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## Agency – Phenomenological Inquiries in Interdisciplinary Perspective

**Abstract.** The article intends to realize two goals. The first is an attempt to elucidate an interdisciplinary perspective in the approach to the anthropological category of agency (esp. by A. Gell, K. Wojtyła, M. Chekhov). The second goal is to apply the results of the examination of interdisciplinarity to the proposed definition of the anthropological meaning of the notion of agency (in the strict sense). My definition captures implications the category has for determining the order of reality in terms of ontological and epistemological dimensions.

**Key words:** phenomenology of agency, external-internal, social anthropology, philosophical anthropology, anthropology of theatre, Alfred Gell, Karol Wojtyła, Michael Chekhov

## Sprawczość – badania fenomenologiczne w perspektywie interdyscyplinarnej

**Abstrakt.** Artykuł zmierza do realizacji dwóch celów. Pierwszym jest próba naświetlenia interdyscyplinarnej perspektywy na antropologiczne podejście do kategorii sprawstwa (zwl. A. Gella, K. Wojtyły, M. Czechowa). Drugim celem jest zastosowanie wyników studium interdyscyplinarności do proponowanej definicji antropologicznego znaczenia pojęcia sprawstwa (w sensie ścisłym). Moja definicja ujmuje implikacje, jakie kategoria sprawstwa ma dla determinacji porządku rzeczywistości w kategoriach wymiaru ontologicznego i epistemologicznego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** fenomenologia sprawstwa, wewnętrzne-zewnętrzne, antropologia społeczna, antropologia filozoficzna, antropologia teatru, Alfred Gell, Karol Wojtyła, Michał Czechow

### 1. Introduction

Phenomenological problems embrace gnosiological dimension and its important point is – as formulated by Husserl – “How can cognition reach beyond itself? How can it reach a being that is not to be found within the confines of consciousness” (1990: 3). Thus defined challenge includes the question about the possibility of cognition, and – additionally – about cognition transgressing the internal confines of the subject towards the external world. Therefore, it covers the methodological dimension of immanence and transcendence. While for Husserl the problem of

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trans-cending / crossing within the *cogitatio* was a spurious one, the discernment of these categories, especially as objectively existing beings, serves the ultimate goal of giving meaning to cognition and to the object in general, also to human existence.

## 2. The source

Husserl wrote: “But first we need insight that the crucial issue must rather have to do with the relation between cognition and its object, but in the reduced sense, According To Which We are dealing not with human cognition, but with cognition general, apart from any existential Assumptions either of empirical or ego of a real world” (1990: 60).

Although Husserl’s immediate object of interest was not directly the knowing subject herself, much less her external environment, it is difficult to remove the subject from the field of the cognitive relationship. Earlier, Franz Brentano, analyzing the content of cognition, pointed to its intentionality and directedness: from the subject towards the object.

Thus, in the phenomenological perspective, cognition takes place between subject and object. This obvious thesis presumes some others: cognition is an action of the subject directed towards its object, a form of interaction. The direction of intentionality, often manifested in the actions of the subject as well as object (persons, animals, plants and inanimated objects, or works of art)<sup>1</sup>, involves the category of agency and the causal-effect relations in the process of cognition. Some understandings of these categories can contribute to indicate the direction of solution not only of Husserl’s problem of the nature of cognition, but also of grasping the real structure of reality (as both immanent and transcendent).

I propose to account for the category of agency from the perspective of (Alfred Gell’s) social-cultural anthropology (esp. Alfred Gell’s folk notion) and philosophical anthropology (offered by Karol Wojtyła) as well as Michael Chekhov’s conception of agency in performing arts. In these areas of human activities, the agency category takes the status of the key idea.

## 3. Important modification

Husserl’s general reductionist thesis on the nature of cognition was applied by Alfred Schütz to social theories. He thoroughly modified it, delimiting three tropes: theory of intentionality, the notion of intersubjectivity and the notion of *Lebenswelt*. Especially the latter two move us into the real world, i.e. outside of the closed space of the abstract notion of ‘cognition’ towards conditions, which to

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<sup>1</sup> A different position is taken in philosophical debates. See (Bayne 2008).

a greater or lesser extent take into account the existing outside reality. This reality in a minimal version has the form of Others – objectively existing cognitive subjects and the fact of their action. “Finally, Schütz invites us to re-examine the original constitution of the life-world which human beings take for granted in their »natural attitude«, through such devices as an assumed »reciprocity of perspectives« and an »interchangeability of standpoints«, and which the social analyst rarely topicalizes, but which is an active site of culture regarded as a social process emergent from intentional social action” (Jenks 1993: 58).

Schütz’s “extension” of the field of “cognition” upon the contexts of existence of cognitive and active subjects and their live contexts resulted in constituting new research trend in sociology. It can be described as the field of interaction between “system” and “agency”. The leading researcher in this field is Margaret Archer (esp. 2000). Her basic assumption is categorical distinction of the social order, which “lacks self-awareness”, from the individual – self-conscious. Archer proposes to tackle the problem: What significance for the nature of the social has self-awareness of its participants? She addresses the problem within theoretical sociology and demonstrates that this dichotomy is inseparable from the problem of “causal forces”, which activate themselves in the process of reflexivity of individuals.

#### 4. Phenomenology in Anthropology (of art): Folk Agency

Husserl’s phenomenology in its version modified by Schütz was applied in social anthropology by Alfred Gell – a British scholar (1945–1996), the author of the fervently debated monograph *Art and Agency*. Gell during his field research in Papua New Guinea (1969–71) became acquainted with the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Nevertheless, it was only a version of Husserl’s phenomenology that resulted in Gell’s conception of ethnographic time (1992), tribal sources of research on human identity (1979), and foremost the anthropological theory of art.

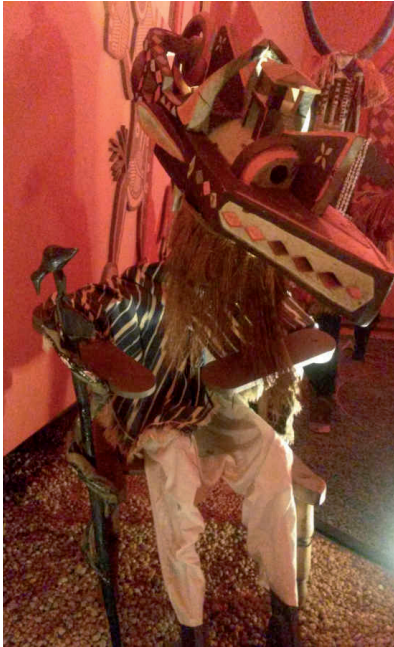
Gell, being a consistent social anthropologist, conceptualized artefact (also Western “artworks”) as “index”. Index, in turn, was taken to be central for the nexus, which forms around it, i.e. the web of causal-effect relations having intentional character. For instance, if we grant that an index is constituted by a work of visual art as conceived in the Western world, then we can indicate the following basic structure of the pertinent web:

Agent (creator of the work) → Index → Recipient (Patient)

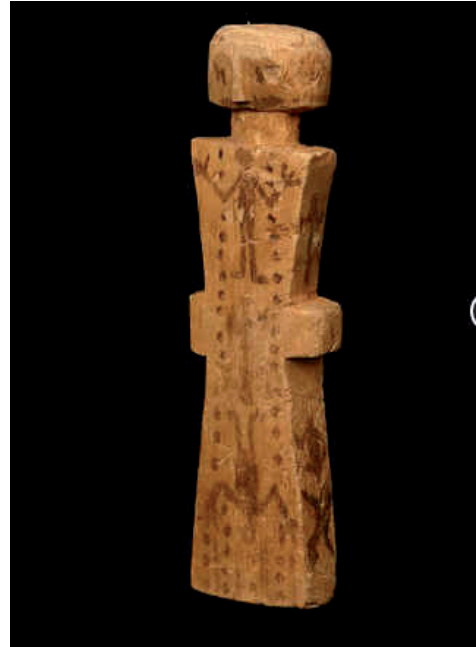
The relation is always unidirectional, though the structures of the web can actually take on unusually complex forms, such as in the case of ethnographic fetish (nail fetish, Kongo), created – as commissioned by individuals – by a shaman for

the community in order to ultimately influence the individuals from the community. “Primary agent” of the figure of fetish could be 1) a person, who commissioned it or 2) the shaman, or 3) the person using the figure. It could also have a ‘prototype’ – in this case a form-pattern of militant demon and branches of a tree.

Figure 1. Panel: (1) The Guinea mask in rituals against enemies; (2) A fetish of a girl. Columbia



(1)



(2)

Source: Panel (1) phot. A. Kawalec; (2) phot. G. Solecki, A. Piętak (The National Museum in Szczecin).

Different potentialities of the structure of nexus embrace environmental conditions of the functioning of *nail fetish* in the community of tribe.

‘Functioning’ means recognition by social potentialities of its influence and the scope of use. Gell’s diagrams represent different schemes of structural relations of social agency as influenced by *nail fetish* (see 1998: 103).

In each case – although in the center of the web of intentional (as real) influence is index (nail fetish), we always have to deal with a concrete “primary agent”. In that situation index will occupy the position of “the secondary agent”. To differentiate the former from the latter category of agency was for Gell of fundamental importance, despite in the context of the dominance of the “material turn” – the interpretators of Gell’s thought attribute to artifacts the position tantamount to the one of subjects.

Figure 2. Nail fetish, Kongo



Source: phot. G. Solecki, A. Piętak (The National Museum in Szczecin).

In anthropology the category of agency is inseparable from different types of social agents. Gell, moreover, separates the meaning of agency from philosophical abstract meanings. He creates the notion of ‘folk agency’, understood simply as the power of initiating the consequences of events through activity of the mind or will, or intention (1998: 16, 17). While artifacts often do not pose intention, mind or will, they nevertheless indirectly participate in the agency of ‘primary agents’. However, in the real social world the influence of ‘secondary agents’ is often equally well (or even more) effective as ‘primary agents’ (e.g. deluges, hurricanes)<sup>2</sup>.

The category of agency in Gell’s anthropology assumes two major theses. The first one is anthropological: it claims existence of rational and volitional, or at least intentional, beings. The second is performatively and pragmatically oriented: the beings have social influence in terms of causal-effect relation, whereas the agent’s intention is the cause and a change in (social, external) reality is the effect. The intentional causal-effect relations are functionally common, for instance, on the relation between the owner and her car Gell claims: “My car is a (potential) agent with respect to me as a »patient«, not in respect to itself, as a car. It is an agent only in so far as I am a »patient«, and it is a »patient« (the counterpart of an agent) only in so far as I am an agent with respect to it” (1998: 22)<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, in philosophy there are sophisticated analyses of different forms of that influence – Gell observes though that social world, for instance the functioning

<sup>2</sup> Thesis of the primeness of agency of the non-human world with regard to the human one is not accepted by Gell. It seems, however, that the possibility of accepting this thesis paves the way to transcend the particularly Western perspective of perceiving the world as being independent of its perpetrator.

<sup>3</sup> See also discussion of Gell’s idea (Kawalec 2016).

of different idols in it (a doll among children, Porsche car among adults) and draws commonsensical conclusions. He focuses especially on ontological conclusions and claims that in the situation of the influence of the elements of environment or artifacts, e.g. artworks, we deal with the conception of agent as ‘the extended mind’, and as a result ‘the distributed person’. Those ideas Gell constructed on the basis of Husserl’s conception of the consciousness of time (1998: 239).

The subject takes on the form of ‘the fractal person’ – genealogically understood person, following the pattern of the Meeting House of the Maori tribe in New Zealand, which embodies the powers/agency of many generations and intensely influencing the present-day social reality (Gell on the base of Hamilton 1896: 143).

Figure 3. Meeting house w Ohinemutu



Source: Hamilton, *The Art Workmanship of the Maori Race in New Zealand*, p. 140.

Gell’s depicts ‘the distributed person’ of the Maori tribe, which creates the Meeting House, with marked main points of generations of creators and their creations as well as relations between them and dynamic points of cognition and functioning of the whole work of Meeting House as the species of artifacts of this tribe (1998: 255)<sup>4</sup>. The conception of ontology and performativity of artifact

<sup>4</sup> A similar chart Gell made for the activities of an artist – Marcel Duchamp, on the basis of his studies on his artistic biography (life and works) (1998: 235).



formulated by Gell is an application of Husserl's conception of retention and protention (Husserl 1991), adapted to the requirements of environmental real life of the work and its creators (nexus).

The genealogical conception of subject (as individual and society) – “the fractal person” – reveals strong permeation of intentional (immanent) reality of a given society with objective as transcendent. Both, however, for Gell have the subjective and objective character as for instance the tribal exchange of valuables in Oceania “Kula” would not be possible without intentionally planned influence of Big Man and the intentional activity of Big Man would not be possible if the social institution of Kula did not exist in Oceania.

Gell's anthropological conception of art/artifact/performance satisfies thus features characteristic of phenomenology (in Schütz's version), as well as of phenomenology of art (Lorenc 2003): 1) exchangeability of the external with the internal, 2) ambivalence of distance and approaching, 3) the open character of (aesthetic) experience, which consists in “continuity of co-participation”, yearning towards “the entire understanding, in which we find what is primarily ours” (Lorenc 2015).

Exchangeability, approaching or participation are activities initiated by an agent having an effect upon a (recipient/patient). Irrespective of the personal or objectual nature of the agent – if she fulfills the functions of social influence – she possesses the status of ‘social agency’. The conditions then for phenomenology, while from philosophical perspective determining only human subjects, they can also extend to agents (primary and secondary), who have social influence either directly (as primary agent → recipient), or indirectly as mediated by artifacts (in the relation: primary agent → index (as secondary agent) → recipient).

The category of agency is common to Margaret Archer's theory and Alfred Gell's anthropology. While Archer from the sociological-theoretical perspective overcomes the hiatus between macrosocial dimension (‘system’) towards microsocial dimension (‘reflexivity’), Alfred Gell directly applied the phenomenological tools. His anthropological theory integrates ethnographical data with the data of subject-oriented and social anthropology. A consequence of his approach is the ontological conception of ‘the fractal person’ and ‘distributed mind’ (as described by Gell: as parts of cake, as layers of an onion, as the structure of Meeting House). His conception partly transcends Western division between the living and the inanimate.

## 5. Phenomenology in philosophy of person

The category of agency is also central in Karol Wojtyła's philosophy of human person (*The Acting Person*, 1979, in Polish – 1968), who was trained in the classical realistic metaphysics (the heritage of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas). This version of realism accepts the underlying thesis (adopted also by speculative realism) about

the objectivity of the existence of the external world and the possibilities of its knowledge by humans. His thoroughgoing inquiry into the nature of human being, however, brought Wojtyła to phenomenology. The phenomenological methods appeared to him to be tailored for the study of the essence of human person as Wojtyła was mainly concerned with personal (conscious and voluntary) acting. He considered ‘the acting’ as both the manifestation of personhood and simultaneously as constituting her as a person (free and responsible being). Wojtyła therefore the category of personal acting considered as a bridge between the internal world of the subject and the external metaphysical world of the human being.

Wojtyła’s conception of human person is a philosophical insight into the nature of human being through action. In contrast to Gell-anthropologist Wojtyła’s inquiry takes as central those categories, which reveal the specificity of human existence among other kinds of being. Those specific features are rationality and self-consciousness, voluntariness and the resulting skills of the subject: self-governance, self-possession (person is both the one, who possesses herself and the one, who is possessed exclusively by herself) and primarily self-determination (*persona est sui iuris*).

Wojtyła understands ‘person’ as the acting being. He accordingly applies the method of registering phenomena (acts as they appear), eidetic reduction (bracketing of the contexts of act) and insights into the nature of action in order to explain, how from a passive subject of experiences she turns into a responsible agent of actions. The issue of personal acting – according to Wojtyła – integrates the fields of anthropology and realistic metaphysics as “the issue of person constitutes particularly apt area, where a direct encounter takes place with being, and by the same token with metaphysical reflexion” (John Paul II 1998: 83).

‘The discovery’ of freedom as a feature constitutive of person revealed the dimension of agency. Wojtyła claimed that freedom expresses itself in agency, while agency leads to responsibility. Freedom is grounded in will: “The will, as we know, always has an intentional direction: it is always a willing directed to an object that is seen as a value. Such willing is consequently not merely a detached intentional act: on the contrary, it has an intransitive significance in the person. When willing something even beyond myself I thereby also in one way or another bring back the discretion of the will upon myself. Since willing is an intentional act, it can never pass unheeding by the ego, which in some respects is the ultimate object of the will” (1979: 161). However, neither rationality, nor will, by themselves are not sufficient for becoming a person, for self-determination. It is only the integral person, according to Wojtyła, who lives in social environment, who becomes a responsible agent, and her actions are susceptible to moral evaluation (the influence of Max Scheler).

The conception of person elaborated by Wojtyła is a dynamic one, because its essence is the act of decision, which is fulfilled in the concrete act. Rational



person as the agent of these acts is a free subject, who becomes responsible for her actions. The following is a significant sample of Wojtyła's insights into the dynamics of personal being: "That analysis of self-determination as well as of the performing of an action and the fulfillment this brings confirms our view of the person as a highly specific structure, namely, the structure of self-governance and self-possession. This structure differentiates the person from a merely natural being, for the elements of self-determination, of freedom, and of the consciousness of it, are wholly alien to nature as is also the transcendence in action formed within the person by his freedom and his conscious efficacy. It is that efficacy which is derived from freedom as the essential factor in the dynamic reality of the person and revealed by the experience of »man acts«. The experience of being the agent, of being the actor, makes of acting the »action of the person« and distinguishes it from the other, numerous manifestations of the human dynamism, in which the moment of a conscious efficacy of the personal ego is lacking" (1979: 189).

And shorter next: "In concept of »self-possession« denotes the person both as the one who possessed himself and as the one who is in the possession of himself. Similarly, the concept of »self-governance« denotes the person both as the one who governs himself and as the one who is in a way subjected and subordinate to himself" (1979: 190).

Agency for Wojtyła is thus constitutive for the personal structure of human being (reason and will) – it realizes her as person through the accomplished action. Between agency and the resulting act there exists a dynamic space realizing itself towards transcendence (for agency reveals itself as self-governance), also the structural integrity of personal dynamisms (such as immanence, here: rational-volitional dynamisms, sensory-appetitive and physiological-vegetative).

The above outlined sample of Wojtyła's eidetic insights into the nature of human being invokes the well-known in our culture dichotomic conception of human being as composed of body and mind<sup>5</sup>. Agency initiates the dynamism of becoming a person along the direction internal→external. Nevertheless, Wojtyła conceives of a possibility of a backward influence, the interaction of the subject with the external world. His conception of person realizes itself in two additional dimensions: as *subiectum* (autonomous substance) and as a relation (Buttiglione 1994: 21). Wojtyła, who himself experienced the world war (the loss of close relatives, his work in German work/prison camp in quarries) and the consequences of communism in the Poland, understood well the meaning of social-political determinations. He interpreted those influences as 'the second nature' of human being. They condition, according to Wojtyła, the formation of person, but as 'person' she is constituted by the conscious and free actions of the *subiectum*.

<sup>5</sup> Lowe E.J. presents some parallel assumptions on person (see: Lowe 2010).

## 6. Phenomenology in performing arts

Wojtyła, being a dramatist and actor himself, conceived of the role of consciousness as agent and cause of action resulting in change of reality – the immanent one of the subject, or the transcendent one of the external world. Through theatrical exercises humans develop more fully, they become more responsible, sensitive, open to themselves and to others, and the world, become more empathetic, but also distanced, able to activate emotions, will, self-governance (being the owner of own actions and at the same time being their executor). In art, thus, as much as in life – as Wojtyła claimed – the point is for person to act (in the sense of *actus personae*), and not just passively undergo some occurrences taking place in her (in the sense of *actus hominis*). In ordinary language, but also in the artistic one, the field of rationality, consciousness and volatility is referred to as ‘mind’. The description of the fourth kind of exercise in the work of actor, as recorded in the monograph *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting* (1953) by Michael Chekhov opens with Leonard da Vinci’s motto: “The soul desires to dwell with the body because without the members of the body it can neither act nor feel” (1953: 63).<sup>6</sup>

The conceptions of self-governance and self-determination, independently of Wojtyła’s theories and experiences, were realized in his theatrical activities by Konstanty Stanislawski’s pupil, collaborator of Московский Художественный Академический Театра (МХАТ and МХАТ2 (20. of XX) – Michael Chekhov. He elaborated his own method of actor’s preparation during emigration in the Western Europe (Austria, France, Germany, England), and especially in the USA – under the influence of psychoanalysis and Rudolf Steiner’s research on anthroposophy (working with e.g. the celebrities of the American movie industry: G. Cooper, G. Peck or I. Bergman).

In the case of actor’s technique elaborated by Chekhov we deal with the art understood as ability, skillful application of rules. The rules engage all personal dimensions of human being: her somatic processes, psychic (sensory-appetitive) and mental (volitional-rational). On this view, art concerns personal integral experience in combination with existential and environmental contexts of human person. For instance, Chekhov wrote about the first exercise in imagination and attention as active waiting, namely asking questions to... object, sound, speech as well as questions posed to the very recollection of object, sound, ... and also as concentration of attention: consisting in keeping an object, pulling it, approaching it and penetrating it.

The second way to conduct exercises was to create atmosphere, which Chekhov described as giving inspiration and power, creating bonds between actors and audience, while actors sought the atmosphere also in ordinary life, listening to

<sup>6</sup> In discussion of Chekhov’s method I use (Kawalec 2010: 312–324).

it everywhere. The actor is moving from a purely sensory experience, through the process of inductive generalizations to interiorization of the experience. This acquired knowledge becomes a factor shaping her personality. The interiorized experience can be expressed by a gesture. Chekhov suggests, for example, that adept experiences an atmosphere of joy as an action and will conclude that the atmosphere contains a gesture of opening, spread. Whereas depressed mood will be secured in a gesture of a closing. Personifying the atmosphere, Chekhov claimed that it was the work of the will of atmosphere. The feelings of individuals are shaped by exercises with the so-called coloration. This is the third method of conducting trials, the most faithful to MCHAT's way of working.

The fourth way of conducting trials proposed by Chekhov is forming oneself and drama through the exercise of *psychological gesture*. This is the central method in Chekhov's proposal. It combines in the fullest possible way all the layers of human being, in her corporeal-psyche dimension, as well as in the mental. The fifth way is to embody the vision and the so-called specificity. Visions can be embodied, starting with simple exercises consisting in imagining the 'center', for example a heart, which supplies all the life forces to every part of our body. The last way to conduct tests is to train the actor to improvise, through which the agent is unrestricted by schemes.

These methods of conducting tests demonstrate Chekhov's ontological assumptions. The actor on the stage, according to him, has three kinds of consciousness: first – ordinary, commonplace, which directs our actions almost automatically, the second – 'self', reflectivity, a controller of ordinary consciousness, while the third kind belongs to the created character. It is necessary to imagine a fully formed character, but it is creative. According to Chekhov, the actor on the stage is experiencing, crying because of the self, the consciousness that sensitizes, shapes empathy, has the knowledge and controls the ordinary consciousness in addition to the consciousness of the created character.

Chekhov's approach can be described as *ortopraxis*. His thesis is that the action is the key to the will. If the desire is strong, then the gesture will be strong too. And vice versa – if the gesture is strong, it will wake up in you – but only after interiorization (because one cannot want at will) – a strong will. The reflexivity of the relations, interaction of physical-psyche (movement) and mental spheres (will and intellect) is the basic anthropological premise of this creator of theater creators. Subsequent exercises illustrate different proportions of these effects, however, he always conceives of human integrally, including moreover environmental entanglement (this is K. Stanislavski's impact). The exercises that he proposes always include the sensory sphere up to the reflecting and this sensory is ultimately a test for the effect of the formation of the specific skill of the actor.

Interactivity of the internal with the external, is evident in Chekhov's idea, especially between the level of desires and feelings and the volitional (rationality

and will) in correlation with agency action: “In the qualities and sensations we found the key to the treasury of our feelings. But there is dry and the key to our will power? Yes, and in it we find in the movement (action, gesture). You can easily prove it to yourself by trying to make a strong, well-shaped but simple gesture. Repeat it several times and you will see That after a while your will power grows stronger and stronger under the influence of a dry gesture” (1953: 63).

The central exercise for actor in order to become a fully integrated person is the psychological gesture. Chekhov explained it by comparing it with the naturalistic gestures that are like parts to the whole. All the naturalistic gestures arise from this whole, including also the physical everyday gestures. According to Chekhov psychological-general gestures arise and are performed in our mind.

A variation of psychological gesture is a fantastic psychological gesture. This gesture allows the expression of the most intimate and original artistic concepts. Exercise of psychological gesture is intended to broaden and deepen sensitivity, experience of what is most intimate to express it.

Figure 4. Psychological gestures



Source: Author's drawings based on (Chekhov 1953).

The psychological gesture is used while working on the whole role (in motion is the will of the character, in tint – her feelings), and on the fragments of the role, the scenes, to build the atmosphere and in the work on the word. The latter use has its provenance in the concept of Rudolf Steiner's sound eurhythmics, according to which every sound, and vowel and consonant, contains a specific gesture. It can be revealed, and then it will be expressed through the gesture of the human body (e.g. sound A contains a gesture of openness, acceptance, surprise, consonant – like all the consonants it is connected with the outside world – e.g. M intensifies and penetrates to the phenomenon, touches its essence, while N slides along the surface of the phenomena and includes a note of irony). The whole alphabet developed by

Steiner and elaborated on the practical level by Chekhov, is the foundation of the actor's work on the speech on stage. Eurhythmic gesture, unlike psychological, is objective in nature (it exists independently of the mental attitude of the subject), but it is also less creative than the psychological. The aim of both gestures is activating the will and the feelings and opening of imagination. According to Chekhov, with achieving the excellent level of exercise student should be able to admit: "I feel my body and my speech as a direct continuation of my psychology. I feel them as visible and audible parts of my soul" (1953: 81).

The way of adept's development along this method of exercise proceeds from sensory experience through generalization of knowledge about oneself and the outside world by interiorization ("making their own") up to the real influence on emotions and will. The whole process is reflexive. This way of development is possible because human being, according to Chekhov, is a dynamic psycho-corporeal unity, although theoretically one can discriminate its components: the senses, feelings, thoughts (imagination and intellect) and impulses of will, fulfilled in a gesture as a conscious and free human action. The immanent world of persons Chekhov, however, distinguishes from the outside world. For example, during exercises of psychological gesture, he recommended to adept: "Distinguish between inner and outer tempos" (1953: 84).

## 7. The agency and "internal-external"

The concepts of acting and person of Chekhov and Wojtyła have many points in common. First of all, the role of the human body, which acts as an intermediary between the sensual and the mental dimension. Wojtyła writes: "the problem of the body in its strict relations to the human person may as well be considered in a somewhat static approach. Its relation to the human person is absolutely necessary, so much so that it is contained even in that often used definition which sees man as a rational animal: in this definition "animal" denotes the body as well as corporality. It is the body that gives man his concreteness [...] we may equate here the "visible" with the "external" (1979: 203). In dynamic perspective on the human person these dimensions engage and cooperate. Wojtyła wrote: "The person integration in the action [...] is not static; on the contrary, its nature is dynamic. As to the direction of these conditionings we see that in a way they operate from outside and are directed inward (in the case of psychical functions conditioned by the somatic ones) and from the inside outward (in the case of the somatic expression of the psychical functions)" (1979: 202).

So, the body is the place and means of expression of person at various levels (physical, psychic and mental). The dynamism of the body reveals also action fulfilled by a free and conscious act that by its feature of transitivity and intransitivity realizes the agent (by the choice in action human constitutes herself),

and influences other people. Using theatrical-philosophical metaphors, one can say that by Chekhov *gesture (action) teaches a person to act (conscious and free agency in acting), and the act teaches how to perform gestures*. Gesture stimulates imagination, emotions and will, resulting in act fulfilling a person. A person in turn fulfills herself, expressing herself through a moral act or a theatrical gesture.

Although the starting point of these authors is a bit different, because Chekhov begins actor work by performing an action, while Wojtyła begins by reflecting on acting, interiorization of experiential data, they share a common goal. Their goal is to find the truth (and with it the good or beautiful, see Wojtyła 1994: 486) – on the basis of the transcendental reference to reality. They both speak about human as the object of action, both emphasize the necessity to shape oneself by transgressing oneself, and both claim that the transgressing is accomplished in acting. The act they both understand as a free and conscious human action, which allows reflexive relationship between the internal and the external with regard to human person.

Different from Husserl – Chekhov’s practical approach to the category of agency, Wojtyła’s philosophical, Gell’s anthropological engage the methods of phenomenology, which provide secure subjective ground of knowledge. At the same time they all recognize the need to take into account the objective material and environmental dimension of the subject, including the *Lebenswelt*. Therefore, they accept – as a space of a collision between the subjective and the objective agency, understood only personalistically (philosophical anthropology), or additionally – factually (social anthropology, artworks, fictitious characters with agency ability or theatrical props).

Person integrates the internal dynamics determinations and external determinations. The very agency while it is not only an initial point of a specific change, but also a mediating functional mechanism of “the distributed mind” – “fractal person” and philosophical and theatrical “person”, as it is fulfilled/implemented in each act.

Agency is a crucial category justifying and transcending (at the same time) every human act and his theoretical (usually Western) categories and points of view. Because the world of agency (as Gell’s *nexus*) is the dynamic and mutual relation (not only a feature, not only abstractive category) between the agents. Moreover, agency points to the original and objective cause of some – maybe all – points of view of subject, indicates the origin of the ontological order (and – anthropological – undermining distinction of “Western” animate and inanimate dimensions of world).

Moreover, “folk agency” opens the door for the complementarity of the approaches of research which ensures the integrity of human cognition, knowledge, and... harmony of life (against the tyranny of innovative technology) and “naive”, primary attitude of human being allows to capture all events in the world as



a result of the agency of integrally affecting the Creator, the Human Person and the Elements of the Natural and Social Environment.

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