

# Voices in Dialogue: Interview with Giuliano Campo about Zygmunt Molik's praxis

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## Abstract - Voices in Dialogue: Interview with Giuliano Campo about Zygmunt Molik's praxis

The present interview aims to deepen contents about Molik's vocal exercises and methodological principles in the actor's work. It is a conversation with Giuliano Campo covering the following topics: Resonators, with comments on the creation and overcoming of this exercise; *Partitura*, about the process of choreographing the actor's psychophysical actions; Alphabet of the Body, about the origins of this system and how it helps in vocal work; Master's Conduct, about how Molik learned to treat the voice of the students; and terms such as Life and The Unknown. In addition, the interview has further elaborations and unfoldings of the themes treated in the book *Body and Voice Work by Zygmunt Molik (2012)*, always seeking not to approach his technique as a “manual”, but as a “living instrument”.

**Keywords:** Voice. Movement. Molik. Giuliano Campo.

## Resumo - Vozes em Diálogo: Entrevista com Giuliano Campo acerca da práxis de Zygmunt Molik

A presente entrevista tem como objetivo aprofundar os conteúdos relacionados aos exercícios vocais de Molik e seus princípios metodológicos no trabalho do ator. É uma conversa com Giuliano Campo que abrange os seguintes tópicos: Ressonadores, com comentários sobre a criação e superação deste exercício; Partituras, sobre o processo de coreografar as ações psicofísicas do ator; Alfabeto Corporal, sobre as origens deste sistema e como ele ajuda no trabalho vocal; Conduta do Mestre, sobre como Molik aprendeu a tratar a voz dos alunos; e termos como Vida e O Desconhecido. Além disso, a entrevista contempla elaborações e desdobramentos dos temas abordados no livro *Trabalho de voz e corpo de Zygmunt Molik (2012)*, sempre buscando não abordar sua técnica como um “manual”, mas como um “instrumento vivo”.

**Palavras-chave:** Voz. Movimento. Molik. Giuliano Campo.

## Resumen - Voces en diálogo: entrevista con Giuliano Campo sobre la praxis de Zygmunt Molik

La presente entrevista pretende profundizar en contenidos sobre los ejercicios vocales de Molik y los principios metodológicos en el trabajo de los actores. Se trata de una conversación con Giuliano Campo que abarca los siguientes temas: Resonadores, con comentarios sobre la creación y superación de este ejercicio; Partitura, sobre el proceso de coreografiar las acciones psicofísicas del actor; Alfabeto del Cuerpo, sobre los orígenes de este sistema y cómo ayuda en el trabajo vocal; Conducta del Maestro, sobre cómo Molik aprendió a tratar la voz de los alumnos; y términos como Vida y Lo Desconocido. Además, la entrevista cuenta con más elaboraciones y desdoblamiento de los temas tratados en el libro *Trabajo corporal y vocal de Zygmunt Molik (2012)*, buscando siempre no abordar su técnica como un “manual”, sino como un “instrumento vivo”.

**Palabras clave:** Voz. Movimiento. Molik. Giuliano Campo.

Zygmunt Molik was one of the founders of Jerzy Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre in the 1950s, and played a leading role in the group's training of actors, especially in the vocal treatment of its members. Being the most professionalized actor in the group for a certain time, he ended up starring in most of the plays until the arrival of the actors Zbigniew Cynkutis and Ryszard Cieślak. He gained renown after his performance in *Akropolis*, extolled for his physical and vocal qualities as an actor.

Molik was with Grotowski during the entire Theatrical Phase and Paratheatrical Phase, disengaging from the group only after 1985, when he began to build his solo workshop Voice and Body. During the Theatrical Phase, Molik would have developed the way Laboratory Theatre approaches resonators. Also during this phase, throughout the creation of the poor theater<sup>1</sup>, Grotowski developed the terms *impulse* and *body life* that were fundamental for Molik to develop his solo work.

During the Parateatral Phase, together with other members of the group, Molik gave sessions known as Acting Therapy, in which he began to develop his methodological principles that aimed at a “vocal unblocking”<sup>2</sup>. An important record of this phase is the film also called Acting Therapy (1976), which portrays the moments of these sessions that were conducted by Rena Mirecka, when addressing the plastic exercises, and by Molik, when provoking the vocal unblocking of the students.

Later, after the 80's, Molik developed the workshop Voice and Body using many of his influences in the construction of the Laboratory's trainings and in the relationship with its members. Having as axis his work with vocal unblocking from the acting therapy sessions, Molik substitutes Mirecka's *plastic* exercises for his new movement system called *body alphabet*. Influenced by Grotowski's terms *impulse* and *body life*, Molik also develops his terms *Life* and *the unknown*. There is even a film called *Dyrygent* (2006) that shows parts of his workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> It was during this period, in the Laboratory Theater, through the investigations of the actor's work on himself that Grotowski came to develop the so famous poor theater. This theater of Grotowski's manifested itself in opposition to the “rich theater” or “synthetic theater” as he himself called the theatrical productions of his time that were known for trying to be a synthesis of all the arts.

<sup>2</sup> Vocal unblocking refers to the process that the actor undergoes to achieve what Molik calls “open voice”. The vocal blockages may be physical blockages such as language habits, posture, inconsistent adduction of the vocal folds, unconsciously sublocated larynx, among others. However, they can also be psychological and emotional blocks related to self-acceptance, excessive self-charging, anxiety, etc.

During his work with the Voice and Body, Molik met Giuliano Campo and Jorge Parente, two important figures in the perpetuation of these vocal techniques. Campo conducted extensive research on Molik's vocal techniques, and produced the documentary *Alphabet of the Body* (2009), which portrays Parente performing 26 actions of Molik's system. After 7 interviews with Molik, Campo developed his book *Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work* (2012) gathering the 3 films mentioned above. This book remains to this day the largest bibliographic reference on Molik's practice. It is important to note that Parente was chosen by Molik to perform his alphabet in the documentary because he is considered a 'master' in this technique.

Later, in 2022, in the dissertation *Voz e Movimento: uma análise da práxis de Zygmunt Molik* (2022) written by Pablo Magalhães, both the aforementioned book and the 3 films also mentioned above are analyzed. The research brings together these materials with this present interview with Campo, which in turn addresses deepening of themes treated slightly in the bibliographic records; confirmations about the origin of terms and exercises and their connections with the practices of Laboratory Theatre; and other unpublished information about the structure of Molik's "Voice and Body" workshop, and also about important exercises of this technique as the *body alphabet* and *levitation*.

In addition, the interview also touches on an important subject for this kind of practice: tradition in the transmission of knowledge. Throughout Campo's book and the Magalhães' dissertation, comments are made about the fears of creating a "manual" with these techniques, since this methodological path would go against the tradition to which Molik claimed to belong. A tradition that, according to Campo, belongs to a vertical transmission of knowledge. Therefore, many authors in this line of work aim to produce academic records based on dialogues about the theme, in an attempt to provide a dialog that dribbles the limitations that words have when describing such practical and personal techniques.

After this brief historical contextualization, enjoy the following interview:

**Magalhães:** I could notice that both in practice and, especially, in theory, Grotowski, Molik, Barba and even you seemed reluctant to a dictionarization of this artwork in a way that always emphasized an aversion to the creation of a “manual” with this technique. I even understood that the search for a dialogical writing using interviews to deal with this work, showed itself as a writing alternative that did not result in a manual but in discussions and reflections about the theme. I would like to say that I seek through this interview not to dictionary the work but to promote discussions, reflections and perspectives about this technique. So, to begin, I would like to start by getting to know a little bit about you, in which artistic areas you have been working and, mainly, how is your relation currently with this work of Molik.

**Campo:** Back to the original pedagogy in maieutics: Plato and Socrates. When you understand that it is this dialogical way that gives you the opportunity to arrive at some truth, rather than letting someone else tell you what is right or wrong or the way you have to follow. After all, this is not really the way to learn. There is another thing, when it comes to writing, there is a problem with the kind of approach you take when you want to teach or learn something. For example, the idea that we learn from books. Of course we learn from books, but there is a limitation in written texts and there are some traditions that are alternatives to this. You can go back to ancient times, other cultures, indigenous cultures, it was very clear that the kind of approach shows that real knowledge comes with direct communication, something that is alive, especially about Life. So it is an illusion that you can translate everything, your whole being, your presence, a direct contact with somebody into a written text. Of course you get something, but you really lose a lot. Stanislavski created a text “the actor's work on himself”, simulating what was happening in the teaching process or in the exchange between masters and students, this kind of book is not a manual or something to be read, but to be lived. Fabiene called this “theater in book form”. So it is more of a theatrical experience or a living experience than a typical manual with a recipe.

Stanislavski is famous for having created a system, but even in this idea he avoided having a system that you could use as a recipe. Maybe in the American translation they used the first part of the system for historical reasons. Stanislavski still made attempts, encountered obstacles and changed approaches. It was always a process, not something you discover by simply saying “this is it! and now you follow the recipe”. What I tried to do in the

book with Molik was to follow this kind of path. I use all the recordings and everything is accurate, but the way the book is organized and edited is fictitious. It is fictitious. I didn't have nine classes with Molik. It didn't work that way in reality, but that was to allow the creation of a text as Stanislawski did. This is because he used notes, he didn't record everything and put everything on paper. He used some notes to create a text that could be used for some specific purposes, and that is the operation. I try to have this book as a kind of living instrument. Socrates never wrote a text. It was Plato who used Socrates' teachings. He [Socrates] was against writing. The people of the Veda culture could write down the whole huge body of knowledge of this culture. But they refused. They didn't want it because it would be a misunderstanding of the actual communication. We are lucky to have many of the original sources, but we cannot make the mistake of believing that what we can read is the same as the teaching, it is not. It is an impression of it.

But there is something else that we have to consider: The cultural education that is based on texts and books is quite contemporary, I mean, it was settled in the 19th century with the establishment of the bourgeoisie. Power and culture. Their idea of having schools with classes, with people sitting at a desk in a discipline, which is the mirror image of their military rules, that's the origin of it. So the knowledge was based solely on reading the text. And this was questioned by many, especially during the Russian Revolution, for example, some educators and some pedagogues wanted to challenge and change the way we could approach knowledge. Focusing the work more on physical activities instead of being a sitting class reading books. Also, even Tolstoy, who was the main inspiration, by the way, for Stanislavski, was one of the founders of modern pedagogy, and he created a colony where his students were in contact with nature. So working with this kind of pedagogical strand in theater and beyond theater, but starting with theater and art, is meant to have an impact far beyond the field. It's a way to reconsider transmission, knowledge, and the way we grow as human beings, basically.

I worked for years with Molik while I was developing the book. I met him before, in Poland. And then we met for the book. I remember when Professor Polar Lane first showed the film of Akropolis. That really blew my mind. It was something absolutely special. It's also a beautiful film. The way it was filmed was already experimental because it is absolutely impossible, again, to translate a live performance into another language, but this is a fantastic example of how it can be done. Especially Molik's work. I mean, he does something

absolutely magical. You can see in some moments what Grotowski considered as a “total act”. The actor and the vocal work. In the famous last procession with everybody, seeing all the actors who are singing this litany, joyfully entering the gas chamber. It is one of the best moments of the theater. You can still enjoy it through the film. I was very impressed by it. So you can imagine, when I had the opportunity to work with him, how important it was for me, it was one of the reasons why I'm doing this profession.

But Molik was a very interesting character. Many people tried to produce some materials from Molik that could be circulated, but none of them were really successful. This is because Molik never liked to talk much. I know I brought him into several of my publications, but he wanted to say almost nothing. He simply wouldn't talk. And he had a very simple approach. Apparently, he didn't. But the point is that he was always extremely honest. Extremely. I mean, radically honest and accurate. So he is not somebody who starts talking about memories in life. He just looks at you and says just a few words. So it was very difficult to communicate in our work in an institutional, classical, normal way. I had to find other strategies. I developed a very strong connection with him. By the way, he liked my voice. I had the opportunity to sing for him. I remember that he often, when we met during lunch or in some informal situations, would ask me to sing. It was the most fun time. Well, these are just episodes now. It's very strange, you know, the book was published just when Molik was dying. So I feel something, a little bit of pain, because we worked for years. He was very interested in the book and for him it was like the last piece of the legacy. We finished the book, we finished everything. It was ready, but he died before...we couldn't enjoy the book together and go around presenting it and doing workshops. But it's really the last legacy he left. Of course, Jorge Parente also does a great job. Now I still feel a kind of responsibility to continue this path in some way. But in my own way, I am of course not pretending to be Molik, but trying to keep the work going, and doing what is important to keep it alive. So I have been teaching, talking about Molik, doing a lot of presentations, conferences, and practical work.

Now we are running workshops in many, many places over the years. Sometimes I introduce the alphabet of the body in my courses, but this is not something that is used systematically, because I don't want to impose it as part of the programs. I use it when I feel it can work, when students are receptive to it because it is also difficult to put this methodological principle as one of the many principles you discuss when teaching. Part of it

is because it is very personal and part of it is because it cannot be confused with other types of acting techniques that we use, after all it is not an acting technique. It is very beneficial for actors. I'm not saying it's not. It's very important for understanding what the Grotowskian approach is like. But the purpose of the alphabet of the body is not to produce training for actors. That is very important. The alphabet of the body and all the work in Molik's "Voice and Body" is not just for actors. Because the voice and body work is open to anybody. That's the point: it's not for professionals, it's for human beings of any kind, any quality, any ability, age, gender, there is no limitation. One of the things that Molik really pointed out was the difference between the kind of training he developed and training like Richard Cieslak's. Richard Cieslak's is absolutely amazing but the problem is that to follow this kind of physical exercise, you need to be some kind of athlete, you need to be young, extremely skilled and be very capable of doing these kinds of amazing physical exercises. The work with Molik is very different. Since there are no significant obstacles for someone to do the exercises, their actions or letters of the alphabet, maybe some of them can be tricky, but it doesn't need to be essential to do all of them.

So basically everyone was accepted as a student, that happened to me, and to students of any background. Of course most of them were young actors or students, but in many cases they were people who would not be able to do any particularly stressful physical or vocal exercise. The point is to discover your voice, to discover that you have a voice. That's the point, so this is for everybody. Even professional singers, opera singers who know everything about voice, technically. But that doesn't mean they have an open voice that connects to Life with a "capital L", as Molik used to say. And believe me, this work changes people's lives. The moment someone finds out that they have a life. Something happens in the organism, in the person. It is absolutely true, it has functionality because the voice, once opened, is a direct channel to the interiority and to the emotions. To the truth of yourself, you discover yourself. Something happens and this transforms people's lives.

**Magalhães:** I decided to start the interview dealing with a theme that seems to have been left aside by Molik and Grotowski after some time. I would like to deal with the Resonators, a technique that initially seemed promising, but after the new directions of the work in the laboratory theatre, in the search for poor theater, seemed to have been "abandoned". Grotowski and Molik claimed that working the resonators after a certain time was

misdirecting the actor's attention to the wrong place. Molik even called them “Obvious Things” using this as a motivation for abandoning the technique. However, while they were still being studied the way they were conceived, Grotowski's Resonators had some bibliographic records and, according to them and to some passages of your book, I could notice convergences and even divergences between Molik and Grotowski on the subject.

Within these disagreements between Grotowski and Molik, I could notice one regarding the use of the occipital resonator in relation to the La Nuque register commented by Molik. Grotowski seemed to believe that the Occipital Resonator was the resonator that produced the higher registers and greater vocal expansion, whereas Molik seemed to trust these possibilities to the La Nuque register. Do you believe that this is just a different approach to the same resonator? Or, possibly, was the La Nuque a resonator apart that Molik used a lot that did not appear in Grotowski's recordings? What was the way Molik worked with this resonator?

**Campo:** OK, so I think we have some questions, some are technical, some are not technical but relate to the history of these two great figures. So one thing to understand is that in the Laboratory Theatre the only professional was Molik, as an actor. The others were all very young. Molik was a little bit older than the others and he already had some experiences. He was working as an actor, but also as a “reciter”. This means that it was a particular form of storytelling used at that time in Poland in open spaces. He used to promote some of these works for steel factories. So he would travel around the country with an accordion player and another small group paid by the government to convince people. So he was already using his voice in a very professional way and doing theater at that time. Grotowski started in drama school, first as an actor and then as a director, but he never really acted. He studied in Moscow, but when he returned to Poland, he created the company after the impetus given by Ludwik Flaszen, who was the original creator of laboratory theatre. Grotowski chose non-experienced actors from here and there, including Rena Mirecka. Molik was the only one with any experience. So the initial phase was to create a training. Grotowski had very strong ideas about what to do, even when he was very young, inexperienced, but he was already clearly a leader and a guide for the others. Even all the members of the group, in particular Molik and Mirecka said “we would jump into the fire, for Grotowski.” Grotowski was clearly the one who inspired the others. But in a “technical” way Molik was the most experienced of



them. When they developed the different techniques, they were creating a laboratory theatre. It is a very specific way of organizing a company in which the training is governed by some company members within the group. By the way, be aware that we are talking about the 1950s, people didn't have the opportunity to go to workshops, around the world or invite special people, think of Poland at that time. So they had to use the sources they had to create something innovative and different. The first physical training they developed was through an American Marine training book. Further on they divided up the different disciplines: Mirecka was leading the plastic exercises, later Cieslak was handling the gymnastic type of physical work, Cynkutis working on the rhythm and Molik working on the voice. So basically everything they created was created by themselves and with Grotowski. In that way, during the whole period of establishing the training, it's hard to distinguish, but I would say that Molik is the protagonist in establishing the vocal training, not Grotowski. Of course Grotowski, with this enormous mind and skills, was instrumental, was a guide, and I would also say a quick learner. But anyway, all the work with all the resonators, of course, was Molik's work that comes from a tradition.

The resonator work has been in use for hundreds of years, if not millennia. It is typical of opera singers. So when you get into the specific technique, I can tell you my idea or the experience I have, but we don't have Molik or Grotowski and ask them about it. But what I can tell you is that the higher pitch that was a specific interest of Grotowski was actually from the top of the head and this is derived from some information he got from Chinese opera. Although Molik is much more rooted in European theater and experiences, he doesn't really have that kind of exchange. For example, Hatha-yoga. Grotowski was always a practitioner of yoga. And also Richard Cieslak, the work he did with Grotowski, you see it's basically the dynamic development of Hatha-yoga. Molik used only some of them. He never really dealt with it. He was not close to other cultures. That's the point, he has a very specific European approach in training. That's what he brought and developed. So those are the differences, but technically they're not big, honestly. It was kind of a very free exploration, to start with these techniques and then try them out and see how they worked. Molik, when he was developing the various systems, starting with the resonators and then the "Voice and Body" work, the first thing he did was experiment on himself, for a long time, and try it with the group members. And when they started doing workshops, much later, Molik had thousands of students and he could experiment and determine what was working or not working and

under what conditions. For example, there's an episode about Richard Cieslak: when he joined the company, much later than the others, he was younger, he studied puppetry in drama school but he wasn't really trained as an actor like the others, and he had problems with his voice. And you can see in films where Cieslak is doing some voice exercise, having this kind of very low register and some problems, he was kind of blocked. So Molik worked with him directly and opened up his voice. That was the goal instead of, again, "creating recipes," he used to work very pragmatically, providing solutions to some specific problems. Molik, and also Grotowski, stopped using resonators especially because they basically abandoned theater. Resonators serve mainly as actor training because it increases the expressive possibilities of an actor. Of course you can use resonators, and frankly, you can find some other ways to use them as part of voice work, to open up the voice in some cases. I remember Molik, after giving up resonators for many years, focusing on "Voice and Body Work," was indeed returning to using resonators from time to time. The point is that it was not the main work that could really achieve what they were trying to achieve at the time of Paratheater, basically because that was part of actor training. And they were moving into something totally different, and Grotowski, moved even beyond that because he started working with the traditional songs. Most of the traditional songs were from Haiti and African type roots.

After the period of international exploration of the theater of sources, the range of expiration and also the goals changed towards "art as vehicle". Molik was no longer working at that time with Grotowski, and neither was Mirecka. After the initial period of working together in Parateatro they parted ways. Grotowski left after 1983 or 1982 and they never worked together again. But what is interesting is that neither Molik nor Mirecka returned to the theater. After their experience with Grotowski they finished with theater and continued "working on themselves," just like Grotowski. Each of them had their own particularities, but all were related in some way. For Molik, the voice was the vehicle. He was the first to use the term vehicle.

**Magalhães:** In my dissertation I have been analyzing the films that you left available in your book Zygmunt Molik's Voice and Body Work, however, it is important to point out that due to the time these films were recorded and released, resonators were no longer worked as they were conceived and, Consequently, they are hardly addressed in the films, since they refer to

the Paratheatrical Phase (Acting Therapy) and to Molik's solo works with his workshop "Voice and Body" (Dyrygent and Body Alphabet) already years after Grotowski's death in 1999. So, I would like to know if you ever witnessed any of Molik's courses or works in which he consciously addressed the resonators, directing attention specifically to them and, especially, if any of these moments were documented? Also, in the films in the book you wrote, are these resonators addressed at any time, even if unconsciously?

**Campo:** He never approached the resonators during the workshops, and consequently the films, because he was concentrating on "Voice and Body." I had a few one-on-one sessions with Molik about that. He was really starting, at that time, to rework and think about how to develop new approaches, recovering some work with resonators, but he was not yet using this with the students. However, there are some moments in the typical "Voice and Body" cycle, it's about five or six days, right at the end of the work, when individuals do some improvisation. At these times we had individual work with Molik and a lot of things were going on at the time. So not everything that is part of the method is explored. You can see in the documentaries that they use some movements and gestures that are not codified for the use of specific common aspects of the voice, so probably yes, in this case, there probably is. At some points he was using something that you could relate to resonators, but not in a systematic way.

**Magalhães:** Yes, I mean, it seems that he didn't abandon the resonators, but he changed the approach. After a while, he didn't consciously use it or direct the actors' focus to the resonators, but he also stimulated them to use it.

**Campo:** Yes, stimulate! Because the problem is that when you use resonators in a very systematic way, it can seem like a recipe, a system to follow. And it is fragmented. That's also why Grotowski, I think, left that kind of approach because it's like using a fragmented approach. Whereas the idea is to create this kind of flowing, organic, almost shamanic state of consciousness. Molik is no different. So you don't stop the training and say "OK, now we work on this". It can happen at a certain point, yes, one on one, to check something, but not as part of the system.

**Magalhães:** Several times in your book, you and Molik comment about the reservations you have about “creating an acting manual” with this technique. You even criticize the translations of Stanislavski's books into English, alleging that initially, in Russian, it was called “The actor's work on himself” and in English it became “The actor's manual”. Moreover, allied to this problematic, after the first half of Grotowski's Theatrical Phase, the resonators seem to act in a harmful way to the actor's attention and consequently to his corporal and vocal freedom on stage. Do you think it was for this very reason that Molik preferred not to give much clarification about resonators in his book? Molik said that “Resonators are obvious things”, is that what contributed to the abandonment of this technique? and finally, is that the same reason that prevented Molik from providing further clarification about the “Universal Map of Energy Points” that you asked him about in interviews with him? Is there anything you would like to say about this that you didn't say in your book?

**Campo:** Let's start with what you said before, about the title of Stanislavski's book. This is something important! The Russian edition of the book is called “The Actor's Work on Himself.” You have to know that the first edition of Stanislavski's book is American. The story goes that his son was sick and needed money - we are talking now about the time of the Soviet Union - and there were some problems. At that time in the Soviet Union you couldn't have copyrights, so he couldn't get money from publications, and because of this he accepted the invitation from the Americans after his 1923 tour in America. That tour was very successful and he became famous. So he accepted, published the book in America to get the copyright. But the problem is that the text was somehow manipulated to make it more acceptable to an American audience. Also, it was very biased since it refers only to the first part of the experimentation of the system. It turned out that Stanislavski rejected that book and then published it in Russia with the original title. And not only the title, but numerous other elements, is an interesting story. But the point is that the title is very important, “the actor's work on himself” means that the goal of the work is not to produce a kind of commercial art or a spectacle, but it's to work on yourself, it's to use art as a vehicle. So it completely changed the perspective. But the Americans owned the copyright, legally, so the whole world outside of Russia, with some exceptions, could only know Stanislavski's work from the American books. So for 70 years it was forbidden to publish any other version, but

finally they were able to do so. After the copyright expired, Routledge published a more accurate - but not completely accurate, unfortunately - version of the original Russian book, with a new translation in 2005. Again, they changed the title, and use something like “actors work a student diary” which is not the original title, I don't know why, I think they might be afraid that people will get confused and not understand the title “An Actor's Work on Himself”. That's just it, the idea of creating a recipe manual that is always a problem. By the way, I am now publishing a book. My new book will be published by Routledge in June, it's called “Acting the Essence: A Performer's Work on the Self” to make it even clearer if that's possible.

**Magalhães:** What about this universal map of energy points?

**Campo:** Yes, the energy points. Well, I did my academic research, and I find it amazing how accurately Molik could identify some problems and blockages in people. So I asked him if he had a specific map that used energy centers. This is because I am training in some Chinese, Indian and Japanese traditions that have some specific energy centers that you can operate. Many traditions have this kind of map. I was wondering if he was using any of these or any clinical or medical map. But it was not his approach. His approach is very different. Everything comes from experience and knowledge of people. You know people and individuals. That's why he said using a shamanic approach, this is a kind of knowledge that some very experienced people have, but it comes from experience. It can only be transmitted through practice. I must say that I was lucky enough to work with him a lot and see how he operates it. But I know that what I learned from Molik was through practice. The more you practice, using these very extraordinary methods that Molik uses, you find more and more ways to identify and resolve the blockages, but this comes from practice, from a very strong structure that you have. Because the method works, but in the beginning you can just try to imitate the master and see. But from this imitation, after years of experience, you begin to really understand how it works. But again, if you explain it and say “You play it here and there,” it sounds silly because it's not about that. It works like that, but first: it doesn't work for everybody in the same way. Second: there are many elements that come together. It's not a clinical approach. It's a holistic approach.

**Magalhães:** And I think this is because it is something very personal, right? We are all different, so you have to work differently for each of us.

**Campo:** Yes, it is completely personal! And each individual is different. Some have some physical blocks, some have some psychological blocks, some are mixed. Some students have blocks that come from environments, others from age or professional issues. Of course, we are all the same. They are all human. So some things work the same way. But, for example, some letters of the alphabet work very well for some, but with others they don't work at all. You know, in some cultures some exercises are well accepted, in other cultures they are not. They refuse or they don't, people sometimes get irritated. So you have to have experience with the range of people you have and work with that. You really start to identify the correct procedure.

**Magalhães:** One of Molik's terms that most intrigued me was the term Life, which is repeated several times throughout the book. It seems to be one of the most important points of Molik's work, perhaps even the goal of his technique: to find a Life. However, like other themes in his work, Molik does not describe exactly what this Life is. Through some metaphors and examples from the classroom, essays and performances, it is possible to grasp the meaning of this term. For me, particularly, I closely associated this term Life from Molik with the search for the body-life, a term developed by Grotowski. Both Life seemed to be the goal of Molik's technique, and the body-life seemed to be the goal of the actor's training in Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre. And in your experience, how do you see the term Life addressed by Molik? Do you believe that there is any relation with Grotowski's term body-life?

**Campo:** I don't think it's different, I think it's the same. It actually comes from Stanislavski! He says very clearly that he was interested in actors acting as if they were doing it for the first time, experiencing it for the first time. Even if it's repeated, obviously. But Stanislavski's goal was to have a creative actor who, every time he acts, he is living, so he is living not repeating. So this is the Life that we are all looking for when we do any kind of training in this line. So you can use different terminology, but Life is Life. It can be quite confusing when you read it, but when you practice it is not something very complicated. You can see it when you work in

a studio and practice or when you just watch the actors in the theater. You can see when an actor is living Life, when he has a presence or when he is empty, mechanical or empty because he doesn't know what to do. When you do a real action, you must have something inside you. The work is both external and internal. You can use techniques that come to stimulate the external or use techniques that come to stimulate the internal or both combined, usually both combined, it depends. In the Grotowskian approach, which is not new but just clear, you use elements of memory, life, present experience, past experience and imagination - but this is already present in Stanislavski - yet it becomes more systematic with Grotowski and also with Molik. You see a very clear direction and then you see people working with them, maybe they are not used to it, but this is really the essence of acting or even working in this kind of practice. The work is to be able to release your own creative energies, and in Molik's case, through voice. But when you have to create the *partitura*<sup>3</sup>, you have to find that path again that came from memories of life and imagination, either one of the two or both combined, no matter how you added them together. The problem is that you know you are not using the logical mind, it is a different approach. In fact their whole job is to try to avoid the logical mind, Molik said that if he could he would "cut the actors' heads off". It's not just Molik who says that, there are many others. But Molik made it so clear and effective. So when you get into the process, by the way, you don't have to repeat it like 100 to 2000 times. For Grotowski, at one point, his main focus was on precision, I mean Molik too, but he demonstrated that you could see Life, even if you organized your *partitura* after doing three or four repetitions. We don't need to repeat about 100 times to do it, after three or four repetitions of your *partitura*, if it is full of these elements, it's not empty, you can see it. Yes, you have Life. That is Life! It is really Life, you know, it has the capital L because it is, I would say, a life that is lived at a special time, under special circumstances. And it is a special selection because you are going back to some moments that are clearly important to you, but it is Life. It is your life. You see a lot of people doing this work because they don't have any conditioning, they don't have to follow the lines, they don't have the problem of having to perform for their audience. Here you create this laboratory. That's the meaning of the laboratory, you have a space, and it is protected, so you give some instruments for people to

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<sup>3</sup> The word "*Partitura*" is of Latin descent and is commonly used in Portuguese, Italian and Spanish as a translation of the English word "score". It refers to the system of graphic material, containing printed or handwritten notations, that shows the totality of the parts of a musical composition. On the other hand, in the scenic arts it is commonly used as a synonym for a sequence of physical actions.

be free and express themselves and do this kind of research. That's when you see this fire, you know? Coming out. It's hard to express with words. There is something here to experience only in practice.

**Magalhães:** This is a part of the work that is practical. In fact, I think it's really easier to understand by practice, than by theory.

**Campo:** Yes.

**Magalhães:** I loved this answer. Actually, I think these two terms are very close to each other. Body-Life, Life, and even Presence. It seems like they are talking about the same feeling.

**Magalhães:** This search into the unknown and even encounter with the unknown is mentioned by you and Molik in your book, however, Molik seems reluctant to elaborate on it, perhaps because it is something too subjective and consequently delicate to describe. According to the bibliographical records, the search seems to be related to a moment of improvisation by the actor, while the encounter with the unknown seems to be the actor's encounter with a Life. I would even like to open space in this interview for you to deal, if you wish, with subjects that Molik preferred to leave aside in his interviews with you, so, as with resonators and energy maps, I had difficulty finding information about this search in the unknown. What then is your perspective on this term? What for you is this search or encounter with the unknown?

**Campo:** Yes! I think we need to avoid thinking that there is a mythology, let's try to demystify that, and again, it's another issue that becomes clear if you do the practice. It's a moment, it's just a moment during the practice. It's a magical moment, it's a very special moment, but the only way to explain what you're going to do, what's going to happen, is during the practice. So Molik was not reluctant about it, he just used these words to explain what happens in these moments. Basically, it's a phase of the work. In the initial work with "Voice and Body" you do some practices, you do the warm-up and some exercises, but then you dive into the alphabet of the body. Then you do all the work with the alphabet, you learn the letters, after three days, when you master the alphabet, you start to use it, I mean, it is an



instrument. It is not something you learn just to learn it. These structures are instruments to help you do that, to “go into your deep consciousness” - Molik wouldn't use this term, it's just to explain - To go into that kind of subconscious, into the world you have inside. Artistic creation is always unconscious. You have to find some ways to instigate that, and this is the way Molik used to instigate it in his work: the letters of the alphabet. So at that moment, in order to create your *partitura*, you have to gradually get rid of the letters of the alphabet, and now you don't know what to do in this space, what is to come. Of course, you can say that you can have many other ways, but this is a direct way, very effective, because you avoid sitting and thinking about what I'm going to do or taking notes. You are just working in the space - we used to work in this space for three days with other people - if you don't know what to do, you repeat some letters of the alphabet. But you realize now that you have to leave them and use them as instruments, as hooks to get into other actions, other movements that can relate or instigate, help you to get to some images, to investigate your memories, relive them, or just let these images appear. So you live the moment, here is Life. This is the unknown because when you do this moment of practice, you don't know what you are going to see/do because it is not planned on paper. It is happening and you don't know until it happens. It is the pure creative moment of the work. It's very simple, it's not mystical, it is what it is: you enter the unknown because you are letting go of the structure that was helping you move in space, and when you leave the structure, you see another world. That's when Life appears. Because you are not repeating the forms, you are doing something else. Life comes in its own individual, and it doesn't look like anything else. By the way, these letters of the alphabet are not just formal exercises like gymnastics, they are all already related to some images. So they help you to approach, by analogy, something else that can inspire you. To approach something that relates to your life or other images that you can create.

**Magalhães:** We are now going to deal with this set of movements, these precise actions that Molik has called the alphabet of the body. Initially, I would like to ask if you know the origin of this alphabet. Where do all those movements come from? Did Molik have any inspiration or even physical practices that he trained and started to use as part of this alphabet? According to his book, some of the “letters” of the alphabet apparently have some inspiration from Hatha Yoga movements, European Pantomime, and in some way Molik seems to have

even used some “details” from *Plastiques* exercises. So, in your experience about this subject, how did you create this alphabet?

**Campo:** Yes, it is what you are saying. I know because I've also practiced plastic exercises with various people like Renna Mirecka, basically who created it, and also Cynkutis, and Cynkutis' wife, but also with Odin Theatre actors who learn from Richard Cieslak. So I know very well the plastic exercises, their development of the theatrical body, actually. And yes, you can clearly see these references. Some of these letters of the alphabet are versions or parts of the plastic exercises, or even something that was developed by some colleagues, in particular by Rena Mirecka, like The Kite. The Kite is something that Renna used to do. But yes, others are from Hatha Yoga, I mean, Molik was not a Yoga practitioner, but some, of course, practiced together. For example, “Cobra” comes from Hatha Yoga, others Molik said came from pantomime, from a European pantomime, they practiced all these things. So yes, also from pantomime and these traditional European acting techniques for the body. So it's a mixture of different things, other lyrics I think he produced himself, just created based on pragmatism. Some of the work he did had very direct contact with people. So some of the stuff was a kind of manipulation, and from this manipulation he could develop some exercises in understanding where the body needed to be emphasized. Because they don't all work the same way, that's why there are so many of them. Because each of these letters works on some very specific blockages, they are all meant to release some blockages. When you learn the “letters”, you practice them, and then you use your voice. If you use your voice correctly, with the right breathing, you understand, during the practice, where the blockage is and how we can unblock it using these letters. Each one of them has a different history, different origins. They don't come from the same culture. They come from Molik. By the way, you need to be aware of something, this is important, Molik explains that there are only two reasons why the voice is blocked. One is the breath and the other is the larynx, the blocking of the larynx. So all these lyrics work at some different points in the body, or at different kinds of dynamics, and for one of these two purposes, or both. They regulate the breath. The breath is full, slow, and complete. And the letters work by opening the larynx in some way.

**Magalhães:** During the documentary *Alphabet of the Body*, which portrays Jorge Parente performing the “letters” of the alphabet; yourself performing some of these letters; and finally, a dialog between you and Molik commenting on the film as you watch it. At the end of Jorge Parente's part, he puts himself into an improvisation using the letters of the alphabet as a “guide,” connecting one movement to the other in an improvised way. Then he improvises these movements now being guided by the voice. Would this moment of improvisation be a search in the unknown as the one commented above?

**Campo:** All right, let's put things in the right order, okay? So the first thing we need to be aware of is that this is not part of actor training. In my experience, it is very useful for actors if it is used in a certain way, but that is not the goal of the work. Yes, that is very important. Then the rest is to understand that there are some phases in the work. So the first phase is that you learn the alphabet of the body, and then once you learn them one by one, you create a short presentation in which you edit them, basically. You use one after the other without a specific order. Just as it comes. You just do, maybe not all of them. You do what comes to you when you are trying to provide an improvisation. In this improvisation, you just put some letters of the alphabet together. There is the first performance, the physical performance extracted from the alphabet of the body. Then you have a second performance, we do the same as the first performance, but this time you vocalize. And you see, basically, the effect of the alphabet of the body and you see that the goal of these actions is to unlock the voice. OK, now the other work with improvisation and voice is the moment when you leave, you leave the letters of the alphabet of the body, this is the moment we were talking about before, when you encounter the unknown. That is the moment. And in that moment you use the whole system just to enter this “other world”, this creative moment, the creative energy. So before you unblock the voice - this blocked voice means I'm blocking the creative energy - that's the moment when you leave the alphabet of the body and its forms. You just live with your Life and encounter the unknown and create your *partitura*, which is a sequence of physical actions at the end. And then, when you repeat it 3 or 4 times you get that “*partitura*”. That is enough. And then what you do is perform it using vocalization, just as you did with the letters of the alphabet. Now that you have this next step, with the “Open Voice”, open energy, you use it with the physical action sequence. Then you put it together. The *partitura*

that you have full of your life and a Life that comes from a voice that is now more open. You put those things together and you have a performance, basically.

**Magalhães:** Finally, one last question about the alphabet of the body. During this personal search of mine for ways to work the voice of the actor, I had contact with several techniques, including those related to opera, musical theater and similars. In these areas, from the experience I had, the vocal technique was worked keeping the body a little more static, without much movement. When I got to know the work of Grotowski and Molik, I was very captivated by the amount of movement they seemed to produce in their vocal and body training, and even this conceptual division (body and voice) seemed more homogeneous to me. However, I couldn't avoid noticing that when observing the body's alphabet movements (at least those exposed in the book and in the documentary) I didn't notice any sound emissions, vocal sounds coming from the actor, with the exception, of course, of the final improvisation being guided by the voice. This fact raised a question in my mind: how does the alphabet of the body help in a possible vocal unblocking using so little vocal emission? Since it is quite common in vocal warm-ups to use vibration exercises, vocal extension exercises and so on. In your experience, how do you believe this vocal unblocking occurs?

**Campo:** There's something that you don't see in the movies and it's not described in the book in detail because it's a practice that takes place at the beginning of the sessions. You do a warm-up with breathing, and then you do what Molik used to call “give a voice”. Basically you open your voice completely, and you do it a few times in different ways, I mean it's something to do in practice. So doing that in the beginning is also a way to check people's voice and blocks. So, yes, there is a moment of full voice expression. It's a kind of check to do every day and also see the development, and only then you start doing the alphabet of the body which is silent. It is a silent exercise, the voice in the alphabet of the body happens on the third day or fourth day. When you master the alphabet, you start using the voice. When you do the exercises, you know that you are totally free to use your voice in any way you want, but, it is different from this “beginning”, that you are not moving around much, having, you know, your posture a certain way and not being busy with performance. So, your voice may respond differently, and then it depends on the level of experience and the level of blocks that you have. So you may not see that in the film with Jorge, but this voice is already open, so

it can be modulated. It's basically just to explain what the process is. But of course something is missing there. Maybe if you watch Dyrigent you can get something. But it's a nice freedom, and of course if you don't experience the workshop and its structure, you might get a little confused. It's not very clear. Do you know that they wanted me, a few years ago, to publish with the book a movie with Jorge and the complete workshop? I didn't agree. Because I didn't want to make the book a recipe and because Molik was not that. I couldn't, you know, approve this kind of operation. So, for me, this book is this book. You understand it a little bit, but then you have to do workshops to experience it. Yes, it can't replace that.

**Magalhães:** Yes, I believe it was the right thing to do, I mean, it was fair to the work not to publish everything.

**Campo:** This book is already something. There is a logic, an internal logic, and I didn't want to break that. And I also don't want to give this illusion that you watch a DVD that gives instructions on how to run this workshop, because that's not the point. It's risky enough when you watch the alphabet of the body and think "OK, now I know them and I do them". I mean, there's something wrong with that, it doesn't work that way because those images are documentation. It's not an explanation, it can't replace the actual workshop.

**Magalhães:** The process of vocal unblocking was what most caught my attention in Molik's work, and what most piqued my curiosity was the pedagogy, shall we say, that Molik had when trying to unblock a student's voice. I believe that this topic that we are going to address now is the most "intuitive" moment of the technique, it is the part of the work where Molik needs to do, as a guide, "what needs to be done" to unblock the student's voice. However, there doesn't seem to be a rule or a pattern of how Molik acted to unblock the voice, and it also doesn't seem as clear, in theoretical terms, what is blocked in the actor and how to see these blockages. In reading his book and analyzing these moments in Acting Therapy, for example, I could notice that this pedagogy was something that Molik seemed to know intuitively. It was as if Molik simply knew, or could clearly see which points are "tensed" in the voice and body of the actor and what he, Molik, as a teacher, needed to do to unblock them. Even going through various propositions, directions, indications, stimuli, and even physical interferences in the actor's body while he was trying to "open his voice". This is well

portrayed in Acting Therapy with comments in his book about that boy in the movie. I would like to ask: was it in fact something purely intuitive? Did Molik learn from someone how to see the blockages and the possibilities of unblocking? Is it possible to learn how Molik saw and solved these problems?

**Campo:** Yes. It's just practicing, and Molik said he learned by himself. And “learning by himself” means that he learned by also working with Grotowski, with his colleagues in the biggest theater company of the second half of the 20th century, and with hundreds of students. So it comes from experience, but it is a very solid experience. In that way, yes, it is possible, of course. After working with Molik I can tell you that I started to identify some things. I am sure that every time this method works, the more you do it, if you approach it and practice it, you start to understand more about working with people. But you can't say that there is only one way to do it because, what is important, in Molik's case, is that he could use different ideas to unlock the voice. Sometimes we can change the posture of the body, work on some breathing, do some physical pressure or stretching at some points. Sometimes it is shamanic. Sometimes you as a teacher direct yourself to the student, in moments, on the level of emotion. And also in rhythms, sometimes you need to follow a certain rhythm. The basis of this, be aware, is an alteration of consciousness. Without that you can't really understand the nature of the work. There is an alteration of consciousness. So when you can move to another state of consciousness, there is something that can only be controlled by the leader at that moment. And the relationship cannot be misdirected. But what you encounter can only be seen at that level of caution. So if you impose yourself “now you have to do this or that,” it won't make sense. For example, I think it's in the book, I worked with the student and told him to jump up and cry out. In English it is “cry out,” which means “scream,” that was the mistake in the accent. Cry out. Cry. “Now you cry out,” and he cried. He jumped up and cried. And that was the way to unlock it. But it was not planned, saying something present in a book: “OK. And at this point I will say 'scream'.” There was a certain moment when there was a different level of consciousness, individual and group, where these things could happen. And you have to be ready to act.

**Magalhães:** Now about the “sing your life,” the moments when Molik would request this of the students, is this “sing your life” a stimulus in the midst of some exercise or improvisation, or does it actually become one of Molik's course exercises? Is it a moment of the work with a predominant focus on the voice? I mean, how did the student's body look like, in movement or more predominantly still? Is the moment in *Dyrygent* when the students are singing alone to everyone else, is this exercise “Sing Your Life”?

**Campo:** No, no. There are some moments in the workshop when students are singing, but that is not the “sing your life”. This “sing your life” occasion is that moment when you do the physical improvisation, when you encounter the unknown, so you have your “*partitura*” and then you use the voice there, but it's not an abstract voice because it's related to the life you're living. So instead of just doing the action, you also use vocalization, although it doesn't have words, but it's all related to the Life you are living in the exercise, anyway, it's another way of expressing your Life, so that's what happens. Your Life.

**Magalhães:** Now dealing with this group vocal unblocking work. In analyzing *Dyrygent* I could notice at the end of the film, between minutes 13:30 and 17:15, that the group portrayed has achieved a very complex tuning and harmonization of voices, I would even say a high technical level in terms of chorality. The last 4 minutes of the film seem to portray a group exercise also improvised with the main focus on the voice. I was curious about the process they had until they reached that level: Was it in fact a specific exercise portrayed at that moment? What would be the name of this group voice exercise? Had the group done the exercise throughout the 9-day workshop? Do those final minutes of the film portray the exercise at the end of the course with the actors already more “unlocked” vocally? Was it common for classes to reach that level only within the 9 days of the course? Lots of questions, right?

**Campo:** Yes, yes, a lot of questions, but a very simple answer. This is basically the most obvious result you can get from the work. This is because this moment occurs at the end of the workshop before saying goodbye. Basically, it is the last moment. During the work with the group it comes as a surprise. These students work up until that moment, you know, in groups but basically individually. One by one they showed what they did in the course, but

they never really worked together as a group, yet at the end they do this group work that Molik called levitation. You close your eyes. You just assume a very specific posture that helps at that point, when the body and the voice are ready after days of work that help in opening the voice, in a genuinely open voice. So basically this happens. People start giving voice, following each other in a very organic and genuine way. This just happens, this is not directed. And this happens all the time. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the work.

**Magalhães:** Does every workshop end this way, and does every group come to this?

**Campo:** Yes.

**Magalhães:** Very good. And if this happens only once in nine days then that moment in “Dyrygent” was the first time the students did this exercise?

**Campo:** Yes, yes. There are no other occasions. And it's not a choir. They're not following a musical score. They're not practicing, they're not reproducing or anything like that. It's a moment when everything comes together and makes sense because you're in this over the days getting closer and closer to this open expression in your voice and also the relationship with others. This relationship that you don't know very well because you were working your focus on yourself, but you are in the same room and you are working freely with everyone else. This is the moment when all these elements come together, and it doesn't matter if you are a trained actor, if your voice is still bad, because you are starting to feel it. And then, with the others, all these elements come together, blend into something magical.

**Magalhães:** And that is really magical. I mean, it resembles angels in a room, it's really beautiful.

**Campo:** And that is why Molik says “close your eyes, the idea is that you are levitating, you are moving 20 centimeters off the ground.

**Magalhães:** And knowing that this happens only once during the workshop and only at the end makes it all the more special.



**Campo:** Yes. Before there was nothing. It just comes as it is.

**Magalhães:** Perfect. Perfect. I mean, thank you for all these answers. This is gold for me, for my research. Thank you. Thank you very much.

**Campo:** Very good. You're welcome. My pleasure.

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