

第七届亚洲戏剧教育

世界戏剧与戏剧的民族化

Theatre - Globalization and Localization

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全球化和本土化：当代的契诃夫

契诃夫不同意把他的作品翻译成外语，这是众所周知的。他认为他的作品只是写俄罗斯和俄罗斯人，与其他国家的人不相关，因此对其也毫无意义可言。与众不同的是，对这一观点他是怀着自豪之感声明的，他不认为作品在局部区域内发表会有所贬值；他避开了国际声誉，仍然忠实于书写发生在身边的事情。

契诃夫对现代戏剧有着最重要的影响，这对我来说是一生中的灵感之源。本次会议以“本土-全球问题及契诃夫戏剧”为焦点，契诃夫对本土的自豪和热爱是最值得我们去学习的，我们必须传授给后代：我们自己的世界和我们学生的世界不亚于任何呈现在光鲜亮丽的国际杂志上的世界。要在这一行业获取成功，运气永远比技能重要；但是对“名誉”的追求确实日益成为一种激励力量，尤其是当人们已经广泛地接受了跨种族的演员阵容，且年轻人观看了太多这种跨种族表演并认同了这种形式之后，他们看

问题时就更有全球化倾向。

围绕戏剧产业日益国际化的话题对创作者和演绎者来说略有不同。剧作家面临各种翻译问题，同时缺乏对语境的理解；而掌握一定程度语言的演员可以在任何国家工作，只要能够模仿当地的口音或者具有当地种族特征。我年轻时的化妆课终于已成为历史，那时我们学习怎样化妆成“黑人”或“亚洲人”。如今，人们再也不用让马龙·白兰度去饰演一个日本人或让本·金斯利去饰演甘地——尽管西方国家的亚洲人尤其是在舞台上仍在扮演各个亚洲民族。

只要具备足够的才能，适当的资质和自然主义表演技能（相通的国际表演风格），演员可以并且能够在其他国家找到工作，如今许多演员已经视此为他们的目标。但是，即便是在演绎领域，只有在本土获得成功之后，才有可能在国际上获得成功。我培养过很多获过奥斯卡金像奖的艺术家的（演员、设计师和作家），除了少数运气好的例外，在受邀从事国际性工作之前，他们都在巡演的本土电影或戏剧中获得过重大成就。

另一方面，创作型艺术家较难在国际上取得成就，那些例外是值得我们研究的。首先，要着眼于本土，例如纽约的一条街道，“第四十二大街”——似乎并不会阻止百老汇的音乐剧盛行于美国以外的地方——我曾经看过中央戏剧学院的学生表演《歌舞线上》，技能娴熟，取得了很大的成功。这论证了我的观点：为何契诃夫的戏剧以及大多伟大的艺术作品表达的意思超出了艺术家的本意，原因并不一定在于作品的主题、风格或者形式，而是作品对人类本性的探究。《歌舞线上》与其说是关于百老汇合唱团的，毋宁说是关于表演者需要得到世界各地理解的相关工作。英国《战马》的成功可以归结为本土化和全球化相结合的结果——男孩，马和战争，特定的时间和地点只用于支撑重点。此外，正如我亲历过的，如果没有虚构成分，也不可能创作出“国际化的作品”；即使是全球性主题，也必须描写特定的“本土”事件。

我们从契诃夫以及诸位大师身上学到的另一个道理是：当作家仔细观察现实生活中的人及其行为，以虔诚、客观的态度进行写作时（当然技能也要纯熟），即使重点和细节都很有有限，该作品也能够被世界各地的人们所理解。本土题材并非普遍存在，“题材戏剧”确实随社会改变很快就会过时，但人的行为在各种情况下，无论本土与否，都能令其他人（最

自我的物种)感到好奇。更重要的是,与易卜生、斯特林堡、萧伯纳以及其他自然主义作家不同,契诃夫及其作品主题主要集中描写人性而非社会问题,他的作品是对人性的研究,而非着眼于叙事的复杂性或特定的普遍问题。

我们对这一点可以信心十足:正如好演员一样,我们身上存在人类的各种可能:我们是独一无二,与众不同的;同时我们又几乎是整个人类的复制品。同样,我们的艺术形式既是独特的也是普遍的——虽然我们并非总能发现我们的艺术形式中最为积极的价值。我们通常需要来自另一个地区或国家的人说明我们的本土特性和传统的特别之处。我们的文化通过外国人的眼睛反馈给我们时,我们发现了一些以前从未注意到的事情。相反,我们很容易想到来自海外的大多数东西,尤其是当代的。长期以来我一直秉持这样的观点:传统艺术形式可能使我们彼此疏远,特别是在海外演出时,因“不同”而受到宣扬和推崇,其异国情调产生距离感,并可能制造分歧。然而当代戏剧、当代音乐和当代服饰等却使我们更为紧密。例如,廖一梅编剧,孟京辉执导的《恋爱的犀牛》:年轻和激情在世界各地的戏剧中都有吸引力,在用当代戏剧制作的国际化语言进行呈现时,这个作品在任何地方演出都能获得共鸣,这一点是不足为奇的。

当然,国际标准也会造成其他问题,使人一想到“全球化戏剧”这样的事物便不寒而栗。艺术最不需要的便是星巴克或麦当劳似的戏剧,不过有人会从多个角度指出,这正是迪斯尼最为成功之处。好莱坞、宝莱坞和红泥坞有意通过融合具有国际吸引力的元素进行创作,这是商业主义的一个范例,但并非艺术创作的范例。虽然指定写作所需的专业主义含有可嘉的技能,但最伟大的艺术往往来源于个人的激情,且以契诃夫为例,其人物大多由周围的环境所塑造。

看到才华横溢的年轻学生渴望将自己的一生致力于掌握某一艺术形式的技能,我总是备感欣慰。但如今多数学生钟爱多种风格和流派,受到各式各样戏剧和表演的影响,很少有人想一生致力于比如狂言或卡塔卡利舞。不管好坏与否,这一趋势都会继续:我们的艺术曾经是一种“职业”,如今却是一种“产业”;我们曾经是流浪的“吉普赛人”,现在却是令人尊敬的社会活动家。对许多人来说,取得更大成就源于普遍的全球推动力,但这只是新闻和资讯传播较密集快速特别是电子媒介辅助的结

果。如今，具有全球吸引力几乎是对“明星”的定义：在多个国家如在自己国家一样有名。某些艺术家的巨大人气证明了日益国际化的审美观，与本土或国家趣味及市场力无关的审美观——众所周知，这就是可有效制造的“名气”。我们需要研究的并非是巧妙销售食品饮料一样的人气，而是其作品和吸引力跨越语言和文化屏障的艺术家的人气。

为了打入国际市场，许多人喜欢参加各种国际艺术节，理解这种共性对我们来说非常重要。我指的并非最基本的或平民的共性，而是广为传播的人的方面、表情、行为和情形。国际艺术节过去往往涵盖“异国情调”和“与众不同的”节目，如今融合当代性强的作品却较为常见。由于在各地的档案室唾手可得，巡演传统风格和形式戏剧的时光似乎一去不复返了。然而，传统作品是每个游客的首选，就地观看本土艺术的兴趣会与日俱增。另外，各地的公众对地域本身充满好奇，希望探索自己所处的时代以及感兴趣的问题，这些问题若由他国映射出来，他们会更欣喜。尽管我个人喜欢能剧和歌舞伎，但作为艺术节或剧院的艺术总监，我知道如果在海外巡演能剧和歌舞伎一定会赔钱。传统戏剧除非成为珍品，否则似乎没有全球市场。当然，巡演制作其他国家的当代戏剧也是有获得成功的可能性的。《恋爱的犀牛》再次论证了这一点：世界各地的观众对同样的人物角色及其问题能够感同身受，如同观看诸多中国的影片，他们很欣慰地看到当代的中国人并非格外不同和“神秘”，没有数个世纪的文学和媒体表现的那些陈词滥调，当代的中国人实质上与世界各地的人一样。这就是戏剧的巨大社会作用之一：戏剧是有效的抚慰之物，是家庭和社区的映射。我们身边的先知或本土艺术家在别处受到推崇（如获得国际大奖）之前，总是鲜为得到重视。澳大利亚和新加坡都受到这种思维的约束：最好的往往来自异地；若是本土的，肯定不会太好。这当然是一个存在诸多不安全因素的新兴国家的普遍观点，也是媒体的过失，以及编辑和艺术记者的无知。直到20世纪80年代，澳大利亚导演和演员在受聘前必须在国外留学；即便现在，新加坡最有权势的人也都在海外留学过。澳大利亚“明星”有幸搭乘日益繁荣的电影产业的快车，但他们的技艺都是在舞台上习得的。他们经过自己文化的洗礼也是幸运的。艺术家以在国际上取得成功作为目标是危险的：自然，这会浪费创造力，但真正的危险在于可能无法形成鲜明的特色，获得根植于某一特定文化中的全部知识和技能。获得国际成功

与人际关系和运气有很大关系；但首先是获得本土或国家的影响。此外，本土舞台也是塑造和形成我们重要技能和价值的地方。本土教育、本土戏剧和本土电影对艺术家来说非常重要和有价值的：地方性成就了艺术家；全球性只能创造“明星”。众所周知，许多明星是制造出来的，票房较高，获利较大的正是“华而不实的東西”。因此，永远不要混淆艺术家和明星，他们是极为不同的。

全球化的力量十分强大，不可抗拒，所以反对技术进步只能是徒劳；我们必须想方设法帮助年轻人区分和了解全球化力量的利弊。本土化和全球化各有利弊，弊可能是真正的危险，而利可能是很好的教训或错觉。

我经常在一些会议上关注戏剧风格、形式和流派濒临消亡的问题，我曾多次督促对其进行保护。即使现在没有价值，也不能否定其未来的价值。我们的遗产必须加以保护，它们是供未来的从业者和学者开掘的宝藏。我已发出过多次警告，我们不想跟欧洲一样失去自己的主要艺术形式。不过此刻迫在眉睫的危险并非针对主要艺术形式，而是即将消亡的地方性剧种。

有两个不同的问题：创造激情四射的当代戏剧的同时，如何运用、振兴并发展本土舞台及国际戏剧节巡演感兴趣的传统形式，通过其他艺术形式对其进行改变；以及如何通过掌握这些技能的现存演员实现保护。后者通常都被称为“博物馆戏剧”，普遍用来形容使观众失去兴趣的传统作品。前者包含过去几十年的一些著名作品——例如姆努什金用印度雅克莎迦那戏剧形式创作的《奥瑞斯忒亚三部曲》，罗伯特·勒帕热用几种日本艺术形式创作的《太田川的七条支流》，荣念曾把戏曲加入到现代的背景中的《西游荒山泪》，其表演者同亨德尔高音的表演者一样优雅。但是，如果我们把这些新作品的产生视为对传统的保护，那就大错特错了，这些作品对传统的改变远远多于保留。这就是我们为什么要想办法保存一切现有的表演形式。

我们可以制作大量电影，这是必要的，但并非解决如何将技能和见解传递给表演者本人这个问题的答案。我们可以凭借戏剧考古学接触某些已消亡的艺术形式，如经常误称为“情节剧”的“修辞手势”，但有人认为就像二战后Shrehler拯救即兴喜剧一样，全面拯救修辞手势太迟了。没人会料到，沦为濒临灭亡的地区性意大利艺术形式，观众被电影和电视夺走的

喜剧会复兴到如此程度：世界各地的戏剧学校都在教授喜剧——不过很少有专业剧院专注于此。我们无法预见哪种传统会在未来发挥巨大作用。但若我们打算在学校教授这些艺术形式和其变体，我们就没有时间培养学生从事当代戏剧。

中国最幸运的是有专门的学校教授戏曲，旨在保护表演形式及地方性剧种，探索保持戏曲常新并让观众喜爱的方法。德里的国立戏剧学校也试图用传统艺术形式训练学生，在保护传统艺术形式方面做出重要贡献，但是学校的教育重点还是放在了现代戏剧上。显然，戏剧学校只能有限地挑选几种传统形式进行教授。一些戏剧人在戏剧创作中使用了传统形式，并用传统形式进行演出——例如，观世荣夫（日本能剧）和野村万斋（狂言）。可悲的是，我们缺乏采用所有的传统表演形式的专业剧院，但庆幸的是，毕竟还有少数剧团在从事这方面的工作。我们应如何对待这些失去大众关注的戏剧形式？在我有生之年，我目睹了一些戏剧形式和流派的消亡——例如大木偶剧、新派戏剧、情节剧和滑稽剧，看到许多戏剧沦为“边缘戏剧”和“博物馆戏剧”。虽然观众通过新的媒介能获取更加好看并且更加廉价的娱乐方式，但是，观众对本土戏剧失去兴趣是否也意味着表演者及表演艺术本身也不再对本土戏剧感兴趣了呢？

幸运的是，戏剧学者尤为关注已消亡的形式和语言，因为这些形式和语言有很多方面尚未开发。但现代戏剧创作人员也会在快速消失的形式中发现许多方面的价值，如上所述，很多人在想方设法重新包装这些形式以重获观众的支持。

我们正处于2012年引人注目的一个时点：国际巨片独领风骚，同时黔驴技穷，大屏幕已风光不再，需要更大更好的效果、3D和活动座椅与“家庭娱乐中心”、视频、CD、苹果手机、苹果电脑以及精致的餐饮相抗衡。犹如在舞台上“反映自然”的数千年的努力被电影横扫，自然主义于19世纪末终于登上舞台，如今电影达到了巅峰，又被手提电脑和个人技术挤到边缘。

很长时间以来，我一直强调观众在戏剧现场中的重要性，我们必须考虑观众在每项工作中的作用；现场方面仍会有吸引力并通过观众在作为公共活动的戏剧中的重要性继续发挥作用。让本土观众重新参与应是重中之重：因为如果这一根基稳健，便会获得更大范围的成功，自然也会获得国

际成功，因为对异域风土人情的好奇总会激发我们对外来事物的兴趣。

我一直是四个不同剧院的艺术总监，知道观众喜欢戏剧季的多样化表演，我从未见过观众将来自异国的优秀戏剧拒之门外（只听观众抱怨过定期上演了太多某个国家的戏剧）——除非精挑细选，有些戏剧是难以理解的。相反，上演太多本土戏剧似乎会令观众担心。好的戏剧季应是涵盖和平衡数个国家最新或最经典的戏剧，正如所有表达莎士比亚戏剧主题的剧目一样，理想状态是达到平衡——既不要过于极端，也不要过于中庸。在经营皇家昆士兰剧院时，我收到许多喜爱我执导的本土、国家和国际戏剧节目组的观众来信，他们喜欢对比本土作品与其他州和国家以及其他时代的优秀戏剧。这里再次强调的是平衡：既不忽视本土作品，也不一味崇拜国际戏剧，无论其获过多少大奖（我们得承认，有些诸如获得普利策奖的作品，只不过是景气年份里的佳作）。

对剧院来说，国际化有多种方式，最经济的是与相关的姐妹城市或国家的姐妹剧院建立联系。例如，在我担任Playbox-Malthouse剧院（全新作品剧院）的艺术总监期间，找出了同样制作新剧的剧院，定期交换彼此认为可能感兴趣的剧本。我与上海人民艺术剧院的交流收获颇丰，他们启用的演员规模是我们无法企及的。我们还与其他剧院创立了称之为“讲述彼此故事”的理念，届时会在我们的戏剧季编排对方的戏剧。这往往需要引入原创国的剧作家或导演，也为剧作家提供了在新的环境中审视作品的机会。

契诃夫在有生之年从未看到自己的作品在别国上演；不过他一经离世，翻译作品便接踵上演。世界各地的戏迷不仅对他的新式自然主义及以人物为本的戏剧产生了共鸣，而且联想到了家庭、友谊和爱的永恒主题。我们知道，优秀的戏剧均围绕家庭，从《俄狄浦斯》和《奥瑞斯忒亚》到《哈姆雷特》、《三姐妹》、《北京人》、《大胆妈妈和她的孩子们》及《推销员之死》等等，不胜枚举。世界各地的生活均围绕家庭、朋友、爱和工作而展开；我们从契诃夫身上学到了一个道理：若我们书写这些人们普遍关心的问题，忠实于刻画各个地方的人，我们的作品将会获得共鸣并引起各地观众的关注。

在剧本写作课中，我教授我称之为“契诃夫革命”的课程：契诃夫放弃使用易卜生结构（佳构剧），而选择其《伊万诺夫》和《海鸥》中的

结构，并增加了后高潮场景。虽然前三幕使用了亚里士多德原则，但是也由此从戏剧性转向了现实性。他直觉地做了这个巨大的转变，把《林魔》改成了《万尼亚舅舅》，或许是因为注意到在《伊万诺夫》或《海鸥》结尾不能快速落下帷幕，因为大家沉浸在死亡的氛围中时都想看到舞台上人物角色的脸孔。契诃夫用整整一幕来展现“高潮过后，生活仍在继续”，他不仅使写作接近现实而且更加接近人类感兴趣的话题。长久以来，我们一直热衷于看生存故事，第一次世界大战之后，全世界的目光都聚焦在巨大灾难之后如何生存的问题上。20世纪30年代初，契诃夫的戏剧在各地上演，但他的家人却没有拿到任何稿酬，并在两次可怕的战争中艰难度日。二战之后全世界更注重后高潮场景，契诃夫戏剧中最后一幕的概念成为现代戏剧的典范。二战后的世界是经历创伤和大屠杀后的世界，那时期的《等待戈多》便是契诃夫最后一幕理论的完美诠释：我们不再需要论述或演绎，我们也不需要高潮，观看幸存者们的行为就已足够。

喜剧总是含有阿里斯多芬多年前创建的荒诞元素，契诃夫塑造的当代阿尔弗雷德·雅里和达达主义者通过荒诞之人的荒诞之举，以广义木偶戏的方式进一步探索了这些元素；但是契诃夫将荒诞主义界定为试图在荒诞世界里表现正常的人。执导过契诃夫作品的导演及专业演员会同意这个观点：契诃夫的荒诞（举手投足自然舒适）是贝克特、尤涅斯科、品特及阿尔比等进行延伸的依据。换句话说，契诃夫感知写作的方式——一般以本土为中心——发明了现代戏剧、全球戏剧；无论是结构还是风格均跨越了国家和文化的界限。

除此之外，虽然创作对象是本土观众，创作内容是本土故事，但契诃夫的作品真实地反映了他看到的世界，折射出了现代理念，即生活中每一个时刻都是悲剧和喜剧的交织的现代理念。在此，他又一次推翻了亚里士多德之前的观点，即所有的戏剧或场景一定要么是喜剧，要么是悲剧。悲喜剧的发明也使其超越了所有剧作家，包括从未创立过任何写作结构的莎士比亚和易卜生。莎士比亚的幻想流派是对舞台的原创性贡献，但契诃夫后来演变成为创伤后戏剧或小说的创伤后场景及其悲喜剧风格却对所有的文学来说都是一种创新。

契诃夫的另一个改革提醒了人们他对于当代戏剧的价值。我们都知道契诃夫的戏剧对斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基表演体系发展的重要性，许多人将斯坦

尼斯拉夫斯基和契诃夫相提并论，但我们也知道契诃夫并不是很欣赏斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基的作品，根据他寄给演员的许多修改记号，我们知道他极其反对斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基认为戏剧应该更倾向于喜剧这一观点。契诃夫也不欣赏易卜生的戏剧或社会问题剧。从契诃夫的关于斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基作品的照片中很容易看出，表演风格绝不是现在我们所知道的自然主义，其情节剧的表现手法肯定与周围蟋蟀的叫声等格格不入。契诃夫，作为一位具有科学精神的医生，一心一意笔耕于本土，能看到生活和演员舞台表现的巨大差异。契诃夫在许多方面先知先觉，他关注人物性格，预见到了戏剧表演的新方式。这种预见及其要求也带来了表演艺术的革命性变化。

许多契诃夫戏剧的导演非常清楚，他们需要一种超越斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基戏剧的表演方法。关于斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基的基本分析是必要的，但易卜生戏剧与契诃夫戏剧的表演之间有天壤之别。托尔斯泰称契诃夫为印象派作家，气恼契诃夫似乎没有明显的社会目的；托尔斯泰、易卜生、萧伯纳和米勒认为戏剧必须首先具有社会责任。契诃夫也是短篇小说大师，这些小说揭示了他对人类行为的科学探究；同时暴露了他对道德兴味索然。面对人的复杂性时，与其他巨擘不同的是，契诃夫极为谦逊。我们知道他憎恶贫困和无知，竭尽所能克服它们并医治身体疾病；但我们也知道他一刻也不曾想过在作品中传达“信息”，至少不会传达易卜生或托尔斯泰会声明的信息。

契诃夫戏剧的主旨比其他作家所关心的本土问题宽泛得多；鉴于他只反映周围的人，他的主旨，正如我们现在所知，普遍得令人吃惊。他写道：“我只想如实地展现人的行为，希望他们看到自己时会想要改变。”观察人的真实情形，如实地刻画人的行为需要对斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基的有限方法及弗洛伊德的方法进行改革。斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基总是有所助益，但绝非现代戏剧的最终定论者（设想一下将他的风格用于贝克特和尤奈斯库），也绝非佳构剧之前所写的戏剧的最终定论者（众所周知，最有助于上演莎士比亚戏剧的是韵律和音感）。似乎显而易见的是斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基的方法最适于易卜生的戏剧和佳构剧，此类戏剧需要完全围绕主题和内容的表演。诚然，任何有关人的润饰若非直接嵌入主题便是多余的，并且会分散观众的注意力，但契诃夫的戏剧却不会如此。

仅从本土的角度来看，契诃夫引发了一场放之四海皆准的改革：他

不仅鼓励对比和混乱，还引入了矛盾。典型的例子是：“我走了（他坐着）”。这对易卜生和萧伯纳来说当然是不可接受的，但事实上这种随意和矛盾最好地诠释了现代的情况，在现代黑白已混淆不清，各个人物甚至经常不清楚自己的目标，当然也不清楚自己的动机。实质上，契诃夫观点的核心是矛盾，这与罗马人通过即兴喜剧表现的喜剧和讽刺的许多原则不谋而合。喜剧有一整套关于人类信念薄弱的插科打诨。契诃夫作品中的人物不能简单定为佳构剧中的人物，因为这些角色的动机总会引发争议。此外，我们无法像对待其他剧作家一样轻易做出决定，我们在做出任何选择之前必须打起精神进行彻彻底底的探究。我们在排练的演出阶段会发现，契诃夫给了演员大量自由，但自由太多，有时也很难知道从何处着手。演员说台词时，人们认为观众看的是讲话者；而当演员看着空中的人物时，我们马上就会注意到，观众往往看着演员的说话对象，而非讲话者。契诃夫的戏剧中有许多其他戏剧没有的东西，有趣的是，那些独特的方面在生活中也能找到。

为了更好地展现契诃夫作品中人物鲜明的多重性格，我想到了一种新的描述方法，这种描述也会产生既适于现代戏剧也适于现代电影的表演。托尔斯泰称契诃夫为印象派作家，正如《海鸥》中人们称男主角特里波列夫那样。印象主义的理念是在画布上涂多种色彩——如托尔斯泰所说“似乎任意”——但从一定的距离来看，却比照片（现实主义）更生动。印象主义也会引出许多额外的事情：莫奈的干草垛虽然主要是用同一色调画的，但却根据不同时辰优先使用某种色彩。教授表演时，我们通常用色彩表示感情，有些现在已是老生常谈，红色代表愤怒，蓝色表示忧郁等。梵文的味或“味”同样与色彩有关。虽然并非主要与色彩的象征用途（因国而异）有关，但我们经常提及“感情色彩”或要求演员为词语或短语“着色”。时下的观点认为根本没有人物可言，只有演员的所言所为及观众的所想。即便如此，“人物”的元素仍然可供选择、安排和传达。由此通过选择性格特征并在不同的点揭示性格特征（往往有几处重复）引出了人物。当角色像在佳构剧中经常做的那样陈述意图和动机时，演员可将多数工作放心交给台词，但是如果认为契诃夫的台词承担了一切那可是重大的错误。同样，现代戏剧和电影剧本需要作者提供大量情景和附加信息说明如何挑选演员，以及如何执导和表演这些“角色”。

传授别人的表演理论是几乎不可能的。每个老师必须改编这些理论，使用他们认为有价值的。除了斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基重要的动作表演，我又开发了三个领域，坦白地说，这是连接演员并使演员相互关联所必需的元素，这样的合作对表演来说是必不可少的主要部分。首先，除了角色所做的动作，描述的关键部分是感情。情感表达在传统戏剧中占主导地位，且在整个亚洲戏剧中仍然贯穿“自然主义”。此外，许多演员并不感觉投入了某个场景，除非他们有所“感觉”。推动演员的注意力由表演感情转向表演动作已经导致感情有所贬值（虽然感情很少甚至没有感情是“纯洁的”），但感情却是角色内在生活的主要元素。其次，谈及角色时，也会谈及素质，我们应该把这些素质应同其他有助于界定人物的元素一起认真考虑收集。这些素质在传统美德与罪恶中可以找到，而且像感情一样，往往是几个元素的融合。作家、导演和演员经常忘记界定角色类型的关键素质，譬如，男主角不能没有勇气或诚实等有助于感同身受的令人敬佩的特质；拜伦式或有缺陷的男主角肯定有傲慢、贪婪等令人讨厌的或负面的素质。我为演员和作家建议的四个领域中的最后一个是我所说的“状态”。感情并非总能界定一个角色的状态，“平静”或“沉思”是感情吗？“存在状态”对于舞台上的一切存在都大有用处，尤其是不经常有台词和动作的小角色。一旦收集起一系列的“存在状态”，很容易就会发现这些状态与感情的重叠，也会发现状态的作用，特别是在重演的起点。当然，在契诃夫的作品中，“状态”可以同时影响舞台上的所有角色，例如，在《海鸥》第1幕的结尾处，“沉默的天使飞过”时或《樱桃园》第2幕，大家都陷入沉思时，远处是梅德维登科的吉他，菲尔斯在自言自语。

动作、感情、素质和“状态”形成对人物的印象，犹如莫奈的一个干草垛主要为紫色，另一个却明显有更多绿色。也可将人物-色彩比作主题，创作符合音乐中回旋曲原则的结构，主题——是重复最多的主题。根据演员的演绎对演员选择的描述要素进行排序——例如，一名演员可能选择“茫然”作为加佑夫的主题或特质，而另一名演员可能优先选用温暖和爱作为他的主要素质。此时，第二特质也经常重复，但不如第一特质频繁。犹如印象派画布，多种色彩给人较为厚重的联想，就像一颗璀璨的多面宝石会从多个方面反映生活。这样的表演能够获得更大的动力，通过重心转向各种特质、无数的小危机、改变的時刻、对比和矛盾，通过对立突出性

格。换言之，演员不要扮演人物的“核心”——就像对待易卜生等人的作品一样——而要通过扮演传达外在的极端的和矛盾性的人物状态。若我们将人物素质想象为色彩，那么按“红色”、“黄色”，然后又是“红色和黄色”的顺序扮演最能表达这一理念——给人的印象是“橙色”，但实际上从未扮演过“橙色”。

就像所有表演训练一样，起初似乎技术性很强，但有助于增添排练时的乐趣。表演本身需要较强的主观性，但如果我们对比一下斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基的表演与启发了包括契诃夫在内的多位作家的埃莉诺拉·杜萨的表演，我确信斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基会和如今的梅丽尔·斯特里普一样技术性很强。对许多电影演员来说特质是首要的，我们可以对比现代美国与澳大利亚的表演，其较强的物质性和表面上的随意可以视为对抗英国“头部特写”并努力更丰富地反映生活。停留于任一色彩或态度过久会使“自然主义”本身令人厌倦——正如在20世纪50年代，人们认为契诃夫“垂垂老矣”，“郁郁寡欢”。契诃夫教给我们的道理是：不要把各种色彩混在一起，否则我们只能得到一出令观众犯困的戏剧。

我研究的关于契诃夫的资料越多，越认为他不仅与我是同代人，而且比我先知先觉，挑战着我关于人类、关于表演、关于戏剧本身的想法。他也是个矛盾的综合体，既陌生又熟悉。他是典型的俄罗斯人，但在我看来却是澳大利亚人，就连莎士比亚也从未给过我这样的感觉。契诃夫也很像中国人，执意留给世界一个更好的地方，然后他找到了。但他只书写他所熟知的世界，从未涉及“外国人”或国际观点、视角，唯一的外国人是樱桃园里的夏洛特，据说夏洛特有德国口音，原型是契诃夫认识的一位英国妇女。不过这些俄罗斯人已为我们所知，无论我们来自哪个国家，他们的普遍性是萧伯纳作品中的人物绝不会有的。这一点同曹禺研究人性的作品《北京人》有异曲同工之妙，而且我并非第一个将他们相提并论的，尤其是契诃夫最钟爱的主题——“多余的人”或教育不当之人。曹禺也没有写国际性的戏剧题材，他只写发生在自己身边的事情。这是契诃夫教给我们的主要道理：任何分析、探索和反映生活的作品都会引起他人的兴趣，而与其种族、宗教或政治无关。

Universal and Provincial: Chekhov our Contemporary

Aubrey Mellor

Chekhov is known to have dismissed the idea of translating his work; he believed that he wrote only about Russia and Russians, and therefore his work would be irrelevant and meaningless to non-Russians. It is refreshing that this was stated with pride, that he found nothing devalued in being parochial; he eschewed international fame, and remained true to his purpose of mirroring what he observed around him.

For me, Chekhov is the prime influence on modern theatre, and a source of inspiration all my life; but for this conference, focusing on the Local-Global issue and on Chekhov in Performance, his pride and interest in the local is the greatest lesson for us all - and one we must impart to future generations: that our own world, the worlds of our students, are as important as anything in a glossy international magazine. Success in this industry is often more a matter of luck than of skill; but the desire for 'fame' is a growing motivational force today, especially as cross-racial casting is now generally accepted; and, as young people see and identify with more such examples, consequently more are inspired to look globally.

The issues surrounding our industry's growing internationalism differ slightly for the creator and for the interpreter. Playwrights face translation problems as well as lack of contextual understanding; but Actors, with a degree

of language mastery, can work in any country, provided the material can be shaped to their national accent or racial features. Gone, at last, are the make-up classes of my youth, where we learned how to do ‘negroid’ and ‘asiatic’ make-up; the world no longer tolerates a Marlon Brando as a Japanese or a Ben Kingsley as Gandhi - although Asians in Western countries are still usually expected to play a range of Asian nationalities, particularly on stage.

Given sufficient aptitude, appropriate qualities and skill with naturalism, (the shared international performing style) actors can, and will, find work in other countries; and many now see this as their goal. But, even in the interpretation areas, international success first needs achieving success in a local or regional goal. I have helped train many academy-award winning artists (actors, designers, and writers); and, with very few lucky exceptions, all achieved something significant at home, in local films or local theatre which toured, before they were invited to international work.

On the other hand, it is much more difficult for creative artists to achieve internationally, though the exceptions are worth our study. For a start, focus on the local, e.g. a street in New York, “Forty-Second Street”, seemed never to hinder Broadway musicals from being popular outside of America – and indeed here at the Central Academy I have seen students performing *Chorus Line* with enormous skill and success. This supports my view of why Chekhov’s plays, and most great art works, communicate beyond the artist’s intent: it is not necessarily the themes or style or form, it is the work’s intrinsic human focus that makes it exportable. *A Chorus Line* is not so much about being in a Broadway chorus as it is about the need for performers to get work, something understood and relevant everywhere. The success of *Britain’s War Horse* can be also analysed for common and global concerns - a boy, a horse, a war, with the specifics of time and place merely supportive of the main focus. Further, as I have personally proved, one can’t deliberately write an ‘international play’, without being inauthentic; one can only write with a specific ‘local’ focus, even when using universal themes in one’s work.

The next lesson that we can learn from Chekhov, and from all the greatest,

is that when one closely observes people and their behaviour, and when one writes with honesty and integrity, and of course with great skill, one's work, even parochial in both focus and detail, can be understood by others anywhere in the world. Local issues are not necessarily paralleled elsewhere; and indeed 'issue plays' date quickly, as society changes; but human behaviour, within any situation, local or not, remains a curiosity to other humans, the most self-interested of species. Significantly, unlike Ibsen and Strindberg, Shaw and other 'naturalists', Chekhov's focus and his themes were on the human condition, not on social issues; and his work famously was a study of character, not of narrative complexity or of a particular prevailing issue.

We can take confidence in the fact that, like good actors, we have the seeds of all human possibilities within us: we are unique and different; while at the same time almost clones of the entire human race. Similarly, our art-forms have both unique and universal qualities - though we are not always astute in seeing the most positive values of our own. We often need someone from another region or country to articulate what is special about our local features and traditions. When our culture is reflected back at us through the eyes of a foreigner, we see things that we had never noticed ourselves. Conversely, we can easily relate to most material from overseas, especially the contemporary. I have long held the view that traditional art forms potentially distance us from each other; particularly when performed overseas, where they are promoted and celebrated for 'difference', and their exoticism evokes a sense of distancing and potentially divisive elements. Whereas contemporary plays, contemporary music, contemporary clothes, etc, all bring us closer together. For example, Liao Yimei's *Rhinoceros in Love* in Meng Jinghui's vivid production: youth and passion have always had appeal in the theatre anywhere in the world, and when presented in the international language of contemporary theatre-making, it is no surprise that such work will communicate wherever it travels.

Of course, international standards create other problems; and one shudders to imagine such a thing as 'global theatre'. The last thing the arts need is Starbucks or McDonalds theatre; though in many ways one could say

that is where the Disney organisation has been most successful. Hollywood, Bollywood and Honkywood are now consciously creating works through mixing ingredients of international appeal; and here is a lesson in commercialism. It is not, however, a lesson in art-making. Though there are admirable skills in the professionalism required to write to order, the greatest art has always come from individuals' personal passions; and, as Chekhov examples, the personal is most shaped by surrounding environment.

I am always comforted when I meet a talented young student eager to devote his/her life to mastering the skills of one specific art-form; but most students today have passion for more than one style or genre, being more influenced by a diversity of theatre and performance. Fewer will want to dedicate a lifetime to e.g. Kyogen or Kathakali. For good or bad, this trend will continue: where ours was once a 'Profession', it is now an 'Industry', where we were once nomadic 'gypsies', we are now respected community leaders. For many, the wish to achieve on a grander scale is a shared global impulse; it is but one consequence of closer and faster communications in news and information, especially aided by electronic media. To have global appeal is almost the definition of a 'star' today: to be as well known in many countries as in one's own. The huge popularity of some artists gives evidence to a growing international aesthetic; one that is independent of local or national tastes, and independent of market forces? which, as we know, can effectively create 'fame'. We need to study the popularity, not of cleverly marketed foods and beverages, but of artists whose work and appeal crosses language and cultural barriers.

To reach the international market - and many of us like to participate in international festivals - it is important we understand the common factors. I don't mean the lowest common or populist denominator; I mean the human aspects, expressions, actions and situations that illuminate and communicate widely. International Arts Festivals used to often include the 'exotic' and program for 'difference', but today this is far less usual than a good mix of strong contemporary works. The days of touring traditional plays, styles and

forms seem to have gone, as access to such is readily available in archives everywhere. On the other hand, traditional work is high on the agenda of every tourist, and the interest in seeing local art in situ will continue to grow. Further, the general public anywhere in the world is curious about itself and wants to see its own times and its own concerns; and often enjoys them more when reflected back at them from other countries. Though personally I love Noh and Kabuki, for example, as an Artistic Director of a Festival or a Theatre Company, I know I would lose money if I attempted to tour them abroad. Traditional theatre seems to lack a global market, except as a curiosity. On the other hand, I have toured and produced contemporary plays from other countries with great success. Again, *Rhinoceros in Love* supports this: audiences everywhere empathised with the same characters and their problems, and as with so many Chinese films, they took much comfort in seeing that contemporary Chinese people are not exotically different and 'inscrutable' and all the other clichés that centuries of literature and media have projected; contemporary Chinese people are essentially the same as other humans anywhere. And herein is one of theatre's great social purposes: theatre the great comforter, theatre the mirror of family, and of community.

A prophet in one's own land, or a local artist, is rarely valued until acclaimed elsewhere: for example, wins an international award. Australia and Singapore both suffer from this thinking: that the best is always from somewhere else; that if it is local, then it can't really be good. This is, of course, the common view of a young country with all its insecurities; it is also a fault of the media and the ignorance in our editors and arts journalists. Until the 1980s Australian directors and actors had to have studied abroad before they were employable on the stage; even today the most empowered in Singapore have all studied overseas. Australian 'stars' were lucky to ride on the back of a growing film industry, though they had all learned their craft on the stage. They were also lucky to have developed first though their own culture. There is danger in having international success as a goal: one can waste creative energy of course, but the real danger is one may not develop distinctive features, and

one may fail to gain integral knowledge and skills rooted first in one particular culture. International success has much to do with contacts and luck; but even then is most possible after achieving local or national significance. Besides, the local scene is what first shapes us, and gives us our essential skills and values. Local training, local theatre and local films are crucial, and of greatest value to the artist. It is the parochial which makes the artist; the global only makes a 'star'; and as we all know, much stardom is manufactured: it is the 'tinsel' that sells more tickets and gives greater profits. Let's never confuse the artist with the star, as they are very different.

The forces of globalisation are powerful and irresistible, so we waste energy on being luddites; we must find ways to understand the virtues and evils of global forces and help the young differentiate. As with everything, there are pluses and minuses in both local and global; the minus can be genuine dangers and the pluses can be excellent lessons, but can also be illusions.

At other conferences I have often addressed the problem of endangered theatre styles, forms, and genres, and I have repeatedly urged their preservation; even if not valued today, their future value cannot be dismissed. Our heritage is a wealth that must be preserved to be mined afresh by future generations of practitioners and academics. As I have warned several times, we don't want to lose major forms as Europe has; though the more immediate danger at the moment is not to the major forms but the possible imminent loss of their regional variants.

There are two separate issues: how to use, revitalise and evolve traditional forms, mutating them with others in the creation of exciting contemporary theatre, of interest to the local scene as well as to the international theatre festival circuit; and how to conserve them through living performers still skilled in the specific details. The latter is often dismissed by practitioners as museum theatre, a term broadly used to describe traditional work which has lost its appeal to audiences. The former includes some of the greatest works in the last decades? eg Mnouchkine's Oresteian Trilogy using India's Yakshagana; Robert Lepage's Seven Streams of the River Ota, using several Japanese Art forms; Danny's

Yung's Tears on Barren Hill, putting Xiqu in a modern context and proving the Dan performer as elegant as a Handel counter-tenor? but if we looked to these new works as means to conserve tradition, we would be mistaken; as they use and mutate rather than preserve. They are examples of why we need to find ways to preserve all surviving performance styles.

We can, and do, film extensively; this is necessary, but it is not the answer to the problem of how to pass on the skills and insights to the performers themselves. We can look to theatre archaeology to approximate some lost forms, eg Rhetorical Gesture, often wrongly called 'Melodrama', but it is arguably too late to fully rescue it as Shrehler did with Commedia del'Arte after WWII. No one could have predicted that Commedia, reduced to a dying regional Italian form, having lost its audience to film and television, could revive to such an extent that it is now taught in theatre schools around the world? though few professional companies are devoted to it. We cannot predict which of our traditions will play a huge role in the future. But if we set out to teach all these forms and their variants in our schools, we would not have time to train our students for employment in contemporary theatre.

China is most fortunate to have Xiqu taught in a special school devoted not only to preserving the form and its regional variants, but also to exploring ways to keep it refreshed and relevant to audiences. The National School of Drama in Delhi works hard to train students in traditional forms and contributes greatly to their conservation, but its main focus is modern theatre. Clearly we can teach only a few select traditions in theatre schools. Several practitioners famously have used tradition in theatre-making, whilst also performing regularly in their preserved style – eg Hideo Kanze (Noh) and Mansai Nomura (Kyogen). Sadly, we can't have professional companies devoted to every traditional performing art, and must be grateful that we still have a few. What do we do with a form that is no longer of interest to audiences? In my lifetime I have witnessed the death of several forms and genres – eg Grand Guignol, Shimpa, Melodrama, Farce? and seen many others condemned as 'irrelevant' and 'museum' theatre. Audiences have access to a greater and cheaper range of entertainment

through new media; but just because a local style is now no longer of interest to audiences, does that mean it is no longer of interest to performers and the performing arts *per se*?

Luckily, academics are extremely interested in the dead forms and dead languages, as they still contain a wealth of unexplored aspects; but modern theatre-makers can also see value in many aspects of the fast-disappearing forms; and, as I mention above, many work hard to find ways to repackaging them and revitalise audience support for them.

We are at an interesting point in 2012: we see the dominance of the huge international block-busters, and we also see that they are running out of ideas, that the big screen now no longer has the hold it once had, that bigger and better effects, 3D and moving seats, are necessary to compete with 'home entertainment centres', videos, CDs, iphones, ipads - and indeed fine dining. As our thousands of years of work towards 'mirroring nature' on stage was side-swiped by film, just as naturalism finally arrived on stage at the end of the 19th century, so now we see film reach its zenith, and being pushed sideways by portable and personal technology.

I have long advocated the importance of the audience in live theatre, teaching that we must consider the role of the audience in every work; the live aspect will continue to have its appeal and will continually engage through the ancient essential of theatre as a communal activity. Re-engaging local audiences should be our first priority: if the grass roots are healthy, then wider success, indeed international success will grow naturally? because curiosity about what is happening elsewhere will always make us seek out importable product of interest.

I have been Artistic Director of four different theatre companies, and I know that audiences enjoy variety in a theatre season; I have never known audiences who are not interested in the best plays from other countries — although, unless carefully chosen, some are not easily understood. I have known audiences to complain, however, if too many from one single country are regularly programmed. Conversely, too many local plays seem to worry audiences; a

good season is a balanced season that includes plays from several countries, both new and classics. As with the themes of all Shakespeare plays, the ideal is the right balance – not too many extremes, yet not too much middle-ground either. When running the Royal Queensland Theatre Company, I received many letters from audience members loving my programming mix of local, national and international plays; they liked to gauge how their local work stood up against the best plays from other states and other countries and indeed from other times. Again, the real point here is balance: no disrespect for local product, and no awestruck worshiping of international plays, no matter how many awards they have won (let's face it, some of the award-winning plays, eg Pulitzer winners, are terrible, just the best of a bad year)

There are numerous ways to engage internationally. The cheapest way for a theatre company is to establish links with sister companies in sister cities or countries of interest. For example, when I was Artistic Director of Playbox-Malthouse, an all-new-work company, I sought out theatre companies similarly producing new work and we regularly swapped scripts we thought might be of interest to each other. I had a fruitful exchange with the Shanghai People's Art Theatre, though their new work was always of a cast size we could never afford. With other companies we also developed an idea we called "telling each other's stories" ; when we would program each other's plays into our seasons. Often this would also involve bringing the playwright and/or director from the originating country – and it was always a revelation for the playwright to see the work in a new context.

Chekhov never lived to see his plays performed in another country; though translations followed quickly upon his death. Theatre-goers world-wide not only responded to his new naturalism, and his character-based theatre, but they also related to the eternal themes of family, friendships and love. We know that the great plays are about families, from Oedipus and *The Oresteia*, through *Hamlet*, *Three Sisters*, *Peking Man*, *Mother Courage and Death of a Salesman*, to name but a few. Life anywhere in the world revolves around family, friends, love and work; and we learn from Chekhov that if we write about these universally-

shared concerns, and remain true to portraying humans, regardless of their local context, our work will have an understanding and interested audience anywhere.

In playwriting I teach what I call “The Chekhov Revolution” : when he threw away the well-made play, the Ibsen structure, indeed his own *Ivanov* and *Seagull* structure, and added a post climax act. Indeed, though he kept Aristotelian principles for the first three acts, he shifted his dramatic focus off the Theatrical - and onto Reality. He created this monumental change, instinctively, when he rewrote *Wood Demon* as *Uncle Vanya*, possibly through noticing that one can't take a fast curtain at the end of *Ivanov* or *Seagull*, because everyone wants to watch the faces of the characters on stage as they react to the deaths. By devoting a whole Act to showing that 'life goes on' after the climax, Chekhov moved writing not only closer to reality but also closer to what humans are interested in. The survival story has long fascinated us, probably from the original cave stories, and after WWI the world was engrossed in how to survive after a major catastrophe. Chekhov's plays were widely performed in the 'twenties and early 'thirties, though his estate sadly earned nothing from royalties, and his family struggled to live through two horrific wars. After WWII the world related even more strongly to the post-climax act, indeed the concept of the last act of a Chekhov play became the model for all modern plays. The world was in post-trauma; it was post-holocaust; and *Waiting for Godot* is the perfect example of being the final act of a Chekhov play: no longer did we need exposition, or development, indeed, no longer did we need climax; it was enough to watch the behaviour of human beings who had survived.

Comedy has always contained absurd elements, from Aristophanes through the ages, Chekhov's contemporary Alfred Jarry and the Dadaist explored it further, often in broad puppetry ways, absurd people behaving absurdly; but it was Chekhov who defined Absurdism as humans attempting to behave normally in an absurd world. Those who have directed Chekhov with professional actors will agree that Chekhov's absurdity, sitting easily with natural behaviour, is the basis for the extensions of Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter and Albee etc. In other words, the way Chekhov perceived and wrote — always locally, parochially - has

invented the modern play, the universal play; which, in both structure and style, crosses national and cultural boundaries.

Further, though Chekhov was writing for local audiences and about local concerns, his need to truthfully reflect what he saw, led to the modern concept that life is both tragic and comic in the one moment. Here again he leads a revolution against Aristotle and all previous thinking that plays, or scenes, had to fall into either the comic or the tragic, never in between. The invention of the tragic-comic alone put him ahead of all others, including Shakespeare and Ibsen who never invented any writing structures. Shakespeare's fantasy genre was an original contribution to the stage, but Chekhov's post-trauma act, later to become the post-trauma play or novel, and Chekhov's tragi-comic style were inventions for all literature.

But there is yet another Chekhov revolution that reminds us of his value to contemporary theatre today. We all know the importance of Chekhov's plays in the development of Stanislavsky's articulation of an acting system; indeed, many speak of Stanislavsky and Chekhov in the same breath. However, we also know that Chekhov was not happy with Stanislavsky's productions; apart from the many corrective notes he sent to actors, we know he differed most in his view that his plays were much funnier than Stanislavsky could see. We also know that Chekhov was not an admirer of Ibsen's plays or of message/problem plays. It is easy to see from photographs of Stanislavsky's productions of Chekhov, that the acting style was hardly the naturalism we know today, its melodramatic externals must have sat oddly with the atmospheric sounds of crickets etc. Chekhov, with only a local focus, though of course also a man of science, a doctor, could see the huge difference between life and what actors were doing on the stage. A man ahead of his time in so many ways, Chekhov was focused on character and had a vision for how this was to be acted. This vision and its demands have led to also revolutionise acting.

Directors of many Chekhov's plays know well that they need an acting approach that goes well beyond Stanislavsky's. Basic Stanislavsky analysis is necessary, but there is a world of difference between the acting of an Ibsen play

and the acting of Chekhov. Tolstoy called Chekhov an Impressionist, and was annoyed by Chekhov's seeming lack of obvious social purpose: the Tolstoy-Ibsen-Shaw-Miller view that theatre must first have social responsibilities. Chekhov was also the master of the short story, and these stories all reveal his scientific enquiry into human behaviour; they also reveal his lack of interest in a moral. In the face of the complexity of the human condition, unlike other giants, Chekhov had great humility. We know he abhorred poverty and ignorance and did all he could to alleviate these, as well as to cure physical sickness; but we also know that he never presumed for a moment to have a 'message' in each work. At least not a message as Ibsen or Tolstoy would proclaim. Chekhov's intent was much broader than the mostly parochial concerns that occupied other writers; his intent, as we now know, was surprisingly universal, given that he reflected only the people around him. "All I want to do" he wrote, "is show people as they really are, and hope that when they see themselves they will want to change". See people as they really are. To portray humans as they really are needs a revolution that moves on from Stanislavsky's limited methodology, and indeed from Freud's. Stanislavsky is always a help, but he is never the last word in modern plays, (imagine applying him to Beckett and Ionesco) and never the last word in plays written before the 'well-made play' (as we know, it is the metre and the musicality that is the greatest help to playing Shakespeare). It seems quite clear that Stanislavsky's methods apply most fully to Ibsen and the well-made play; and such plays need acting that is built entirely around the theme and content; indeed, any human touches that do not feed directly into the theme are not only superfluous, they are distracting. Not so with Chekhov.

Still only observing locally, Chekhov created yet another revolution that rings true universally: not only did he encourage contrast and crisis, he introduced Contradiction. The classic example is: "I'm going' (*He sits*)". This is intolerable for Ibsen and Shaw, of course; but in fact this waywardness, this contradiction, best defines the modern condition, where black and white are no longer clear, and when characters themselves often do not know even their objectives, and certainly not their own motives. In essence, it is Contradiction

that is at the core of Chekhov's view; and this aligns with many principles of comedy and satire, from the Romans, through Commedia – which had a whole group of *Lazzi* based upon the frailty of human convictions. Chekhov's characters cannot be as easily defined as those in well-made plays; and their main objectives are always debatable. Further, one cannot make decisions around the table as one can with almost every other playwright; one has to get on one's feet and explore thoroughly before one can make any choices at all. What one discovers in the workshop stage of rehearsals is that Chekhov gives enormous freedom to the actor; so much freedom that sometimes it is terrifying to know where to start. When one reads the plays, one thinks the audience is watching the speaker; whereas when one sees the characters in the space, one notices immediately that the audience often watches not the speaker, but the listener. There are many other aspects in Chekhov's plays that are not found in other plays; but, interestingly, those unique aspects are also to be found in life.

From wishing to better serve the vivid multi-dimensionality of Chekhov's characters, I developed a new approach to characterisation that also happily creates acting that suits both modern plays and modern screen acting. Tolstoy called Chekhov an Impressionist, something that Chekhov's characters also call Treplev in *Seagull*. The concept of impressionism is to put many colours on the canvas? "seemingly arbitrary" as Tolstoy said? which nonetheless, from a distance, create a more vivid image than a photograph (realism). Impressionism is also evocative of many additional things: Monet's haystacks, though painted essentially with the same palette, prioritise more of one prominent colour, depending of the time of day. When teaching acting, we often equate emotions with colours, some are now clichés, red for anger, blue for sadness etc; and the nine emotions in Sanskrit's Navarasas or 'rasas' are similarly linked with colours. Though not essentially connected to the symbolic use of colour, which changes in different countries, we often speak of an 'emotional colour', or request an actor to 'colour' a word or phrase. There is a current view that there is no such thing as character: there is only what the actor says and does and what the audience imagines. Even so, the elements of 'character' can still

selected, arranged and communicated. Thus character is evoked by selecting character traits and revealing them at various points, often repeating several. When characters state intent and motive, as they often do in a well-made play, the actor can trust the text to do most of the work. But it is a grave error to think that the Chekhov text carries everything; similarly modern plays and film scripts need a wealth of context and additional information from the writers to clarify how to cast, direct, and act these 'characters'.

It is nearly impossible to teach someone else's acting theories; every teacher has to adapt them and use what they consider valuable. I have developed three other areas in addition to Stanislavsky's crucial Action-playing - which, quite frankly must forever remain the essential element to link and interconnect actors; such give-and-take being the life blood of acting. Apart from the Actions that characters do, a crucial area of characterisation is Emotions; and expressing emotions predominates in traditional theatre and still permeates 'naturalism' throughout Asia. Further, many actors don't feel they are engaged with a scene unless they are 'feeling' something. The push to change actors' focus away from acting emotions and onto playing actions, has led to a devaluing of emotions today; though there are few of them, and none of them 'pure', they are prime elements of a character's inner-life. When one talks of character, one also talks of Qualities and these should be carefully considered and collected along with other lists that help define humans. Qualities can be found amongst the traditional virtues and sins; and, like emotions, are often a mix of several elements. Writers, directors and actors often forget crucial qualities that define the role type; for example one can't have a hero without admirable traits that aids empathy, eg courage, or honesty. One can't have a Byronic or flawed hero without a distasteful or negative quality, eg pride, greed. The last of the four areas I advocate for actors and writers is what I call 'States'. A character's state cannot always be defined by an emotion: is 'peaceful' or 'meditative' an emotion? One's 'state of being' is extremely useful for any existence on stage, especially for smaller roles that are not constantly engaged with text and action. Once one starts to collect a list of 'States of Being' one easily sees the

overlaps with emotion, but also can see their usefulness, especially as points of departure from which to react. Of course, in Chekhov a 'state' can sometimes effect all characters on stage at the same time; for example, toward the end of Act 1 of *Seagull* when the "angel of silence flies over" them; or in Act 2 of *Cherry Orchard* when all sit lost in thoughts, Medvedenko's guitar in the distance, Feers mumbling to himself.

Impressions of character are evoked by Actions, Emotions, Qualities and 'States'. And just as one of Monet's haystacks has a predominance of purple, a different haystack clearly has more green. One can liken character-colours also to themes, and create structures that follow the principle of the rondo form in music; there, Theme One is the theme that is most repeated. The characterisation ingredients that the actor selects are ranked, according to the actor's interpretation? eg one actor might choose 'vagueness' as the main theme or trait of Gayev, whereas another might prioritise warmth and love as his main quality. Then, the Secondary trait is also repeated often, but not as often as the 'First'. As with an impressionistic painted canvas, the range of diverse colours gives greater depth and evocation, as a multi-faceted jewel will sparkle with more reflection of life. Such acting gains greater dynamics though vivid shifts of focus onto a range of traits, on myriad minor crises, on moments of change, the contrasts and the contradictions, and projecting character through opposites. In other words, never play the 'centre' of a character? as one does with Ibsen etc? but, instead, suggest a centre, by playing all the outer facets, extremes and contradictions that can be communicated. If we were to imagine character qualities as colours, the concept may be best communicated as playing 'red' then 'yellow', then 'red' and then 'yellow' again? giving the impression of 'orange', yet never actually playing 'orange'.

As with all acting exercises, this seems highly technical at first, but makes for fun and fascinating rehearsals; performance itself requires greater subjectivity. But if we were to compare Stanislavsky's acting with that of Eleanora Dusa, who inspired many, including Chekhov, I feel sure that Stanislavsky would be as technical an actor as eg Meryl Streep is today. One

can point to many film actors where idiosyncrasy is fore-fronted; one can compare modern America and Australian acting and see its greater physicality and seeming waywardness as not only a reaction against the British 'talking heads' but also as an attempt to engage more richly with reflecting life, knowing that to stay in any one colour or attitude for too long will make 'naturalism' itself seem boring - as in the 1950s view of Chekhov as 'autumnal' and 'moody'. The lesson he has to teach us is not to mix all the colours together, or we get a brown murk - a 'brown study' - the sort of theatre that has put so many audiences to sleep.

The more I work on Chekhov material, the more I see him as not just my contemporary, but still ahead of me, still challenging my view of humankind, and of acting and of theatre itself. He is also a mass of contradictions, strange and familiar at the same time. He is very Russian, yet to me he is Australian, and in a way that Shakespeare never can be. He is also very Chinese; and determined to leave the world a better place than he found it. Yet he wrote only of his known world, he never included 'foreigners' or international views or perspectives; the only foreigner is Charlotta in *Cherry*

Orchard who is said to have a German accent and to be based upon an English woman Chekhov knew. And yet these Russians feel 'known' to us, no matter what country we are from; they have universality in ways Shaw's characters can never have. But such is equally true of Cao Yu's great character study, *Peking Man* and I am not the first to compare them, especially in Chekhov's favourite theme of the 'superfluous' or wrongly-educated person. Cao Yu did not set out to write a play of international appeal: he set out to reflect life as he saw it around him. Here is Chekhov's main lesson; that any life, analysed, explored and reflected, is of interest to another human, regardless of their race, religion or politics.

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