babel, 2011: 172). In line with Vakhtangov, Malaev-Babel believed that the main actor’s job, creating the role happens through the subconscious. “An actor should allow himself or herself full freedom to do what he or she truly feels like doing onstage. The creative subconscious will take care of the ‘required’ artistic result” (Malaev-Babel, 2013: 257).

Here the question as to how to articulate the place of the actor as a doer, whose main job is creating the role and yet they have no control over the process of creating the role, is of considerable importance. For this reason I set up the practical component of this PhD in such a way as to be able to observe the process of creating a role and to investigate the mechanisms of creation practically through my case study. In considering this process I wanted to be able to find a means to examine the mechanisms of creation, and through this investigation to begin to find a technique to find ways to ‘control’ the spontaneity of creation. One of the reasons that I need this investigation is that it is important in acting to know how to exert control over the creativity and to control the process of creating the role. One of the problems in creating the role is that the actor cannot create his role by his own will as the process of creating the role happens spontaneously. For instance Stanislavsky stated that:

One cannot always create subconsciously and with inspiration. No such genius
exists in the world. Therefore our art teaches us first of all to create consciously and rightly, because that will best prepare the way for the blossoming of the subconscious, which is inspiration. The more you have of conscious creative moments in your role the more chance you will have of a flow of inspiration (Stanislavsky, 1989: 14).

According to Stanislavsky’s idea, an actor has to first create his role consciously and then be prepared and wait for spontaneous creativity. In contrast, in his previous idea, Stanislavsky stressed spontaneous creativity and then he claimed that the actor cannot create subconsciously always. This contradiction shows perhaps that there has been a deficiency in the process of creating the role in his method. As mentioned before some scholars believe that the best way for acting is creating the role spontaneously; however, this spontaneity is not always reliable.

Stanislavsky suggested conscious creativity to eliminate the deficiency of spontaneity of in creating the role. The Mind Technique, instead of asking the actor to create his role twice, first consciously and then subconsciously, is an attempt to find a way to create the role through the technique. Grotowski however, had other ideas: “Spontaneity and discipline are the basic aspects of an actor's work and they require a methodical key” (Grotowski, 2012: 261). Grotowski gave credence to discipline as well as spontaneity, which leads the actor to the methodical key, or in other words, technique. Therefore an actor should have a technique to help him to create his role when he is not able to create spontaneously.

By the same token, David Krasner mentioned: “Technique enables the actor to enlarge and expand her creative, imaginative and physical embodiment of the role” (Krasner, 2011: 3). It seemed that technique could resolve the unreliability of spontaneity in the process of creating the role. On the other hand, some scholars believe that technique is a substitute for creativity on the stage. For example William Missouri Downs and Erik Ramsey give an example to argue that the creating of the role happens during the rehearsal and on the stage there is no creation by the actor:

Imagine a talented actor playing the role of Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The audience is enthralled, the performance is winning the heart of critics, but is the actor being creative? He may be having an adrenaline rush, but has he come up with unique answers about the role of Hamlet? Is he solving problems, thereby adding value to the role of Hamlet? More than likely, during a performance, the actor is not being creative, but instead relying on technique (Ramsey and Missouri, 2012: 224).
According to Ramsey and Missouri, the actor’s creativity only exists during the rehearsal, and technique assists the actor while he is on the stage. This example also offered a means by which to eliminate the unreliability of spontaneity through the use of technique in the process of creating the role. As matter of fact Ramsey and Missouri divided creation of the role during the rehearsal from the used technique of performing the role on the stage as two different terms in two parts in rehearsal and performance.

Ramsey and Missouri claimed that: “Technique is what we learn from being creative. The actual creativity for our Hamlet actor more than likely occurred during the rehearsal process, not during his performance” (Ramsey and Missouri, 2012: 224). According to Ramsey and Missouri, the process of creating the role happens during the rehearsal despite the actor still facing the unreliability of spontaneity in the process of creating the role. In contrast James Kaufman and John Baer state that: “Although much of the creative process occurs in the rehearsals that precede the performance, the creative process continues during the performance; the essence of acting creativity is what is done on stage, not what is done during rehearsal” (Kaufman and Baer, 2005: 47). Accordingly Grotowski explained this argument in this way:

At the beginning of rehearsals, associations will be evoked normally, but after twenty performances there will be nothing left. The acting will be purely mechanical. To avoid this, the actor, like the musician, needs a score. The musician's score consists of notes. Theatre is an encounter. The actor's score consists of the elements of human contact: give and take. Take other people, confront them with oneself, one's own experiences and thoughts, and give a reply (Grotowski, 2012: 212).

Therefore the process of creating the role also continues on the stage in the form of engagement with the audience, give and take or what I earlier called perfect creation in line with Meisner and Zarilli (See page 45). Nonetheless, Ramsey and Missouri believed that the actor creates his role spontaneously in the process of rehearsal and he only has to present his created role on the stage through the technique. Also if the actor’s creation is not completed in the rehearsal, he cannot play his role in front of the audience. Moreover technique is more reliable than spontaneous creativity on the stage. “Techniques are procedures that have been proven to work repeatedly” (Ramsey and Missouri, 2012: 224). However, according to Grotovski and Zarrilli, the process of creating the role starts in rehearsal and continues till the last performance. Albeit most of the process of creating the role happens in rehearsal. In the same vein Kaufman
and Baer declared that: “In acting the creative process continues through performance and constitutes the creative product- it has no existence apart from the creative process of performance” (Kaufman and Baer, 2005: 47).

In conclusion, the perfect creation is one of the most important duties of an actor; however an actor has no control over the process of creating the role, as the process of creation is interior and emerges spontaneously. Based on my own experiences, however, I argue that the process of creating the role can be controlled.

2.2: The necessity of creativity and its function and difficulties in acting in comparison with emotional memories

As discussed previously, acting means considerably more than just performing a role as it exists in the script. Acting is a process of creation; therefore accessing creativity becomes essential in acting training. A simple explanation for the acting process is that an actor imagines his role and he needs to feed his imagination of the role every day with imaginary materials. Creativity in acting involves finding ways of forming these imaginary materials. In accordance with statements from some scholars given below, I realized that not only is accessing creativity problematic for Iranian actors, but also it is difficult for some other actors around the world.

For example for creating the role some actors according to Stanislavsky’s system have assimilated their emotional experiences and memories with their roles; however, the emotional experiences and memories could cause three important problems. Firstly making actors repetitive and not creative; secondly sometimes the actor cannot be impressed through his emotional memories on the stage; and thirdly these individual experiences might affect the role as everybody has individual reactions to different situations. This means that the reaction of the character might be different from the reaction of an actor in his individual life.

For these reasons some scholars have attempted to replace some techniques with those which might activate creativity instead of using emotional memories. Hodge supports this matter with her citation: “It is after 1918 that Chekhov comes out most strongly against Stanislavsky’s use of personal experience and emotion, arguing that this, in effect, binds the actor’s creativity” (Hodge, 2010: 66). Accordingly, some Iranian actors
have an issue regarding creativity caused by using emotional memories.

An important issue for Iranian actors is how to avoid being repetitive in presenting their roles: how to keep their acting ‘alive’ in each performance. Franc Chamberlain stated that “Stanislavsky had always aimed to break the fixed habits of actors and to develop acting as a creative art” (Chamberlain, 2004: 8). Conforming to this, developing a system of creativity can help overcome the issue of a performer relying on fixed habits or repetitive actions when acting. Moreover, creativity simplifies and enriches the process of development. Creativity also plays a key role in the acting process and has been utilized in all acting methods. “[m]ost aspiring actors need to develop their ability to access creativity. […] and develop sensitivity to the generative activities of inner creative state” (John Lutterbie, 2011: 34). Therefore creativity helps actors to avoid repetitive and soulless performing.

Creativity, then, is neither controllable nor tangible. It is not a physical phenomenon like body and voice to be trained by precise practice. Therefore in acting it is important to know the source of creativity in order to increase, control or even generate creativity. Although it is hard to state the exact source of creativity, most scholars believe that the subconscious might be the source of creativity. Natalie Crohn Schmitt notes that: “[…] creativity arises from the unconscious with the modern idea that it can, nonetheless, be fostered” (Schmitt, 1990: 147). According to Schmitt, creativity comes from the subconscious.

Similarly Alison Hodge suggests that “Opening to the higher ego involved a means of accessing the creativity and spontaneity that Stanislavsky had been searching for, and provided an alternative approach to his creative state of mind” (Hodge, 2010: 66). One of the reasons for this point of view is that, as previously mentioned, creativity is an inner process of any production. As noted by Peter Tschmuck, “[r]esearch of creativity based on psychology always ends up viewing creativity as a mental process” (Tschmuck, 2006: 200). Therefore it is difficult to offer a comprehensive method for generating creativity and it is even more difficult to accurately explain the relationship between the subconscious and creativity as these terms are not physical.

Furthermore, the other vital specification of creativity is spontaneity. Spontaneity is neither predictable nor controllable. Mark Runco and Steven Pritzker explain that: “Spontaneity was defined as keeping oneself open, living the moment, letting go,
becoming an instrument for the work, and allowing one’s instincts to take over” (Runco and Pritzker, 1999: 6). According to Runco and Pritzker’s quote, the artist has no control over the process of creating and in fact an artist has to become an instrument to stimulate the instinct. Therefore the artist has to let his instinct or his inner mind control the process of creation. Thus creativity is a spontaneous phenomenon where the time of creation is always unknown. Spontaneity in creativity, being also an inner process, has made some difficulties for actors. However, I argue that there might be a way that an actor can control the process of creating the role, even if it is a spontaneous process. Therefore the next section considers creativity as an inner process.

2.3: Creativity in acting as an inner process

The feelings, movements and reactions of the character are not always described completely in the script; therefore the actor has to fill the gaps in the character of his role through creativity. Everything that an actor adds to the basic information of the character in the script is based on the actor’s access to an inner process of creativity. Sometimes creativity can be an answer to a question, a solution to a problem, or even an easier way of using or making something. In fact an actor is creating his role with an interior process during the rehearsal through answering the questions about the role. Relying on my own experience, sometimes the process of creating continues when the process of rehearsal has finished.

For instance when the play is in performance an actor is still creating new ideas about his role even if these ideas are manifest in small changes which have significant impact. Creation happens when an outer or inner impellent causes a spark to generate creativity. However, it is not unlikely that there is a hidden ‘pre-spark’ and a hidden process operating in the mind that creates a new and creative idea. From this perspective there is a gap between a question and its creative answer, a gap filled, I would suggest, by an interior process. Here the hypothesis is that an impellent that can be a question activates creativity through an interior process that eventuates in an answer or creation.

Another specification of creativity is that creativity can be manifest in an ability to change a familiar term that comes up suddenly. For an example, “Creativity is the ability to introduce change, whether that change is collective or personal or sudden or
gradual” (Richard Schechner, 1985: 253). For Schechner, creativity can be a sudden idea that sparks at an unexpected time. For another example from education science, Prue Goodwin notes that “Creativity is the effective surprise that occurs when unpredictable connections of otherwise unrelated bits of knowledge or experience spark new insights and understanding” (Goodwin, 2012: 2). Schechner emphasizes that creativity is sudden and unexpected and explains: “Creativity in art is the appearance—sudden and unexpected, yet prepared for by a lifetime's devotion to discipline—of sheer knowledge, wisdom hard-won by experience, precipitated into a gesture, a song, a look: a performance” (Schechner, 1985: 259). Thus initially there is an interior process in the mind that spontaneously develops the possible answers or solutions in order to reach the creative idea.

In another example, Malcolm Ross states that “creativity is a burst of inspiration” (Ross, 2011: 125). Laurie Materna added: “you have unlimited creativity and potential in this state. Your inner mind is waiting for you to explore and grow” (Materna, 2007: 83). Michael Chekhov’s idea is that creativity helps a performer to physicalise an imaginary character. Simon Murray says that “Michael Chekhov […] strongly influenced by the radical educationalist, Rudolph Steiner, Chekhov’s approach to training focused on creativity and the use of the imagination to physicalise a role” (Simon Murray, 2004: 162). Therefore, in my view, creativity in acting can be the ability to imagine and to perform this imagination physically.

Whatever various theorists and practitioners have suggested or argued about creativity, the question remains as to whether the stimulus of a creative idea comes up suddenly or whether the idea in fact is an outcome of an interior hidden process. It is also impossible to pin down where and when exactly such a process is happening. I would say that creativity can be a catalyst for the interior process of an idea in the mind, either in the conscious or the subconscious. In this regard Schechner believes that Stanislavsky stressed the subconscious as the source of creativity. “Stanislavsky, on the other hand, was a great actor whose whole life's energy went into developing methods of systematizing what he felt were the "subconscious" means of creativity employed by great actors” (Schechner, 1985: 235). One of the reasons that Stanislavsky believed that creativity is stimulated by the subconscious was that the creative state stimulates a creative feeling that cannot necessarily be thoughtfully gained. As he explains:
An actor’s creative feeling stimulated by artistic enthusiasm and fervor will unconsciously probe deeply and directly into the psychological depths that the eye cannot see and the ear cannot hear, reason does not notice. Only artistic feeling intuits what they are (Stanislavsky, 2009: 14).

By the same token Merlin states that “The natural state and the creative state are remarkably similar, and the theory is that the more sophisticated an actor’s psycho-technique, the more ‘naturally’ the creative state will come to us on stage” (Merlin, 2004: 72). Relying on Merlin’s quote; the approach to the nature of an actor is the same as the approach to creativity that shows how close the creative state and natural state are to each other. If we accept that an actor can approach his creative state naturally, we need to accept a level of unreliability and spontaneity, especially on stage. Thus understanding how to stimulate creativity is important. Paul Sloane’s suggestion is, “for helping stimulate creativity: Sleep on the problem. Allowing the issue to incubate in your brain for a while seems to help your subconscious mind to put things into perspective and gather ideas” (Sloane, 2010: 38).

Sloane suggests letting the subconscious gather the ideas. What mechanism operates however during the sleep that causes creativity? What is the reason that an actor needs to think about his role in his pre-sleep state? These were important questions which I observed in my case studies. In addition Sloane also states that the interior process of creating happens through the subconscious. On the other hand accessing the subconscious is not in our control, thus Arthur Vangundy notes:

The problem is that we can’t always access our subconscious on demand. We have no set of commands or buttons to push to enter our subconscious minds. Instead, we have to enter them more indirectly (Vangundy, 2005: 193).

To stimulate creativity a different and more indirect method is needed. For instance for Vangundy, “one way to access our subconscious thoughts is to create a personal internal mentor” (Vangundy, 2005: 193). Vangundy emphasizes an interior person who can stimulate creativity. Therefore the development of a personal internal mentor who can control the subconscious and stimulate creativity in the process of creation is needed. The first hypothesis is that this internal mentor person is an imaginary interior persona. In this regard Vangundy added that:

I am not suggesting that we all have a little person living inside us. Instead, I believe we all have the subconscious motives, impulses, feelings, and images. All this material has tremendous potential as a vast, untapped reservoir of creativity
Creativity then, is an interior process which is lead by an imaginary notion that could be an imaginary persona or subconscious impulse. In this respect Michael Chekhov explains that all creation happens by another “I” inside. He argues that: “While creating you are two selves, and you are able to distinguish clearly between the different functions they fulfil” (2013: 87). In other words this other “I” can be an imaginary persona, as Vangundy also mentioned, which can conquer creativity in the mind of the actor and the first “I” or “self” can be the real person or the actor himself. This imaginary persona in the mind plays a key role in the process of creating the role, as Chekhov commented: “Considerable changes which you cannot help experiencing take place in your consciousness under the influence of this powerful other “I” […] it enriches and expands the consciousness” (Chekhov, 2013: 87).

The second hypothesis, generated by my own experience, is that the imaginary persona inside sometimes leads the actor in the process of creating the role, and that this persona might be summed up as what I would call ‘the third eye’ – an idea which will be considered in the next section.

2.4: The third eye and its function in the process of creating a role

The third eye has different interpretations from different perspectives. For instance in Buddhist supposition, the third eye is placed between the eyebrows on the pineal gland; however it is a metaphysical phenomenon rather than physical. “Your pineal gland lies behind the central point of your eyebrows, deep inside the brain. This is known as the third eye or the metaphysical eye” (V Ravi, 2011: 90). Hence the third eye can be the interior imaginary eye that is located in the mind. In the Mind Technique as I develop it in this thesis, the third eye has been described similarly. This inner/third eye has the ability to evaluate an actor’s actions, and besides ‘watching’ or observing, it also has other applications.

For William Ellis: “The third eye is a place where the balance between mind, emotions, spirituality, and physical body may be achieved in order to create, heal, and perceive universal and divine information” (Ellis, 2008: 65). According to Ellis’ interpretation of the third eye, and indeed my own understanding, the third eye is a kind of
‘wisdom/perception’ that assists an actor in creating and exploring his interior world through the mind’s control. Consequently, the third eye is also controlled by the actor’s mind. The question that concerns me here is that if the third eye is being controlled by the mind of the actor, how might the third eye dominate the actor’s actions from the director or audience’s point of view? Here an actor needs the third person to watch and control his possible mistakes in order to avoid being misled by the third eye, as the source of knowledge of the actor and his third eye is the same. In contrast to this opinion Ravi mentioned that:

Your third eye chakra is a very powerful tool available to you to control your mind during meditation. In fact, it is a Divine gift for humanity. Concentrate on your third eye chakra and begin to look deep within (Ravi, 2011: 90).

Pursuant to Ravi’s quote and my own experience, the third eye is a powerful tool that an actor can use to control his mind and his actions. Thus the third eye cannot emerge from the conscious as the conscious perception is not wide enough to see the hidden part of the actor’s actions. Therefore the third eye might dominate the consciousness. By the same token, Arthur O’Malley supports this idea that:

[…] the centre of psychic energy. This centre is the origin of insight and a doorway into the unconscious mind. Opening the third eye can assist our patients and clients in their exploration of higher realm (O’Malley, 2015:46).

According to O’Malley, the third eye is a portal to tap into the subconscious. Therefore the third eye subconsciously controls the actor’s actions and creativity. Thus, “The third eye is a source of super-consciousness (the unconscious sphere of consciousness), spiritual wisdom, clairvoyance, imagination, and intuitive insight” (Ellis, 2008: 65). Understanding this idea illuminates the effect of the third eye in the process of creating the role; however I still need to know what the source of the third eye is.

In line with Ellis’ quote, the source of the third eye that can dominate the actor’s actions is the subconscious. The hypotheses are that an actor can control himself through the third eye. The third eye contributes the third person’s views, someone other than the actor. The third eye can lead an actor as its knowledge and awareness is higher than the actor’s knowledge even if it is located in the actor’s mind. Also an actor naturally has no access to the third eye’s knowledge and awareness; this requires a special skill and technique.
2.5: The importance of the third eye in the process of creating the role

Using Formula 1 (See page 55), I attempt to explain why the function of the “third eye” is important in creating a role. The first reason is that, during individual rehearsal, actors have an inner overseer/third eye that gives them a view from the outside. The presence of the overseer/third eye is the reason that an actor is able to rehearse and correct himself in an individual rehearsal. Subsequently an actor who is not aware of or not connected to his overseer cannot benefit from his individual rehearsal. An actor always needs to be watched from the outside. This control and watching from the outside is usually done by the director in group rehearsals, but in an individual rehearsal, it is done by an overseer.

The overseer can be another name for the “third eye”. The reason that I call it the overseer instead of the “third eye” is that they both have the same functions. This point was also considered during the rehearsing of Medea. The question to be asked then is: what is the overseer or the “third eye”? Is it related to the subconscious? According to William Ellis’ quote above, the “third eye” can be the source of the subconscious. Thus, it can be said that the knowledge that comes from the “third eye” is rooted in the subconscious. However, this is still a hypothesis that I wanted to test in practice. Considering the function of the “third eye” in creating the role can therefore illuminate this complex psychophysical work.

The second reason is related to the third eye’s direction. There are two different exercises for an individual rehearsal for actors: mind rehearsal and physical rehearsal. In the former, imagination plays a significant role. In the latter, the body takes priority. Imagination can be an activity of the mind that everybody can execute easily, but in my opinion, a mind rehearsal, on the other hand, is a skill that only trained actors can execute. Nevertheless, the differences between imagination and mind rehearsal might not be so clear. George Caplan states:

The difference between mental rehearsal and imagination is that mental rehearsal does not take into account how the skill is rehearsed or what senses and emotions are used throughout the skill. It is the cognitive rehearsal of a skill without any physical movement (Caplan, 2007: 357).

In line with Caplan’s idea, one of the important skills that actors need to be trained in, is a form of mental rehearsal. This can help to connect the actor to the “third eye”. In
mental rehearsal, the “third eye” acts in the same way as a director might in person – hence I would like to call it the *self director/overseer*. Thus in this practice as research, it is important for me to consider the function of the “third eye” as a *self director/overseer* during a mental rehearsal.

The third reason is that an actor creates their interpretation of a role during rehearsals. This means that the rehearsal process is very important. Based on my twenty years of acting experience, the system of rehearsal also has an effect on creating the role. For instance, one of the functions of the rehearsal is repeating a subject physically and mentally every day in a certain time. Zarrilli states that “[d]aily repetition allows the actor time to explore ever-subtler dimensions of the body, the mind, and their relationship-in-acting, i.e., body and mind are gradually being attuned to one another” (Zarrilli, 2012: 29). As Zarrilli explains, the rehearsal system can make a circulation between the body and the mind; however, this is only the surface function of a rehearsal. Alan Hughes also states that “[b]y repetition, in theatre and in rehearsal, actors have always assimilated technique, so that it becomes second nature” (Hughes, 2012: 119). The important point here is that there is a relationship between the attuned body and mind in creating a role. Also, there might be a relationship with the system of repetition that causes the actor to create that role. In my opinion, there is a complex relationship between the “third eye” in uniting the body and the mind, through repetition, in creating the role. The hypothesis that I am proposing to test out in my own practice therefore, is to consider the circulation of these variables as seen in Formula 1:

Where \( A = \text{Mind} + \text{Body} + \text{Voice} + \text{The third eye} + X \) (Unknown notion).

\[
P (\text{Actor}) + A (\text{Mind} + \text{Body} + \text{Voice} + \text{The third eye} + X) \iff C (\text{Created character})
\]

Then:

**Formula 1:** \( P + (A + X) \iff C \)

It has to be acknowledged that there are a number of practitioners who believe that the presence of the third eye is just a distraction in the process of creating the role and also other practitioners have different ideas. In one example, Michel Saint-Denis believed that “students often feel that technique hampers spontaneity, that it kills creativity. But if one has learned and absorbed technique, it becomes second nature. One is not conscious of it, but it is there- the ‘third eye’, the actor’s ever-present unconscious
control” (2008: 116). Regarding Saint-Denis’ quote, the third eye controls an actor’s actions. By the same token, when monitoring the rehearsal of Medea, I could examine the role of the third eye in the process of developing and creating the role. Therefore the third eye, which plays a significant part in the process of creating the role, needs to be considered in this research.

In contrast, some may say that an actor can create his role by omitting the presence of the third eye as it kills the nature of acting. For instance, Robert Falls indicated in his interview that “I think that the key to acting is letting go of the third eye of watching yourself. It’s existing very spontaneously within the moment onstage and letting yourself respond emotionally within any given moment instinctively” (Edward Vilga, 1997: 76). Regarding Falls’ observation, the third eye does not only help an actor to create his role, but it also stops the actor from responding to his actions spontaneously.

These two different ideas about the function of the third eye bring up the question of what is the function of the third eye in the process of creating the role that can help some actors, but not others? In my practice as research, in the second case study, Medea, my intention was to find ways of watching and observing myself to see when the ‘third eye’ might function as a guide and when it might not. The comments of popular Hollywood actor Clint Eastwood are pertinent here:

You get to see yourself a lot, get to see what you can do wrong or right. You get to looking at yourself on film so much that you can almost step away with a third eye or as a second person. I think if you take all the books written by Stanislavsky, Chekhov or whoever right down the line, the basic function of any teacher is to teach yourself (Eastwood, Coblentz, 1999: 34).

Thus, it is important to reflect on the actor’s ability itself. Some might suggest that ultimately the only help that acting technique can offer is that it helps the actor learn how to observe himself. So, the question for me here is focused on who leads this process of self-observation? In line with my hypothesis, Eileen O’Neill notes,

When you are doing the scene, you sometimes need that third eye because there are so many choices an actor can make in any role. Perhaps the choice the actor makes is not the best for the piece. You need that third eye to really guide you and say, wait a minute. May be another choice will be a little better for the concept of the picture (Tom Lisanti, 2012: 124).

For O’Neill, an actor has so many choices in terms of playing the moment differently: where do these choices come from? Are these choices coming from the third eye or is
there another route? In connection to this concern, my research considers the function of the third eye in the process of creating a role in order to design some techniques which for the purposes of my thesis I have named ‘the Mind Technique’: these are intended to activate creativity by formulating a means of understanding and controlling what is generically referred to as ‘the third eye’. Through my practice I intend to examine some techniques which have the potential both to activate creativity and to enable control over the process of creating a role. Before moving on to this however, I want to examine different ways of activating creativity.

2.6: Activating creativity

Many actors struggle with how to activate and control their creativity, because of the seemingly spontaneous nature of creativity. As the process of creating a role is an interior process and the creation of the role happens spontaneously, some acting techniques have attempted to help to develop or enforce creativity. Acting techniques have often been designed to activate creativity and eliminate any reliance on the spontaneous generation of creativity as much as possible. Still creativity is not necessarily in the control of the actors. In reality creativity in acting as an interior process cannot be controlled; however it can be enforced with some acting methods. I argue that creativity in acting, even as an interior process can be controlled through what I would call effective thoughts.

Steve Padget has recently stated that: “The Mindberg Model suggests that there are two domains of thinking – the conscious and the unconscious. [...] The unconscious thinking domain of the Mindberg Model is highly relevant to the development of creativity, and touches upon creative teaching, creative learning and teaching for creativity” (Padget, 2012: 36). The Mindberg Model involves thinking of a question or problem, which in turn activates creativity in order to find an answer or solution. In the other words the mechanism of creativity is a process that starts with a motivation that encourages a person to think through problem solving. As soon as a question or problem comes up, the process of creativity starts spontaneously. The source of creative spontaneity is a creative idea or solution that is generated through a process. I have created Diagram 6 to show the process of creating a role through the Mind Technique.
Diagram 6: Initial perspective of the Mind Technique procedure

This diagram shows that there is a gap between the third eye and creating the role, and this gap is one of the aspects which are considered in the practical element of my research. An exploration of this gap might offer some techniques designed to control the process of creating the role. My hypothesis is that with the Mind Technique, the control of creativity can be trained, even if creativity is not a physical phenomenon like the body and the voice. In fact the Mind Technique attempts to access the place where creativity occurs. If creativity can be engendered from within the subconscious, I argue that accessing the subconscious is essential in a continual process of actor training.

As previously discussed, one of the ways to access the inner process of creating the role is to know how to develop and make use of effective thoughts through an interior imaginary persona. Here the ‘imaginary persona’, who sits somewhere between the actor’s conscious and subconscious, acts as the third eye that informs the actor of any new ideas and also leads and criticizes the actor’s actions. In fact the mental process of creating the role begins in the mind with regularly repeating effective thoughts and questions. Playing the role is the same as an impellent that motivates the creation of something. This impellent is similar to an order to activate creativity and makes a connection between the third eye and the actor for creating the role. Nevertheless there is a hidden mechanism in this process that explains how and with what notion the idea comes up which is shown in Formula 2.

**Formula 2: The process of creating an idea**

The process begins with an impellent ➔ An impellent causes an effective thought ➔ An effective thought causes creation to proceed spontaneously ➔ Creating an
This formula is the hypothesis of the process of creating an idea in the Mind Technique which will be considered later in Chapter 3. The process illustrated above in Diagram 6 is considered in the case studies in order to locate the gap between the third eye and the process of creating a role which is shown to be as ultimately the function of the third eye itself. Returning to my research question: How to control the inner processes of creating the role through a new technique? I contrived the two case studies which follow to consider these formulas and Diagram 6.
CHAPTER THREE: Practice as Research

Investigating these ideas explored in the previous chapter gave me further insight into ideas about the subconscious and creativity in acting which I will explore here. I have argued up to this point that the procedure of creating the role can happen in the mind and might even be controllable through given effective thoughts. For this purpose, considering the procedure of creating the role in acting is crucial, and in this chapter, which reflects on the practical part of the research, the process of creating the role will be considered using two case studies. The first one is based on early experiments with the formulation of tapping to the subconscious and the second one focuses on the application of the third eye as an inner leader in the development of a performance, Medea.

Following my belief that the creation of the role that automatically happens inside is hidden, I am going to show that exposing and examining the spontaneous procedure helps to bring the process under control in order to improve the quality of the process of creating the role. Covert processes of creativity will prove an important point of accessing and controlling the subconscious in acting because often actors cannot control the procedure effectively if the process is unknown. Thus, this chapter aims to outline a technique, in order to construct a tangible and accessible method in acting. As previously stated, the technique that will be uncovered by this research is called the Mind Technique. This technique offers an unnatural process of creating a role, similar to the spontaneous and natural creation of the role. The leading research question has been: How to control the inner processes of creating the role through a new technique? Other questions are: where and when does the creation of the role happen? If the creation of the role happens in the mind, how can an actor control the process of creating the role?

In order to begin to answer these questions the process of creating the role has to be observed and considered in detail. In order to do this I have set up and completed two separate case studies. The first involves a series of four workshops with actors in Tehran, Iran; and the second is a solo performance of a version of Medea devised and written by myself, making use of a number of sources - described in more detail below - and performed in the John Thaw Studio at the University of Manchester, UK, on the
12th and 13th of January 2017 (See Appendix 3, Medea performance). Both of these practical experiments have helped me develop the Mind Technique, which considers the influence of the subconscious on the actors ‘creativity in the process of creating the role which follow.

3.1: The importance of Mindfulness

In preparation for this practical research, I attended a mindfulness course in order to observe ways of accessing concentration and effective thoughts. The mindfulness course provided the groundwork for addressing the impact of concentration on creating the role, and the value of this preparatory exercise will be briefly articulated before moving on to discuss the main case studies. As concentration plays a significant role in the Mind Technique the mindfulness course provided an opportunity for self-observation and preparation in order to practically consider the high levels of concentration that would be needed in the work to follow. I participated in a four day retreat in Cittaviveka Monastery in Petersfield, UK where I was taught about meditation. This course was intensely practical and helped me to experience group meditation and consider the process of meditation as a process of self-observation.

The understanding of meditation that was gained at this basic level of retreat was that it is a state of deep concentration where the mind is completely calm and silent and in a state of thoughtless awareness. Also, when it is done on a regular basis meditation can in fact happen spontaneously. These insights brought me to the point that meditation might be a state of thoughtlessness where the subconscious can be controlled in certain directions or be led through effective thoughts. Furthermore, meditation is an inner process that can produce, change and fulfil a certain aim that is generated by the mind. The mind can be full of thoughts that are not needed, that are not important or that have to be changed. In this case, meditation can be a formal way to clear the mind and reach a calm and silent level. Thus, meditation might be defined as a method that can empty the mind of unnecessary thoughts. This might be what an actor needs to do in the early stage of creating the role. Patricia Monaghan and Viereck Eleanor note that:

A common definition of meditation, often encountered in Buddhist literature,

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5 Cittaviveka Monastery in Petersfield, UK, 12th to 15th of June 2015.
holds that meditation involves emptying the mind entirely. [...] to move the mind away from the frenzy of everyday concerns into a point of greater stillness and serenity (Monaghan and Eleanor, 2011: 190).

However, even after emptying the mind from cluttered thoughts, a concentrated thought is needed for acting. In the Mind Technique, the way of thinking, what we are thinking about and what words that we use to influence the mind are important. Moreover, meditation is synonym of contemplation and thoughts.

In the Mind Technique I need to gain a level of concentration of attuned body and mind in which the effective thoughts and thinking about the role have to be used. Mindfulness meditation “is a form of meditation that helps us stay in the moment and allows us to be present in here and now, not focusing on the future or in the past” (Judith Te Huia; 2013: 37). In a sense, most of our unnecessary thoughts are about past and future. Although this does not mean that what we think about what we have done or what we think about what we are going to do is unnecessary. The thoughts have to be in line with the creation of the role. In the process of creating the role our thoughts have to be effective in order to influence our mind activity to therefore access creativity. The body and mind can be concentrated by mindfulness meditation. Mindfulness meditation can be done while body is still or moving. The important point in mindfulness meditation is being aware. Te Huia adds:

Mindfulness meditation is about the mind being calm and in harmony with the body. In mindfulness meditation it is more about being aware of your thoughts, feelings and emotions, but not judging them (Te Huia, 2013: 37).

Sometimes meditation takes you to a state of unawareness where you are not even aware that you have left consciousness and gone to a deeper level of mind. This state is like dreaming and it is called a meditative state and it is not as useful for the purposes of this investigation as simply being mindful. Actors need to be both aware and functioning on a high level at the same time as accessing the subconscious state. The state that is used in the Mind Technique therefore is the state between the conscious and the subconscious which is commonly called the Alpha level. Mindfulness meditation is a state where we concentrate on a specific object and try to clear the intrusive thoughts in the mind.

The meditation that I experienced on the course was mindfulness meditation which places stress on regular times, typically five o’clock in the morning or seven o’clock in
the evening and which uses a special ritual mantra. Through doing the course I was able to observe what happens to the mind’s activities when we concentrate and how an actor might connect to his mind via his effective thoughts. Furthermore, the mindfulness course helped me to experience and find out the modality of meditative concentration as a preparation to start my case studies. With this basic experience I could carry out my research through the case studies which follow.

Case Study 1: Four participatory workshops as the first stage in discovering how to activate creativity through the tapping in the subconscious

The workshops were conducted in Iranshahr Hall Theatre in Tehran on two different days. Participants included four different types of actors as follows: Mohammad Ghasir, Melika shafee, Melika Asadi and Sara Salami from the young amateur group; Akram Easy, Mohammad Zibaee, Daniel Rashidi and Shakila Milanlouee in the amateur group; Mehran Taherian, Farnoosh Zarei, Zahra Javanshir, Hanieh Nejati, Javad janati Kia and Mahmoud Azad in the intermediate actors group; Mohammadreza Alaee, Mokhaderah Shafiee Rad, Mohsen Bidavizi, Ehsan Yahya Abadi and Narges Dejeh in the professional actors group. I chose different types of actors including professional actors, intermediate actors, amateurs and young amateurs.

In the procedure of the creation of a role there is an enigmatic gap between encountering the role and creating the role. This gap, which is in fact the process of creating the role, illuminates how the creation of the role happens. The purpose of my practice as research was to find the relationship between the subconscious and creativity with a view to the inner process of creating the role through the third eye as an inner leader. The hypothesis of this chapter is that the procedure of creating the role happens in the subconscious. In this case I designed four workshops in order to focus on the enigmatic gap of the creation of the role. Each workshop follows one another to assess the research question that is focused on creating the role in different steps. The main question is: What is the mechanism of creating the role?

To clarify the enigmatic gap between encountering the role and creating the role, I propose to consciously execute a process of creating the role. In these series of workshops the new procedure of creating the role will be modelled, based on accessing
the subconscious through Alpha waves, which will consciously be applied. The Alpha wave is one of the four most important frequencies of the brain, and connects to a high level of concentration. “The human brain produces waves, particularly Alpha waves and Beta waves. Alpha waves are indications of the relaxation and peacefulness that come from a very low level of conscious brain activity” (James Potter, 2012: 102). Some particular music can adjust the brain frequencies to Alpha waves; therefore each workshop was started with calm music made by John B. Levine and meditation. The music for mediation that was used is synchronic music and meditation. This kind of music is designed to adjust the Alpha waves in the brain in order to connect to the subconscious.

In the first workshop the participants were given a piece of paper to write and monitor their experiences. A basic imaginary character as a stickman was given to be completed and created during the four workshops and this process was monitored and recorded step by step. To begin in Diagram 7 below, the assumptive normative procedure for creating a role is formed. The purpose of running the workshops was perhaps best explained through these diagrams which show the process of creating the role through the Mind Technique. The outcome of these workshops will be shown through the completion of Diagram 7. In this diagram there are some lacunae or gaps between the phases in the process of creating the role in the Mind Technique methods and these workshops are designed to highlight these lacunae.

![Diagram 7: A hypothetical model of the Mind Technique](image-url)
3.2: The First workshop: Concentration and Alpha frequency in line with creating the role

The first workshop looked at mechanisms of concentration, accessing the Alpha waves and how concentration on particular objects might cause creativity. The purpose of this workshop was finding some ideas about what might lie in the gap between ‘thinking about the role’ and ‘imagining the situation’ that lies at the root of creating the role. The process between these two points is important as it could hypothetically show how creativity may be happening in the subconscious.

Main question:

When an actor concentrates on his role what mechanism happens inside which guides him to creativity?

In this workshop, participants were asked to create a moment once with opened eyes and another time with closed eyes. Then they were asked to close their eyes and concentrate on their breathing and imagine a small dot in the sequence which follows:

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes;
2. Take a deep breath and relax your muscles and try to clear your mind of your mind’s chatter;
3. Now relax your inner mind and your muscles;
4. Now imagine a small black dot;
5. Take a deep breath and observe it. Repeat it for three times;
6. This dot is getting big and bigger and turns into an empty circle. This circle is shaped like a spheroid;
7. This shape is a ball. You can play with the ball in your mind;
8. Now you understand that this shape can move and change itself;
9. It turns into a stickman. Concentrate on this stickman;
10. Scan all over this stickman. Observe its neck, hand, body and legs;
11. Now open your eyes as you keep your concentration and draw your imaginary stickman on a sheet of paper that you have been given before and attach it on the wall wherever you like;

12. Now sit comfortably again and close your eyes;

13. Take a deep breath and observe the stickman. Repeat it for three times;

14. This stickman will remain in your mind. Now open your eyes.

**Image 3:**

The purpose of this exercise was to balance their energy to prepare participants for Alpha synchrony meditation. As previously noted, this workshop focused on the procedure of concentration and reaching the Alpha level. (See appendix 2, Relaxation, duration: 2 minutes and 35 Seconds). Earlier, I mentioned that the Alpha level is the highest level of concentration. I needed to observe this procedure in order to find the relationship between the highest level of concentration and creativity that can fill the gaps in Diagram 7.1 (See page 66).

After concentration exercises in the first workshop, I asked participants to create a picture with their bodies. Then I asked them to close their eyes, think about the picture as they had been led to concentrate their mind. After three minutes I asked them to open their eyes and create a picture. I observed that they could make the creative pictures straight away. On the first occasion participants’ movements were limited and not creative whereas the second time they were more creative. For instance, the first time they could not move freely and their movements were stereotyped; while the second time they could move freely, create some new movements without thinking and even felt more comfortable.

I asked the participants, “Why can you make a creative picture now better than the first time?” When they closed their eyes, their imagination activated immediately. As they
observed, when they closed their eyes they could ignore everything around them and just concentrate on the world of their imaginations. According to their answers and my observations, this practice brought three key points and steps towards creation, closing the eyes, focusing on breathing and free imagination. Closing the eyes is the first step to keep ourselves concentrated and away from disturbance. The second step is breathing. A deep breath can be a good way to focus on the role and release oneself from the mind’s chatter. Focusing on the circulation of every breath helps to visualise the thoughts and free imagination assists participants to create movements and pictures without using their memories. Participants the first time thought about the picture with open eyes and the second time they thought about the picture with closed eyes. The result of two ways of doing this showed that the second time they were more creative than the first time. Therefore there might be a correlation between closing eyes, focusing on a subject and creativity.

According to my observations, through this practice I prepared them to reach the Alpha level, where the state between the conscious and the subconscious is. Alpha level is the place where the person has no control over his thoughts and imagination while he is aware. Furthermore, the first time participants controlled their thoughts by their consciousness as usual. The second time participants freely allowed their mind to visualize their thoughts. Likewise, the first time they used their memories to make the pictures. The second time however, their pictures had been made spontaneously (See appendix 2, Interview, Mokhadereh, duration 2.59).

Afterwards I asked participants to close their eyes, take a deep breath and focus on a black dot that is turned into an empty circle. They had been led to play with their imaginary shape which they created in their mind. I am saying creation because they just made it without using their memories. They were also doing different imaginary movements freely. As they said they experienced different feelings, like a different world that was new for some of them. I explained to them that this world, the world of creation, is the place that they will go to again during the next workshops. The outcome of the first workshop was to draw my attention to breathing. Based on my observation, concentration and breathing with closed eyes helped participants to activate their imagination and then their imagination led them to approach the creative pictures.
Diagram 7.1: A hypothetical model of the Mind Technique

This workshop brought up the idea for me that there might be a relationship between concentrated mind, free imagination and creating a role. Therefore, I decided to consider the effect of imagination on the process of creating the role in the next workshop which follows.

3.3: The second workshop: Effect of imagination in creating the role

In this workshop, to consider the process of imagination, I had to create a situation to make participants imagine something, in order to assess the process of creating the role through the imagination. For this purpose I designed two different practices. First I asked participants to imagine some movements as they were inspired by music. Everyone had to work individually. Then I asked them to imagine a story (See appendix 2, Repetition, duration: 3.26 Seconds).

Main question: What is the relationship between Alpha frequency and imagination?
To consider the effect of Alpha frequency on the participants’ imagination, I formed two ways of creating the role. The first mechanism of creating the role was: Given the situation, inspire the memories and action. The second time, the mechanism of creating was: concentration, giving the situation to their mind, imagining the imaginary character and play the imaginary character physically. I asked participants to forget whatever they had done and then concentrate with closed eyes. I asked them to get familiar with the stickman first, then I asked them to imagine the stickman by using movements, words, sentences and then story.

The character that each actor imagines in his mind is developed through the process of creating the role. In this workshop participants were asked to concentrate on their stickman through a sequence which follows:

1- Close your eyes and take a deep breath;

2- Try to concentrate on the stickman. You start to scan its body from top to bottom;

3- Now you find that your stickman can move;

4- Now you must to improvise a silent story for your stickman in your mind;

5- Your stickman starts to pantomime;

6- Now you see that your stickman can say a word. You will remember his first word, then second, third … to tenth words;

7- Your stickman can say sentences. You will remember his first sentences, second and third … to tenth sentences;

8- Then you have to open your eyes and repeat your imaginary story, movements and dialogues by themselves. You now have to record all in your paper.

In this workshop, actors were faced with a new way of imagination. This meant that body and mind were both concentrated together. The stickman is a pattern for actors to first imagine in their mind then practically develop their imaginary character, their stickmen corresponding to the physical characters. To consider the process of imagination a tool was needed to show the changes, improvements and creation. I chose the stickman as a tool to show the procedure of the subjective process to the objective process. The stickman had a duty to remain in the mind and worked even when the
workshop was finished. This stickman was completing and improving in participants’ minds. The whole controlled process was carried out spontaneously, with this difference: that the stickman as an artificial impellent inspired participants to create their role.

According to participants’ experience and my observation I realized that repetition caused creative imagination whereas some of participants mentioned that the stickman was acting by itself and spontaneously (See appendix 2, Repetition, duration: 3.26 Seconds). Most of the participants believed that they had never experienced that they could imagine and create a story in their mind and then perform it physically.

To illustrate the first point, it has to be said that even if the repetition causes the creative imagination, it shows that they imagined subconsciously. Repetition emphasizes the importance of the effective thoughts that is given to the subconscious. Repetition of the imagination acts as a visual order to the subconscious. Therefore it is in line with what has been said before. I used the stickman as an impellent to motivate them to make a story. The point is that when the actors imagine subconsciously they have no control over their imagination. By this method, the information is given to the subconscious and we expect the result as we informed the subconscious. The subconscious has duty to serve the effective thoughts as an order that has been given to it. Participants also liked the idea of the stickman as they can use this pattern for any role that they will be given in future. In this workshop participants were enabled to do this through the second step. Their mind could be ready to create systematically. When they were in the creation world, a lot of ideas came to their minds. Even some participants who were also writers said that they would like to use this method for writing (See appendix 2, interview, Reza time from 00.00.44 to 00.1.05).
This workshop and its feedback brought me to the idea that creativity can be activated through the Alpha frequency and imagination in the process of creating the role. To consider this idea I executed the third workshop.

3.4: The third workshop: Activation of creativity through the effective thoughts and visual order

In most acting methods, creativity plays a key role; however, the mechanism of the process from thinking about the situation, imagination, activation of creativity and creating the role is covert.

Main question: What is the mechanism of activating creativity in order to create the role?

Before I started the third workshop, I explained to the participants that imagination in the Stanislavsky system and imagination in the Mind Technique are different. So that in the Stanislavsky system, imagination comes through Magic If. For instance, what happens if this piece of paper were a dead bird? That is conscious visualization.
However, imagination in the Mind technique is a direct and the subconscious visualization of the thoughts in the highest level of concentration or Alpha level. For example, in the Mind Technique this (piece of paper) is a dead bird. There is no condition for this piece of paper to be a dead bird because it is a dead bird. It means that there is no If, it must be as we imagine. Obviously, in the Mind Technique such a strong imagination is best achieved through a relaxed body and mind, both together. Also I was thinking that imagination might have an effect on the mind that helps to create the role. Thus there can be a relationship between imagination and visual order to the subconscious which I considered in the third workshop as follows.

In this workshop participants were asked to develop their stickman into particular characters which were given to them. These characters were based on the well-known scripts such as Othello for male and Medea for female. To observe the process of creation and show how to activate creativity a sequence based on the stickman has been designed. My hypothetical method that can activate creativity was force motivation. In this method an artificial motivation was made in order to activate creativity because creativity can be activated by a motivation. Therefore if we make an artificial motivation or force motivation, creativity will be activated spontaneously (See appendix 2, Othello/Medea, time from 16:24 to 17:08).

1- Close your eyes and take a deep breath;
2- Try to concentrate on the stickman;
3- Now you find that your stickman does not feel good. She/he feels suffocated;
4- Now you must to improvise his/her story that how he/she was betrayed;
5- Now you get close to the stickman. You take her/his hand;
6- As soon as you touch the stickman you turn into the character;
7- Now you are facing a mirror. You see yourself and think how you want to revenge;
8- Now you clench your fist and hit the mirror with all your strength;
9- You make up your mind how you want to face your unfaithful partner;
10- You imagine your character as you want it to be as a goal;
11- Now open your eyes and physically play your story for your own.

In this workshop, first I asked participants to play the moment that they want to take revenge in their role, Othello and Medea. I asked them to repeat the moment of revenge
several times. The process for this practice was: Thinking about the situation, imagining themselves as Othello or Medea, making the moment of taking revenge consciously in their mind, acting the same as the given role, consciously repeating the action for improvement of sharpening action. At first the results of their actions were based on their memories with no creativity. Participants showed that by this method they just used their memories instead of creating a new moment.

Then I asked participants to use the Mind Technique. I asked them to close their eyes and imagine their roles (Othello and Medea) in their mind. Their imaginary characters were facing the mirror and they were deciding how to revenge the wrongs that their partners had done to them. Then I asked them to show it physically. Afterwards I asked them to repeat their imagination in their mind then play it physically. I asked them to repeat this practice several times before sleep and report their experiences the day after. The process for the second time were: Giving the effective thoughts about the role, imagine the given thoughts as a visual order to your subconscious, imagine the situation of Othello or Medea, visualize the moment of revenge, and play the imaginary stickman as Othello or Medea, physically then before sleep repeat the practice in their mind and repeat the practice the day after in the next day workshop. (See appendix 2, Othello/Medea, time from 16:48 to 25: 08). According to participants’ feedback I brought two examples as follows:

Melika who in the first practice, had problems with revenge as she thought that this is not fair to involve children and also killing does not solve the problem, in the second practice she could kill her children as she turned into Medea and she wanted to exact revenge in the same way that Medea did. Melika imagined leaving her children in a tub full of water and allowing them to be drowned. In the first practice Daniel also thought that if you really love someone you cannot kill her; in the second practice he could kill Desdemona with the combination of hate and love. Daniel imagined pouring poison into her glass of wine. What this observation gained is that the participants claimed after each time that they repeat the practice they could imagine some new things and they could get nearer to their role. Some of them said that they had a dream about their character the night before. Some others said that when they were at home suddenly a new and creative idea came into their mind (See appendix 2, interview, Reza time from 1.29 to 2.34).

This sample showed that the imaginary character that they gave to their subconscious
was being completed spontaneously and subconsciously. They did not think about their character or even did not practice at home; however their subconscious was working to complete their character during the night, illustrating how their subconscious was working on their character whether they were awake or asleep.

This workshop helped participants to visualize images by their subconscious through the effective thoughts. For instance, in the Mind Technique the ideal of character is initially imagined as a goal for actors to reach, with this difference: that this imagination forms in the subconscious as an order. In this workshop a regulated model of imagination was designed by the form of stickman. As a result of this workshop I observed that creativity in acting needs a ground or basis from which to spark. There can be two important steps for activating creativity. One of the main steps to activate creativity is: force motivation and the other is an ideal goal. The hypothesis was that the ideal goal as a visual order goes to the subconscious and therefore the subconscious attempts to serve the order. In this workshop I tried to give the participants the right effective thoughts when their minds were in the Alpha level in order to give the right order to their subconscious so that the rest of the process would happen spontaneously.

The important point in this workshop was making the ideal of the character as a goal. This imaginary ideal was a visual order to the subconscious. From this observation a certain question came to mind: what is the mechanism of repetition of effective thoughts especially in pre-sleep? To answer this question I formed the fourth workshop.

Diagram 7.3: A hypothetical model of the Mind Technique
3.5: The fourth workshop: The function of repetition of effective thoughts in pre-sleep?

In the three previous workshops, I led participants to go into the Alpha level, the place between the conscious and the subconscious. In this workshop I wanted to make a situation for participants when they are in the Alpha level, give them effective thoughts, then ask them to repeat it in pre-sleep. For this purpose I designed the stickman differently. This time the stickman was not obedient, it moved, talked and felt independently. The participants could not control the stickman. In fact it was controlled by their subconscious. This was the most important differences between this workshop and others. Through this practice I led participants to let their subconscious make their characters itself by giving an order in the pre-sleep. As the new stickman was not obedient, it acted spontaneously. In this workshop participants were asked to concentrate on their stickman through a sequence which follows:

1- Close your eyes and take a deep breath;
2- Try to concentrate on the stickman;
3- You can see it moves, speaks and feels by itself;
4- The stickman is disobedient. It moves and talks under her/his own control;
5- Imagine the mirror and the stickman. The stickman is upset. You try to get close to it to find out what is the matter;
6- The stickman starts to move and talk differently. She/he looks like Medea/Othello;
7- She/he changes his/her clothes. She/he wears the clothes of Medea/Othello. She/he faces the mirror;
8- She/he decides to get revenge. You can see it in her/his eyes. She/he takes your hand. As soon as you get close to her/him you turn into Medea/Othello;
9- You decide to get revenge. You go through a door. You see your unfaithful partner;
10- You start to release your anger. You break and throw everything that is in the room;
11- Then the last thing that you are going to beat is Jason/Desdemona. You have now got revenge;
12- Now you open your eyes and physically play whatever you imagined.
Then I asked them to repeat this sequence in their pre-sleep. The day after, I asked them to play their roles.

In this workshop I designed the stickman as a disobedient character to lead participants to trust their subconscious. They did not control the stickman consciously as it was disobedient; thus it was controlled by the participants’ subconscious. The participants could control their subconscious through their effective thoughts that had been given to the participants’ subconscious in the beginning of the workshop through the sequence of the practice. This system worked as participants stated their experiences that their character was doing something that they would not agree with (See appendix 2, Repetition, time from 2:00 to 4:05).

For instance some of them had a problem to get furious enough to kill somebody. In one example Akram (who played Medea) felt upset more than being furious to kill her children and Reza (who played Othello) was not furious enough to kill Desdemona. Reza said “Even if he was forced to get revenge, he preferred to do something other than killing Desdemona”. Akram said “I can kill Jason but I cannot kill my own children”. Although when they worked on this practice they could get near to their character in a short time and act the same as Othello/Medea. In the third workshop they could divide their own character and the role. In the fourth workshop, after they repeated effective thoughts in pre-sleep, they could completely think and act the same as their role. Reza and Akram were led to act other than their own personalities. Indeed this new method helped them to create their role without their conscious interference. This workshop showed that by this method it is possible to lead actors to their subconscious and ask them to control their subconscious through their thoughts and repetition in pre-sleep.

Other than thinking the same as the role character, this workshop helped them to create some words and movement and images that came into their minds without thinking consciously. Other participants like Reza and Akram, could move and act creatively. For instance Sarah imagined feeding her children with poisoned food while she told her life story. Mohammad imagined suffocating his imaginary partner with her handkerchief. Mohammad caressed his partner and said very lovely words to her and then killed her. In the first practice in the third workshop, participants moved and talked based on their experiences and memories, but in the fourth workshop they created some
dialogues and movements that they had never thought about before.

In another example, Javad claimed that he placed himself as his role and he thought there was someone else who acted and spoke instead of him. Yahiya said it was someone who asked me to get revenge in the way that I did. Then we discussed with the participants what Javad and Yahiya had said and their experiences.

This workshop showed how creativity worked in action and that it can be controlled through the Mind Technique. In most acting workshops in Iran that are focused on creativity, workshop leaders often try to make participants create, whereas in this workshop how creativity might happen automatically was considered in order to develop a method that can increase and control creativity. The recap of the discussion was focused on the person inside some of the participants who were the same as Javad and Yahiya that were led to act during the practice. Still there was no clue for the reason of the effect of the pre-sleep on their creativities. As a result there was a relationship between activating creativity and the inside leader, the third eye in the process of creating the role which needs to be considered in the next case study. In conclusion, the outcomes of these four workshops were as follows:

In The Mind Technique, the actor gives the order of creating the tipping point/climax (the most important) of the role to his/her subconscious, physically and imaginary. This order remains in the actor’s subconscious and causes them to make an artificial field for creativity. To activate creativity, a field or motivation is needed. This artificial process that is designed in the Mind Technique is shorter than the natural one.

The process is also controlled by giving the right thoughts and orders. The fact is that if an actor does not control this process, his/her memories replace their creativity, which causes cliché. Also the quality of creation can be increased as the subconscious has a specific order. In the Mind Technique, the subconscious is given an appropriate and clear goal. These workshops also focused on how to control the subconscious by effective thoughts. In the Mind Technique the matter of thinking, the way of thinking, the way of repeating and making a clear order to the subconscious is crucial.

In these workshops the moment of creation was deliberated. Also the modality of creating the role was considered in detail, which is shown below, in Diagram 7.5. This Diagram is the model of creating the role in the Mind Technique, which is gained
through the use of the subconscious, and the results of the four workshops, which initially formed before starting Case Study 1. There were some gaps that were filled by the end of the four workshops and the conclusion of Case Study 1, which is shown below.

Diagram 7.4: A hypothetical model of the Mind Technique

To articulate Diagram 7, which is a model of the Mind Technique and before starting Case Study 2, a short description of the Mind Technique is necessary. The Mind Technique is a method that attempts to connect to the subconscious directly in order to create the role. In this method the tipping point/climax of the role has to be chosen, for instance for Medea when she kills her children. Then the actor is taken to the high level of concentration or Alpha level. In this level the actor is being asked to imagine a stickman. In the next stage the actor has to improve the stickman as the character whose action is explained during the meditation. Then the actor is asked to open her/his eyes and physically repeat what she/he imagined and created in his mind. Following this practice, the actor has to repeat the effective thoughts in his pre-sleep. Indeed, in these
workshops actors were asked to let their subconscious directly make their characters (See appendix 2, Othello/Medea time from 10:30 to 12:54).

In addition, in the Mind Technique there are two levels of creation, which can be called short term creation and long term creation. The short term creation is creating the tipping point/climax of the role. The long term creation is creating the whole role. In Case Study 1, the process of short term creation has been considered; then, the process of long term creation needs to be considered more precisely. This consideration focuses on the process between giving the order to the subconscious and creating the role. The hypothesis is that the third eye acts as a leader for creating the role. To consider this process, long term creation and the function of the third eye, I suggested Case Study 2, which is performing a play, and that was the purpose of the next stage of practical research.

Case Study 2: Practice as Research in Rehearsal and Stages Process

I proposed Case Study 2 as a means to consider what the third eye is and how it can aid the process of creating a role. As previously described, Case Study 1 focused on the process of creating the role. During the last workshop the necessity of considering the effect of pre-sleep thoughts and the third eye as a leader was concluded. I discovered that during the practice, an imaginary person/persona – as previously described – inside the participants started to lead them towards the role in the process of creating the role. In the early stage of my research I was thinking about the third eye and its function; where does it come from and where does its knowledge come from? Indeed, the consideration of the third eye and its function in the process of creating the role is the remaining challenge of this research.

3.6: The necessity of the third eye in the process of creating a role

In Case Study 2, my practice as research (PAR) will document both the rehearsal process and the performance, because I am going to observe the presence of the “third eye” as guidance in both rehearsal and performance. As mentioned previously, the “third eye” guides the actor in the process of creating the role and performance;
therefore I will need to consider the “third eye” while the actor (me) is performing. Following a preliminary investigation of Medea in my practice as research, I propose a new connection between the “third eye” and the actor that can be used as a new technique to create a role. This technique forms a hypothesis in creating a role, similar to a spontaneous creation. For example, Tortsov, director of Stanislavsky in Othello, pinpointed this when he said that “[o]ur subconscious power cannot function without its own engineer – our conscious technique” (Stanislavsky, 2015: 15). In my practice as research, through exploring the performance of the role of Medea, my intention has been to experience the conscious process of creating a role by use of a subconscious technique in order to examine the function and effect of the third eye in creating a role.

To test my hypotheses in creating a role through the third eye and establishing a connection between the inner and outer processes, I observe in the first part of the research the role of the “third eye” in the process of creating the character during rehearsal. In the second part, I observe the role of the “third eye” during performance. My research originates in the question of how and in what form the “third eye” guides the actor. My approach, therefore, is to seek to identify who or what is guiding me in creating and performing a role.

3.7: Analysis and Adaptation of Medea in Performance

As explained earlier, I performed Medea in an adaptation by myself. In my preliminary analysis and theatrical direction, the Medea I wanted to present as a dancer spurned by Jason, her husband who was also her dance partner. Jason left Medea and their two sons for another woman, a younger dancer. In anger, Medea killed her two sons. Also, in my adaptation, Medea preserves both her passionate intensity on motherhood and feelings of vindictive ferocity. I made extensive use of dance and gesture in the performance.

To analyze Medea’s character, it was important to know that she was wild and ruthless, rather than being miserable. Medea was an identifiable modern woman who eschewed actual violence. She believed that revenge was not an emotional or unfair action, but was the necessary process in seeking justice because it prevents injustice. She was not willing to be silent when confronted with injustice. Medea was determined to protest against injustice. From Medea’s point of view, this protest required a precious sacrifice.
on her part. Thus, Medea sacrificed her children’s lives to amend wrongdoings in society, even though her children were her most precious assets. She also wanted to show that killing her soul had an equal status with their children’s lives. Medea wanted to echo not only her current torments, but also all the women in the world who were faced with similar situations. The way she chose to afflict tribulation was through vengeance – a male genocide symbolized by Medea killing her own sons.

On the other hand, Medea’s action was not based on manic and aggressive impulses. Rather, it was her way to defend her ignored rights. Medea as a mother saw life and death as equal notions. Her feeling of death-wishes for her male children came from her feeling of life-wishes. According to Tricia Farwell, “[t]his death wishes, or death instinct, is as much a part of human life as is the instinct for life. Thus, inside of everyone is a constant tension between the desire for life and the desire for death” (Farwell, 2006: 6). Thus Medea killed her sons in defence of her feminine rights. From Medea’s point of view, she did not kill her children; rather, she sacrificed them to bring equality to society.

Generally, the audience often preferred to side with Medea as Jason had broken his oath to her. On the other hand, Medea’s action cannot be acceptable. This dilemma was the significant point in Medea’s script. Hartigan adds: “Whatever the Greek view may have been, modern producers want the audience to side with Medea, while actresses find in her strong character a role to covet” (Hartigan, 1995: 49). The actress playing Medea needs to have great acting skills to show a compendium of grievances (that she had lost her love) as well as a woman who was wise and powerful enough to defend her own rights.

3.8: Structure and documentation of my journey to create the character of Medea

I proposed three steps to create the character: Imagining the picture of the character in the mind (one dimensional); imagining the half-developed character in the mind (two dimensional); and penetrating the character inside in action (three dimensional) which created the character. The first stage of creating the role was when an actor imagined a one-dimensional picture of the character in his mind. My question was: where does this imaginary picture come from? My second question was: if it is hypothesized that the
imaginary picture was based on the received information from the text, then what was the role of the actor in forming this picture? Following that, this picture was eventually developed during the rehearsal as the two-dimensional picture.

At this stage, my question was: what caused this development? What was the role of the third eye in this development? To document this and the reasons causing this development, in the first session of the rehearsal I drew my imaginary character on a piece of paper, and then added any changes that developed during the rehearsal process (See appendix 3, Diary, picture 1, page 21). The reasons for these changes and development might help me in my consideration about the process of creating the role. The last step was the three-dimensional picture that was the time that character penetrated to the inside of the actor, so the actor and character became one person. In other words, the character was created inside the actor. Here the driving question was: what is the mechanism of this creation that causes changes in the body and the voice of the actor? To answer these questions, I was monitoring the rehearsal of Medea that focused on individual rehearsal. I planned to catch and make note of every idea that I received during the rehearsal, consisting of verbal ideas and images which raised in my mind means of considering the function of the third eye.

The play Medea seemed like a perfect place to explore the figure of Medea and the creation of this complicated character through embodiment, movement, concentration, imagination and meditation. My first attempts at thinking about this characterization were, not surprisingly perhaps, through her given situation and her different reactions. But, increasingly, I had questions about the actual presence of Medea in a performance while she experiences the “third eye” as guidance. I strategized about ways to explore the consequences of Medea’s action on the stage in the context of my research questions. For this reason, according to David Kember and Michael Corbett’s model⁶ I articulated five phases of this practice as research: initial reflection; planning; action; observation and reflection. The descriptions of these phases are as follows.

3.9: Initial reflection with the view of the third eye

During the observation of Case Study 1, the workshops in Tehran, considering pre-sleep thoughts and the third eye came up. As discussed above, this was the covert leader that always leads and corrects an actor in both group and individual rehearsals, onstage and offstage. Observing the presence of the third eye can illuminate the relationship between the conscious mind and creativity. In this practice as research, I aimed to modify teaching acting techniques or adapting a new acting method in order to help the actor to enforce the process of creating the role. For this purpose observing and promoting changes in the process of creating the role were designed. To report the effects of these changes, I needed a record of the first action that I made towards the character and the final action when the character was created.

3.10: Planning of observing the third eye and its function

The methodology for this part of the research is firstly, planning; secondly, monitoring; and the third is evaluating the process of development of the character that is oriented towards creating the role. For this purpose, I would need to provide a map to show the changes in body, voice, behaviour, actions and relationship between the actor and the third eye during the process.

This methodology puts the actor at the centre of the development and accepts unanticipated changes as a potential for creativity. Using two keywords of input and output can be helpful to monitor how a specific technique can cause the development of the process of creating the role. This method is particularly helpful for the purpose of the effect of each technique that follows a multi-layered approach to create the role and also for addressing the creativity issue. This concept basically consists of three concentric terms: the actor’s mind, the character, and the third eye, which can be used to show how they influence each other.

The rehearsal period took place over ten weeks, five days a week and two hours a day. One day’s rehearsal includes the routine rehearsal which will run in the empty room for two hours a day and a written report will be made following this. The proposed alterations that I am going to make are focusing on the mind rehearsal and trying to use different methods to activate the creativity. For instance, using the effect of particular
music, such as Alpha music that causes the Alpha frequency in the mind, I am going to choose a short part of the Medea and play it while it is recording. I will then listen to the Alpha music, and repeat the part again to observe the differences. In another example, I just listen to the music and concentrate on my role, then repeat the music and move freely while I am thinking of the character. I will report any changes to the process.

Also I will focus on the third eye and what and when she is recommending any idea. Accordingly the outcome of the fourth workshop, the third eye starts to give ideas after focusing and repeating a part of the role facing the mirror. For this reason, firstly, I play a part imagined with no overseer. Secondly, I will face the mirror and play the part again. Thirdly, I will focus on the third eye and when and how it drives me. This observation can help me to illuminate the differences of self-directing and the third eye. Another idea for activating creativity is using the mask improvisation. “Mask improvisation is an actor training method that sensitizers and frees the imagination stored in the psychophysical being of performer” (Sears Eldredge, 1996:17).

The reason that I am going to use this method is that when using the mask the whole of the actor’s attention is drawn to his interior. The actor tries to impress the audience with his body and the energy that comes through his body. To observe the process of creation dividing any part of the actor that needs to turn to the character such as body, voice, emotion and mind is suggested. In any character, there are some particular moments that are important that I call ‘semi climax points’ and one of them is the tipping/climax points. In the Medea script, the important moments are: When she hears about her husband’s disloyalty; when she speaks to her husband to change his mind; when she decides to take action after she has killed her children. The climax point is the time when she kills her children. I am going to emphasize these moments to create the character.

3.11: Action and Observation: Embodiment of the theory and research

In this section, I am going to explain the process of creating the play and role of Medea, using the new method, the Mind Technique which will be more fully discussed in Chapter 4. Briefly, the Mind technique is a mind rehearsal, rather than a physical
rehearsal. The concept is that an actor passes the basic information coming from either the script or the director’s interpretation of the script to his mind regularly. This is done during every rehearsal and in his pre-sleep during the initial visualisation of his role, so as to allow his thoughts both the conscious and the subconscious realms respectively – to complete the initial picture step-by-step. Also in the process of creating the role, new ideas and all the steps required will be given to the actor in the highest level of concentration/Alpha wave through her third eye, the person inside that corrects her all the time whether in rehearsal, on the stage, or in her daily life.

In my method, even though an actor can create a role from a written text using the Mind Technique. I did not have any written script as I wanted to improvise both the script and the role of Medea during the rehearsal to monitor how every single word or movement that came up in my mind. The rehearsal differed from any current acting methods as I did not have any physical rehearsal until about three quarters of the way into the rehearsal process. I let my mind create the character first through the mind rehearsal, then I followed what my mind asked me to do via the third eye. I received most of the images of my character through the mind rehearsal whether during the rehearsal or after I woke up from sleep.

There are some current methods that emphasize the imagination of the actor and how actors create their role from their imagination. For instance, Jean Benedetti supports this method, saying: “Once the actor has created in his imagination the best form of presenting the inner thoughts and passions of a role, he tries to embody it physically. He is the sculptor of his dream, has shaped himself into finest physical expression of his thoughts and passions” (Benedetti, 2012: 117). The Mind Technique instead focuses on the mechanism of the creation of the initial imagination in the actor’s mind in order to exert control over the imagination. How does the image that Benedetti is referring to come up in the actor’s mind? To answer this question I needed to consider the root of actor’s imagination that was based on the given information.

For this reason, in my observation the selected given information was passed to the mind during the rehearsal. Therefore in the Mind Technique, effective thoughts in pre-sleep play a key role in creating the initial imagination which causes the actor to create the role. The selected information or effective thoughts in pre-sleep can affect the actor’s dream or his imagination during his rehearsal. For instance, Gary Plaford states,
“Dreams are related to the experiences from our most recent waking period” (Plaford, 2009: 48). Using Plaford’s idea, whatever an actor does, thinks and experiences during the day, it will be reflected on, and possibly appear in his dreams. As the given thoughts in pre-sleep are the most recent ones, then they will be more effective on his dream. Therefore if an actor is given particular thoughts that are related to his role prior to sleep, he can receive new ideas through his dreams and thereafter.

The actor’s thoughts and dreams can be directed and channeled to his role creation. David Koulack suggests, “It’s almost as if these reveries or our pre-sleep thoughts act as conduits for some of what will ultimately appear in our dreams” (Koulack, 1991: 84). In line with Koulack’s idea, I designed the Mind Technique to codify a regular practice so as to control the circulation that I call it efficacious circulation. The efficacious circulation includes: thinking about the character, rehearsing with ideas, dreaming about the character, and working on the ideas from the dream in the rehearsal process.

To start my rehearsal based on the Mind Technique, the initial picture of the character was important because it provided the foundation of the character that needed to be improved and completed during the rehearsal. That meant the kind of thoughts I would give to my mind that could correctly lead me to the right interpretation would need to be systematically developed. What was the question I needed to ask? How did I create the initial picture? From my perspective, the theme of Medea was violence and oppressive tragedy. Medea was a violent woman who was on the horns of a dilemma. These ideas led me to draw my initial picture of Medea’s character before the rehearsal began.

As an initial picture, I tried to look at colours and found that the three colours red, black and gray proved significant. Medea is in a black and gray dress and a red cape. The props on the stage are two chairs, three masks and a big white curtain. These elements were my first interpretation of the Medea role and, although I had a stage design I still had no written dialogue (See appendix 3, Diary, Picture 1, page 21 also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Red cape, duration 2.02). The only thing I knew was to be led to the level of instinctive human violence that I could murder my children. This process of leading to this level needed an imaginary character to be considered.

To monitor my imaginary character of the role, I drew five different pictures of Medea
in different times and occasions during all the rehearsals. The changes from the initial picture to the ultimate picture show how the Medea role has been created eventually based on the effective thoughts and *efficacious circulation*. The Mind Technique, in fact, engineers the process of creating the role through an *efficacious circulation* which is one of its phases. I believe that there is a relationship between the effective thoughts in pre-sleep, dream and creating the role. Antonin Artaud had a different idea about the process of this circulation. “In the same way that our dreams have an effect upon us and reality has an effect upon our dreams, so we believe that the images of thought can be identified with a dream which will be efficacious to the degree that it can be projected with the necessary violence” (Artaud, 1958: 85). From Artaud’s idea, the reality that is based on our thoughts has an effect on our dreams which leads to the human nature and violence.

In contrast, it can be said that the actor’s thoughts also have an effect on his dreams and his dreams have an effect on his thoughts, a circular process which causes a liberated and distinctive imagination and not necessarily a violent one. The Mind Technique places effective thoughts in everyday rehearsal in order to gain an instinctive reflection which leads the actor towards creating the role. Nevertheless the instinctive cruelty and violence itself, which is the highest level of human action, may cause creativity.

One of the reasons, in my opinion, is that this kind of feeling is primal and instinctive, which leads the artist to the liberated creative state. This connection is best explained by Artaud’s understanding of cruelty and creativity: “Artaud’s ideal theatre is tied indissolubly to his concept of cruelty. For Artaud, cruelty is excessive, creative, and because he deems cruel any act that moves the human being out of its repetitive cycle, he finds cruelty to be life-giving” (George Rodosthenous, 2015: 172).

From my perspective one of the important reasons that the violence and cruelty of feeling of the character are creative is that violence is an unusual and unexpected human reaction. Regardless of Artaud’s idea about violence and creativity, Medea is a violent character. In the play, Medea displays a ferocious and relentless reaction; she is cruel enough to murder her children and this level of violence spontaneously drives her to the creativity. My question was how to create a violent role which is acting violently in a compassionate and dignified character? It was not my aim to show the cruelty to inspire creativity. That is why in the end, in the construction of my role, Medea was not
a vicious and cruel character, even if her actions seemed different.

The significant point here is that the character that I initially imagined in my early interpretation was a wicked woman who stubbornly stood by her rights. She had an aim that was revenge and she devoted everything to it. However, I wanted to create a different character from what we have normally seen so far. I have to acknowledge that it seemed unlikely for me to create a character whose action is brutal and unforgiveable and yet she is not a wicked and vicious person.

The point that I was thinking about, was that a mother can only murder her children if she is not insane, she has a sensible reason for her action or she is careless and vicious, she is outraged or she becomes involved in the madness of the moment. As previously mentioned this moment of the play, killing her children was the climax of the original Medea. This question remained in my mind of how I could create the role of a Medea who is not vicious. I wanted to know how I needed to prepare through the process of creating the role. In this consideration preparation can be the effective thoughts and repetition in pre-sleep. Through this knowledge I had to start the process of creating the role as follows.

To start I thought that the thoughts which are correlated to the role had to be given with no judgment when the mind was concentrated. Thus the rehearsals started with a relaxation in the first session of the rehearsal (See appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, concentration, duration 5 minutes and 29 seconds). The relaxation and the thoughts that I was given helped me to imagine Medea’s character in my mind before I sleep: A woman with a plain face and unknown feelings (See appendix 3, Diary, picture 1, page 21).

According to my documentary diary, on the second day the idea of the dance came to my mind. (See appendix 3, Diary, 2nd day, page 1; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Mask 4, duration 3: 33). This idea appeared as a word and some unrecognizable movements in my mind. In this stage of the process I did not have any clear perception of whether this idea could help to create the role or not. Nevertheless I knew that I had to create an atmosphere for Medea to tap into her instinct to reach the required violence to be able to murder her children. Regarding my diary, the idea of a woman who is dancing while beating on the drum came into my mind unexpectedly (See appendix 3, Diary, 5th day, page 3). I was wondering why I received these images. Where did these
images come from? Could I approach the climax of the character by dancing? I thought that I cannot expect Medea to be dancing in this difficult situation; however, it depends on the type of dance.

A few days later, the other example was when the idea of the ritual dance came up to my mind, something similar to Zaar during the rehearsal (See appendix 3, Diary, 8th day, page 4). Zaar is an Iranian ritual ceremony that is rooted in African countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia; that can cure the person who is ill by the vicious spirit (jinn) through the dance and repetitive beating on the drums (See appendix 1, Zaar photos and films). “The Zaar ritual serves as curing ceremonial” (Ember and Carol R Melvin, 2003: 143). This idea was the first spark for me. It took me time to realize that this idea could answer most of my questions and was perfectly matched with my initial interpretation. Ritual dance could lead me to self-purification and catharsis. Cia Sautter’s definition of ritual dance is: “Dance is a form of conventional activity that can especially allow for ritual self-expression and reutilization of standard forms of movement” (Sautter, 2010: 20). Medea’s character needed an atmosphere to express herself to approach her instinctive violence. Medea as a mother could not murder her children unless there was a vicious spirit that had penetrated her inside. Nevertheless Medea needed a ritual ceremony to pacify the vicious interior spirit. On the other hand the Zaar ceremony was the one that I was looking for. This reminded me of the picture that came into my mind on the 5th day of my rehearsal (See appendix 3, Diary, 5th day, page 3).

As previously mentioned, referring to the time in which the original Medea would have been performed, women were not allowed to appear in public in order to make speeches or protest. In line with this limitation of females, Zaar is a kind of womanly ritual ceremony. Most of the ritual ceremony leaders and participants are men, whereas in Zaar the leaders and participants are women and men are only present as drum players. Ember mentions that “Anthropologists have suggested that Zaar creates an environment that empowers women by allowing them to express themselves in an exhibitionist manner not permitted within the confines of a traditional Islamic society” (Sophie Ibbotson and Max Lovell-Hoare, 2012: 32). In addition men are helping to run this ritual ceremony. “Most leaders and participants of the Zaar are women, though in some instance men have been permitted to help with drumming, the ritual slaughter of animals for sacrifice, or making offerings to the possessing spirit” (Penni Alzayer,
When the idea of Zaar ritual ceremony had come into my mind several times in different forms, I picked it as a Key Idea. I could imagine the whole play as a ritual Zaar ceremony and Medea was trying to pacify her vicious spirit (jinn). Zaar was in line with the play for two reasons: firstly Zaar was a womanly ritual ceremony that refined a vicious spirit. Secondly, this kind of dance led the actor to approach ecstasy and rapture which is rooted in the actor’s natural disposition. Nevertheless, I was not sure about the Zaar yet, as I had two other issues: This ceremony is for an ill person who would like to be cured and Medea was not an ill person nor she was looking for any treatment.

The day after the idea of a story teller came up to my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 9th day, page 5; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Start, duration 2.39) To analyze this idea, I have to say that the idea of Medea as a story teller came from Dario Fo’s script, and therefore the idea was a kind of given information and not a new idea; however it is important to know what was the main reason that this idea unexpectedly came into my mind. According to my notes on the 10th day of my rehearsal I had some images that came into my mind that were not related to the Zaar. The idea of the particular movements that I received made me more interested than the Zaar. Therefore I preferred to leave the Zaar and focus on those movements that even helped me to improvise some parts of the script.

While I was working on the other part of the play, after three days, the idea of the Middle Eastern dance came up to my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 12th day, page 6, also see Medea rehearsal, Mask 3, duration 3 minutes 46 seconds). I thought this idea was closer to the play. Medea could be a woman who tells her story through her dance. Moreover, Middle Eastern dances, regardless of the aesthetics and attractiveness are near to my culture (Iranian) and original character of Medea in the past (Eastern). Therefore, at this stage I could say that the key idea was Middle Eastern dance not the Zaar, even though the Zaar had led me to this idea.

The other idea was an image of Medea’s mother that came up during pre-sleep (See appendix 3, Diary, 15th day, page 8). This idea helped me to imagine other sides of Medea’s character, childhood and motherhood. (See appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Birth, time from 1:56 to 2:30). Thinking about this side of Medea also helped to lead
me to a character that murdered her children but not because she hated them; she still had maternal feelings and she never stopped loving them. As mentioned previously, Formula 2 (See page 61) shows the process of creating an idea, and I went through this formula step by step.

In this stage, I had a visual order to be given to my mind through the pre-sleep. I still had no explanation of why, where and when the ideas came into my mind. After a few days the idea of a stick came into my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 20th day, page 10; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Stick, duration 3.36). The gap that had to be contemplated was that a stick is one of the props in Zaar. “ Skipping around and brandishing his bamboo stick (bakol) or sticks, the shaman threatens the evil spirit (jinn), advising him to leave the patient’s body. In time, screaming and howling, the (jinn), or the evil cause of the illness, prepares to leave the patient” (Bashiri 1983).  

To add to Bashiri’s explanation, the Zaar is a ritual ceremony that the evil spirit is threatening to leave by a circle around the illness that Mama Zaar is tracing with her stick. The image of the stick brought the idea of the Zaar back to me once again.

In contrast to the ideas I had been given so far, I had a dream that was like a familiar film. This film that I was playing in had images that were in line with the Medea character (See appendix 3, Diary, 22nd day, page 11). This dream led me to add two videos to the performance. I tried to rebuild my dream as a fact of the creation during my dream (See appendix 3, Medea videos, video track 1 and 2). The ideas that came into my mind on different occasions appeared as an image to my mind or in a dream.

After this dream the person inside me started to give the ideas through the words and not just an image. This person that I would like to call the “third eye” started to communicate with me the day after the dream (See appendix 3, Diary, 23rd day, page 11). In this stage, my question was: Why did ideas come into my mind when I was not expecting them? Why had the questions that I was asking not been answered and other ideas appeared to me instead?

For instance, regarding my last question, the idea of the dagger came into my mind

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while I had this question ten days ago (See appendix 3, Diary, 26th day, page 12; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Dagger, duration 2.10). Did it take a long time for the third eye to answer the question? I found that the third eye was informed about every single matter. Sometimes I was given an idea that I did not even ask for (See appendix 3, Diary, 22nd day, page 11). Afterwards I understood that I might have asked about it before. In other words, the third eye predicatively answered the question that I would ask in future.

In one example, the image of fighting came into my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 27th day, page 13). I was not sure that this idea could help me as the play was a solo performance and the image was not clear on who was fighting with whom. A week later the idea of a wicked woman came into my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 33rd day, page 14; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Wicked side 1, duration 2.01). Through this new idea the third eye led me to create another character in the play that was played by Medea, two different sides of Medea. A wicked woman inside Medea who was leading her and causing her to see the situation wisely and not emotionally. These ideas brought the idea of the Zaar once again. A female wicked leader (jinn) inside Medea. Also in the Zaar the ill person is led by a female leader.

Led by a sheikh (female religious leader), attendees chant to the beat of drum and the sound of a tanbura (bowl lute). They aim to create a heightened atmosphere in which the possessed woman can be questioned and the spirit appeased (Ibbotson, Lovell-Hoare, 2012: 32).

When I consciously thought about it, I realized that if I would not like Medea to be vicious and careless, therefore there must be someone who encouraging her towards her actions. From this point of view, Medea’s action seemed in accordance with the Zaar. If I could design a Medea play somehow matching a tenable view such as a ritual Zaar ceremony, she could appear as an innocent character who was acting violently. I confirmed the idea of the Zaar when the other day during the rehearsal the idea of sacrificing instead of killing the children was given to me by the third eye (See appendix 3, Diary, 35th day, page 15).

On this occasion the only reason that could justify Medea’s action was a sacrificial offering of her beloved children. As an example, Abraham offered his beloved son to God. “A story of sacrifice is found in Judaism and Christianity, when Abraham is prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, such is his love for God” (David and Gill Rose,
The action of Abraham was ruthless but his intention of loving God justified his violent action. There is another example in literature, *Iphi-geneia* by Euripides. This play shows how sometimes the intention can outweigh the morality of the action. In other words, the intention can justify immoral action. Elisabeth Tetlow describes this matter further by referring to the sin that Agamemnon committed which forced him to kill/sacrifice his daughter instead.

The penalty was that Agamemnon had to sacrifice his own daughter. He did not want to do this, but he believed that he had no choice. In this play, *Iphi-geneia* was portrayed as a victim vicariously punished for her father's offense (Tetlow, 2005: 113).

These two examples could be linked to Medea's violence if the play were in the *Zaar* form and style. So that in the *Zaar* also there is a sacrificing in order to refine the fault or sin, a spiritual healing to cure an ill person and for fertility treatment. Ibbotson and Lovell-Hoare explain that:

Abandoned dancing is common, as is hysterical behavior, and in some circumstances, particularly in case of sickness or infertility, a hen may be sacrificed by Sudan’s Sufi traditions, with the ecstatic nature of the ceremony mirroring the trance-like zikr of Sufism (Ibbotson, Lovell-Hoare, 2012: 32).

I had consciously tried several times to avoid designing the *Medea* in accordance with the *Zaar* but on different occasions the ideas of *Zaar* came into my mind unwittingly. The above examples and explanation show the reason for this insistent idea. But who drove this idea? It could be an inner engineer which caused me to be driven to this idea. An overseer who knew that the idea of the *Zaar* would perfectly fit my interpretation of *Medea*.

Another example was when a new idea came into my mind that Medea would symbolically be reborn from her children’s dead bodies like a phoenix (See appendix 3, Diary, 37th day, page 16). This idea that the third eye gave to me was familiar. I had been given a visual image of a bird twenty days before, when I did not expect it (See appendix 3, Diary, 16th day, page 8). This shows that there was a connection between these two ideas that were given at two different times; and yet it was not clear why these related ideas did not come up at the same time.

In addition, the *Zaar* also can be performed for a safe birth for a child. “Today, *Zaar* is danced primarily for relaxation and spiritual healing. It is particularly popular with
pregnant women who hope to ensure a safe birth” (Alzayer, 2010: 48). This fact in the
Zaar was parallel with Medea’s rebirth. In this observation according to the Formula 2
that was shown previously: An impellent (My motivation for playing the role of Medea)
which sparked effective thoughts (The questions in pre-sleep) that drove the process of
creating an idea. (See Formula 2, page 61) The process of creating the ideas created the
role.

To conclude the practice elements of the research, regarding my research question,
although one of the most important purposes of the Mind Technique is to control the
process of creating the role, and Case Study 2 shows that it was possible to control the
process, the ideas did not come up in order nor when they were expected. This means
that the third eye was acting as an inner leader/overseer who dominated the whole
process of creating the role except at the time of creating an idea or creating the role.
On the other hand, most of the ideas were told by the third eye directly after the Key
Idea came up through my dream. Moreover, the hypothesis was that there was another
process inside, between given thoughts in pre-sleep and the creation of the ideas that
developed the given thoughts and initial ideas. The outline of the Mind Technique
shown in Diagram 7.1 (See page 66) will be completed in the next chapter. Analyses of
these observations and allusions with different points of view follow in the fifth phase
of my methodology, reflection, in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR: The Mind Technique

In this chapter, I intend to analyze the process of creating the role of Medea and the function of the third eye in this process. Firstly the mechanism of creating the role will be analyzed, followed by the role of the third eye in the process of creating the role. I also explore the basis of the concept of the third eye and how this might influence or lead the actor in the process of rehearsal. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the section of action and observation, generally the given thoughts during the cerebral section of rehearsal and in pre-sleep enabled the creation of ideas for performance outside the ‘actual’ making process. I will discuss the effect of the third eye and the role of effective thoughts in pre-sleep in the process of creating an idea and the role of Medea in this chapter. Three key words need to be explained before starting the consideration of the third eye as a leader. These key words include: Initial idea, vital idea, key idea and lateral idea. Initial idea is the first idea that comes into mind and needs to be developed. Vital idea is the right idea that would help to develop the role character. Key idea is the important idea which causes the role to be created. Lateral idea however is an idea that should be ignored as it is not a helpful idea for creating the role. Using this description I am going to consider the reflection of Case Study 2 as follows.

4.1.1: Reflection: The function of the third eye as a leader in the process of creating Medea

Returning to my previous questions regarding the effect of thoughts from a pre-sleep state on creativity, I needed to know more about the function of the conscious thoughts in pre-sleep that affect the subconscious dream. Gordon Mordechai, a Freudian analyst, writes, “For Freud, it was clear that unconscious processes not only precede the conscious ones but also that the realm of the unconscious is the broader one that encompasses the more narrow realm of our conscious thoughts and feeling” (Mordechai, 2013: 45). According to Mordechai, there is a narrow border between conscious thoughts and the subconscious process from a Freudian perspective. Nevertheless there might not be any tangible evidence that the conscious thoughts drive
subconscious creativity. As in my observation, the process of the creation could be controlled through the effective thoughts in pre-sleep but the ideas came up out of sorts.

For instance, in the fifth session of the rehearsal I asked this question in my rehearsal: How does Medea think about her childhood? And I repeated the question in a pre-sleep state. Then ten days later, while I was repeating this question for the second time, an image of the lullaby came up to my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 5th and 15th day, page 3 and 7; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Lullaby, duration 2.33). On the one hand, if the idea came up because of the effect of the question that had been asked ten days earlier, what was the reason for this delay? According to the law of give and take as explored in Chapter 2 (p.48), when I make a question (Give) I have to receive the answer (Take). Thus this idea had to come to me in a shorter time, the same day or one or two days after. It might be possible that there is another reason for this delay in the interior process of creating an idea.

On the other hand, the idea came up while I was repeating the question for the second time. Thus accordant with the law of give and take, the idea came up immediately after I asked the question for the second time. Still this question remained: why did the idea not come up when I asked the question the first time? The hypothesis here was that given thoughts need an uncertain time to develop and then return to consciousness as an idea. The hypothesis then was that the conscious thoughts and the subconscious are relational and therefore operate as a related system. Whatever stimulates the conscious can also stimulate the subconscious. Ken Howell states, “Remember, your consciousness is a composite of your insight and psyche. Therefore, whatever influences your consciousness identifies an influence affecting your insight and psyche” (Howell, 2000: 15). From my perspective, thoughts that are produced in the consciousness from the stimulus of specific questions or ideas that are given to the subconscious through the thoughts in pre-sleep will be passed on again to the consciousness in a more developed form.

In this process of creating the ideas, imagination in the ‘mind rehearsal’ acted as a catalyst for creation of the ideas to accelerate the process. For instance, I thought about Medea as a story teller using the framework of Franca Rame and Dario Fo’s Medea (1977). When I started the rehearsal I tried to ignore this idea in order to create a new script. I imagined Medea and asked this question simultaneously through pre-sleep
about how Medea might be performed? The initial idea of Medea as a story teller unwittingly came to me again in the third day of rehearsal. The completed version of this idea came to me for the second time after six days (See appendix 3, Diary, 3rd and 9th day, page 2 and 5). This shows that the information that was given to the mind through Dario Fo’s script came to me as an initial idea; then the thoughts given to the subconscious via pre-sleep after developing came to me again. In other words, the given thoughts caused the idea after an unpredictable amount of time, through a process of ‘brewing’ the ideas in my mind outside the rehearsal room.

In another example, the question of how Medea performs her role character was given to me during the rehearsal on the second day and the Initial Idea of a dance came to me the same day in pre-sleep (See appendix 3, Diary, 2nd day, page 1). This question made me think of Middle Eastern dance after two days and again in a more highly developed idea the day after: given thoughts were developed in a creative process in a kind of circular system of thinking.

Another pertinent example is that on the fourth day of rehearsal I imagined the Medea performance and what kind of music I should use. Then the initial idea of a woman with a drum came to me the day after, on the fifth day of rehearsal. The day after that on the sixth day of rehearsal, African music came into my mind, and two days later, on the eighth day of rehearsal, the initial idea of the Zaar came to me and caused to draw Picture 3 (See appendix 3, Diary, 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th day, page 2 to 4 and 23). In these examples each idea had a different means and timescale for creation. Ideas developed in my imagination ‘mind rehearsal’ and pre-sleep states, through a process of interior alteration ideas, and returned to consciousness. This circulation of creation might be repeated several times to approach the complete and final idea which underpins a moment of the performance.

It is important to acknowledge that I tried to be neutral and not to work and develop any idea for the first week of rehearsal in order not to interfere with the subconscious process of creating the role. In these sessions I just tried to give questions about the role and wait for solutions/ideas from the interior process. During rehearsal, when an idea came up, I attempted to make questions about them and repeated those questions in pre-sleep, then I realized that the ideas came back more fully formed and developed afterwards. It was important not to consciously process and impact on the shape and
development of these ideas in the rehearsal room in the early stages. Here I am going to articulate the importance of imagination in the process of creating the role of Medea which is the communication language between actor and their subconscious.

4.1.2: The importance of imagination

Ken Robinson explains two key words in the process of creation: “They are imagination, which is the process of bringing to mind things that are not present to our senses; creativity, which is the process of developing original ideas that have value” (Robinson, 2011: 2). Borrowing the concept from Robinson, in the Mind Technique, imagination is defined as the process of bringing to mind an object that does not exist, either in the present or in the past. This definition helps actors to avoid imagining their past ideas and to focus on what their third eye indicates to them. The idea of creativity however, is a relevant term in relation to the imagination. Elsewhere, Robinson usefully adds: “Creativity involves putting your imagination to work. In a sense, creativity is applied imagination” (Robinson, 2011: 142).

Furthermore, Michael Beaney makes a bridge between creativity and imagination: “Insofar as creativity involves thinking of possibilities, then we might agree that there is a constitutive connection with imagination, for thinking of possibilities is one of the kinds of things that we call ‘imagining’” (Beaney, 2005: 200). Robinson also completes his definition of imagination by saying that: “Imagination is the ability to bring to mind things that are not present to our senses. We can imagine things that exist or things that do not exist at all” (Robinson, 2011: 141). As I explained above, I tried not to interfere with my imagination in the early stage of my rehearsal, to let the novel ideas appear to my imagination because imagination is one of the ways of communication with our inner self.

Some scholars believe that imagination as a source of creativity can engineer creativity; so for this reason they suggest to focus on imagining and thinking of impossibilities in order to receive novel ideas. For Beaney, however, “Imagination is just a vehicle and not a source of creativity if the imagination is involved merely in thinking of possibilities” (Beaney, 2005: 200). Paradoxically, Robinson alleges that: “Imagination is the source of our creativity, but imagination and creativity are not the same thing”
Regardless of the contradictions in the ideas above, I argue that if an actor can guide his mind to an Alpha frequency where the image’s source is the subconscious, then the imagination can be the source of creativity. In contrast, if an actor imagines consciously and not on a high level of concentration which comes of working within an Alpha frequency, the imagination cannot be the source of creativity.

In some respects then imagination is essential for creating the role. The mental picture that has been considered previously emerges via imagination. Imagination, from my point of view, is the communicative language between the subconscious and the conscious. By the same token, Dragan Bogunovic adds: “Imagination is presented to humanity as a continuation of first creation, which did not reveal all created things, to man. Many things that were hidden in dark places and wait for humanity to discover them” (Bogunovic, 2013: 174). Moreover, imagination in the Mind Technique can become manifest as effective visual thoughts. This means that in pre-sleep and in the mind rehearsal, imagination is a method to pass the question as effective thoughts/visual order to the subconscious mind. Nevertheless to prepare the mind for beneficial imagination in acting, based on the Mind Technique, I focused on breathing in my rehearsal which is described further as follows.

4.1.3: The importance of breathing

In the Mind Technique, another important parameter which affects the process of creating a role is the act and process of ‘breathing’. In the Mind Technique, breathing is the basis for the preparation of a heightened state of concentration. Breathing, or control of the breath, can accelerate the process of concentration and loosen the mind for Alpha frequency. Breathing in acting is divided traditionally into two functions. The first relates to the process of relaxation and concentration, and the second is the process of performing, either on the stage or in the rehearsal room. Thus Jan Baker expounds the relationship between creativity, concentration, and breathing:

Deep breathing is a release in yoga also. It releases tension from the body and makes the postures easier to perform. Although deep breathing is a relaxant it does not completely relax the neuromuscular system. It allows us to remain relaxed in the midst of activity. Deep breathing also provides a splendid passageway to concentration and meditation (Baker, 2002: 139).
In the Mind Technique there are a number of practices of breathing which will be articulated in the next section (See appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Concentration, duration 5:29). The other benefit of controlling breathing is its potential to unify the body and the mind. As Michael Cavallaro explains: “There are a number of different breathing exercises that can enhance concentration by relaxing the body. By concentration on breathing, the mind slows down and begins to match the other rhythms of the body” (Cavallaro, 2014: 126). The necessity of unifying the body and mind has been extensively considered in Chapter 1 of this thesis where I looked at the work of a number of practitioners and practices. The effect of breathing on the mind is the subject of much debate. Zarrilli points out: “It is through the breath that the aesthetic inner body reaches and touches both the surface body of exteroception, and also the depth (blood) body of our inner recesses. The fundamental state of absence of this third, aesthetic inner body-mind is witnessed in our everyday relationship to breathing” (Zarrilli, 2012: 56). He also adds:

Alternatively, focusing our attention in and on the act of breathing in a particular way, and in relation to the body, provides one means by which to work against the recessive disappearance of the breath in order to cultivate the breath and our inner awareness toward a heightened, ecstatic state of engagement in a particular practice and/or in relation to world (Zarrilli, 2012: 56).

To recapitulate, starting the rehearsal by concentrating on breathing helps actors to be relaxed, to concentrate and focus. This has the potential to help in unifying their body and mind, providing a connection to the inner consciousness, keeping their body’s rhythm in a correct pace, all of which are the basis for creating a role (See appendix 3, Diary, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th day of rehearsal, page 1, 2). Moreover, concentrating on breathing can happen anytime and anywhere. Gai Jones says: “This is a breathing experience that you can do sitting in a crowded location, without others knowing. Use the technique for focusing, relaxation, and centering. Focus on the breath is what integrates the mind and body” (Jones, 2014: 107). As a result, concentrating on breathing is the easiest way of controlling the body and mind.

To consider the second aspect of breathing in acting, it needs to be added that there are essentially two different types of breathing - chest breathing and diaphragmatic breathing. In acting and performing diaphragmatic breathing should be used. Jones explains the benefit of this kind of breathing: “Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing, is a necessary instrument for the actor. You can achieve the relaxation
needed by engaging the breath. The breath supported by the diaphragmatic muscle leads to a deep sense of relaxation (Jones, 2014: 107)”. In relation to Jones’ idea, an actor needs to use diaphragmatic breathing while performing a role. On one hand, Brigid Panet writes: “Action starts with breath; the knowledge and control of breathing is the centre of the actor’s technique. When you have your breathing under control then you can express fully whatever you wish to convey with your voice and body, and when you choose to alter the rhythm of your breathing your emotions, thoughts and mood will change” (Panet, 2015: 133). Regarding Panet and my own acting experiences, breathing not only prepares the mind to concentrate but also helps actors to prepare and perform their physical action. Therefore I allocated one session of rehearsal to work on my breathing (See appendix 3, Diary, 3rd day, page 2).

In my rehearsal, after breathing, the effective thoughts that were given in my pre-sleep were important. As discussed in previous chapter, I argued that the ideas through a process of interior alteration came back to my consciousness in the developed form. The effect of pre-sleep thoughts and this interior alteration need to be explained in the next section.

4.1.4: The importance of the sleep state

In my consideration of the rehearsal of Medea, I observed the effect of pre-sleep thoughts on the development of the ideas and subsequently on the process of creating the role. Here the question is what had been happening in my mind when I was thinking and imagining the role and the play in pre-sleep or in the mind rehearsal which caused a new idea thereafter? And what is the role of the third eye in the process of inspiring an idea? The hypothesis here is that there must have been interior alterations in sleep that caused a new idea and this new idea sometimes itself or sometimes caused another new idea which like the pieces of the puzzle fall into place in line with creating the role. Before considering this hypothesis, first the modality of sleep has to be explored. Stephen Laberge states that there are two different kinds of sleep:

The first is an energy-conserving state known as Quiet Sleep (QS) associated with growth, repair, restoration, a relaxed body, and an idling brain. The second is a very different state known variously as Active Sleep, Paradoxical Sleep (PS), or REM. This state is associated with rapid eye movements and muscular
twitches, a paralyzed body, a highly activated brain and dreaming” (Laberge, 2009: 15).

In reference to this passage which orients the subject to two notions of sleep - Quiet Sleep and Active Sleep - the important kind of sleep that might be related to creativity is Active Sleep, because in quiet sleep, consciousness is inactivated and the body is relaxed. In the state of active sleep, the body is still and the brain is activated and dreaming. “Dreaming occurs during REM sleep, which has been described as an ‘active Brain in a paralyzed body’” (Lawrence Epstein, 2010: 3). In rapid eye movement sleep (REMS), the brain is very active. “Certain areas of the brain appear to be more active in REM sleep than in wakefulness” (Meir Kryger et al. 2010: 9). Laberge explains: “REM provides the optimal conditions for vivid dreaming- a switched-on brain in a switched-off body” (Laberge, 2009: 16). This means that during Active Sleep, the brain is working at a high level of activity. On the other hand, there is no awareness during the dreaming or REM state.

To explain why the brain is active when there is no awareness, it can be said that in the difference between quiet and active sleep is that in Active Sleep, the subconscious is activated. As previously mentioned, the state of REM sleep or Active Sleep is significant because the subconscious is active. Plaford declares that one of the functions of REM sleep is increasing the level of creativity: “The benefits of REM sleep include an increased level of creativity, an increased ability to remember complex associative information, an improvement in the functioning of emotional memory, and better perceptual and sensory processing” (Plaford, 2009: 105). Besides creativity, Plaford suggests that REM sleep helps with the ability to memorise.

These two terms are essential for acting. For this reason, the Mind Technique emphasizes the pre-sleep thoughts, sleep, and the ideas inspired by the Active Sleep; or in my words, ‘efficacious circulation’, which was explained in Chapter 3. There are a number of scholars who believe that sleeping increases and improves creativity, such as Julian Barling and David Wagner: “Some of our creativity occurs when we are sleep, but lends new information to the theory that sleep improves creativity” (Barling and Wagner, 2016: 113). Another example is from Anthony Stevens, who quotes Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s: “All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a pleasing lively dream” (Stevens, 1997: 278). In addition, Alexander Golbin focused not only on the aspect of resting, refreshing, relaxing and other physical functions of dream, but also its
metaphysical benefits and functions. They write: “The present advances in sleep research demonstrate that dreams can be predictive, diagnostic and creative” (Golbin et al. 2004: 124). REM sleep also has another important function that Plaford explains:

One of the main functions of REM sleep is that of storing our experiences into long-term memory. It is not surprising that the main time for processing experience and learning into memory would be during sleep, because that is when we are most likely not being bombarded with additional information through our perceptions (Plaford, 2009: 24).

From the quotes above we can surmise that even learning and memorising happen during REM sleep. With this supposition if an actor needs to learn a particular movement, for instance a type of dance or physical movement, learning might not simply happen in rehearsal. In fact, during the rehearsal, an actor can gather the information and embed it in his mind, then learning can happen later in REM sleep spontaneously. But what is the difference between REM sleep and a dream? As previously suggested, a dream is a subdivision of the REMS state. From my perspective based on my experiences, creativity emerges not merely in a dream.

Paradoxically Golbin proposed that creativity emerges in a dream. “Creative acts take place in dreams themselves and even creativity is one of the tasks of dreaming” (Golbin et al. 2004: 132). Here one receives the new idea through dream. It is not unlikely that some people have predicted information through their dreams. For one example Oberon Zell-Ravenheart declares: “One of the most famous instances of dream-discovery was that of the ring structure of Benzene. Kekule was trying to figure out a structure- without success- when the solution came to him in a dream” (Zell-Ravenheart, 2004:43). However the fact is that dream, itself, is one of the ways of receiving new ideas or information.

Here William Moorcroft explains: “Dreams are creative by their very nature. Every night each of us puts together several very original and unique dreams, a very creative process. Other aspects of the creativity of dreams carry over into our waking lives in several ways” (Moorcroft, 2005: 305). An actor does not necessarily have to have a dream about his role, but creativity can be ignited in the REM state. So when an actor wakes up, immediately or thereafter, he remembers the new idea that may be relevant to the role that he is playing from his REM sleep. To return to the hypothesis, it is an alteration during sleep, called interior alterations, that means new ideas can be
explained as REMS.

By the same token, in the process of creating the role for Medea, I realized that some information or new ideas had come to me, and I did not know where they had come from. As an example, before I started rehearsal I thought about Medea as an immigrant, but I never thought that she might have left her country because of the war and was therefore a refugee. On the 21st day of rehearsal the third eye directly indicated that “Medea had a life before”. This idea drew my attention to thinking about the reason that Medea immigrated to Athena other than what there is in the original script. I added this question in pre-sleep and in the mind rehearsal. Two days later, on the 23rd day of rehearsal, the idea of the war came into my mind (See appendix 3, Diary, 21th and 23rd day, pages 10, 11; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, War, duration 3.46). I lived in a country where I experienced war for eight years, from 22 September 1980 to 20 August 1988, between Iran and Iraq; however, the idea of the war was not the point that I wanted to bring into focus, and I was sure to forget Iran’s war when I was rehearsing. According to Moorcroft’s statement above, this idea of the war was created during my dream, but I could not remember any more than one sentence of it, “Medea escaped from the war” that I was told by the third eye. Nevertheless this new idea might be related to an involuntary recalling of the previous information that I was given. For instance this might be the effect of my experience of the disaster of eight years of war in my home country of Iran, which was hidden in my subconscious.

The idea of the war had already existed, in the same way as another example, the Middle Eastern dances. If the idea of the war was a recollection of my past experience, thus what was the reason for this involuntary recall? From my observation, some ideas that are in line with the role and need to be remembered come up involuntarily. Sometimes some idea acts the same as an impellent which causes creativity to be sparked. Some new ideas can come up and some old ideas can be remembered. Nevertheless, the involuntary impellent for the idea of the war based on my own memory is unknown. In this case remembering is also important in the process of creating the role. In this regard Plaford brings up the matter of different memory including declarative and non-declarative memory which is related to our subjects.

Declarative memory refers to memory of factual knowledge or experience. It is termed declarative because we can consciously discuss or “declare” the facts or experiences we know or we have had. Non-declarative memory refers to things
we learn to do, like skills or procedures. Non-declarative memories are those that come to us without conscious thought or recollection of them (Plaford, 2009: 25).

Based on Plaford’s idea, in my opinion, an actor’s declarative memory is something that he voluntarily memorises or learns, whereas non-declarative memory is something that he receives involuntarily. This is exactly what I mentioned previously about Middle Eastern dances. Here, it might be said that declarative memory is something that exists in the conscious, and non-declarative memory is something that exists in the subconscious.

The question here might therefore be: what is the purpose of rehearsal if an actor can create his role through his REM sleep? My answer is that a rehearsal is important for the actor, as well as pre-sleep thoughts. As explained in Chapter 2 (See page 56), the key to activating creativity is to answer questions, solve problems or be concerned about something. In the Mind Technique, a rehearsal makes an artificial situation to help the actor to be concerned about creating his role.

As a matter of fact, rehearsal, effective thoughts, pre-sleep thoughts, REM sleep and remembering the creative idea are the important combination in the process of creating the role in the Mind Technique. It is important to say that the Mind Technique is a method of acting that can be used in both, group rehearsal and individual rehearsal; in the rehearsal room and outside the rehearsal room, which are detailed later in this chapter.

**4.1.5: Explanation of REMS in the process of creating the role**

While I was observing the Medea rehearsal, I thought that it might be possible to suggest a way to have control over the REMS. In line with this argument, Golbin, Kravitz and Keith emphasize the circumstances of REM sleep and how peacefulness helps the REM sleep state to manage its function between its two different duties: “This approach makes a bridge between the role of dreaming in creative task solution and the general role of dreaming in adaptation to stressful situations and inner motivational conflicts, the latter being a particular form of creative task” (Golbin et al. 2004: 132). Accordingly the relaxed body and mind helps the mind to focus more on creativity rather than putting effort into eliminating stress or cluttered thoughts. That is why
effective thoughts and concentration in the pre-sleep are designed into the Mind Technique. Furthermore, the Mind Technique suggests having silent fasting, which means refraining from talking for a specified period of time, during the rehearsal. Silent fasting helps actors to be away from any stress zone and have peaceful sleep and REMS.

As previously described, the reason that creativity is activated in REM sleep is that the conscious is deactivated in REM sleep, thus bringing a quiet state for the mind to concentrate on processing thoughts subconsciously. Moorcroft supports this idea by saying that: “Creativity in our dreams, it seems, comes about because weak associations are facilitated during REMS” (Moorcroft, 2005: 305). In REMS consciousness is deactivated and the subconscious is activated. Also creativity is activated when the brain is concentrated because there is no REM sleep, when the brain is busy and distracted. Therefore to boost the level of creativity, the Mind Technique is designed to give the actor some exercises to meditate and be relaxed (See appendix 3, Diary, 2nd day, page 1; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Concentration, duration 5.29).

On the other hand, some believe that most creative people do not have enough time to have REM sleep. For instance, many creative writers or artists are awake at night working hard on their projects, so there is not enough time to have a deep sleep and dream. Golbin state: “Moreover, this suggestion is in contradiction with the well-known fact that creative people in a state of high creative activity (creative ecstasy) often become short sleepers with a sharp drop in REM sleep percentage in night dreams. It seems a paradox—the creative solution of the problem requires dreams while in the process of the most creative activity dreams disappear” (Golbin et al. 2004: 132). Nonetheless, he adds elsewhere: “There is much evidence confirming the supportive and enhancing role that different stages of sleep play in consciousness, memory, emotions, decision-making and creative thinking” (Golbin et al. 2004: 455).

These contradictory quotes brought me this idea that a peaceful REMS helps actors to approach their creative role; however, the process of REMS does not necessarily happen during night sleep. The process of REMS can happen after 45 minutes of sleep, day or night. Therefore, the creative artists who have no night REMS, might have this process during the day. Moreover, as there is no limitation of human creativity, therefore it may say that the creative artists who have no a peaceful REMS can be more
creative if they could manage to have a peaceful REMS.

In addition some believe that the lack of REM sleep might cause less creativity and impact on different activities when the actor is awake. Plaford emphasizes: “Even one night without sleep impairs our ability to think flexibly and creatively” (Plaford, 2009: 19). I experienced this during my rehearsal when I was thinking about a difficult question, but having a short nap helped me to answer the question. For instance on the third day of rehearsal, I was thinking about the beginning of the performance and how to start my dialogues. It seemed difficult and I had to struggle with that. I stopped the rehearsal and took a deep breath and I slept for a while. I do not remember what happened but after I woke up and started my rehearsal again then the image of Medea came into my mind, that she was in the audience and coming to the stage as she was speaking her lines (See appendix 3, Diary, 3rd day, page 2). The other substantial matter that needs to be considered is distinguishing between vital idea and lateral idea that arose earlier and are explained in the next section.

4.1.6: An example of vital and lateral idea

For me one of the debatable matters in the process of creating the role of Medea was, approaching and distinguishing between the lateral idea and the vital idea which leads the actor to create the role through imagination. The key issue, I believe, concerns the function of an important idea or image in the creation or completion of the role of Medea. For instance, one significant idea can cause a movement, a feeling or image that opens the locked door of a pathway to creating the role. However, it might be argued that there must be an idea or image - the key idea - which leads to the spark that ignites the chain of ideas in order to create the role. The question therefore might be: how to approach the key idea?

In The Mind Technique, the method of approaching the key idea is to find a way to clear the mind. Robinson points out that: “In all creative processes we are pushing the boundaries of what we know now, to explore new possibilities” (Robinson, 2011: 152). Actors have to congregate their ideas with no judgment, then their third eye may lead them to the key idea. For instance, in the early stages of my rehearsal I approached some ideas that could change the direction of the process of creating the role of Medea.
Therefore I let the third eye lead me rather than choose the *initial ideas* consciously (See appendix 3, Diary, picture 1, page 21 also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Chair and Mask 2, duration 4:11 and 3:33). In contrast, Robinson believes that: “Creativity is not only about generating ideas; it involves making judgments about them. The process includes elaborating on the initial idea, testing and refining them and even rejecting them, in favour of others that emerge during the process” (Robinson, 2011: 153). The method of the Mind Technique works differently. Any judgments that we make about an idea are conscious and depend on our existing knowledge. Mind Technique can assist actors to generate new ideas more freely and with no judgment; here there needs to be a means by which the imagination can work with the brain in the Alpha state (See appendix 3, Diary, 6th days and picture 2 in page 22).

Furthermore, in my observation was the number of ideas that seemed irrelevant or *lateral idea* to Medea, but after a period of time I realized that they were *vital ideas* and in line with my interpretation of the story. For instance, the idea of Zaar could answer so many questions during the rehearsal and it had the whole of the meaning that I was looking for. Initially, I had a question about the main motivation for killing her children in terms of revenge, jealousy, violence and hatred (See appendix 3, Diary, 8th day, page 4). The idea of the Zaar came up to me on the same day but I did not know that this might be the answer. Therefore I ignored it as I thought that was a *lateral idea*. After several times that this idea came up again on different occasions, I decided to think about it. Eventually during the rehearsal I understood that the ritual ceremony of the Zaar was the only idea that could make Medea an innocent person who had done a terrible thing in response to her unjust circumstances; Medea’s violence in killing her children had no excuse.

The purpose of the Zaar ceremony traditionally was to reduce the sense of violence and replace it with the action of sacrifice and its impact of healing the person who is in pain or ‘jinn’. The root of the Zaar ceremony is its potential to provide a cathartic cleansing of injustice. There are some ritual ceremonies in different tribes that they have some similarity to each other. Michael Argyle sees some similarity between the Zaar ceremony and other ceremonies that can show how Medea can be matched into this ritual ceremony:

There is collective violence in which the whole tribe takes part, this purges them
of aggression and brings peace. The victim, who has been instrumental in this process, then becomes sacred, representing our evil nature transformed into good, thus preserving society (Argyle, 2005: 92).

The philosophy of the Zaar is that bloodshed of a sacrifice is a holy substitution for violence that brings peace. “Ritual sacrifice serves as what Girard calls generative violence, which substitutes a single victim for the entire community, so allowing the community to live” (Fred Alford, 1994: 31). What was the relationship between the Zaar ceremony and Medea? The answer is that, before Medea there were some child sacrifices in Greece. “The most well-known instance of child sacrifice in Archaic Greece is Agamemnon’s sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis at Aulis (Dale Launderville, 2007: 276). In my version Medea had become violent because of her unjust situation. During the play she tried to purify her anger and violence that in her inside had become complex that visualized her as a wicked woman (jinn). Medea in my version attempted to sacrifice her precious possession, her children, to annihilate the injustice in the society. Medea sacrificed her children to end the cycle of violence that had begun from the unjust attitude towards females in the society. Her children became scapegoats of this injustice and violence, similar to the Zaar ceremony. “There is regular sacrifice of humans or animals, who are treated as scapegoats representing the violence of all, which ends the cycle of violence” (Argyle, 2005: 92). Some might say, however, that this doesn’t quite justify it – and ending violence with such a violent act in which her children had no sin or reason to be involved. I add that the ritual ceremony has its own rules and the victim has to be innocent to be accepted for sacrificing. On the other hand, Medea is willing to purify the society from any injustice, a result which seems more important to her than her children’s lives. Medea in my version believed in Machiavelli’s philosophy that says: “The end justifies the means”.

Thus, my Medea uses a combination of the ritual ceremony of Zaar and human or children sacrificing. The Zaar ceremony had appeared when animals became the substitution of human or children. Freud considers violence and animal sacrifice in his book Totem and Taboo which in Argyle’s perspective on the Zaar can be classified in this theory. “This is a modified version of Freud’s Totem and Taboo theory of the totem animal representing the murdered father” (Argyle, 2005: 92). In my version, Medea has a changed intention. Medea’s intention in the original script is revenge and in my version it is using sacrifice to bring justice. Medea sacrificed her children to cure
herself of the jinn inside (Wicked woman) – a representation of society and its injustice towards her as a foreign woman. *Medea* shares the atmosphere with the audience the same as the *Zaar* ceremony.

As a result, actors should not judge, reject or accept any idea in the early stage of rehearsal. Actors should let the third eye reveal the *vital idea* itself. In my experience, if the idea comes insistently, this shows that it may be a *vital idea*. The other way is to trust the third eye comments, which are explained further in the next section.

### 4.1.7: The ‘third eye’ in the process of creating *Medea*

In the continuation of this debate, I am now going to consider the third eye. In my observation the third eye had a different function in creating my performance. According to my own extensive acting experiences, I had often felt that there was ‘a person’ inside me who led me from the outside – like a kind of ‘third eye’. According to my research, the third eye itself also is a component of the creation of a role, where it acts as a kind of transmitter. One of my questions following my research question was, what is the third eye and where does its ‘knowledge’ come from? Based on my research I have two answers. Firstly the third eye can be the completed character that has already been created in the actor’s mind – a kind of pre-rehearsal construct. The reason that it corrects an actor is that it tries to make the actor as close to itself in its version of a completed role. The other answer is that the third eye is a transmitter between the subconscious and the conscious (See appendix 3, Diary, 16th, 24th, 28th days, page 8, 11, 13). It is not inconsistent for the third eye to be defined as both transmitter and completed imaginary character.

In line with this definition, in the process of creating the role of Medea and the play, the ideas came to me in different ways - through visual thought, dream, and via the third eye directly. For instance, for the first time during the rehearsal I felt that the third eye was leading me from the inside (See appendix 3, Diary, 11th day, page 6). It was like a person inside me who led me sometimes in what to do and what not to do. The third eye eventually became a person who spoke to me directly and used clear sentences eleven days later (See appendix 3, Diary, 22nd day, page 11). This direct advice from the third eye happened on the same day that I woke up from a creative dream. My dream was: ‘I
was making a film and I was acting in the film too. I remembered myself in the dark place, I opened a door and passed through. I saw another door and this continued several times. Then rain dropped on my face, and when I wiped it, it was drops of blood. That was why I woke up with shock.’ Afterwards in rehearsal, the third eye directly spoke to me in my mind and suggested – “show murdering your children with a film”. These words brought me the idea of the film in the play (See appendix 3, Diary, 22nd day, page 11).

Another example is that when I was making breakfast for myself, I heard the words in my mind that: “Medea left her country because of the war”. These words were exactly what I heard without thinking about it (See appendix 3, Diary, 23rd day, page 11). The other example is that when I woke up in the morning these images came to my mind: Medea was dreaming a nightmare. Then I imagined that she suddenly woke up and saw a dagger in her hand. Then I remembered that ten days ago I had a question about what weapon Medea used to murder her children? Now I received the answer through these images. Also the third eye suggested to me through the mental words: “Medea was miserable and lonely and Jason came and helped her to orient herself. He gave her confidence.” I used even some of the third eye’s words in my script. These mental words helped the other ideas to come to mind. For instance, in pre-sleep when I was repeating some questions, this idea came into my mind that I have to have different parts in my play (See appendix 3, Diary, 26th day, page 12). These ideas, nightmare, dagger, Jason desire and love to Medea and designing of different parts in the play came to me in one day in different forms through the third eye (See appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Nightmare, duration 4.08).

Another example is that once in rehearsal I had mental images of a woman who was so angry. She started to fight with Medea. I had never thought about anybody else in this play other than Medea. I did not know who she was and why she argued and fought with Medea (See appendix 3, Diary, 27th day, page 12; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Wicked side 2, duration 1.29). Six days later, in the middle of the rehearsal the image of Medea came up to my mind that she had two faces, the one was herself and the other one was the wicked woman who I had seen before in my mental images six days earlier. When I saw this woman for the first time in my mind, I wondered who she might be. Then I realized that the woman was another side of Medea, the different person inside her who was against her action and tried to persuade her to change her
mind. She was a manifestation of Medea’s inner conflict (See appendix 3, Diary, 33rd day, page 14; also see appendix 3, Medea rehearsal, Wicked side 3, duration 2.15) and this was why I created the gesture of covering and changing my face to two different persons.

These examples show that in the process of creating the role and play, the vital ideas came into my mind in various forms. In the early part of the rehearsal process the third eye was a transmitter between the subconscious and the conscious and in the middle of the process of creation, on the twenty second day of rehearsal, the third eye started to direct me more clearly and acted as a completed imaginary character – a sounding board for me as an actor making work. Here I would like to complete the Formula 1: \( P + (A + X) \leftrightarrow C \)

Relying on my observation, the third eye played an important role in the process of creating the role and whole play of Medea; however, the third eye’s ideas and advice were the result of the initial given information: my forgotten and covert experiences of the past and the unrecognized subconscious knowledge that appeared through REMS. Therefore, the X that was unknown and that I was looking for is: \( X = REMS \)

Where P is the actor and A is Mind Technique and C is the created character; then

\[ A = \text{Mind} + \text{Body} + \text{Voice} + \text{The third eye} + \text{REMS} \]

\[ P \ (\text{Actor}) + A \ (\text{Mind} + \text{Body} + \text{Voice} + \text{The third eye} + \text{REMS}) \leftrightarrow C \ (\text{Created character}) \]

Then:

**Formula 1:** \( P + A \leftrightarrow C \)

I have continued my observations on the process of creating the role through using the feedback that I received from audiences with questions about the performance that I received via email.

**4.1.8: Audience feedback on the performance**

According to the feedback that I received from audiences Medea was not violent. This
shows how the idea of ritual ceremony of the \textit{Zaar} covered for, or substituted dramaturgically for Medea’s anger, violence and inhumane action towards her children. I am going to bring some feedback of the effect of \textit{Medea} play and the role of Medea in order to evaluate and assess this research. For instance, Wayne Jackson who has actually performed in an experimental version of Medea, adapted and directed by Fiona Templeton, entitled \textit{The Medea} stated that:

\begin{quote}
I didn’t necessarily read the performance as violent; instead it felt a quite tranquil and cathartic in its exploration of the story. Whilst the narrative itself was violent I felt that the piece played with my understanding of how violence is portrayed – perhaps this is a result of my own desensitisation of violent images because of popular culture (See appendix 3, \textit{Medea} feedback, Wayne Jackson).
\end{quote}

The question focuses on how killing the children cannot be violent? What is Medea doing with the audience that they do not see her inhumane action? The \textit{Zaar} ceremony has a special atmosphere that convinces the participants of the justifiability of any action. Medea brought a partially acceptable justification, whereas without having a ritual ceremony for Medea’s action, it was quite impossible to show Medea as an idealistic person instead of vicious and vengeful person. Another example of audience feedback is given by Krystyna Musiol, a UK H.E. drama lecturer who has seen different versions of \textit{Medea} with different directors. She explains that:

\begin{quote}
The violent scenes were really powerful and the economy of language/movement in them made them more symbolic and ritualistic. Drawing more comparison to this dramatized violence with the violence in Iran would have been interesting to explore (See appendix 3, \textit{Medea} feedback, Krystyna Musiol).
\end{quote}

Krystyna was interested in the style that was related to Iranian culture and how the concept is close to the current Iranian society issues. She found the script had great potential to be performed in the Eastern style. I received some verbal comments from one of the audience after the show. Somaiyeh, who had not read the original script of \textit{Medea} and had never seen any other version of \textit{Medea}, had a completely different point of view:

\begin{quote}
I did not like the play as it was very violent. I even suffered from the whole violent concepts and scenes of the play. I closed my eyes during the videos to avoid seeing those ruthless scenes. I disagree with you that a woman, a mother can choose on her children’s behalf. She abused her children and misused them for her sake (Somaiyeh Hanaee).
\end{quote}

Obviously the \textit{Medea} is a violent play; however I tried to draw the audience’s attention
to the other angles. In contrast with Somaiyeh’s statement that Medea was not allowed to decide on her children’s behalf, I argue and remind the audience again of the story of the Abraham and his decision about his son. Abraham made a decision to do a violent action towards his son because of God’s command. In other words, for a valuable result he chose an unacceptable and violent action; however, nobody thinks of Abraham as a wicked man. There are many examples of human actions where their intention changes the moral acceptance of the society, implying that “the end justified the means”. For instance in every single war around the world we have had many soldiers who killed other soldiers identified as enemies; generally their actions were very violent and ruthless. They might even have been given a Courage Medal for killing other enemy soldiers, because their intention was valuable even if their action is not moral. With respect to Somaiyeh’s comments I still argue that even if ritual ceremony and changing Medea’s intention may not make Medea appear innocent for some small number of audience members, however it did for many others. For instance, after the performance one of the audience, Haleh Jalali came to me while her eyes were full of tears, she said:

I am so impressed with the play. I have sympathy with this poor woman who was forced to sacrifice her children for unjust action towards all women.

There is a slightly different point of view of another audience member who had not read the original script. “It tracked my full attention and it was sad but a very moderate violence” (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Kamal Zarour). Medea had a different effect on other audiences, which I think shows how the play engaged with the audiences. Simon indicated that he did not have any sympathy for a woman who kills her children. He explained that:

Those scenes were very provoking, I felt. I could suspect that they were coming, but not necessarily in the fashion that it was produced. At this point, feelings of emotion were felt on behalf of the character; albeit I found it hard to sympathize with the extremity of some actions, such as the murder of the children (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Simon Merdono).

On the other hand, some audiences indicated how far the play impressed them. For example Krystyna stated that:

For me, the most memorable moment was actually the opening, where the performer directly addressed the audience and raised the comparison between the violence/desperation of Medea (women's rights) and the violence/politics/woman of Iran - having this in mind throughout the play added another layer (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Krystyna Musiol).
There is no sign of anything specifically Iranian in the play except for two Iranian songs, one in the second video/film and the other as Medea’s lullaby. Nevertheless there is the feeling of a combination of Iranian (Eastern) and Western in the piece as a whole. The Eastern ritual ceremony of the play brought the feeling of an Iranian atmosphere. The ritual style also attracted some audiences’ comments, such as Wayne:

The element of ritualism definitely created a mode of spectatorship that allowed for dissection and intrusion into an established narrative; whilst I was aware of the narrative the piece invited me to experience it in a new way (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Wayne Jackson).

Krystyna also commented that: The dances were very engaging and had an element of aliveness/direct response to the action/feeling which was nice (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Krystyna Musiol). Another audience member, Simon explained how he enjoyed the style of the play:

I highly enjoyed the theatrical side of the production, such as the dancing, lighting and scene transition. This was very well executed. I found the dancing quite seductive and alluring, possibly a nod to the movements of that era, in addition to being in line with current movements in Near Asia. The lighting and scene transitions were done well in agreement to the story (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Simon Merdono).

This useful feedback from the audience came from the impact of the ritual style for the play, I would argue. As another audience member, Richard, adds: “Because of the nature of Medea’s plight and dilemma, the ritual dance enhanced the performance whilst the atmosphere enabled tension to be built” (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Richard Crofts). An Iranian audience member, Sharif, believed that Medea was an effective play which was related to today’s society. “Yes it was, particularly as it was very much relevant to today’s society; however I would not have any sympathy with Medea as she killed her own children” (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Shahireh Sharif). According to Sharif’s comment, Medea’s circumstances resonate in the contemporary world. Medea’s circumstance in Islamic countries is exacerbated by the fact that men are allowed to have four wives at the same time. Nevertheless Sharif had the same idea as Somaiyeh about Medea’s action. Kamal, another Arab audience member who is familiar with this situation, mentioned that: “I think it was a very good solo genuine acting effort. I felt it was a good reflection of real heart-felt feelings and I was touched by the different roles and characters you have played” (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Kamal Zarour). Richard also stated that:
I agree the play was graphic and very visual. It inspired feeling in me of pity, horror, discomfort and sometimes uneasiness. In this sense it did its job, but this I feel was due to the performer, through her acting, and certainly left me with very graphic memories (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Richard Crofts).

There was a scene in the play where Medea was facing the audience in silence and sat still. Her silence put the audience in the position to think and judge her situation. This scene had a varied impact. For some audience members it represented an acceptance of her action and for others not. For example one of the audience members Musiol believed that:

The durational act of this silence, and I think she had her arms outstretched, was a powerful moment and cut into the action of the play. Using this drawn out moment to directly look at the audience (questioning their act of witnessing) rather than just facing outwards could have extended the uncomfortableness of it further (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Krystyna Musiol).

From my perspective the function of an effective play is to inspire the audience to think about what was performed. The effective play, in fact, begins in the audience’s minds when they leave the theatre hall. For instance one of the audience members, Krystyna, had such a feeling: “It was effective in that it made me think about the play in a different way, with new comparisons” (See appendix 3, Medea feedback, Krystyna Musiol).

4.1.9: The impact of my observation

In my observation of the process of creating the role through the Mind Technique there were pros and cons. I argue that the creation of the role and the play may have already been created in my mind through the REMS even by the early stages of my rehearsal. I as an actor and director felt that I was gradually remembering what had effectively already been created. As previously explained the idea of the Zaar which was the key Idea was sparked in the initial days of rehearsal, when I consciously had no idea how this key Idea could help me to create both my role and play. Therefore one of the defects is that I could not anticipate the flow of ideas; when an idea comes to mind it is as a kind of ‘remembering’ of the idea that has already been ignited during REMS. Therefore it is hard to know when an actor can remember the created idea. Also how the new idea is being created during REMS is covert.
Another defect is that the third eye did not lead me or correct me until the third week of rehearsal (See appendix 3, Diary, 16th day, page 8). This might suggest that the third eye needs time to be activated.

The positive point is that this observation showed me how the Key Idea came to me with no conscious and direct thought. It showed me how these elements in the play where coherently and perfectly gathered together so that it seemed that someone (the subconscious/the third eye) had analyzed every single point and inspired me.

The third eye plays an important role in the process of creating the role. The third eye as an overseer and self director led me during my rehearsal directly and indirectly. For example I tried to control the mind in the process of creating the role through effective thoughts. On the other hand, the mind controlled me by resisting rejection of the idea of the Zaar. In other words, during rehearsal I tried to avoid the idea of the Zaar and the idea came back repeatedly in different forms, which caused me to accept it. After my performances, regarding my feeling and the audiences’ feedback I realized that the idea of the Zaar was perfectly fitted with my interpretation of Medea. The idea of the Zaar was initially further away than my knowledge and perception. Furthermore, according to my observation the Diagram 7 can be filled as follows.
Diagram 7: The Mind Technique phases in the process of creating the role

Based on all of the above, I have distilled a description of the Mind Technique’s phases which now follows.

The Mind Technique’s phases: A distillation from practice and reading

The Mind Technique consists of twenty exercises and ten phases which include: Relaxation and breathing, concentration with effective thoughts, pre-sleep thoughts, imagination and improvisation, repetition, physical action, efficacious circulation, ideal goal and force motivation, following the third eye and creating the role. The explanations of these phases and exercises are followed.

4.2.1: Phase 1: Relaxation and breathing

In the Mind Technique, rehearsal starts with relaxation. An actor needs to place himself in a relaxed position. Remember, as you are doing the relaxation exercises, do not think that your body or muscle has any tension even if it has. As you start doing these exercises the tension will disappear; therefore it is better to think positively and say to yourself: you are going to relax your body.

- **Exercise 1:** Close your eyes and listen to your own breathing, looking at your blood, how it is circulating inside your body, and clear your mind of other thoughts and cares. Repeat whatever you saw in your mind to make focus easier. By slowing down your breathing from your diaphragm you could immediately relax yourself.

One of the reasons that the Mind Technique has focused on breathing is that when an actor is stressed he tends to take shallow breaths which does not give him enough oxygen.

- **Exercise 2:** Breathe deeply into your diaphragm ten times. Then you imagine you are filling up a balloon as you breathe in through your nose, and deflating it as you breathe out through your mouth. It helps you when you put your hand
gently over your tummy button and feel as your tummy pushed it out and then brought it back in as your breathe the air out. The next step is thinking about your role or something which is quite closely linked with your performance. In this practice the idea is to be mindful of the character that has to be created and block everything else out. Then start to begin breathing very slowly focusing on your role character and describing it to yourself. This takes you only 30 long breaths or about 3 minutes and it makes you relaxed and ready to concentrate.

4.2.2: Phase 2: Concentration with Effective thoughts

In the current acting method there is a gap between concentration and imagination. When actors concentrate what element can cause the imagination? One of the mind’s duties is to imagine whatever we hear or think. If the actors are given the effective thoughts the mind starts to imagine. In acting the functional imagination is needed. Therefore the mind has to receive effective thoughts about the role, to imagine what is in line with the role character. Thus in this phase concentration is combined with the effective thoughts. This method leads actors to imagine what is related to their character. The character that you imagine and the questions that you will ask during this phase act as the effective thoughts.

Hence in this phase, after relaxation and breathing, actors need to concentrate on their role. In the early stage of rehearsal, during the analyzing, an imaginary character has to be imagined. This imaginary character will be completed during the rehearsal and REMS.

- **Exercise 3:** Close your eyes and look slightly upward at an angle of about twenty degrees. This position of the eyes will tell your brain to produce Alpha waves. Then start counting from 100 to 1, slowly, at about 2 second intervals. You have to make sure that you are still awake and your mind is focused on the counting. When you finish counting eventually you will be in Alpha state. When you are in a deep concentration in the Alpha level then you need to imagine the picture of your role. (The uncompleted and plain imaginary character of your role, or the stickman) then use the effective thoughts to concentrate on your stickman which are as follows:
1. Based on the analyses try to explain your character, who is she/he? What is his/her situation? Is he/she in a tough situation and has a difficult choice?

2. How does he/she react and pick one of each difficult choice?

3. What does he/she look like?

4. Where is he/she?

5. What kind of clothes does he/she wear and what colour?

6. How does he/she speak, walk, laugh, cry, eat, sleep and sit?

These are initial questions and every day you can add more questions. The important point is that you do not try to answer the questions. You just need to bring up the questions regarding the personality of your character. These questions will be spontaneously answered during the process. Sometimes even you can imagine the tipping point/climax of the role or the moment that characters commit to an important action. This picture leads the mind to think about the role as it imagines the moment.

4.2.3: Phase 3: Pre-sleep thoughts

The effective thoughts that are given during the concentration in rehearsal have to be repeated in pre-sleep. Try to remember the questions and imagination that emerge during the concentration as you need to repeat them every night before sleep. This technique also helps you to fall asleep quickly. In pre-sleep you do not need to go to the deep concentration or in Alpha level as you do during the rehearsal. You only need to iterate the practice that you have done during the concentration. Sometimes when you are concentrating or repeating the effective thoughts some new images or answers will come up to your mind. Try not to judge or analyze them. Let the process occur by itself without any conscious effort.

- **Exercise 4**: Before you sleep when you lie in bed, close your eyes. Take a deep breath three times. Then try to divide your breathing into three parts; inhaling, holding and exhaling. Each one has to take ten seconds. Repeat this process three times and then as you carry on this form of breathing, start to think about your role and the questions that you have made about it during the rehearsal.
Continue until you fall asleep. It is important when you wake up in the morning to think about what you remember of your ideas in pre-sleep or the images in your dream every day.

4.2.4: Phase 4: Imagination and Improvisation

The purposes of these three exercises which follow are to balance actor’s energy to prepare for Alpha wave meditation as well as to boost imagination, improvisation and concentration together.

- **Exercise 5**: Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Take a deep breath and relax your muscles and try to clear your mind of its chatter. Now relax your inner mind and your muscles. Now imagine a small black dot. This dot is getting big and bigger and turns into an empty circle. This circle is shaped like a spheroid. It is a ball. You can play with the ball in your mind. Now you understand that this shape can move and change itself. It turns into a stickman. Concentrate on this stickman. Scan all over this stickman. Observe its neck, hand, body and legs. Now open your eyes as you keep your concentration and draw your imaginary stickman on a sheet of paper that you have been given before and attach it on the wall wherever you like.

**Image 3:**

- **Exercise 6**: Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Try to concentrate on the stickman. You start to scan its body from top to bottom. Now you find that your stickman can move. Now you must improvise a silent story for your stickman in your mind. Your stickman starts to move. Now you see that your stickman can say a word. You will remember his first word, then second, third … to tenth words. Your stickman can say sentences. You will remember his first sentence, second and third … to tenth sentences. Then you have to open your eyes and
repeat your imaginary story, movements and dialogues.

o **Exercise 7**: Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Try to concentrate on the stickman. Now you must to improvise your role story. Now you get close to the stickman. You take her/his hand. As soon as you touch the stickman, it turns into the ideal character that you have to play.

4.2.5: Phase 5: Efficacious circulation

In this phase, actors need to be aware of the circulation of given effective thoughts in pre-sleep, then in REMS these thoughts will be altered or completed afterwards, and will be remembered during the concentration or during the day and rehearsal. Actors need to think about this circulation as they think about the blood circulation or breath circulation in their concentration exercises. Also as they wake up in the morning they need to remember the first thing that comes into their mind and their dream that they had the night before. They need to see what messages or images or ideas are given without any judgement.

o **Exercise 8**: Close your eyes and imagine the stickman. He/she starts to move on his/her own, out of your control. You imagine that the stickman is not obedient. He/she moves in his/her own way. You just let it move, talk, and behave. You need to remember whatever he improvises. The stickman at this stage becomes the initial character that you need to play.

4.2.6: Phase 6: Ideal goal and Force motivation

As previously stated creativity needs an impellent to spark it. I made a force motivation to lead actors to activate their creativity through an artificial motivation. The impellent that is playing the role, acts as an artificial motivation to spark creativity. This phase has to be done when the imaginary character is relatively complete. This picture as a force motivation leads the subconscious to supply new ideas.
Exercise 9: Imagine facing the mirror; imagine yourself in an imaginary mirror in your mind. Try to look at yourself and imagine how your own face and body is changing to the imaginary character (the disobedient stickman).

Exercise 10: Then repeat this exercise physically with a real mirror. When you are doing this exercise you have to be concentrated to send these visual thoughts to your mind.

When actors have a fairly clear imaginary character of their role, they need to eventually add another imaginary character as a goal. During this phase they need to try to make the first imaginary character close to the final one which presents their ideal character that is ready to play.

Exercise 11: Close your eyes. Then imagine yourself as the best actor that is playing your given role perfectly in the blue rectangle frame. For instance, if you are going to play Medea/Hamlet role, imagine yourself in the perfect form of Medea/Hamlet who is playing on the stage and the audiences are impressed. Then you need to see and hear some of your scenes and dialogues. The duration of this exercise has not to be less than 5 minutes. This imaginary picture remains in your subconscious as a goal. Now you are giving a goal to your subconscious that needs to be created.

Exercise 12: Close your eyes then remember the picture of yourself that you have seen in the mirror in the previous exercise in the blue rectangle frame. Then try to imagine both blue rectangle pictures together. (The first in Exercise 10 and the second in Exercise 11). Now try to make them close together. This means thinking how you can make yourself close to the Ideal goal (the best picture of your role). This exercise also has to be done for not less than 5 minutes.

4.2.7: Phase 7: Repetition

In the Mind Technique the regularity is very important. The actor has to work on these exercises and repeat them every day five days a week at approximately the same time and also repeat them in the pre-sleep exercises every night before falling asleep. He
must also try to think and remember what ideas appeared to him including visually or verbally through the third eye. These repetitions act as a potent order to the actor’s subconscious in order to activate creativity.

4.2.8: Phase 8: Physical Action

In this phase the actor has to transfer his united imaginary character to his body. Here the mind rehearsal and physical rehearsal will be done together.

- **Exercise 13:** Before beginning every rehearsal you need to do these exercises: Close your eyes, take a deep breath and hold it for five seconds and breathe out for five seconds. Repeat this five times. Imagine a black dot. The dot is getting bigger and bigger to fill the screen in front of you, the black screen turns to a door. Open the door, you see a dark tunnel. While you are passing into the tunnel you feel relaxed and powerful. The tunnel has a labyrinth shape but you can see a light at the end of the tunnel. You try to pass through the labyrinth tunnel to approach the light. When you reach the light you see that the light is a spot light on the stage where you are going to play your role. Now you begin to play your role on the stage in your mind only.

- **Exercise 14:** Before to start your practice, make sure that the rehearsal room is clear and you can move with closed eyes. Stand up and close your eyes. Then take a deep breath in and hold it for five seconds and breathe out for five seconds. Repeat this five times. Imagine a black dot. The dot is getting big and bigger to fill the screen in front of you, the black screen turns to a door. Now as you imagine this practice, you also need to do it physically with closed eyes. Open the door, you see a dark tunnel. While you are passing into the tunnel you feel relaxed and powerful. The tunnel has a labyrinth shape but you can see a light in the end of the tunnel. You try to pass through the labyrinth tunnel to approach the light. When you reach the light you see that the light is a spot-light on the stage where you are going to play your role. Now you begin to play your role on the stage with the united character in your mind and body, mentally and physically you start to act. The improvisation will appear spontaneously.

- **Exercise 15:** Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Try to concentrate on the stickman. You can see it moves, speaks and feels. Imagine the mirror and the
stickman. The stickman looks different. You try to get close to it. The stickman starts to move and talk differently. She/he looks like the role. She/he changes his/her clothes. She/he wears your character’s clothes. She/he faces the mirror. You can see her/his emotions in her/his eyes. She/he takes your hand. As soon as you get close to her/him you turn to your character. Now you open your eyes and physically play whatever you imagined.

- **Exercise 16:** Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Try to concentrate on the stickman. Now you are facing a mirror. You see yourself and think how you can create the imaginary character from your mind. Now open your eyes and physically play your story for your own.

**4.2.9: Phase 9: Following the third eye**

The third eye, in fact leads an actor during the process of creating the role. Actors need to listen to their third eye. He tells the actors how they played in the rehearsal and also in performance on the stage. Actors have to concentrate on their third eye which gives them a true picture of themselves. Their third eye will appear spontaneously after two or three weeks of rehearsal.

- **Exercise 17:** This exercise helps you to activate your third eye and follow his advice. Close your eyes and imagine your role. Think you are sitting in front of him/her and asking some questions. Let him/her to answer your questions.
- **Exercise 18:** Close your eyes and imagine yourself and your role that are very friendly together. You are very like each other. Try to communicate with him/her. In this exercise you will have different experience every time. You can see in every single practice how you feel much closer to your imaginary character.
- **Exercise 19:** This exercise needs to be done when you have completed half of your rehearsal. Close your eyes and imagine you and your imaginary character (the imaginary disobedient stickman) become one person, the unity of yourself and your imaginary character that I call the *united character*. You can imagine the *united character* that is doing your routine everyday duties such as walking, talking, cooking, dancing and so on.
Exercise 20: This exercise needs to be done a week after you have done Exercise 18. Close your eyes and imagine the united character that is doing his/her routine everyday duties that the role might be doing (before and after every scene) or every action that the role is doing in the script. After a while of practising this exercise the united character starts to speak to you, lead you and advise you. In this stage, in fact the united character becomes or acts as the third eye. This means that it becomes an overseer who leads you how to create your role.

These exercises in The Mind Technique can help the actor to create his role through his subconscious.
CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

An actor can impact the inner process of creating the role through the Mind Technique. The utilisation of effective thoughts during the rehearsal and in pre-sleep can be identified as an important key to activate creativity. These factors show how actors can control the subconscious creativity and generate creativity systematically. This research attempted to consider the process of creating the role theoretically and practically in order to have a clear consideration in line with the research question: How to control the inner processes of creating the role through a new technique? This research offered actors the opportunity to consider the mechanism of creating the role in order to control the process mindfully. The insights that emerged from this research have deepened the mechanism of the process of creating the role in order to introduce the effect of the third eye on creating the role.

At the beginning of this thesis, I reviewed the selected current acting techniques which pay attention to the inner process of creating the role and then offered the Mind Technique as a new acting method to help actors to activate their creativity through tapping into their subconscious. This thesis has identified the various methods of creativity of 5 scholars. This was achieved by considering certain aspects of different acting methods such as that of the Stanislavsky’ system, Michael Chekhov, Meyerhold, Grotowski and Zarrilli methods combined with my own experience of years on the stage; I perceived a lack of knowledge about the mechanism of creating the role regarding the effect of the subconscious and the third eye.

Stanislavsky focuses on the inner processes of creating the role and the actor’s natural interior. Stanislavsky did not specifically mention having an imaginary character in the actor’s mind; however he pointed to the inner attention whereby the actor creates his role intellectually through his inner attention. Meyerhold’s technique, on the other hand, used études and the united actor’s body-mind with the acting technique to make a physical approach to the role. In his style, Meyerhold focused on another “I” inside, with this difference that the first “I” is the actor and the second “I” is the technique that the actor uses to create his role which is joined in the actor’s mind. This then impacted his way of leading the actors. Chekhov’s argument, an extension to Meyerhold’s, was that the all creation happens through another “I” inside. Chekhov’s ways of creating the
role were based on an imaginary character inside who presents the role character and the actor needs to imitate it physically.

Grotowski’s acting technique draws on Carl Jung’s principles of the collective subconscious, where the actor evokes images from their psyche and transfers it through the body and voice, which he named *trance*. Grotowski’s suggestion for empowering the creativity of the actor and avoiding being rigid and repetitive was to create an atmosphere for engagement and interaction (the pattern of give and take) between actor and audience. Following Grotowski’s suggestion, the important principle in Zarrilli’s acting method is that he combines body and mind as a united term and calls it the psychophysical approach, which causes an engagement between actors and audiences in order to experience a moment together. As such, the presence of the audience affects the creativity of the actor. Zarrilli’s method for creating the role is the awakening inner energy, similar to another “I” inside in Meyerhold and Chekhov’s method. Following this, I examined my two case studies to consider the impact of the third eye on the process of creating the role and monitor the inner process of creating the role. I argue that an actor can activate his subconscious creativity and his third eye (which can be another “I” inside) through the effective thoughts which are in line with the role during the rehearsal and pre-sleep. This research that was based on practice as research (PAR) was informed by these two case studies:

In my first case study, a series of four workshops, I illustrated the impact of Alpha frequency for tapping into the subconscious and creation of the disobedient stickman who presents another “I” inside or the third eye. In the second case study, Medea, I proved that an actor has an overseer/third eye inside who can lead him to create his role. To do so, I engaged with concepts of REMS and the *efficacious circulation* to control the inner process of creating the role. The case studies had a significant impact on my research, specifically the second one where I was able to put the learning from the workshops in Tehran into action.

Initially, at the onset of this academic research, I had experiences of the presence of the third eye as an inner leader and overseer. I always feel the presence of an overseer criticising me all the time to help me correct myself in creating a role in the right direction. But when I monitored the third eye while creating the Medea role, I realized that I can systematically engage with this third eye/overseer. Thus the method I have
sought to explicate becomes a tool for actors to engage and collaborate with their third eye to create their role. The new method, the Mind Technique that has emerged from this research pays attention to the effect of the actors’ thoughts during the process of mind rehearsal specifically in pre-sleep.

I designed Formula 1 that shows clearly the mechanism of creating the role in acting which are completed during the case studies as follows:

**Formula 1: The process of creating the role in the Mind Technique**

Where $A = \text{Mind + Body + Voice + The third eye + REMS}$

$P \text{ (Actor)} + A \text{ (Mind + Body + Voice + The third eye + REMS)} \rightarrow C \text{ (Created character)}$

Then:

**Formula 1: $P + A \rightarrow C$**

And I have drawn the process of creating an idea in Formula 2 below:

**Formula 2: The process of creating an idea**

The process begins with an impellent $\rightarrow$ An impellent causes an effective thought $\rightarrow$ An effective thought causes creation to proceed spontaneously $\rightarrow$ Creating an idea

I have also mapped Diagram 6 in order to embody the process of creating the role in the Mind Technique as follows:

**Diagram 6: The process of creating the role in the Mind Technique**
Other attainments of this research are Diagram 7, below, that shows the Mind Technique’s phases in the process of creating the role:

Diagram 7: The Mind Technique phases in the process of creating the role

These formulas and diagrams help the actor to have an overview of the Mind Technique and its importance. The Mind Technique has been designed to help the actors to activate their creativity through having control over the inner process of creating the role, effective thoughts and paying attention to the third eye. The Mind Technique is fundamentally based on the current acting techniques; nevertheless it is a different acting method. The significant difference is that it clearly leads the actor to activate their creativity through *efficacious circulation*. I suggested considering the process of *efficacious circulation* in order to control the process of REMS. The Mind Technique consists of twenty exercises and has ten phases: Relaxation and breathing, concentration with effective thoughts, pre-sleep thoughts, imagination and improvisation, repetition, physical action, efficacious circulation, ideal goal and force motivation, following the third eye and creating the role. The new technique, the Mind Technique that emerged from this study, may be used as a basis for guidelines for creating an influential and exclusive role; in addition to that, actors have more
knowledge about the third eye and its function.

There is, however, a disadvantage to this method because it is difficult to distinguish between the lateral idea and the vital idea which are received from the third eye. Sometimes during the rehearsal, actors receive the lateral idea and the vital idea at the same time. It is hard for actors to choose the right idea. If actors pay attention to what the third eye says to them, is it possible that actors choose the lateral idea instead of the vital idea? To distinguish between the lateral idea and the vital idea, I argue, can be a way of challenging actors to create their role. When actors think about their roles their mind starts to bring up some ideas that might not be in line with the role. This weakness can lead the actors in the wrong direction. To avoid this confusion, I suggest not choosing the initial ideas as the third eye eventually repeats the vital idea again on different occasions. So in this way, the question is how can the directors’ expectations be acquired and transferred into the actors’ third eye according to the correct direction? If the director’s suggestions differed from the third eye’s ideas, how can actors deal with this?

To broaden these questions further, can the background of the actor in terms of different society, ideology, culture, pedagogy, and even individual experiences have an impact on their third eye? Can my offered acting method, the Mind Technique, be adequate to address the concerns about the actor’s creativity? These questions need further research. But as Joseph Murphy states, which I purport to be the fundamental thrust of my thesis, “The action is your thought, and the reaction is the response of your subconscious mind. If your thoughts are wise, your actions and decisions will be wise” (Murphy, 2010: 150).
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