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Conceptual Metaphor Theory and its Applications to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

by

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Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT)

Abstract

Conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual blending theory are two of the most fundamental principles in cognitive science. Throughout the past ten years, theatre practitioners have applied these principles to theatre practices of acting and directing. Conceptual metaphor and blending rely on imagination and manifest themselves through action, showing the cognitive principle that thought is embodied. An analysis of the Stanislavski system of objectives and tactics demonstrates links between the metaphorical aspects of imagination and acting. These principles are applied to a conceptual metaphor approach to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, emphasizing Love Is A Journey and Love Is A Physical Force. These metaphors can translate into playable action through work on text analysis, metaphorical and psychological gesture, and using the "magic if."

Introduction

Ever since my first psychology class as an undergrad, I have found psychology to be a fascinating subject—there seems to be something phenomenal to me about discovering how the human brain works and learning how different brains function. When searching for a suitable thesis topic, I knew I wanted to work on something that involved theatre performance and psychology. However, as I conducted various searches on topics relating to psychology and acting in the library and on scholarly journal databases, I found very little substantial information, and most of the sources I found reiterated how little we know of the human brain—and we know even less about the psychology of acting. I then decided to revisit the works of Konstantin Stanislavski, whose system of acting contains many psychological principles, but I still could not find outside material that elaborated on actors' psychological workings as they utilized Stanislavskian principles such as concentration and the "magic if."

One spring afternoon, when I had a rare day all to myself, I decided to go to my university's library and browse through scholarly journals to look for articles relating to psychology and theatre, and I found what I was looking for. I came across the *Theatre Journal* Vol. 59, No. 4 which was labeled "Performance and Cognition." I pulled it off the shelf and began reading the articles. I came across an article titled "Interplay: The Method and Potential of a Cognitive Scientific Approach to Theatre" by Amy Cook. The article was about a relatively new topic in cognitive science called conceptual blending theory (CBT). Although I understood very little in the article at the time, Cook emphasized CBT's application to theatre. Furthermore, since this was a new development in the fields of both cognitive science and theatre, I thought it would be a great topic to explore. As I strove to understand CBT, the names George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

kept popping up, although they were not the creators of CBT, as well as the phrase "conceptual metaphor." I tracked down Lakoff and Johnson's seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* and their follow-up book *Philosophy in the Flesh*. Although neither of these books directly addresses theatre practices or performance techniques, the sections regarding imagination and action really stood out to me as they are two words that are frequently heard in theatre. I then set out to search for sources that directly linked theatre practices with CBT and conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and found various practitioners who used aspects of CBT and CMT in their acting and directing approaches.

As I read *Metaphors We Live By* and the examples Lakoff and Johnson gave regarding the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday life, I could not help but think of some of the terminology I've heard in various acting classes and read in acting texts such as, "What are you *fighting* for? What is your *tactic*? Work harder to *cut* him. *Berate* him. *Bludgeon* him," and realized how pervasive metaphor is used in acting pedagogy. I wanted to expound upon these metaphors as well as link the imagination and action aspects of CMT with the imaginative and action-based components of acting.

As I continued my research on CBT and CMT, I saw many researchers connect their conclusions and theories to a specific play script, and almost all of them used plays by William Shakespeare. Cook explains the reason for the widespread popularity of applying CMT and CBT to Shakespeare is due to the fact that the bard's plays "are a cultural shibboleth; any theory that does not illuminate Shakespeare (the text, the popularity, the historical moment, and/or the productions) is not worth applying to anything else" (n. 580). I could easily see her point—I have heard it said that if a singer can learn to sing opera, he or she can learn to sing anything else. A similar theory applies

to Shakespeare: if an actor can learn to perform Shakespeare, he or she can learn to perform anything else.

As I looked for a text to use as a frame of reference for my thesis, I was drawn to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is one of my favorite plays, and its connections to the conceptual metaphors Love Is A Journey and Love Is A Physical Force, which will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapters. One of the goals of linking cognitive science to theatre performance is to question practices within the disciplines of acting and directing, to provide new readings and analyses of a text and performance. To some extent, most, if not all, directors do some work with metaphor. Working with conceptual metaphor has the potential to help directors create a conceptual framework to work within and utilize to work on characterization and blocking. I intend to take existing principles of cognitive science, text analysis, and theatre performance and demonstrate how a unification of these principles can bridge the gap between mind and body for an actor. I will examine these principles from a director's perspective, and how a director can use these theories and practices to coach actors. I will do this through discussing the conceptual metaphors Love Is A Journey and Love Is A Physical Force. Both of these metaphors are prevalent in the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I will proceed to explore methods a director can to utilize these metaphors in guiding actors in choosing appropriate objectives and tactics. In the tradition of conceptual metaphor, it is traditional for every word in the metaphor to be capitalized (i.e. Love Is A Journey), so every conceptual metaphor I include will contain a capital letter for each word

In Chapter One, I will begin by doing a review of literature. I will briefly summarize what various scholars, philosophers, and theorists have written on metaphor throughout the ages, beginning with Aristotle. Lakoff and Johnson built upon these

writings and formed CMT, and Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner created CBT as an extension of CMT. I will then discuss how various theatre theorists and practitioners have connected CBT and CMT to theatre performance.

In Chapter Two, I will discuss the primary metaphor of Love Is A Physical Force and how this metaphor is reflected in the dialogue of Demetrius and Helena. I will then discuss the complex metaphor of Love Is A Journey and its prevalence in the dialogue of Hermia and Lysander. I will also explore the implications of these metaphors in the text and how the actors playing these roles can go about playing metaphoric actions which suit the conceptual metaphors.

In Chapter Three, I will then relate various exercises which relate to CMT and CBT such as exploring rhythms of the language, gesture, and the "magic if." I use *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a frame of reference, but these exercises can be applied to any text of any genre and style of theatre.

Chapter One:
Review of Literature

Metaphor Throughout History

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines diction as "the construction of the [spoken] verses" within epic poetry and dramatic literature (8). For the purposes of this paper, I will focus only on the construction of dramatic literature. In the first section of this chapter, I will briefly examine wrings on metaphor throughout history, beginning with Aristotle. I will then discuss conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual blending theory, followed by an exploration on writings relating conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending to theatre performance. Aristotle augments the importance of diction, claiming it is the means by which the playwright brings his plots to completion (Aristotle 22). Ever since the role of the director grew ever more prominent during the twentieth century, many directors developed means to explore the playwright's language and use it to advance the action of the story. Within the framework of diction, Aristotle defines every word as: standard, exotic, a metaphor, an ornament, made-up, lengthened, reduced, or altered. Among these eight categories, Aristotle claims "the metaphorical [kind] is the most important by far" (Aristotle 32). Aristotle defines metaphor as "the application [to something] of a name belonging to something else, either (a) from the genus to the species, or (b) from the species to the genus, or (c) from a species to [another] species, or (d) according to analogy" (Aristotle 28). This theory of metaphor became the most fundamental theory upon which most, if not all, Western linguistic and metaphorical theories would be based (Fauconnier and Turner 17).

Throughout the ages following Aristotle, various scholars and philosophers added their own views to the definition of metaphor. In the early Middle Ages, the scholar St.

Bede, whose book *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* earned him the title of the father of English history, described metaphor as "the genus of which all the other tropes are species" (qtd. in Eco 87), reinforcing Aristotle's four criteria for metaphor. To Emmanuele Tesauro of the Renaissance, metaphor was "the queen of figures" (qtd. in Franke 139), which interestingly enough is a metaphor itself, and thus used as an example to support Aristotle's claim that metaphor is the most important of the literary devices. Giambattista Vico of the eighteenth century claimed, "Metaphor makes up the bulk of vocabulary in all languages" (Vico 181), a claim which laid the foundation for cognitive linguists of the late twentieth century. Vico went on to observe, "Noteworthy too is the fact that in all languages most expressions for inanimate objects employ metaphors derived from the human body and its parts, or from human senses and emotions" (Vico 159). Etienned Bonnot de Condillac, also of the eighteenth century, echoes the idea of comparison in his definition of metaphor: "If we consult etymology, all the tropes are metaphors: for metaphor signifies properly a word transported from one signification to another" (qtd. in Derrida and Moore 35, n. 32).

The twentieth century saw new development in the realms of rhetoric and language, largely attributed to the works of Noam Chomsky and I. A. Richards. Richards spotted the prevalence of metaphor with his claim, "That metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language can be shown by mere observation. We cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it" (Richards 92), which laid the foundation for linguists (such as George Lakoff) and their writings on the ubiquity of metaphor. At this time, linguistics slowly began to take a more cognitive and psychological approach, as Robert Nisbet observed, "Metaphor is, at its simplest, a way of proceeding from the known to the unknown…It is a way of cognition in which the identifying qualities of one

thing are transferred in an instantaneous, almost unconscious, flash of insight to some

other thing that is, by remoteness or complexity, unknown to us" (Nisbet 4). As other

linguists, psychologists, and philosophers began incorporating the traditional view of

metaphor into theories of how the mind works, Robert J. Matthews foresaw the need for a

new theory of metaphor as he comments in his 1971 essay "Concerning a 'Linguistic

Theory' of Metaphor:"

> "The theory of metaphor would have to be such that it establish necessary and
> sufficient conditions for the distinguishing of metaphor from non-
> metaphor…Second, the theory of metaphor would have to be such that it accounts
> for, in terms of his linguistic competence, the speaker understands and interprets
> metaphors … We see that these two requirements for an adequate account of
> metaphor demand on the one hand and adequate distinction of metaphoric from
> non-metaphoric uses of language, and on the other hand an adequate account of
> the semantics of metaphor (how metaphor is interpreted) in terms
> of the semantic component of language" (413-414).

The theory which Matthews sought came to fruition in 1980 with Lakoff and Johnson's

conceptual metaphor theory.

In their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* (which in citation will be referred to

as *Metaphors*), George Lakoff, a pioneer in the field of cognitive linguistics, and

philosopher Mark Johnson redefined the way we view metaphors. Whereas metaphors

were previously viewed as a poetic and literary device only applicable to language,

Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor structures the way we think as well as speak and

write, thus the idea of the "conceptual metaphor" was born. In the preface to *Metaphors*

We Live By, Lakoff and Johnson relate what lead them to their findings:

> "We were brought together by a joint interest in metaphor. Mark had found that
> most traditional philosophical views permit metaphor very little, if any, role in
> understanding our world and ourselves. George had discovered linguistic
> evidence showing that metaphor is pervasive in everyday language and thought—
> evidence that did not fit any contemporary Anglo-American theory of meaning
> within either linguistics or philosophy. Metaphor has traditionally been viewed in

both fields as a matter of peripheral interest. We shared the intuition that it is, instead, a matter of central concern, perhaps the key to giving an adequate account of understanding" (ix).

Lakoff and Johnson established conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) from this idea that metaphor is more than just a poetic device and declared metaphor is primarily a principle of thought.

CMT begins with the explication of concepts, and continues with the theory that we understand one concept in terms of another. In Lakoff's collaboration with cognitive scientist Mark Turner *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, the authors claim that "it is concepts, not words and phrases, that have meaning" and "words and phrases are meaningful only via the concepts they express" (111). These concepts obtain their meaning through metaphoric thought and language. Lakoff and Johnson argue that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action." Furthermore, these concepts "that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect" but also influence how we perceive the world around us, and we interact with others, and how we go about our daily business down to the most minute and mundane details—essentially, conceptual metaphors revolve around "understanding and *experiencing* one kind of thing in terms of another" (*Metaphors* 5, emphasis added). Moreover, our conceptual systems are primarily subconscious, and all of this occurs without our knowing (*Metaphors* 3). An example of how our conceptual systems use metaphors to create meaning is demonstrated in the example below relating to the conceptual metaphor Argument Is War:

"Your claims are *indefensible*.
He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.
His criticisms were *right on target*.
I *demolished* his argument.

I've never *won* an argument with him.
You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*
If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.
He *shot down* all of my arguments" (Metaphors 4).

Here we see that we do not just speak about arguments in terms of war—we can win or lose arguments, the person with whom we argue is an opponent, and we attack his positions and defend our own. The Argument Is War metaphor is an example of a metaphor we live by in our contemporary American culture, structuring not only the way we perceive an argument, but also "the actions we perform in arguing" (*Metaphors* 4).

Whereas Aristotle created a linguistic approach to metaphor, Lakoff shifts his focus of metaphor from language to thought. Lakoff disagrees with the classic Aristotelian approach for two main reasons: the classic definition of metaphor as a literary device does not take into account metaphor's application to human thought, and the classical theory views metaphor in terms of language rather than thought (203). However, classicist John T. Kirby argues that there is room within Aristotle's theory of metaphor to accommodate Lakoff's cognitive approach. According to Kirby,

"The Aristotelian semiotic approach actually anticipates the new cognitive model—which is itself semiotic in nature: the notion of 'cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system' is not a bad description at all, in fact, of the phenomenon of *semiosis*, in which information from a source-domain (the *object*) is conceptually (i.e. by *interpretants*),
which mapping is represented by a *sign*" (239).

However, Lakoff collaborated with cognitive scientist Mark Turner in exploring the unification of classical approaches with contemporary cognitive approaches in their book *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, claiming, "Poetic thought uses the mechanisms of everyday thought, but it extends them, elaborates them, and combines them in ways that go beyond the ordinary" (67). Poetic thought can go

beyond the ordinary as "a poet can use words to evoke a conceptual metaphor, even

though they are not automatically and routinely used for that purpose" (Lakoff and

Turner 107). Thus, Lakoff and Johnson conclude:

> "To study metaphor is to be confined with hidden aspects of one's own culture.
> To understand poetic metaphor, one must understand conventional metaphor. To
> do so is to discover that one has a worldview, that one's imagination is
> constrained, and that metaphor plays an enormous role in shaping one's everyday
> understanding of everyday events. That is an important part of the power of poetic
> metaphor: it calls upon our deepest modes of everyday understanding and forces
> us to use them in new ways"
> (214).

One of the central aspects of CMT is the idea of our minds constructing meaning

through source-domain mapping, and that idea came to fruition in Gilles Fauconnier and

Mark Turner's *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden

Capacities*. According to Fauconnier and Turner's conceptual blending theory (CBT), our

minds are made up of various "mental spaces," which "are small conceptual packets

constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action." When

our minds require two or more spaces to combine, "input spaces" are formed and "cross-

space mapping" connects the various "input spaces." A "generic mental space" links

what the inputs share in common. The result is a "blended space," where the input and

generic spaces come together to form a new space, thus creating an "emergent structure"

of new mental spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 40-42). If, as Lakoff and Johsnon argue,

thought is largely metaphoric, then metaphoric mapping, an aspect of conceptual

blending theory, is crucial to our way of thinking since it deals with the blending of

multiple input spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 280).

Fauconnier and Turner also discuss the relation of CBT to dramatic performance,

calling the performance "deliberate blends of a living person with an identity." As we

watch a dramatic performance, we, the audience, see one living person (the character) and another living person in the other (the actor) and what is seen on stage is a blend of these two living people. The characters on stage are completely fictional, but a fictional space exists in which that character is alive. In the performance blend, the character walks and talks like the actor and places himself where the actor is, but the actor "tries to accept projections from the character portrayed, and so modifies her language, appearance, dress, attitudes, and gestures" to fit the character. In turn, the spectator perceives the "living, moving, and speaking" character as a living, breathing human being (Fauconnier and Turner 266). This blend of actor and character composes what the Romantic writer Samuel Taylor Coleridge deemed the "willing suspension of disbelief" (298).

Lakoff and Johnson expound on their cognitive approach to metaphor in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (which in citation will be referred to as *Philosophy*), which emphasizes the unification of body and mind. If thought is metaphorical and if "the mind is inherently embodied," then Lakoff and Johnson conclude that conceptual metaphor is embodied as well (3). Lakoff and Johnson reach this conclusion through arguing, "Because our conceptual systems grow out of our bodies, meaning is grounded in and through our bodies" (6). Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson claim, "We have no more fundamental way of comprehending the world than through our embodied, basic-level concepts and the basic-level experiences that they generalize over" (*Philosophy* 231). Mark Johnson expounds on the unification of mind and body in his book *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*: "If there are conceptual metaphors, then there must exist neural connections between sensorimotor areas of the brain and other areas that are involved in thinking" (167). For example, as our minds structure an

argument in terms of war, our conceptual system will influence the way we argue with someone: there will be a victor and a loser, we will argue with the intent of winning, we will defend our stances, and we will attack our opponents' defenses. All of this goes back to the central idea of mind and body not being two separate things, but instead "aspects of one organic process, so that all our meaning, thought, and language emerge from the aesthetic dimensions of this embodied activity" (Johnson 1).

Conceptual Metaphor in Performance Studies

Since the publication of *Metaphors We Live By*, conceptual metaphor theory has become one of the "hot topics" amongst linguists, philosophers, psychologists, neuroscientist, classicists, and theatrical theorists everywhere. As William Franke observes:

> "Today, under the aegis of metaphor, the power of figurative language, arguably the originating power at the source of all language and even of an articulated world as such, has newly become an object of research and general theoretical speculation. This extension of the concept of metaphor is bound up with a renewed view of figurative language in general as not only a substantive bearer of the content of discourse, but also as ontologically constitutive of the world, as operative at the origins of things and their identities. It has become possible to view all language as being metaphorical, and accordingly metaphorical operations of transfer and redefinition have been recognized as being the very essence of language and of all that comes to articulation through it. Furthermore, as witnessed by burgeoning publications and conferences, metaphor has become a topic onto which practically all the classic philosophical problems of ontology and epistemology are projected and appear in a new, specifically linguistic, light" (Franke 138).

Since these new advances in cognitive science declare thought and action as being metaphorical, it is not surprising to see cognitive science making its way into the realm of theatre and performance studies. After all, Hungarian professor of linguistics Zoltán Kövecses declares, "A large part of learning the profession of acting involves the learning

of how to act out certain conceptual metaphors,"—and it is learning about and embodying those metaphors which enhances the acting process (Kövecses 58). As stated before, conceptual metaphors are all about "understanding and *experiencing* one kind of thing in terms of another" (*Metaphors* 5, italics added). Sanford Meisner taught his students, "The first thing you have to do when you read a text is to find yourself—*really* find yourself" (176). Here we see an example of the blend of actor and character as previously discussed, and it is experience which ties the two together.

For the most part, many aspects of cognitive science have been prevalent in theatre performance and pedagogy since the days of Konstantin Stanislavski without our conscious knowledge. However, as we become more consciously aware of how our minds construct and embody meaning, our understanding of the art of acting deepens along with new breakthroughs in directing actors and acting pedagogy. Fauconnier and Turner describe CBT as "a highly imaginative process, but it is so deeply subconscious we have no awareness of it" (12). Rhonda Blair, one of the leading practitioners in the blend of theatre performance and cognitive science, poses the question:

> "This creates particular challenges for the actor, whose art depends on a constant negotiation of the conscious and, for want of better words, the instinctive and intuitive. How might the actor apply the consciously accessible elements of this knowledge to her work?" (Blair 96).

The answer to this question, in part, lies within the writings of the father of modern acting, Konstantin Stanislavski, who developed his systems as a way "to arouse and involve the creative subconscious by indirect, conscious means" which is achieved through "subconscious creation through the actor's conscious psychotechnique" (17-18). This poses a new question of how we can use our consciousness to subconsciously achieve creative means. Fauconnier and Turner offer insight as to how we might bridge the gap between conscious reason and subconscious creativity:

"Because linguistic forms prompt for meanings rather than represent meanings, linguistic systems do not have to be, and in fact cannot be, analogues of conceptual systems . . . Conceptual systems are vast and rich and open-ended, but linguistic systems, however impressive, are relatively quite thin . . . . The evolutionary solution to this problem is to have systems of forms prompt for the construction of meanings that go far beyond anything like the form itself" (277).

This perspective is geared more towards developing creative responses rather than eliciting an emotional response from affective memory recall, a technique which Rhonda Blair calls a "limiting personal-psychoanalytic perspective" (96).

The principles of CMT and CBT rely heavily on the imagination. Stanislavski solidified the technique of using the imagination in acting and trained students to use the "magic if." Michael Chekhov, one of Stanislavski's former students and one of the great acting teachers of the twentieth century, did much work with combining the human mind and body in his acting approaches, affirming, "The human body and psychology influence each other and are in constant interplay" in the acting process (1). The study of cognitive metaphor and the embodied mind helps unify mind and body in the acting process. In her book *Shakesperean Neuroplay: Reinvigorating the Study of Dramatic Texts and Performance through Cognitive Science*, Professor of Theatre and Cognitive Studies Amy Cook asserts, "The embodied mind uses metaphor and imagination to construct meaning in the world" (15). The concept of embodied thought and action has strong ties to theatre performance and helping actors achieve embodied thought and action is one of the main objectives of the director. In his book *The Director's Voice*, director Arthur Bartow conducts a series of interviews with twenty-one professional directors. In her interview with Bartow, director Joanna Akalaitis claims, "Acting is in your *body*" (8, italics added). Jacques Lecoq, founder of L'École Internationale de Théâtre, supports Akalaitis's claim with his belief, "The greatest theatre involves the

whole body" (141). British director Katie Mitchell also emphasizes the importance of the body in acting as it "is one of the main means by which the audience 'reads' emotion" (155). However, since the goal of action-based acting is to steer away from attempting to play emotion, Stanislavski developed his system to draw actors away from focusing on emotion and help them play believable action as seen in his declaration of, "We cannot set feeling; we can only set physical actions" (Toporkov 160). Sanford Meisner supports Stanislavski's claim: "You can't fake emotion. It immediately exposes the fact that you ain't got it" (87). Another one of the great acting teachers of the twentieth century, Lee Strasberg, also supports Stanislavski's viewpoint with his claim, "Emotions cannot be controlled at will" (114). How, then, does the actor help the audience read his character's emotion without attempting to create it? Actress and acting teacher Stella Adler helps answer that question in an interview with Paul Gray:

> "If a student needs to use his conscious memory it is only as a frame of reference for the action itself. All the emotion is contained in the action. The action can be a personal or an imaginative one … To go back to a feeling or emotion of one's own experience I believe to be unhealthy. It tends to separate you from the play, from the action of the play, from the circumstances of the play, and from the author's intention. All this has to be *embodied* in the action" (143, italics added).

Adler's stance on an actor avoiding emotional recall ties into Rhonda Blair's opinion of the use of sense memory being a "limiting personal-psychoanalytic perspective" (96). Adler instead chooses to focus on the need to play actions, which, as she states, can be "personal or imaginative." In his book *Emodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Performance*, Professor of Theatre and Cognitive Studies Rick Kemp declares, "Character grows out of action" (106). Sanford Meisner also backs up this claim with his assertion, "Character is determined by what you *do*" (170, italics added).

Since the days of Stanislavski, the use of imagination has been a target source of study for many acting teachers and researchers of the twentieth century. In her book *The Technique of Acting*, Stella Adler asserts, "Ninety-nine percent of what you see and use on the stage comes from imagination" (17). Adler also offers advice on how to free the imagination: "For the imagination to come quickly, all the actor has to do is let it happen" (18). Mark Johnson offers a non-theatrical perspective of the connection between action and imagination as he affirms, "Imagination is a form of stimulation. Research … shows that imagining certain motor actions activates some of the same parts of the brain that are involved in actually performing that action" (162). This connection between imagination and sensorimotor parts of the brain scientifically support Stella Adler's claim that an action can be imaginary. Lakoff and Johnson explore the role imagination plays in CMT: "Imagination … involves seeing one kind of thing in terms of another kind of thing— what we have called metaphorical thought. Metaphor is thus *imaginative* rationality" (*Metaphors* 193). Strasberg expounds on imaginative reality and its relationship to acting with his comment, "Only imaginary *reality* can be created and, therefore, controlled by the actor" (70, italics added). Meisner adds to the concept of imaginative rationality in helping actors access their imagination to fuel a scene as he states, "Your imagination is, in all likelihood, deeper and more persuasive than the real experience" (79). One of the fundamental aspects of CMT is the idea that "abstract concepts are largely metaphorical" (3). These abstract concepts and their corresponding metaphors exist within the human mind, and therefore subjective to reality. However, these concepts and metaphors are embodied and shape "what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions" (*Metaphors* 145-146). As Fauconnier and Turner state "this is a

highly imaginative process," just as the actions that occur on stage take place within the imagination (12).

Another means of helping actors free their imagination is connecting conceptual metaphor to the language of the play. Directors such as Mel Shapiro, William Ball, and Marshall Mason have all done extensive work with language and offer insight of how a play's language can unlock the door for helping actors spot and act out conceptual metaphors. Ball uses the "heavy and extremely individual use of *language*" (118, italics added) of William Shakespeare, Eugene O'Neill, and Tennessee Williams as examples of how each play has its own unique style and rhythm of language. Theorists from Aristotle to Lakoff have commented on the prevalence on the use of metaphor in language, and a reading of any one of Shakespeare's works reveals a strong emphasis on metaphor. However, the use of metaphor does not stop with Shakespeare—each playwright has his or her own unique poetic language. Lakoff and Turner argue that conceptual metaphor is inherent in poetic language and a study of a play's written language can reveal the conceptual metaphors within a text (107).

Shapiro compares the words of playwrights as their own unique style of music, and if we were to "look at a play by Eugene O'Neill and one by David Mamet, and [we're] listening to completely different music" and a good director needs "to hear the author's music" (55). Aside from a piece of music, Shapiro also compares the language of a play to a painting, declaring that "an author *paints* with language" (56), and Meisner suggests we can "get the colors from asking questions" (*Sanford Meisner: The American Theatre's Best Kept Secret*). Amy Cook also adds her perspective to various authors' approaches to language, focusing on Shakespeare: "The richness of Shakespeare's

language requires more imagination and 'work' and research on how we understand

language, story, and performance can support that claim" (Cook 3).

Lakoff and Turner comment on tying literary metaphor to conceptual metaphor:

"One potential source of richness and power in great poetry is the confluence of a number

of basic metaphorical perspectives" (Lakoff and Turner 27). Furthermore, Lakoff and

Turner claim, "A poet can use words to evoke a conceptual metaphor, even though they

are not automatically and routinely used for that purpose" (Lakoff and Turner 107).

Although metaphor is not just a matter of language, as previously discussed, conceptual

metaphor does lie in written language, and a study of a play's written language can help

unlock the conceptual metaphors in a text. A study of a play's written language along

with conceptual metaphor can also help free an actor's imagination. According to Shapiro,

an actor needs to be "connected to the language in a way that makes personal or

imaginative sense" (59). As previously discussed, conceptual metaphor relies heavily on

the imagination, a concept which Amy Cook supports with her claim, "The embodied

mind uses metaphor and imagination to construct meaning in the world" (15). The

metaphors of a play's text combined with the actor's imagination can help the actor

construct meaning in the world of a play and can then help the actor embody that

meaning.

One method of connecting conceptual metaphor with the body is through gesture.

Michael Chekhov created the concept of the psychological gesture which he discusses in

his book *To The Actor*. According to Chekhov, the purpose of the psychological gesture

"is to influence, stir, mold, and attune your whole inner life to its artistic aims and

purposes" (71). The psychological gesture is a "suitable over-all gesture which can

express" the entirety of the character (Chekhov 65). When discussing the psychological

gesture, Chekhov gives the following example:

> "Imagine that you are going to play a character which, according to your first
> general impression, has a *strong* and unbending *will*, is possessed by strong
> dominating, despotic, *desires*, and is filled with *hatred* and *disgust*" (65, italics in
> original).

Taking these aspects of the character, the actor then creates an overall body position

which encompasses these qualities of the character as seen in the example below:
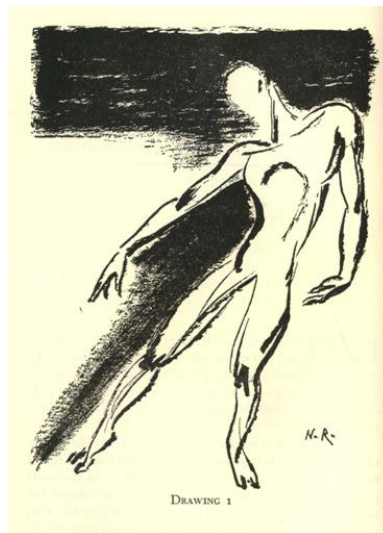
Fig. 1.1 Example of a psychological gesture (Chekhov 64)

After the actor creates the psychological gesture for his character, Chekhov claims,

"Once the higher self has that building material well in hand, it begins to mold it from

within; it moves your body, making it flexible, sensitive and receptive to all creative

impulses" (96). The psychological gesture has the power to unleash creativity, and

another means of freeing creativity lies in the metaphorical gesture.

Professor of Linguistics and Psychology David McNeill has done extensive

studies with the connection to gesture and thought. One of McNeill's central stances on

gesture is that "it is possible for gestures to convey aspects of meaning that, in speech,

cannot be expressed at all except through elaborate paraphrases" (128). Chekhov's

psychological gesture is an example of gesture containing what simple speech cannot convey. Much of McNeill's research is directed towards the study of metaphoric gestures. Conceptual metaphors "provide us with the power to think of the abstract in concrete terms" (McNeill 178) and the same thing applies to metaphoric gestures, which aim to "present and image of an abstract concept, such as knowledge, language itself, the genre of the narrative, etc." (McNeill 80). Rick Kemp is an advocate in helping actors utilize metaphoric gestures during the rehearsal process as he claims, "Work with metaphoric gestures offers the actor one of the most accessible ways to develop their fertility with expressing abstract concepts" (35). The abstract concepts include a character's motivations, objectives, and tactics, and learning how to play objectives and tactics is one of the most fundamental aspects of actor training.

Aside from theatre performance, CMT and CBT have been applied to various fields of study, the first and foremost being philosophy. In *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson describe in detail the metaphors which Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and Nietzsche embody. Lakoff and Johnson also discuss conceptual metaphors concerning categories, with "Categories Are Containers" being the main metaphor (i.e. "Are tomatoes *in* the fruit or vegetable category?") (*Philosophy* 51). Lakoff's book *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* discusses at length various conceptual metaphors surrounding categories. Lakoff also applies CMT to politics as seen in his books *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, *The Little Blue Book: The Essential Guide to Thinking and Talking Democratic,* and *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. Johnson goes into more details relating basic kinesiology to the sensory systems of the brain in his books *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* and *Body in the*

Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason, and *Philosophy in the Flesh* with Lakoff. In *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Capacities*, Fauconnier and Turner apply CBT to multiple aspects of human cognition as well as language using mathematics, politics, cultural differences, and Buddhist riddles as examples. All of these are notable aspects of CMT and CBT; however, they are not applicable to the topics of this paper which focuses mainly on integrating the imaginative aspects of theatre performance with CMT. In the following chapters, I will examine two conceptual metaphors within William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and how to utilize them in performance.

Chapter Two:
Love Is A Journey

Antonin Artaud once said, "In the theater, poetry and science must henceforth be identical" (140). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* revolutionized approaches to cognitive science from the discovery of mirror neurons to the development of conceptual blending theory. At the forefront of these approaches to cognitive science is the unification of body and mind, with the concept of thought being metaphorical and embodied (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 3). Within the past decade, theorists and practitioners have taken these cognitive concepts and applied them to theatre and performance studies, taking Artaud's wish to blend art and science to new heights.

The concept of thought being embodied in acting began with Konstantin Stanislavski, who, when art failed to meet his needs, turned to science to develop his "System." A fundamental aspect of the System was the use of an actor's consciousness to activate the subconscious while creating a role (Blair 94, 96). An actor's craft largely "depends on a constant negotiation of the conscious and…the instinctive and intuitive" (Blair 96). The cognitive principles described here are largely subconscious, occurring "at lightning speed" without our noticing (Fauconnier and Turner 18). So if all of this occurs subconsciously, what is the point of being aware of it? Cognitive linguists Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner offer insight on how to close the gap between reason and creativity:

> "Because linguistic forms prompt for meanings rather than represent meanings, linguistic systems do not have to be, and in fact cannot be, analogues of conceptual systems . . . Conceptual systems are vast and rich and open-ended, but linguistic systems, however impressive, are relatively quite thin. . . . The evolutionary solution to this problem is to have systems of forms prompt for the construction of meanings that go far beyond anything like the form itself" (Fauconnier and Turner 277).

This viewpoint "provides the actor with a model for how to free herself from the sometimes limiting personal-psychoanalytic perspective of some American acting 'methods,' because it is about how to prompt creative responses rather than excavating psychologically repressed memories from one's emotional history" (Blair 96).

In this chapter, I will examine aspects of the conceptual metaphor of "Love Is A Journey" and how this metaphor applies to the characters Lysander and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Then I will explore various ways of utilizing these cognitive approaches to acting the roles of Lysander and Hermia.

Primary Metaphor and Love Is A Physical Force

There are two types of classifications within the realm of conceptual metaphor: primary and complex. Lakoff and Johnson describe primary metaphors as "atoms that can be put together to form molecules" (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 60). Examples of primary metaphor include Actions Are Self-Propelled Motions ("I'm *moving* right along the project"), Purposes Are Destinations ("He'll ultimately be successful, but he isn't *there* yet"), Relationships Are Enclosures ("We've been in a *close* relationship for years, but it's beginning to seem *confining*"), and Intimacy Is Closeness ("We've been *close* for years, but we're beginning to drift apart") (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 52-53). Linguist Cornelia Müller gives us a detailed mapping of primary metaphor:

Fig. 2.1 Primary metaphors based on sensory, social, affective, and haptic experiences (Müller 73).

One of the most prevalent primary metaphors in our American culture is "Love Is A Physical Force." In this metaphor, a lover is compared to a physical object subject to a greater physical force (Kövecses 90). The mapping for this metaphor is as follows:

Physical Force —> Love
Objects Affected By Force —> Lovers

The Love Is A Physical Force metaphor is seen in various expressions such as:

"She *knocked me out*. I was *bowled over* by him. We were immediately *attracted* to one another. There was a *magnetism* between us. We were *drawn* to each other. He *swept her off her feet*" (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 83).

Passivity is a key component in this metaphor, as seen in expressions like *knocked me out*, *attracted to*, *magnetism*, and *swept her off her feet*. All of these linguistic examples illustrate the fact that as the object affected by force (a lover) obeys a stronger and larger physical force (love), no effort whatsoever is required on the part of the objects affected by force. Within this conceptual framework of love, falling in love is something that occurs naturally with no effort; falling in love is not a conscious choice and therefore the lover cannot be held responsible for falling in love. Furthermore, the Love Is A Physical Force metaphor conveys the idea that the physical force (love) has control over the

objects it affects (lovers) and the lovers are not responsible for their actions

(Kövecses 90). Primary metaphors are the foundation for larger, multi-layered metaphors

known as complex metaphors.

The Complex Metaphor of "Life Is A Journey"

If primary metaphors are like atoms, then complex metaphors are like molecules,

and like molecules primary metaphors are "stable—conventionalized, entrenched, fixed

for long periods of time" (*Philosphy in the Flesh* 60). Complex metaphors create a major

piece of our conceptual system, affecting the way we think and act. Furthermore, primary

metaphors create the foundation for new metaphorical combinations, both ordinary and

conceptual. Complex metaphors arise from primary metaphors and aspects of common

knowledge such as cultural models, social theories, and culturally-accepted knowledge

and beliefs (*Philosphy in the Flesh* 60).

One of the most prevalent complex metaphors seen in our American culture is A

Purposeful Life Is A Journey, which is in accordance with the cultural belief, "People are

supposed to have purposes in life, and they are supposed to act so as to achieve those

purposes" (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 61). This philosophy is also prevalent in the theories

of acting teachers Konstantin Stanislavksi and Uta Hagen. Stanislavski's superobjective

revolves around the concept of a character acting achieve his or her life's purpose (307).

Hagen elaborates on the idea of superobjective, stating, "Each movement of true

wandering has destination, is focused on a relevant object that we deal with in order to

further the character of the story" (69), showing how characters in a play have purposes

and act to achieve those purposes. It is then up to the actor to define his character's

destination and make acting choices that will lead him to the destination.

The primary metaphors that make up the complex metaphor of Life Is A Journey are Purposes Are Destinations and Actions Are Motions, which turn the previous statement into the metaphorical cultural belief, "People are supposed to have destinations in life, and they are supposed to move so as to reach those destinations." People who set goals and strive to achieve them are seen as "driven," whereas people who seem to have no purpose are seen as "lost," "stuck," or "not knowing which way to turn." When the two primary metaphors are put together, they form the following metaphorical mapping:

> A Purposeful Life Is A Journey
> A Person Living A Life Is A Traveler
> Life Goals Are Destinations
> A Life Plan Is An Itinerary

This mapping can be distilled even further using the following arrow system:

Journey	—>	Purposeful Life
Traveler	—>	Person Living A Life
Destinations	—>	Life Goals
Itinerary	—>	Life Plan

This mapping shows a complex metaphor made up of four primary metaphors which arises from the cultural expectation for everyone to have a purpose in life, the primary metaphors Purposes Are Destinations and Actions Are Motion, and the concept of a journey being a long trip to a sequence of destinations (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 61-62). Lakoff and Johnson continue to describe the grounding that complex metaphor contains:

> "The complex metaphor we have just examined, A Purposeful Life Is A Journey, does not have an experiential grounding of its own. There is no correlation between purposeful lives and journeys in our everyday experience. Does this mean that this metaphor has no grounding of any kind? Not at all. It is composed of primary metaphors, as we have seen. Those primary metaphors are grounded. For example, Purposes Are Destinations and Action[s] Are Motions each have their own experiential grounding. That grounding is preserved when the primary metaphors are combined into the larger complex metaphor. The grounding of A Purposeful Life Is A Journey is given by the individual groundings of each

component primary metaphor" (*Philosophy in the Flesh* 63).

Considering that there is no correlation between purposeful lives and journeys, linguist Zoltán Kövecses asks, "Why do [we] draw so heavily on the domain of journey in their effort to comprehend life?" He then answers his own question with, "Cognitive linguists suggest that they do so because thinking about the abstract concept of life is facilitated by the more concrete concept of journey" (Kövecses 4). This ties in to the whole idea behind conceptual metaphor—that our minds understand abstract concepts in terms of concrete concepts. Kövecses links CMT to acting with his claim, "A large part of learning the profession of acting involves the learning of how to act out certain conceptual metaphors" (58). Hagen demonstrates the Life Is A Journey metaphor with her claim that every action has a destination to advance the character's story (69). These abstract and concrete concepts form a closely intertwined web, leading one conceptual metaphor to give way to another conceptual metaphor.

The Complex Metaphor of Love Is A Journey

Just as primary metaphors give way to complex metaphors, complex metaphors serve as the foundation for more complex metaphors, and, as Lakoff and Johnson argue, "There is not only structure within a single complex metaphor. There is also structure in the metaphorical structure as a whole" (63). An example of a complex metaphor which derives its meaning from another complex metaphor is Love Is A Journey, which stems from A Purposeful Life Is A Journey.

As seen in the A Purposeful Life Is A Journey mapping, one person corresponds to a traveler with his or her life goals being destinations. However, in our American culture, two people in a relationship are seen as having common goals as well as

individual goals—each life is a journey, but a couple's journey together toward their joint

life goals. Reaching individual goals is difficult enough, but a couple faces the challenge

of combining life goals and achieving them together despite their differences. The Love

Is A Journey metaphor arises from the combination of two people pursuing destinations

on their own journey through life to create a joined journey to various destinations

together. The complex metaphor Love Is A Journey comes from the primary metaphors A

Relationship Is An Enclosure and Intimacy Is Closeness, which come together to form

the following mapping:

> Love Is A Journey
> The Lovers Are Travelers
> Their Common Life Goals Are Destinations
> The Relationship Is A Vehicle
> Difficulties Are Impediments to Motion
> (*Philosophy* 64)

Kövecses (7) adds additional primary metaphors to his mapping of Love Is A Journey:

Source: Journey		*Target*: Love
the travelers	—>	the lovers
the vehicle	—>	the love relationship itself
the journey	—>	events in the relationship
the distance covered	—>	the progress made
the obstacles encountered	—>	the difficulties experienced
decisions about which way to go	—>	choices about what to do
the destination of the journey	—>	the goal(s) of the relationship

Cognitive linguist Cornelia Müller gives an alternative example of metaphorical mapping,

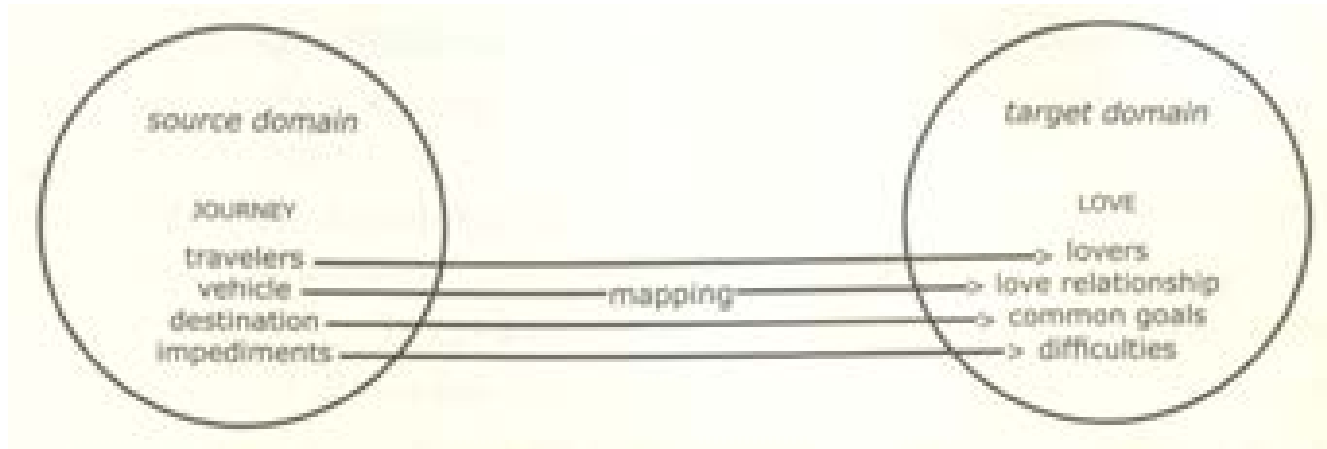using the Love Is A Journey metaphor below:

Fig. 2.2 Love Is A Journey conceptual mapping (Müller 86)

Müller separates the mapping into two domains, which relates back to the idea that

conceptual metaphor is the connection between two domains (Kövecses 4, Müller 85,

Lakoff and Turner 4, Lakoff and Johnson 117, Lakoff 435). Here we have the target

domain, which is the abstract concept attempting to be understood, and the source

domain, which is the concrete concept the target domain is understood.

Complex Metaphor and Conceptual Blending Theory

As an introduction to their theory of conceptual blending, cognitive scientists

Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner state, "Everyday analogies help us understand

difficult concepts in simple terms (similar to metaphor theory). This is a highly

imaginative process, but it is so deeply subconscious we have no awareness of it"

(Fauconnier and Turner 12). Conceptual blending theory (CBT) goes "beyond metaphor

and analogy to blend different mental spaces… to arrive at a third, blended space that

contains and compresses more and different information than is contained in the two

initial inputs" (Blair 94). CBT provides a means in which the elements of meaning

construct themselves and reconstruct to form new meaningful structures (Müller 161).

Conceptual metaphors work with conceptual blending to show that metaphor is perceived

as a specific form of blending rather than blending being reduced to metaphor. The basic

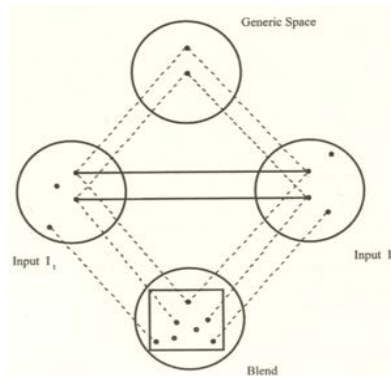diagram of conceptual blending is shown below:

Fig. 2.3 The basic diagram of conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 46).

The foundation for CBT lies in the theory of mental spaces which Fauconnier and

Turner define as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes

of local understanding and action" (40). In the Love Is A Journey mapping, there is a

mental space for love and a mental space for journey, a space for travelers and a space for

lovers, and so on. These spaces are "connected to long-term schematic knowledge called

'frames'" such as the frame of movement from destination to destination, and to "long-

term specific knowledge" such as a memory connected to a journey or love (Fauconnier

and Turner 40). Mental spaces are connected in a myriad of ways and use frames as their

structure. Mental spaces are also "modified as thought and discourse unfold" and "can be

used generally to model dynamic mappings in thought and language" (Fauconnier and

Turner 40).

The generic space is the grounds on which the blend is based and contains the

commonalities between inputs. For example, in the Love Is A Journey mapping, there is a

progression (journey, love), agents (travelers, lovers), an end (destinations, common life

goals), a means to achieve the ends (vehicle, love relationship), and challenges that arise

(impediments to motion, difficulties). The generic space then maps onto the two input

spaces, which contain the material and fills out into the general structure, which is then transferred into the blended space—the newly formed meaning (Fauconnier and Turner 40-41). When applied to a complex metaphor, such as Love Is A Journey, the resulting mapping is as follows:
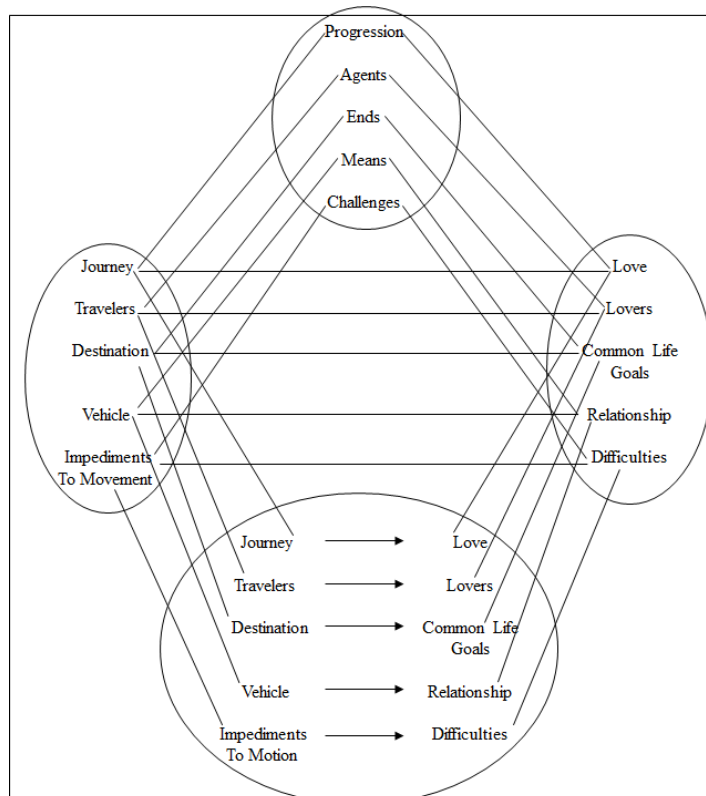

Fig 1.4 The conceptual blend of Love Is A Journey

While it is possible for multiple blends to exist, the transference onto the blended space is selective, and the process of conceptual blending results from three processes: acknowledging identity, conceptual integration, and imagination (Müller 163). This process augments Amy Cook's argument that "the embodied mind uses metaphor and imagination to construct meaning in the world" (15), and we act according to how we perceive meaning in the world, which is in accordance with Fauconnier and Turner's belief that "conceptual blending can transform language into action" (185). That action can be transferred onto a stage whereexpressi actors strive to move the action of the play

forward, which, as director David Ball argues, is fundamental to the progression of a play's storytelling (45). If actors strive for truth in their acting, Cook believes "analyzing how meaning is made is important because it illuminates the scaffolding that structures the play" (93). In the next section, I will examine the role conceptual metaphor and CBT play in aiding actors and directors in their choices to move the action of the play forward.

Love Is A Physical Force in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The physical and metaphorical journey is seen in the pursuits of Demetrius and Helena. Their story begins, as Dante Alighieri describes, "with some adverse circumstances" (195) and their journey is anything but smooth. Lysander's happy idea fuels Helena's happy idea of informing Demetrius of Hermia's journey into the forest where Helena in turn plans to follow Demetrius. Helena and Demetrius embark on a physical and metaphorical journey of their own. In the first scene with Demetrius and Helena in the forest, Demetrius exclaims, "I love thee not, therefore *pursue* me not" (II.i.173) with "pursue" being the key word. The Oxford English Dictionary carries several definitions for "pursue." There is the standard definition one might expect: "to follow or go in pursuit (chiefly involving physical movement)," as seen in the fact that Helena is literally following Demetrius. However, there are other definitions to consider. "Pursue" is also defined as "to seek to reach or attain; to make one's way to (a place)." When we consider this definition, we can see "pursue" in a figurative sense as well as a literal sense. If love is a journey in which we undertake to fulfill a more purposeful life, then a purposeful life can also be a journey. Lakoff and Johnson provide four guidelines for obtaining a more purposeful life. First, "A purposeful life requires planning a means for achieving your purposes." Helena plans to "tell [Demetrius] of fair Hermia's flight"

(I.i.246) in order to gain Demetrius's gratitude. The second guideline is more of a

warning: "purposeful lives may have difficulties, and you should try to anticipate them."

When Helena's first plan does not work out, Helena then plans to follow Demetrius into

the forest and follows through with that plan. Third, "You should provide yourself with

what you need to *pursue* a purposeful life" (italics added). Helena certainly believes

Demetrius will provide her with the love she needs in order to obtain a purposeful life.

The final guideline is to "have an itinerary indicating where you are supposed to be at

what times and where to go next." Although, for the most part, Helena makes her plans

and executes them in the moment, she still has a clear idea of where to go and what to do

next (*Philosophy* 62).

There is one further definition of "pursue" to consider: "to assail persistently, be

ever-present to, dog," with "dog" being a crucial word. Oxford English Dictionary

defines the verb "dog" as "to follow like a dog on the heels of; to track (a person, or his

or her trail, footsteps, etc.) closely and persistently." Within this same scene, Helena

exclaims:

> "I am your spaniel. And, Demetrius,
> The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.
> Use me but as your spaniel—spurn me, strike me,
> Neglect me, lose me. Only give me leave,
> Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
> What worser place can I beg in your love—
> And yet a place of high respect with me—
> Than to be used as you use your dog?" (II.i.188-195)

This comparison of Helena to a dog juxtaposed with a dog-like action adds a newer

dimension to the character, and knowledge of these elements can help aid the actress

playing Helena in making clear, distinct choices of objectives and tactics.

If Helena is a dog following her owner (Demetrius) with a certain purpose for following—such as to implore, obtain, win, etc.—then it is possible to choose "dog-like" tactics for Helena to play throughout the performance. Like a dog begging for love, with "love" being the ending destination, Helena embarks on a journey to obtain the one she loves. Stanislavski gives the example of stretching out one's hand in trying "to express in your eyes feelings of love, respect, gratitude. This is a Task we perform every day, but there is an element of the psychological in it" (146). Suppose Helena does physically hold out her hand to Demetrius expressing sentiments of love along with an element of psychology, which gives the audience insight to Helena's thoughts and needs. Psycholinguist David McNeill has shown that "gestures accompanying speech often trace out images from the source domains of conceptual metaphor," thus giving us the concept of the metaphorical gesture (qtd. in *Philosophy in the Flesh* 85). Therefore, if Helena is a dog begging for love and chooses a fitting tactic—beg, implore, guilt, etc.—and her accompanying gesture of holding her hand out to Demetrius with love and longing, showing that Demetrius is the embodiment of the love she craves, then we have a reflection of the Love Is A Possession metaphor, which is rooted in Helena's psychology and imagination. And how does Helena go about obtaining this possession of love? By being a traveler on the journey of love with the love relationship as the vehicle.

Conceptual Metaphor and Conceptual Blending in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

As Dante Alighieri described, "Comedy, indeed, beginneth with some adverse circumstances, but its theme hath a happy termination" (195). *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begins in "adverse circumstances," as Hermia is faced with the decision to marry

a man she does not love, become a nun, or die. Hermia's dilemma provides fuel to propel

Lysander's insight that "the course of true love never did run smooth" (I.i.134),

establishing the idea of love being a journey, and a rather difficult journey at that. In this

metaphor, Hermia and Lysander are travelers on a road which will take them towards a

common destination (*Philosophy* 64), and, as Lysander declares, the journey encounters

obstacles which make the journey rougher than necessary. At this point of the play, the

obstacle standing in the way of Lysander and Hermia's journey is the ultimatum Egeus

and Theseus establish which the two lovers choose to overcome with Lysander's happy

idea of escaping into the woods to seek refuge at his aunt's home. Thus, the lovers begin

a physical journey that proves to be just as rough as their metaphorical journey due to

Puck's mistakes.

In addition to the concept that love is a journey and the lovers are travelers, the

metaphor extends to the love relationship being the vehicle the lovers travel on

(*Philosophy in the Flesh* 65). If love is the driving force of the lover's journey, then

another metaphor is brought to mind: Love Is A Physical Force (*Philosophy in the Flesh*

83). The conceptual metaphor of Love Is A Physical Force is also prevalent throughout *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream. As Lysander is enchanted, he excuses himself from Hermia,

saying, "Why should he stay, whom love doth *press* to go?" which causes Hermia to

respond, "What love could *press* Lysander from my side?" (III.ii.187-188). In this case, it

is love pressing Lysander to move from Hermia, and this is where the central conflict of

this scene comes into play: Lysander fights for Helena and Hermia fights for Lysander.

Michael Shurtleff poses the question, "How, then, do you achieve balance if everyone is

in there pitching hard for what he's fighting for? Through *relationship*" (43, emphasis

added). If Hermia and Lysander's love is a journey that does not "run smooth" and they

are travelers on the journey with their relationship being the vehicle, then we can use the

metaphors as a means of executing playable action.

Konstantin Stanislavski gave several guidelines for choosing playable actions as

well as how to go about playing them. Appropriate playable objectives, which Jean

Benedetti refers to as bits and tasks in her translation, are defined as:

> "1) Tasks that exist on our side of the footlights and not on the other. In other
> words, Tasks which are related to the play, directed towards the other actors, and
> not to the audience in the front rows.
> 2) Tasks which are right for the actor as a person, and are in keeping with the role.
> 3) Creative and aesthetic Tasks, that is, ones which are conductive to the basic
> goal of acting, the creation of "the life of the human spirit of a role" and to
> communicating it artistically.
> 4) Genuine, living, dynamic, human Tasks which drive the role forward, and not
> histrionic, conventional dead ones which bear no relation to the character but
> which are there to amuse the audience.
> 5) Tasks in which the actor, his fellow actors and the audience can believe.
> 6) Fascinating, exciting Tasks which are capable of stimulating experiencing.
> 7) Apposite Tasks, that is ones which are typical of a role and precisely, not
> approximately related to the meaning of the play.
> 8) Tasks which are rich and correspond to the deeper meaning of the role, not
> ones that are shallow, and skim the surface of the play" (145).

It is through this process of objectives and tactics that an actor goes about transforming

his character's thoughts into actions. Lakoff and Johsno argue that the process of

transforming thought into action is metaphorical in nature (*Metaphors* 4).

If thought is metaphorical and actions are the result of thought, then Lakoff and

Johnson argue that action is metaphorical as well. The central metaphor for action is,

Actions Are Self-Propelled Movements with the following corresponding to aspects of

movement:

> "Aids To Action Are Aids To Movement
> Manner Of Action Is Manner Of Movement
> Careful Action Is Careful Movement

> Speed Of Action Is Speed Of Movement
> Freedom Of Action Is The Lack Of Impediment To Movement
> Suspension Of Action Is The Stopping Of Movement" (*Philosophy* 187).

There are different kinds of action as well. There are physical actions for which we have specific concepts for such as running, eating, jumping etc. However, the objectives and tactics we play on stage do not necessarily take the form of physical actions—the actions we play on stage must take the form of a transitive verb "that you can actively do to someone else" (Calderone and Lloyd-Williams xvii). The actress playing Hermia cannot choose to state her intention for her line "What love could *press* Lysander from my side?" (III.ii.188) as "I want to run you." While the actress may physically be running towards Lysander, but "run" is not what she is trying to *do* to him. The actress will need to choose transitive intention statements such as "I want to *implore* Lysander," or "I want to *halt* Lysander," or "I want to *retain* Lysander." Before making definite decisions, it is prudent for the actress to consider metaphors, which are based in the given circumstances of the play, discussed so far: Love is a Journey, the Lovers are Travelers, the Love Relationship is a Vehicle, and Actions are Self-Propelled Movements. Where are Hermia and Lysander on their journey at this point? At this point Hermia has hit a wall in her journey which she must overcome in order to achieve her destination, which provides the fuel for her actions, which must be self-propelled movements. Therefore, Hermia's actions must relate to where she is on her journey (as compared to where she began and where she wants to go) and the motivation stems from the vehicle she is on (the love relationship). Those actions may not be things she is *literally* doing—such as bludgeon, cut, press, etc.—but these actions will propel her movements into working towards achieving her goals, which will naturally affect her movements, gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections.

In the above example, we see some verbs that can be taken literally, such as bludgeon, cut, and press, but it is unlikely that Hermia will have a bat with which to physically beat Lysander. These actions are metaphorical as well. Here we are taking one concept of physically bludgeoning to bludgeoning with words directed right at Lysander with the intent to emotionally harm and cripple Lysander just as if Hermia was physically beating him. Now these actions become less of a matter of physical movement and more of a manner of playing the action under imaginary circumstances. Hermia is not physically bludgeoning Lysander, but in order to successfully play this tactic, the actress needs to give herself some imaginary stimulation in order to play the action (Meisner 79). In the following chapter, I will discuss ways of developing imaginary stimulation through a series of acting exercises with ties to cognitive science.

Chapter Three
Applications

Thus far, I have discussed theories of conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending. I have also outlined how these theories can be used in character interpretations in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, the arts of acting and directing cannot be entirely understood without actually *doing* or *performing*. In this chapter, I will discuss three exercises developed by leading theatre practitioners that are related to conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending. Although these exercises may not have originally sprung out of cognitive research, recent advances in cognitive science show direct links between these practical exercises and cognitive theories, and I will discuss these connections in the chapter.

In his book *To The Actor*, Michael Chekhov claims, "The technique of acting can never be properly understood without *practicing* it" (xv, italics in original). While acknowledging the importance of understanding the theories of acting, Chekhov claims that without careful application of the exercises in his book, an actor runs into the problem of being too "bookish" or cerebral in his acting. Thus far, I have discussed the principles and concepts behind conceptual blending and conceptual metaphor theories, two crucial elements of cognitive science. However, merely understanding these theories can never truly have any application to theatre if they are never fully practiced. For the exercises in this chapter, I draw on exercises described in works by Tony Award winning director Mel Shapiro, Professor in Theatre and Cognitive Science Rick Kemp, and from the great acting teacher Michael Chekhov. Through these exercises, I will explore various aspects of acting such as use of language, character physicality, and the "magic if" and discuss their applications to the field of cognitive science. I draw on *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream for inspiration, but the exercises and principles of this chapter have applications to a wide variety of theatre styles and genres.

Exploring Conceptual Metaphor through Language

One way of exploring the conceptual metaphors of a text is through the script's written language. Shapiro has outlined some specific language exercises which can help an actor delve into his character. According to Shapiro, Shakespeare is the prime example of a playwright who "paints with language" that is "bursting with metaphor and with florid poetry" (56). The language of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a great model for this type of language. Oberon and Titania's speeches are full of heightened language and imagery, both due to their supernatural and regal states. The language of the lovers—Demetrius, Helena, Hermia, and Lysander—is more direct and metaphor-driven, whereas the mechanicals' language is nearly void of imagery and metaphor, and their lines are written in prose as opposed to the verse of the rest of the cast.

The romantic aspects of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—such as the relationships between Oberon and Titania, Bottom and Titania, the four lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe, and Theseus and Hippolyta—are captured in verse, whereas the lowly mechanicals remain consistent with Shakespeare's convention of using prose for the lower class's speech patterns. In a musical, the characters sing when they can no longer speak and their heightened emotions and states of mind are translated into song. The need to sing in a musical is the same as the need to speak in verse in Shakespeare: it is, as Shapiro calls, "another kind of lyrical moment," and although the actor does not sing Shakespeare's poetry, there needs to be "an overflow of feeling and a need to express it that goes beyond the way [we] talk to each other" (56). Conceptual metaphor can help convey that

heightened expression, and Shapiro's exercises offer insight of working conceptual

metaphor into a text.

The first step in exploring conceptual metaphor from an acting standpoint is

isolating the imagery in characters' lines. For example, I will use Helena's opening

speech in the first act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> "Call you me fair? That fair again unsay.
> Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
> Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
> More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
> When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
> Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
> Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
> My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
> My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
> Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
> The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
> O, teach me how you look, and with what art
> You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart" (I.i.181-193).

While scanning the meter is a crucial part of exploring the rhythm of the speech,

exploring the images enhances the meter. After scanning the meter, the actress should

then underline each image in the speech, for example:

> Fair, fair again unsay
> Your fair, happy fair
> Lode-stars, sweet air
> Lark, shepherd's ear
> Wheat is green, hawthorn's buds appear
> Sickness is catching

These are examples of concrete, identifiable images within the first six lines of Helena's

speech. The director can have the actress close her eyes and say the images out loud and

concentrate on the images they evoke to make them more personal to the actress. Work

with the actress until the images flow naturally and easily. After achieving this free-

flowing imagery, have the actress circle and only say the verbs in the speech, for example:

> Call
> Unsay
> Loves
> Are
> Is
> Is catching
> Catch
> Go
> Catch
> Catch
> Were
> Being bated
> Give
> Be
> Teach
> Sway

Once all the verbs are underlined, have the actress say them out loud, then repeat and

have the actress add on whatever words in the line she feels are necessary. Keep adding

words until the whole line is spoken, and then "by this time the images will be clearer and

each word needed, each word earned" (Shapiro 59). Once this form of speech is

established, there is "a good chance that a character is beginning to emerge and a story is

being told" because "the character is constructed on what he or she says and on the

manner in which it is being said" (Shapiro 60). Shapiro's exercises show how exploring

the play's imagery helps the actor tap into the character he is playing. A view supported

by Louis E. Catron, Professor Emeritus at the College of William and Mary, supports

Shapiro's theories with his claim, "Actors make their decisions based on study of the

speech and character" (Catron 39). As the actor studies the character's speech, the

character's actions will become clear, and the "character grows out of action" (Kemp 106).

George Lakoff and Mark Turner connect imagery to metaphor in their book *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* and introduce us to the concept of the image-metaphor. In defining an image-metaphor, Lakoff and Turner use the following stanza from Emily Dickinson's poem "Because I Could Not Stop for Death:"

> "We paused before a house that seemed
> A swelling of the ground—
> The roof was scarcely visible—
> The Cornice—in the ground" (113).

Lakoff and Turner then provide the following analysis for these lines:

> "There is an image-metaphor at work in these lines, which helps to activate the DEATH IS GOING TO A FINAL DESTINATION metaphor. Our conventional image of a grave is superimposed on our conventional image of a house: the roof of the house is the bulge of the earth, and the cornice of the roof is the gravestone, with the interior of the house being earth. Such a superimposition of images constitutes a metaphor in itself, since it is a mapping from one conventional image onto another conventional image. Such an image-metaphor can the help activate other conventional metaphors. Because our conventional image of a grave is associated with death and our conventional image of a house is associated with our going toward our own houses as final destinations, the superimposition of the images activates a connection between death and going home, and hence it activates the metaphor DEATH IS GOING TO A FINAL DESTINATION" (8).

Helena's speech ends with, "O, teach me how you look, and with what art / You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart" (I.i.192-3). Here, the key image is "sway the motion of Demetrius' heart," which is an image-metaphor because it contains the Love Is A Physical Force conceptual metaphor. Within the framework of this metaphor, love is the physical force and the objects affected by force are the lovers. Demetrius, despite Hermia's attempts to thwart his unwanted advances, is still drawn to Hermia, and his

actions affect Hermia, Lysander, and Helena. Yet, Helena, despite Demetrius's blunt refusals, is the object affected by the physical force of love as seen in her exclamation of, "You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant /…leave your power to draw, / And I shall have no power to follow you" (II.i.180-183). Within these lines the actress, after doing the image and verb exercises, is faced with the challenge of blending the image along with the metaphor, and as conceptual metaphor is a principle of action as well as thought, then it is the action which can blend together the image and the conceptual metaphor. As a characters' actions are conveyed in a physical way, exploring characterized physicalizations is the next step in bringing to life the conceptual metaphors of a script.

Using Gesture to Bring Conceptual Metaphor to Life

David McNeill, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Linguistics at the University of Chicago, has done much work and research on the connection between cognition and gesture. McNeill concludes that gesture is a form of speech all on its own and that "gestures and the *images* behind them coexist with speech" (1, italics added). It is the image, which occurs in the mind, followed by gesture (McNeill 29) and the occurring gesture is the result of speech and action (McNeill 11). McNeill places gestures into five different categories: iconic, metaphoric, beat, cohesive, and deictic (12-18).

Just as conceptual metaphors allow us to think of the abstract in concrete terms, metaphorical gestures allow us to express abstract concepts in concrete terms (McNeill 178). According to McNeill, metaphoric gestures are pictorial, "but the pictorial content presents an abstract idea rather than a concrete object or event. The gesture presents an image of the invisible—an image of an abstraction" (14). For example, in the image

below, the speaker is describing a cartoon he just saw, saying, "It was a Sylvester and

Tweety cartoon," while raising his hands up like so:

Fig. 3.1 "It was a Sylvester and Tweety cartoon" with accompanying gesture (McNiell 14).

The speaker's hands raise up, offering the listener a concrete "object," referring to the

genre of the cartoon. The cartoon genre is an abstract concept, but the speaker "makes it

concrete in the form of an image of a bounded object supported in the hands and

presented to the listener … This is the metaphor: the concept of a genre of a certain

kind…is presented as a bounded, supportable, spatially localizable physical object"

(McNeill 14-15).

McNeill's theories on gesture expand upon the theories of George Lakoff and

Mark Johnson who argue that our physical experiences shape our conceptual systems and

metaphoric thought in their book *Philosophy in the Flesh*:

> "Our abilities to move the way we do and to track the motion of other things give
> motion a major role in our conceptual system. The fact that we have muscles and
> use them to apply force in certain ways leads to the structure of our system of
> casual concepts. What is important is that the peculiar nature of our bodies shapes
> our very possibilities for
> conceptualization and categorization" (23).

This is due to the fact that our "brains are structured so as to project activation patterns

from sensorimotor areas to higher cortical areas" (Lakoff and Johnson 77). For example,

within the Time Is Motion metaphor, our brains contain an area in the visual system

which detects movement, but there is no area in our brain designed for detecting time. Since our brains directly perceive motion, motion is able to act as a source for our metaphorical systems to make sense of the abstract concept of time. This connection between time and motion becomes more established with repetition until the connection permanently forges itself within the brain. Metaphor then becomes "part of our perceptual apparatus rather than a post-perceptual activity of disembodied reason" (Kemp 47). Therefore, the most basic conceptual metaphor in the English language involves "an observer at the present who is facing toward the future, with the past behind the observer" (Lakoff and Johnson 140). Metaphoric thinking, therefore, "operates at every level of cognition" which ultimately affects the way we move (Kemp 47), supporting McNeill's claim that metaphoric gestures are created from the mind (145).

In his book *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells us About Performance*, Rick Kemp declares, "Work with metaphoric gestures offers the actor one of the most accessible ways to develop their fertility with expressing abstract concepts" (35). Furthermore, Kemp declares working with metaphoric gestures "has important implications for actors seeking to create vivid embodiments of thought, because it shows that most concepts of subjective experience are metaphorically based on a sensorimotor source domain, and therefore *have embodied movement tendencies*" (47, italics in original). Long before principles of cognitive science were established, actor and director Michael Chekhov showed a sound "understanding of the way in which physical experience in the material world shapes conceptual thought" with his development of the psychological gesture.

Chekhov's psychological gesture is an example of a form of gesture which results from imagery and action, the two ingredients which McNeill argues are essential for

gesture (11). The psychological gesture (which is commonly referred to as PG) is meant

"to be a preparation for an image that [is] held in the imagination, but not shown to the

audience" (Kemp 125). The foundation of the psychological gesture is the actor defining

what the character's strongest desire is, or what Stanislavski called the superobjective,

and the psychological gesture expresses the superobjective "in a physical and imagistic

way" (Kemp 125). Michael Chekhov offers some guidelines on how to find the

character's psychological gesture:

> "Ask yourself what the *main* desire of the character might be, and when you get
> an answer, even if it is only a hint, start to build your PG step by step, using at
> first your *hand* and *arm* only. You might thrust them forward aggressively,
> clenching your fist, if the desire reminds you of grasping or catching (greed,
> avarice, cupidity, miserliness)…Having once started this way, you will no longer
> find it difficult (in fact, it will happen by itself) to extend and adjust your
> particular gesture to your shoulders, your neck, the position of your head and
> torso, legs and feet, until your *entire* body is thus occupied. Working this way,
> you will soon discover whether your first guess as to the main desire of the
> character was correct. The PG itself will lead you to this discovery, without too
> much interference on the part of the reasoning mind" (73-4, italics
> in original).

The psychological gesture is then repeated throughout the rehearsal period, and the actor

is encouraged and expected to adjust and refine the psychological gesture as his

understanding of the character deepens and develops. As the actor repeats and refines the

psychological gesture, a "muscular memory of the image of the wish is developed that

subliminally affects the performance of the character, but can also be consciously

recalled during performance to inform the character's physicality and affective state"

(Kemp 125). Separate psychological gestures can also be created to reflect the characters

wants for each scene, reflecting Stanislavski's breakdown of scene and beat objectives.

The psychological gesture is essentially the embodiment of an abstract concept, with the abstract concept being the character's superobjective. The psychological gesture creates a physical image based on the character's wants. Helena's image-metaphor, previously examined, gives insight to her wants—her imploration of Hermia to "teach me how you look, and with what art / You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart" (I.i.192-3), which goes to show that Helena fights for Demetrius throughout the play, and her psychological gesture should reflect in some way her desire to attract Demetrius the same way Hermia attracts Demetrius. As the conceptual metaphor of Love Is A Physical Force comes into play of Helena's psychological gesture, we see a combination of the metaphorical gesture with the psychological gesture.

In Chekhov's example of thrusting one's hands and arms "forward aggressively, clenching your fist, if the desire reminds you of grasping or catching (greed, avarice, cupidity, miserliness)" is metaphorical in nature as reaching or grasping for any of the mentioned wants, or any abstract concept, represents an abstract image. If Helena is fighting for love—specifically Demetrius's love—and her psychological gesture reflects her being an object which the physical force of love affects, then we have a gesture which is both psychological and metaphorical. According to Chekhov, it is the physical aspects of a character which activate the actor's imagination, and Lakoff and Johnson as well as Fauconnier and Turner argue that conceptual metaphor enhances the imagination as well. Therefore, in combining Chekhov's psychological gesture with the metaphorical gesture, we combine techniques in letting the actor's imagination run free.

Kemp gives an exercise to help actors embody metaphorical concepts through physical actions as well as use physical action to stimulate and express simple thought. Kemp uses the term "primary action" as a link to the cognitive idea of primary metaphors.

The primary actions are based on Rudolph von Laban's three categories of movement, which are seen in the table below:

Weight	Space	Time
Heavy (or Strong)	Direct	Sudden (or Quick)
Light	Indirect	Sustained

Table 3.1 Laban's categories of movement (Kemp 50)

Kemp's exercise of Laban efforts as primary actions utilizes various combinations of the three categories to create eight kinds of movements (see appendix for illustrations of the movements):

1) Heavy-Direct-Sudden describes a punch
2) Heavy-Direct-Sustained describes a push or pull
3) Heavy-Indirect-Sudden describes a slash
4) Heavy-Indirect-Sustains describes a wringing (i.e. wringing out a cloth)
5) Light-Indirect-Sustained describes stroking (i.e. stroking an animal)
6) Light-Indirect-Sudden describes a flicking of the arm
7) Light-Direct-Sudden describes a tap (i.e. a tap on the shoulder)
8) Light-Direct-Sustained describes a glide
(Kemp 51-59)

The exercise itself contains three steps:

Step One:

In this step, actors are introduced to "the metaphorical actions in a playful way that allows the actors to gain defined physical and vocal experience of each" action (Kemp 59). At this point in the exercise, size should be emphasized and the director should encourage "big physical actions" and "loud vocal expression" (Kemp 59). The director should have the actors stand in a circle and repeat the "punch" action multiple times while saying the word "punch" with each stroke of the gesture. Then the director invites pairs to converse across the circle and each phrase should be accompanied by a vocal and physical punch (though no physical contact should be made)—the actors can

all converse simultaneously or one at a time. This process is then repeated for the seven

remaining actions (Kemp 59-60).

Step Two

In this stage, the actors move individually throughout the room as the director

calls out each action. The actors repeat each action for a full minute without any sort of

vocalization or interaction between actors. After each action, the director should invite

the actors to "notice how they feel and what sense of self arises from the action. This

alerts them [the actors] to the affective qualities generated through proprioception"

(Kemp 60).

Step Three

The actors now split into pairs with one actor observing as the other actor merely

imagines performing the physical action without any vocalizations. The actor thinking

through the actions should "allow the body to respond to the visualization, but to *avoid*

consciously demonstrating the action or using large movements" (Kemp 60, italics in

original). It is best if actors think through the movements in a different sequence than the

group performed them. The partners are encouraged to look for clues such as eye

movements, breath patterns, and changes in tension to reveal what action their partner

imagines (Kemp 60). Kemp then explains the implications of such an exercise:

> "The range and 'size' and nuance visible in these activities demonstrates the
> applicability of these actions to a variety of styles and genres. The behavior in
> Step 1 would be appropriate in a farce, while Step 3 offers the subtlety needed for
> naturalistic work on screen. Of course, given the fact that these verbs describe
> behavior that happens in daily life anyway, they provide a useful vocabulary for a
> director or instructor to use in giving feedback to the actor. Another significant
> benefit is the added ease with which instructors, directors, and actors can identify
> levels of intensity. Because each action has a physical origin, one can talk about
> the metaphoric range of movement or the relative force of the
> metaphorical punch in the vocal delivery" (60).

This exercise can also combine with Shapiro's imagery and verb exercise with the actors performing actions that relate to the images and verbs of the text. After performing the language and metaphoric gesture exercises, actors can then use these concepts to dig deeper into their characters by utilizing their imaginations through the "magic if."

The "Magic If" and Conceptual Blending

According to Stanislavski, an actor's work "begins by introducing the 'magic if' into the play and role, and this lifts the actor out of everyday life into the world of the *imagination*" (60, italics added). The "magic if" involves the actor behaving "as if" he was in the same fictional situation as the character (Kemp 108). When it comes to utilizing the "magic if," Stanislavski states, "All you have to do is say 'What would I do, how would I handle it if the story of the madman turned out to be actually true?' and immediately you are dynamic and alive" (51). Kemp outlines some of the challenges that arise from taking this approach too literally:

> "This process encourages the actor to respond from his or her own personality, to use what Lakoff and Johnson call 'advisory projection.' While this links the actor imaginatively to the fictional situation, *the actor's personality defines the character's response*. This has always seemed illogical to me. My personality is not the same as that of Falstaff or Leontes, and I would not respond to their fictional circumstances in the way that they do. This is true both at the level of narrative action and behavioral action. While it understandable that Stanislavski sought to promote credible behavior in actors, if this particular idea is followed literally, it limits the activity of the imagination in preparing a role" (108, italics in original).

Because such an imposition of one's personality on to a character limits rather than frees creativity, many teachers of Stanislavski-based acting have altered the "magic-if" statement to "What would I do if I were the character in the situation?" which "involves imagining both the fictional circumstances *and* the fictional character" (Kemp 109). Furthermore, recent research in cognitive science offers a broader understanding of the

imagination than what Stanislavski had available to him. These developments in

cognitive science show "that the imagination is…a feature of cognition that is woven

through much of our mental processes as *metaphoric activity*" (Kemp 109, italics added).

Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner's conceptual blending theory (CBT) offers a deeper

understanding of unification of the actor's personality with the fictional circumstances

and the fictional character.

CBT occurs across three mental spaces: the generic space and two input spaces.

Each of these spaces contain various aspects of meaning that integrate with each other to

create a fourth mental space which contains the new conceptual material. Kemp

illustrates the similarities between CBT and Chekhov's approach to acting:

> "The process that occurs when two concepts, or domains of experience, are
> framed together in linguistic or imagistic ways, making the mind scan
> automatically for underlying similarities. This is the process that occurs when an
> actor thinks of 'self' and 'character'—in Chekhov's approach, these would be two
> different domains of experience, framed together by the fact that they will share
> the same body. Fauconnier and Turner suggest that if the two domains have traits
> in common (in the example of character, these could be personality traits), then
> the result of the scanning will be the recall from long-term memory of a third or
> "generic" space containing the outlines of these traits… The presence of this
> generic space primes the mind to project or 'map' connections, resulting in yet a
> fourth space, the blend itself" (119).

For example, let us say that the actress playing Helena in a production of *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream is trained in Stanislavski's system and attempts to use the "magic if" to

successfully create a believable character. In one input space, the actress has a mental

picture of who Helena is. The second input space represents the actress's self. The blend

occurs as the actress strives to imagine what she would do if she were Helena in the

fictional situation. The actress can then takes this one step farther when she utilizes the

Love Is A Physical Force metaphor prevalent in Helena's speech—the actress can then

use the "magic if" conceptual blend to imagine what she would do if she was a lover

affected by a greater physical force, which represents love in the Love Is A Physical

Force metaphor. The conceptual blend can then influence the objectives, tactics, and

physical actions which the actress chooses to play (Kemp 119).

Chekhov, who had a firm grasp on the connection between body and mind long

before CBT and CMT, developed the imaginary body exercise that helps actors utilize the

"magic if" and analyze how their characters move differently than the actors themselves.

Chekhov uses an example of a slow, lazy character to illustrate the imaginary body

exercise:

> "Imagine, as a case in point, that you must play the role of a person whose
> character you define as lazy, sluggish and awkward (psychologically as well as
> physically). These qualities should not necessarily be pronounced or emphatically
> expressed, as perhaps in comedy. They might show themselves as mere, almost
> imperceptible indications. And yet they are typical features of the character which
> should not be overlooked.
>> "As soon as you have outlined those features and qualities of your role—
> that is, compared with your own—try to imagine what *kind of body* such a lazy,
> awkward and slow person should have. Perhaps you will find that he might
> possess a full, plump, short body with dropping shoulders, thick neck, long arms
> hanging listlessly, and a big, heavy head. This body is, of course, a far cry from
> your own. Yet you must look like that and do as it does. How do you go about
> effecting a true resemblance? Thus:
>> "*You are going to imagine that in the same space you occupy with your
> own, real body there exists another body—the imaginary body of your character,
> which you have just created in your mind*" (86-7, italics in original).

Chekhov compares this process to putting on a garment, the concept that we should

clothe ourselves with the character's body. Chekhov uses a lethargic character as an

example, but this exercise can be applied to any character type such as the love-starved

Helena or the blundering, mischievous Puck. This analysis of character can begin with an

actor analyzing his character's language, speech patterns, and speech rhythms, as

explored in Shapiro's language exercises. The process continues by transforming language into action and gesture through performing Chekhov's psychological gesture exercise and Kemp's metaphorical gesture exercise. These physicalizations offer actor parameters to let their imaginations run free, and the "magic if" triggers that imaginative process.

Chapter 4:
Conclusion

The material I have presented relates empirically based research in recent developments in cognitive science which contain direct applications to an actor's work such as imagery, language rhythms, gesture, imagination, and action. The cognitive approach to acting integrates both the mental and physical work that an actor trains himself in order to create a role. Here are some of the principles which cognitive science offers us that can be used in acting:

- Abstract thought is metaphorical

- The mind is inherently embodied

- Metaphorical thought and conceptual blending rely heavily on the imagination

- Conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending lead to action

- Conceptual metaphor can be used in poetic metaphor

Rick Kemp argues that actor training programs that utilize principles of cognitive science can better prepare actors for the rigorous rehearsal procedures of the professional world by combing cognitive principles with traditional "script-based programs." Training programs can accomplish this through the use of theatre games and ensemble activities which help actors explore non-verbal communication, character physicalization, and vocal variety.

As the processes of acting and directing are closely related, the cognitive approach to acting also has strong implications for the director's work. As I described in Chapter Two, an understanding of conceptual metaphor presents a different approach to script analysis. This approach to script analysis acts as a guide for directors to

understanding character motivations and translating those motivations into playable

actions, reinforcing Zoltán Kövecses's claim, "A large part of learning the profession of

acting involves the learning of how to act out certain conceptual metaphors" (58). The

exercises described in Chapter Three describe a process in which an actor can act

metaphoric actions, beginning with a study of images, verbs, and metaphors within a text.

These metaphoric actions become physical with work on metaphoric gesture and

effective use of the "magic if."

As I began researching this topic, I wondered if understanding cognitive

applications to acting would lead to a more cerebral approach of theatre which would

limit creativity. However, the opposite is true. One of the most fundamental aspects of

cognitive science is the prevalence of imagination in everyday thought. Furthermore,

imagination, as all aspects of thought, is embodied, and part of actor training consists of

unifying the body and mind. We act with our bodies, and our minds act as a puppeteer

who helps us move and act as the character would move and act. As we learn about the

intricacies of the human mind and body, these natural phenomena do not lose their

wonder—if anything the wonder intensifies, making the "magic if" more magical than

ever.

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Appendix

All images taken from Kemp, pages 51-59.

1) Heavy-Direct-Sudden (PUNCH)

2.a) Heavy-Direct-Sustained (PUSH)

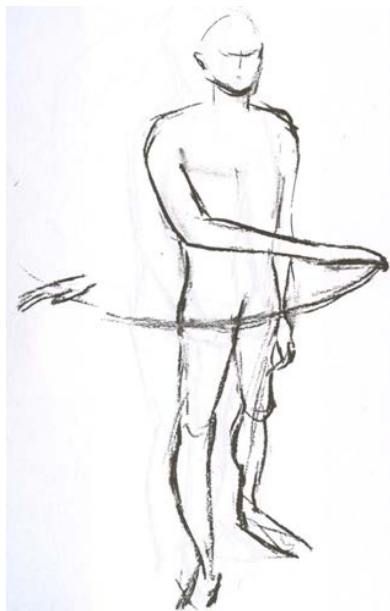2.b) Heavy-Direct-Sustained (PULL)

3) Heavy-Indirect-Sudden (SLASH)

4) Heavy-Indirect-Sustains (WRING)

5) Light-Indirect-Sustained (STROKE)

6) Light-Indirect-Sudden (FLICK)

7) Light-Direct-Sudden (TAP)

8) Light-Direct-Sustained (GLIDE)