



GHEORGHE DIMA NATIONAL
MUSIC ACADEMY – CLUJ

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**ACTOR'S ART –
SCENICAL
MOVEMENT**

Coursebook

1st Year of studies, 1st Semester

Contents

| | |
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| INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| UNIT NO. 1 – STUDY ON STANISLAWSKY’S METHOD..... | 6 |
| Lecture 1 – History | 6 |
| Lecture 2 – Konstantin Stanislavski – An Actor’s Work on Himself | 14 |
| Lecture 3 – Action. “If”. “Proposed situations” | 15 |
| Lecture 4 – Imagination | 16 |
| Lecture 5 – Onstage attention | 18 |
| Lecture 6 – Relaxation of muscles..... | 20 |
| Lecture 7 – Units and objectives | 21 |
| Lecture 8 – Emotional memory | 23 |
| Lecture 9 – Communication..... | 24 |
| Lecture 10 – Moments of psychic life | 26 |
| Lecture 11 – The stage state of mind | 27 |
| Lecture 12 – The super-objective. The through-line of action..... | 28 |
| Lecture 13 – The subconscious in the stage mood of the artist..... | 30 |
| Lecture 14 – Speaking on the stage | 31 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 34 |

The Actor's Art - Scenical Movement course aims to educate the student to obtain an emotional plastic language, exploiting to the maximum his own physical and mental structure, in order to obtain the ability to act on stage.

Accumulated specific competencies

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| <p>Professional competencies</p> | <p>C1</p> <p>Achieving an adequate correlation between the sound configuration and its theatrical-choreographic musical image, based on the aural skills and the specialized knowledge acquired in the field of musical theatre / choreography</p> <p>Applying specific methods and strategies for developing the educational role of the musical performance in society.</p> |
| <p>Transversal competencies</p> | <p>C1.1</p> <p>Identification, description and operation with concepts in the field of musical / choreographic performing arts.</p> <p>C1.2</p> <p>Analysis, interpretation and operationalization of various examples of the correlation between the sound configuration and its musical-theatrical / choreographic image</p> <p>C1.3</p> <p>Realization (interpretive or directing) of musical-theatrical / choreographic works, with the application of different classical techniques, respecting the improvisational rules that underlie them and aiming to obtain a result with aesthetic values.</p> <p>C1.4</p> <p>Comparative analysis of the sound configuration</p> |

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| | <p>and its musical-theatrical / choreographic expression, in order to be able to evaluate the concordance or non-concordance between them (aiming at the stylistic framing, the adequate and functional use of the language elements, etc.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C1.5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elaboration of themes aiming at the musical-theatrical / choreographic translation of some sound configurations, using the established principles and methods</p> |
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Course objectives

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| 7.1 General objectives | <p>a) cognitive - the experimentation and recovery of the five senses, of all types of memory and imagination, as well as of all psychic processes of effective processing not only superficial-symbolic and mimicked of the sensory information obtained by the correct approach to static objects and living dynamic subjects</p> <p>b) psychomotor - the transformation of the convention (proposed theme, role) into psychic reality gradually objective, which determines naturally, organically, the appropriate behaviours</p> |
| 7.2 Specific objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing the role from a psychosomatic, intellectual and emotional |

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| | <p>point of view. We learn from experience and experimentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying and using body language appropriate to stage performance• Use of specialized language• Training the ability to work both in a team and individually• Knowledge, understanding of basic concepts, theories and methods of the; their proper use in professional communication• Development field and area of specialization of formative elements regarding directing, respectively choreographic composition, stylistics and dance notation |
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UNIT NO. 1 - STUDY ON STANISLAVSKI'S METHODS

INTRODUCTION

Lecture 1 – History

The scenical movement and implicitly the actor's art can be defined, to a certain extent, throughout the history of the theatre, because, even if at the beginning the notion of "actor" was not fully understood, the act of imitation (the one which took on a in ritual form) needed to be performed by an individual. In addition, the well-known scheme that supports the concept of performace consists of three "elements" that are immanent, interdependent: character - situation - relationship. The triad from which, when one of the terms is missing, then the concept of theatre is abolished. What is certain is that, although insufficient to prove the actor's status, the history of the theatre proves immeasurably how different mentalities will correspond to different social times, society being a fund of ideas - as Roland Barthes or Georges Gusdorf (1) show, society is grafted on a vast canvas of concepts / signs (myths) that are being reformulated.

As Ioana Petcu mentions in the article *The status of the actor throughout the history of the theatre*, we distinguish several historical periods of evolution of the scenical movement and the actor's art. In the primitive era, man made the distinction between body and soul, between self and other (identity and otherness), even if relatively instinctively and not through complex psychic processes. People would disguise themselves as animals, dress in skins, put on a sculpted mask and imitate the movements of animals by reproducing their cry. The primitive man enters a role - this is the beginning of theatre, unanimously recognized by researchers and continued today in African tribes. In determining the distance and proximity to the other, the mask plays an important role now, and its use will be perpetuated over time. The theatre mask - which also appears in sacred dances - is a way of manifesting the universal self. In general, it does not change the personality of the

wearer, which means that the *Self* is immutable, that it is not affected by its contingent manifestations. On the other hand, a change by adapting the actor to the role, by identifying him with the divinity he imitates, is the very purpose of the performance. For the mask, especially in its unreal and animal aspects, is the divine face, and especially the face of the sun. The mask sometimes also externalizes demonic tendencies, as happens in the Balinese theatre, in which its two aspects are confronted. The same happens with carnival masks, in which the satanic aspect is only manifested, so that it can be banished. The cathartic function of the mask is also discovered in the Nô theatre, because it does not hide, but reveals the inferior tendencies, which must be driven away. However, it is clear that theatre is less aware of art at first, because “the primitive man does not form abstract concepts proper, in certain fields, but rather images and they are saturated with psychic elements that determine certain rather bizarre stands.”(2). Therefore, we notice that primitive mentality is a “thinking through images,” it is a logical and totemic one.

Classical antiquity is the period when theatre is about to be defined (and we think primarily of establishing the notions of tragedy and comedy in Aristotle’s *Poetics*), and the Greek miracle is visible. Greatness and decadence, dramatic art is the one that has always oscillated between the two states, and the actor was at the confluence, either he was hosted at the royal court, or he played for the entertainment of the crowd in the street. What Antiquity gained, only to be rejected in medieval times, was bodily exploitation. And not only in theatre, but also in other arts, in sculpture and painting, in particular. A sort of what was to be humanism is now emerging. The beauty of the body includes that of the soul. The status of the woman-actor is not recognized. From priestly “actors” who practiced rituals (choreography or the Anthesteria festivals which celebrated the gods Dionysus or Demeter), to gladiators (who had a lower status than slaves), all use costumes, makeup that in turn helps to shape the character and have an aesthetic-corporeal role.

Returning to the problem of the mask, the origin of the term is very relevant. In a discussion between Parrhasios and Socrates, the etymology is mentioned: *prôsopon* designates at the same time, the face seen from the front and

the theatre mask (this word also means grammatical persons; “I” any “you” are those Greek *prósopa*, Etruscan *phersu*, or Latin *personae*: ‘face-masks’ for people who speak). Female characters are played by men, which attests to homosexuality at the time. However, in ancient times this term was not known, appearing only in 1890. The Romans and Greeks did not distinguish between homosexuality and heterosexuality. They distinguished between activity and passivity. In the case of ancient Rome, beyond the celebrations dedicated to the gods, there are at least two theatrical forms that offer multiple perspectives on individual and collective consciousness, from an artistic point of view: the ceremonies at the emperor’s court and the gladiator fights.

In his writing, *Héliogabale*, the French writer and playwright Antonin Artaud monographs the controversial Roman emperor of the Severin dynasty (from an alchemical and historical perspective). He went down in history best known for his anarchic actions on religion and the taboo-breaking tendencies (orgies) he had. Through the ceremonies he organized at his court or on the streets of the royal city of El-Gabal, under the sign of the sun god, he is the one who, in Artaud’s vision, contributed to shaping the theatrical phenomena in the world of Rome. “De la fable de Vénus et Pâris avec l’état de fièvre qu’elle crée, avec les mirages qu’elle suscite, est un exemple d’anarchie dangereuse, c’est la poésie et le théâtre mis sur le plan de la réalité la plus véridique. (...) Qu’a fait au juste Héliogabale? Il a peut-être transformé le trône romain en tréteau, mais il a du coup introduit le théâtre et par le théâtre la poésie sur le trône de Rome, dans le palais d’un empereur romain, et la poésie quand elle est réelle, ça mérite du sang, ça justifie que l’on verse du sang” (3). Another example in this direction is the emperor Tiberius, another controversial figure of the Latin imperial throne: the one who chooses the life of pornographic ceremonies and then that of the hermitage. His case is discussed at length in his book by the well-known novelist Pascal Quinard, and scenes similar to those evoked there are in fact only the attestation of the presence of the theatre in multiple forms on the Latin territory; manifestations of this kind are resumed by the Italian director of the twentieth century, Pier Paolo Pasolini in his last, but no less shocking film *Salò*.

On the other hand, the audience moves away from the public readings that took place in the squares, running away from the spirit and retreating in the amphitheatre performances with the gladiators caught in bloody fights. True stage performances, these fights had a story (they generally reproduced real battles between the Roman legions and other peoples they subjugated, but they also approached the fights with wild animals). In addition to the situation, this type of manifestations had “actors,” they used costumes and objects (weapons). *Retiarii* (gladiators armed with a trident, a dagger and a weighted net) played the role of Neptune. *Murmillones* (the ones armed with shields, swords and helmets) played the role of Vulcan. When necessary, the fights mimicked real wars, with conquered cities that they plundered, and, in order to make the people have fun, dwarfs or women slaughtered each other. The French specialist blames them for the dual nature of mass demonstrations that include the cruelty and innocence of the game: “Beyond punishment, beyond the spectacle of facing death or sacrifice staged in the form of life and death fights, society takes revenge and gathers to kill by laughter. It is the *ludus*, (the “game” par excellence, the word *ludus* being itself Etruscan), which before being represented in the amphitheater, is mimicked in licentious dance and rudeness.”(4)

The main manifestation in medieval theatre took place in cities, in those that developed faster after the ancient world suffered a decline. Interesting and suggestive for the behaviour of the medieval man is the fact that he presents himself as an especially theatrical individual. The fact that he prefers not to distinguish between real and fantastic, the two worlds being in perfect co-existence, the fact that he is bestowed with gestures, proving to be a gesture-able creature, are clear evidence for the hypothesis stated above. However, they generally disown their actors, and we do not include here those who practice liturgical drama, miracles or mysteries, although they do not belong to a higher institution either. Even though it had a special role in the daily life of the burgh, the theatre had a particularly popular character. “Often, those exploited and despised by the feudal hierarchy found support, comfort, in its manifestations” (5). In the early stages of medieval times, acting was provided by members of the clergy, and later, when the venue migrated

from the inside to the outside, the need for licensed actors was felt. In the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, actors from the members of the *puy*s (guilds) were recruited. The itinerant troops of jugglers, minstrels and other histrionic performances were present for a long time on the territory of Europe, some of them reaching professionalism under the initial name of *joueurs de personnages*. It would be wrong to understand that all the actors came from the ranks of the vagabonds. By no means, since miracles and mysteries, not to mention the liturgical drama, include characters from high society and, in addition to the priests involved, there are other “honourable” people: seniors, magistrates, wealthy owners. And proof that man has become aware of the functions of the theatre, and that in this way the dramatic art is precisely outlined, several events are telling: in 1437, in Metz, a certain Nicolle, at the scene of the crucifixion, was on the verge of “stopping his heart;” another amateur actor, Johan de Minney, as Judas, prolonged his play so much in the hanging scene that he was brought back to life by “rubbing his body with vinegar and other substances.” Regarding the entry of women on stage, the tendency to keep them aside weakened over time. In the sixteenth century we already have attestations that the Virgin Mary was played by women. We must not forget the autonomy that women acquire in Venice, where the courtesan schools were founded in medieval times and flourished in the Renaissance.

Leading roles in mysteries involved great and substantial risks, and the ones organising the performances (“directors”) had no knowledge to facilitate the work of the actor, sometimes reaching extreme situations. In this sense, the torture scenes were rudely conducted to the end, when both the executioner and the martyr were exhausted. There were also embarrassing accidents when the actors lost consciousness.

At one time there was a brotherhood (*Brotherhood of the Passion*) that included amateur actors whose duty was to interpret the mysteries. The emergence of professional actors dates back to the late Middle Ages.

The contempt of the clergy for the manifestations of the profane theatre are attested in the documents of the time. Rigorous principles derive from Roman law, where it was stated that playing on stage for profit was an infamous occupation. The

philosopher and man of the cloth Thomas Aquinas considered them unworthy of receiving the sacraments, considering that there is no doubt that buffoons, comedians and storytellers would not escape the greatest torments of hell. “In the countries where Orthodox Christianity developed, the moral condemnation of the buffoons (*skoromoch*) was so strong that it sometimes took the form of a real repression against them. The contempt, and then the climate of a moral ambivalence that has long plagued the comedians of modern times are certainly reminiscent of these ancient traditions”- asserts scholar Bronislaw Geremek (6).

What managed to put the actor’s work at the centre of the dramatic art is the *commedia dell’arte*. Along with a “court” theatre in Italy, which began to be called due to the luxurious and cumbersome direction, *panem et circenses*, according to the formula of ancient Rome, a number of companies of actors are developing. The concept is quite different from the rest of Europe, and “companies” of actors who came to France, for example, because they allowed women to play female roles, and no longer used young people, were banned from touring. From these encumbrances will stem in time the *commedia dell’arte*. Practitioners of this kind of performance focus on their play, which is not easy at all, the skills they have to fulfill being multiple. They demonstrate knowledge of acrobatics, dance, music, fine arts (when designing their own costumes, makeup or sets). We are witnessing a real reign of the actor. Some conceive their own texts, as would happen only from Shakespeare on, and especially in classicism. What the *commedia dell’arte* aimed mainly at was social satire, and each character did it in his own way: either by exaggerating some characters just to make fun of them (Pantalone, the Captain), or by embodying cunning, skill, malice (such as Arlequino, Pulcinella, the lovers). However, no matter how much this species was admired (as evidenced by its endurance until the eighteenth century, after which a decline was felt, the *commedia dell’arte* troupes being mentioned in nineteenth-century documents), there was a suspicion on the part of the wealthier families towards it. In this sense, a scene from *The Boors* is relevant (Carlo Goldoni being one of the great authors of plays of this kind): Margarita, Lunardo’s wife, is afraid to welcome “masks” in the house and not so much for the simple fact that under one of them there is a stranger, and under the other the future

fiancé of her daughter who should not have been known, but especially for the fact that it was not appropriate to receive the visit of people in carnival costumes, as if by this she would have embraced decadent deeds.

The Renaissance theatre is not only cloistered in Italy, but it covers the borders of the whole of Europe, acquiring a special nuance in Spain and England. In the Iberian space, in addition to famous writers such as Calderon, Cervantes or Lope de Vega, the street theatre continues to circulate, which will give birth to a very well-known figure, the picaro. The cast consisted of men, sometimes joined by a woman, usually a singer. Most of them lived a hard life, full of adventures, enduring insults and sometimes, in order to survive, they resorted to dishonest deeds, which lead to their reputation as vagabonds. As for England, slowly, the troupes of actors are multiplying. Their tents are set up in almost all the important localities. The old pageants - traveling platforms on which performances were given - have not disappeared altogether, but the scene is not of extraordinary grandeur. The proof is, even in the literature of the time: “But pardon, and gentles all/ The flat unraised spirits that have dared/On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth/ So great an object” (William Shakespeare, Henry V, Prologue). We cannot deny, however, that there were often situations when mass scenes took on proportions, picturesqueness and brilliance. The Bard raised the theatre to a very high level not only in his lifetime, but through his universal message, it is always updated, even today.

The modern father of the transformation into science of the *Scenical movement and the Actor's Art*, K.S. Stanislavski, speaks in *An Actor's Work on Himself*, about the engines of psychic life, with enough persuasive power to justify a deep and applied study of what Plato would call the “shadow of a shadow” (7). It is logical that Stanislavski, with his deeply constructive attitude, should become a revolutionary: “With the exception of a few notes left by Gogol and a few paragraphs from Scepkin's letters, nothing has been written yet that would have been necessary for both the actors at the time of creation and the teachers in contact with the disciples. Everything that has been written about theatre is made up of philosophical speculations, often very interesting, about the fruits that would be desirable to reach in art,” states Stanislavski in the article *Balance and future perspectives*, thus

legitimizing any search in the field. (8) This is also the reason why in the theoretical part of this course, we will study some chapters from *An Actor's Work on Himself* by K.S Stanislavski.

Many of the questions that may arise during or after reading each chapter can be best answered by applying the recommended exercises in practice. Unfortunately, there is no other way to collaborate: the acting technique cannot be well understood without practicing it. The technique of any art can sometimes inhibit - as has happened before - the spark of inspiration in a mediocre artist, "but the same technique, in the hands of a master, can turn the spark into an inextinguishable flame." (9)

Notes:

(1) Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Seuil, 1957) și Georges Gusdorf, *Mythe et métaphysique* (Flammarion, 1968)

(2) Anton Dumitriu, *Istoria logicii*, Editura didactică și pedagogică, București, 1975, p. 20-21

(3) translation: "the fable of Venus and Paris through the feverish state it creates, through the mirages it evokes, is an example of dangerous anarchy, poetry and theatre on the plane of the truest reality. (...) What did Heliogabal actually do? The Roman throne may have been betrayed, but at the same time he brought poetry through the theatre to the throne of Rome, in the palace of a Roman emperor, and when poetry is real, it forces bleeding, justifies the shedding of blood." Antonin Artaud, *Héliogabale ou l'anarchiste couronné*, Paris, Gallimard, p 107

(4) Pascal Quinard, *Sexul și spaima*, ed. Humanitas, București, 2006

(5) Ion Zamfirecu, *Istoria universală a teatrului*, vol. II, Editura pentru literatură universală, București, 1966, p. 18

(6) Bronislaw Geremek, *Marginalii*, în *Omul medieval* (volum coordonat de Jacques le Goff), ed. Polirom, Iași, p. 335

(7)(8) Florin Zamfirescu "Actorie sau magie" Ed Privirea 2003, Bucuresti

(9-) Mihail Cehov, *On the Technique of Acting*, 1953, New York, editura Harper & Row Brothers)

Lecture 2 – Konstantin Stanislavski – An Actor’s Work on Himself

Born Konstantin Sergeyevich Alexeev in Moscow into one of the wealthiest families in Tsarist Russia, he made his stage debut at the age of only seven. He took the stage name Stanislavski at the beginning of his career, out of the desire to defend the good name of the family from the preconceived ideas of the society of that period and region about being an actor.

In 1888, Stanislavski founded a Society of Art and Literature at the Mali Theatre, where he gained experience in dramatic art.

In 1897 he co-founded the Moscow Art Theatre with Vladimir Nemirovich-Dancenko. One of the first plays staged was Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull*. In the Art Theatre, Stanislavski began the development of his famous ‘system,’ based on the tradition of Alexander Pushkin’s realism. The ‘system’ will later be developed by Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, Robert Lewis, Sanford Meisner and many others in the United States. Stanislavski’s ‘system’ focuses on the realistic development of the characters. The actors were instructed to use ‘affective memory’ to naturally portray the emotions of the characters played. To succeed in this attempt, the actors were asked to think about a moment in their lives when they felt the desired emotion and try to present it on stage, all in order to ensure an interpretation as close as possible to reality.

Stanislavski’s system is a complex method for interpreting credible characters. Today’s film, television and theatre actors owe much to this method.

One of the ways the System uses is that of the ‘magic if.’ The actors were urged to ask as many questions as possible about the character being played, one of the first such questions being, “What would I do if I were in the same situation as my character?”

Stanislavsky had an influence on writers such as Maxim Gorky and Mikhail Chekhov.

Stanislavski survived both the 1905 revolution and the 1917 revolution, during the latter only after Lenin’s intervention, as was rumoured at the time. In

1918, Stanislavski founded the First Studio as a school for young actors and wrote several plays in the field of theatre.

The actor's work on himself is the title of the book written by Stanislavski and has become a 'gospel' for young actors in training, from all over the world. *The actor's work on himself* is structured as a semi-autobiographical account of the Russian actor, during his preparations to put himself in the place of the character. In fact, Stanislavski introduces himself in the book disguised not only in the role of the young actor who tells about his stage education but also in that of the older acting teacher, who serves as a guide, thus analyzing the perception of the new entrant into this sphere as well as the one already experienced in this art. The book could be considered a dual biography that tells the story of Stanislavski the Younger, the student (and narrator of the books) Kostya Nazvanov, and Stanislavski the Elder, the director Tortsov.

Lecture 3 – Action. "If". "Proposed situations"

Entitled 'The Action,' Chapter 3 presents several exercises described in dialogue form, in which Tortsov and his students reveal and analyze some key elements of the stage performance system. These include the idea that "on stage it is necessary to interpret, either outwardly or inwardly, which emphasizes the important role of inner activity, which can express great inner intensity, even when there is not much external action." Through a simple "sit and do nothing" exercise proved the students that even the simplest activity in everyday life, to sit and do nothing, is extremely difficult to be rendered on stage!

In the same context, Tortsov, the director, presents the concepts of 'if' and 'given circumstances' when he asks students to improvise the situation of the violent and dangerous madman escaped from a mental institution. These three elements introduced in the chapter are meant to open the imagination of the actors while understanding an important artistic principle: "unconscious creativeness through conscious technique."

Conclusions:

- Whatever happens on the stage must be done for a purpose
- The natural attitude on stage brings life to the theatrical play, while showing one's own person, in one way or another, takes us out of art, placing us in the banal.
- Dramatic art is based on action, on activity, but on an activity both inner and external.
- The value of art is determined by its spiritual content.
- On stage we act motivated, *according to a goal, fruitfully*, not "in general," for the sake of action.
- The feelings presented in the stage play must not be forced, they must be anticipated, in order to come naturally, otherwise the play will become false, mechanical, etc.
- The stage action must be internally motivated, logical, consistent and possible in reality.
- 'If' represents for artists the lever that makes the transition from reality to the only world in which creation can be performed, the human spirit.
- 'If' does not talk about a real fact, but only asks a question to be solved by the actor.
- The 'proposed situations' as well as 'if' are assumptions, 'figments of imagination,' they act both together, as well as separately and help to create inner movement.

Course 4 – Imagination

Chapter 4 deals with *Imagination* and its importance in the creative act. Stanislavski underlines that for artists, imagination is crucial and must be continuously developed. Kostya is tempted to imagine his actions in a familiar environment, of his own room

and to present them in detail to the class, but very quickly his imagination “dries up.” Paul is then asked to imagine that he is an oak and to base all his actions on a few fundamental questions: ‘who,’ ‘what,’ ‘how,’ ‘where,’ ‘when,’ ‘why’ and ‘for what reason.’ Tortsov concludes the course with another principle of his vision:

“The actor must feel the challenge to action physically as well as intellectually, based on his imagination.”

Therefore: “Every movement made on the stage, every word spoken, is the result of the right life of your imagination.”

Conclusions:

- Reality itself is not art.
- Imagination creates things that may exist, that happen, that we know, and fantasy creates things that do not exist, that we do not know, that have not been and never will be. “Fantasy knows everything and can do anything.”
- Imagination completes everything that the author, the director, the playwright did not say and in the creative process, imagination is “the forerunner that leads even the artist.”
- The actor’s imagination starts first the inner action, then the outer one.
- When the artist, with the help of imagination, substitutes real objects for imaginary objects, he must believe not in the authenticity of real objects, but in the authenticity of his attitudes towards substituted objects.
- “To be” in the actor’s language means that he is at the centre of imagined, invented conditions. It means that he exists in the middle of the imagined life and that he acts according to it.
- Any imaginary action must be well documented, imagination only completes the data provided by the bibliographic material. The world of fairy tales, of the fantastic must also be constructed logically and consistently, in order to be able to approach the impossible with the possible.

- In every moment of the play, and of the inner and outer action, the actor must see what is happening outside of him, on stage, or what is happening inside him, in his own imagination.

- Creation takes place without stopping, reflecting, on the screen of the artist's inner vision, proposed situations, rich in images, of the role, within which the artist, interpreter of the role, lives on stage, according to his own consciousness.

- Every on-stage movement, every word must be the result of the just and effervescent activity of the imagination.

- Imagination must be developed, activated permanently, nothing is done on stage mechanically, formally, without the participation of the imagination.

Actors and directors, like all creative artists, are well acquainted with this power of imagination. "I am always surrounded by images," asserted Max Reinhardt. Dickens wrote that he sat in his study all morning waiting for *Oliver Twist* to appear. Goethe noticed that inspiring images appear before us of their own accord, exclaiming: "Here we are!" Rafael saw an image pass before him in his room, and it was the Sistine Madonna. But while creative images are independent and changeable within themselves, though full of emotions and desires, you must not believe, as you work on your parts, that they will all come to you fully developed and accomplished. What do you have to do to complete them? You must ask questions of these images, just as you would ask a friend. Sometimes you have to give them strict orders. By changing and completing themselves under the influence of your questions and orders, they give you answers visible to your inner sight. (10)

Lecture 5 – Onstage attention

Chapter 5 draws on the critical element of Focus. With the exercise of burning money, Tortsov concludes that the failure of this scene is due to the students' inability to focus their attention. The concept of 'Circles of Attention' is introduced. The 'Small Circle of Attention' refers to the student's head and hands: by focusing on them, they manage to reach their state of 'public solitude'. Then the Medium,

Large and Largest Circles progress from the immediate surroundings to the stage and auditorium. Actors need to learn how to shift their attention among these circles. Tortsov also explains about the existence of an inner attention that must be developed through exercises. He encourages students to “look to, listen to and hear what is beautiful” in nature, art, literature, music, as well as in everyday life, in order to make lasting impressions in their minds and souls. Thus, while playing a role on the stage, these impressions become the subject of the actors’ inner attention, generating creativeness in their interpretation.

Conclusions:

- The actor must take into account the presence of the audience, but not be overwhelmed by the ‘black hole’ through which he is watched. The play must not be influenced by the presence of the audience.

- In order to break away from the theatre hall, the actor must feel *captivated* by what is happening on stage.

- The actor must have an ‘**object of attention**’ *on the stage* and not in the *performance hall*, and to fix their attention on it, which will also provoke the need to act, to do something with it. There are *near point, mid point and far point* ‘objects’.

- All the actions that in life are natural and familiar for the artist, on stage, in front of the footlights, become strained, that’s why the actor has to re-educate himself to learn them again.

- On the stage, the artist must *look and see*.

- The objects on which the actor turns his attention are points, but in addition to points there is a smaller sector of objects, called the *circle of attention*, which contains several independent objects. The artist’s eye jumps from one object to another, but will not cross the circumference of the circle of attention. There is a *close, middle and far circle of attention*. These circles will turn into *moving circles*, which accompany the actor’s movements on the stage.

- If the actor's attention weakens when looking at the large or medium circle, he will focus on the point object, and the close circle, to stimulate his return to attention.

- In order to use imaginary situations, the actor must develop his *inner* attention, on the same principles on which he developed his outer attention (based on objects and circles).

- Ordinary, boring objects must be endowed, with the help of fantasy and imagination, with qualities and features that motivate the actor in his play, and with the help of which the action is created.

- *Affective or sensitive* attention is absolutely necessary in the work of the actor, precisely for "creating the life of the human spirit of the role."

- The artist must be careful not only on the stage but also in life, to be an observer of the subtleties that surround him.

Lecture 6 – Relaxation of muscles

It is a well-known fact that the human body and psyche influence each other and are in constant interaction. A body, whether it has muscular overdevelopment or is underdeveloped, can easily disturb the activity of the mind, can blunt feelings, or weaken the will. But the actor, who must consider his body as an instrument for experimenting with creative ideas on stage, must strive for the achievement of a complete harmony between the mental and the physical. There are certain actors who deeply feel their roles, can understand them with the greatest clarity, but who cannot express, nor produce, in front of the audience this wealth, with their own means. Those wonderful ideas and emotions are somewhat chained inside their bodies. The extreme sensitivity of the body to the creative psychic impulses cannot be obtained through strictly physical exercises. The psyche itself must take part in this development. The body of an actor must absorb the psychic qualities, it must be full and permeated by them, so that they gradually transform him into a sensitive

membrane, a kind of receiver and conveyor of the subtlest images, feelings and voluntary impulses. (11)

Conclusions:

- The tension in the muscles of the body impedes the creative act, the feeling, the embodiment of the feelings and the mood of the artist.

- Self-control of the muscles, even if it does not completely eliminate the tension, helps to relax the muscles. Self-control must be transformed into a normal habit, into a natural necessity, not only in the quieter parts of the role, but especially in the tense ones.

- The most important thing is to find the center of gravity of the body that conditions the balance.

- Each position or attitude of the artist has 3 moments: *tension, release, justification*. 1. the inevitable surplus of tension with each new attitude and the emotions caused by the performance in public; 2. release of excess tension by means of control; 3. motivation or justification of the attitude if it does not give the artist enough confidence in himself.

Lecture 7 –Units and objectives

The individual development of each actor is continued in Stanislavski's work in the forms: textual analysis, truth on stage and emotional memory. The division of the play into units governed by individual objectives is the main topic of Chapter 7. While the units are the main intellectual divisions of the play, they may carry names that represent the subject of the partial action. In any case, their goal should be expressed by a verb because: "every objective must carry in itself the germ of action."

Next, we discuss the philosophy of creating a sense of truth on the stage. The essence of the chapter lies in the intrinsic contradiction of the interpretation: "on

the stage everything must be real in the imaginary life of the actor.” Tortsov leads his students, through practice and discussion, to the conclusion that there are two kinds of truth and belief in what people are doing. The first is the one created automatically, based on the actual fact, and the second, the scenic one, equally truthful, but which originates on the plane of imaginative and artistic fiction. In ordinary life, truth is what really exists, whereas on stage, it consists of something that is not actually in existence, but which could happen. Actors must inspire both in themselves and in their audiences, the belief in the possibility of these emotions and actions to exist in real life. Tortsov makes a clear distinction between the representation of images and passions in the play of actors, and the truthfulness of his art, which “helps to create the images themselves and arouse real passions.” Also in this chapter, through Tortsov’s words, Stanislavski presents several nuances in the exercise of another student based on the abandoned child scene from Henrik Ibsen’s play *Brand*. When Tortsov suggests to the student to imagine the loss of her own child, everything turns into a very dramatic and convincing interpretation, because by a “divine coincidence,” the event had really happened in the real life of the future actress. However, the young woman was not overwhelmed by her emotions. Here Tortsov suggests that nevertheless, actors should not be too carried away by their own passions, because, in general, the action of the play is not their real life, and this should help them not to overact on the stage.

Conclusions:

- The roles must be fragmented so that they can be traversed more easily. If the text of the paper is dry, the imagination must complete the action in such a way that it is no longer monotonous.

- The large fragments represent the skeleton of the work, and the small ones must be connected logically in order to be represented together and not separately.

- The actor starts from the whole, decomposes the work to the smallest detail, but then rebuilds it step by step, until he obtains the whole again.

- The episodes, the main fragments are those without which the play cannot exist.

- In each fragment a creative *objective* is highlighted, which is born from the fragment, or, on the contrary, gives birth to the fragment.

- Theatrical creation is the staging, in order to be interpreted, of issues, of great themes and “of authentic, fruitful action, according to a purpose, for their use.” If the previous themes were correctly interpreted, the result comes naturally.

- The stage themes have many variations, some useful, others harmful to the play. The themes can be: *outer* and *inner*, ie *physical* and *psychological*. The main characteristic of the theme, no matter how correct, is the “attraction,” ie the temptation of the artist to interpret it, concentrating towards it the creative force of the artist.

- The crystallization in a word of the fragment is necessary to synthesize its essence, thus reaching the theme. The name of the theme must be fixed by a verb, not by a noun.

Lecture 8 –Emotional memory

In the ninth chapter, the term “emotional memory” is introduced throughout the discussions between Tortsov and his students. The concept is taken from the work of the French psychologist, Theodule Ribot. Tortsov describes emotional memory as a psychological quality of recalling past experiences from the actor’s personal life.

Conclusions:

- The best incentive of creation is, very often, the unexpected, the novelty of the creative theme.

- Emotional memory preserves the feelings experienced by the character.

- The strongest senses are sight and hearing. The actor, like the painter or the musician, has them both and uses them to stimulate the feelings he has to relive.

- Memories synthesize all similar events experienced by the individual, filter all the features that impressed the viewer.

- The action of the *subconscious through the conscious* is a basic principle. The unexpected, the subconscious tempt and stimulate creation, but the conscious, recapitulative memories of emotional memory are those that act on inspiration.

- The artist plays himself at every moment of the stage play, if the *self* and the feeling of the *self* disappears his play will be superficial.

- Actors do not differ in roles, but in their inner essence.

- The setting, the atmosphere prepared by the director, the props, all directly influence the feelings of the actor.

- If the atmosphere created by the director is appropriate for the play, it will stimulate the actor's creativity, and will help stimulate his emotional memory, as well as his artistic experience.

- The artist can start from a randomly created feeling to the stimulus, and then return from the stimulus to the feeling, being able at any time to prompt the necessary recapitulative experience.

- Memories can be analyzed from several points of view: of the hero, of the witness, of the listener, of the narrator, etc. The actor must know all aspects of the emotional material, apply them to the role and process them according to the requirements of the role.

Lecture 9 – Communication

Next, in chapter ten, Stanislavski discusses the concept of *communication on stage*. It shifts the focus of the student-actor from individual to ensemble training. After an exchange of ideas, Tortsov and his students come to the conclusion that in real life people are in a continuous connection or communication among themselves and with their surroundings. This is of utmost importance since by its nature, theatre is based on the intercommunication of emotions and ideas among the actors on the stage.

Tortsov also brings to the students' attention the public's resonance during performance, between the emotions expressed by the actors and those of the audience, giving an example from the world of musical performance:

“If you want to learn to appreciate what you get from the public, let me suggest that you give a performance to a completely empty hall. Would you care to do that? No! Because to act without a public is like singing in a place without resonance. To play to a large and sympathetic audience is like singing in a room with perfect acoustics. The audience constitutes the spiritual acoustics for us. They give back what they receive from us as living, human emotions.”

Based on the Hindu philosophy that promotes the existence of a vital energy called Prana that radiates from the solar plexus, Tortsov explains the existence of two centers in us, the cerebral centre of the brain (consciousness) and the nervous centre of the solar plexus (emotion). These two centres can establish a line of communication between them that represents the concept of self-communion. Then, gradually, Tortsov describes the notions of communion with another actor on the stage, communion with an imaginary object, and the mutual communion with the audience.

Conclusions:

- The eyes, the artist's look on the stage must reflect the content of his creative soul. As long as he is on stage, the artist communicates through this content with his partners in the play.

- Every moment of existence contains communication. It is of several kinds: *self-communication* or *communication with oneself* - rarely encountered in reality and often on stage, and *mutual communication* or *with the partner*.

- The artist must know the partner's part so that communication is uninterrupted, continuous.

- The actor communicates indirectly with the attendees, transmits them moods, stirs feelings, makes them participate in the action.

- Body movements, steps, the attitude, facial expressions are all ways of communication. The artist must overcome the cold, theatrical communication, lacking in feeling, and communicate with vivid, thrilling feelings, analogous to those of the authentic role lived and embodied.

- The frequent mistakes of the actors are: the blank eye, the immobile face, the dull voice, speech without inflection, contorted body with a stiff backbone and neck, wooden arms, hands, fingers, in which there is no motion, the slouching gait. These must be replaced by the naturalness and fairness of the actions.

- There are several types of communication: *external, visible, physical and inner, invisible, spiritual*.

David K. Berlo claims that the fidelity of communication is affected by 5 elements:

1. Communication skills
2. Knowledge
3. Social system
4. Culture
5. Attitudes

Communication skills influence the sender's ability to analyze their own intentions and encode the message so as to convey what they intended. We often detect the lack of communication skills when we want to send a message and "we can't find the right word," or we feel that "we can't reach the audience." Berlo is of the opinion that, in the communication process, communication skills intervene in the correct choice and application of the code, in the comprehensive use of the code elements, in the application of conventions and the adaptation of the code to the target audience.

Knowledge of the properties of different communication channels helps the broadcaster to choose the one that has the desired impact.

Lecture 10 – Moments of psychic life

Continuing the work, Stanislavski-Tortsov introduces us to the creative process of the actors. At the beginning, the actors have to gather the lines along which their inner forces move, their creative instrument (mind, feelings, will) arouses the inner “elements” of an actor in order to give life to the fictional subject of the play. Using all his inner strength, he helps the actors to absorb the spiritual content and the innate truth of their play and their roles. In the context of the specificity of a character, these elements direct the actor towards creative objectives in order to distribute the role to the audience. The fusion of these “elements” creates an important inner state, which Stanislavski labels as the “central creative state of mind.” He also concludes by adding that this creative state is better than the normal state of a human being, because it implies a feeling of “solitude in public.”

Conclusions:

- The engines of the psychic life of the artist are: Intelligence (Mind), Will and Feeling.

- Intelligence has 2 main moments of its function: the moment of the first impulse, which causes the process of creating the representation, and the other which derives from it - the creation of reasoning.

- The three engines of psychic life act together, they coexist in a close interdependence, stimulating each other.

- Will has 2 aspects: 1. emotion predominates over desire, 2. desire dominates (even forced) over emotion.

Lecture 11 – The stage state of mind

The concept of “super-objective” of the plot is introduced in chapter fifteen as the main objective of a play that must be bond together individual objectives, as well as to the thoughts, feelings and actions of the actors. But most important is to identify the super-objective of a play, being vital to the work of the actors during the

preparation and performance on stage. At the end of this chapter, the author concludes that his “system” of stage play helps the student-actors gain control over three important features in their creative process, called “inner grasp” (the inner state or power of actors created by the main inner current of the play), the through-line of action and the super-objective.

Conclusions:

- The stage mood, due to its unnatural condition of creation in front of the audience, hides in it a particle of special influence of theatre and stage, with their tendency to self-demonstration, which does not exist in the normal mood of man.

- The stage mood contains the feeling of solitude in front of the audience, the existence of the audience can inhibit, but can also help create the role.

- At the time of creation, the elements used by the actor must be inseparable, causing a fair inner creative state.

- The natural human state, almost the same as we feel in reality, must be created “artificially” with the help of psycho-technique.

- The performance must be prepared not only from the physical point of view, of the make-up, the costume, etc., but also mentally, the role must be brought to life, with its feelings and emotions; the actor will study for a long time all the affective details of the role, and on the day of the performance he will prepare enough to *enter the role*.

- The creative process boils for years in the artist’s soul: day, night, rehearsal, show. At every moment of the preparation of the role, it is born in the whole being of the one who creates a deep, complex, strong, lasting and steady inner creative state. Only when this state exists can one speak of creation and authentic art.

Lecture 12 – The super-objective. The through-line of action

The last pages of *The Actor's Work on Himself* reveal Stanislavski's vision on acting as truthful as any human being can. He presents his highly artistic ideals, in a purely naturalistic way, emphasizing the artist's need for freedom of expression of his own human and spiritual being. The focus of all the actors on the stage should be directed only towards the super-objective and towards the through-line of action, and the acting should take place subconsciously, in a 'natural' way. Stanislavski's view is that the only way mechanical or stereotypical interpretation can be avoided is when artists recreate their parts sincerely, truthfully and in a straightforward way. He goes beyond the boundaries of life on stage and expands the philosophical aspect of his discussion on art to the real life itself. The highest goal in one's life is called supreme objective, and the steps a person takes in a lifetime to fulfill it is called the supreme through-line of action. Stanislavski clarifies that not all subconscious activity is inspiration. The concept of inspiration is a subtle blend of conscious and subconscious activities reflected in objectives and their through-line of action. Creativity in Stanislavski's system requires "the conception and birth of a new being - the person in the part [...] Each dramatic and artistic image, created on the stage, is unique and cannot be repeated, just as in nature."

Conclusions

- the super-objective is represented by those ideas, feelings, ideals of life, which accompany the writer throughout life, they are like a red thread, and are the basis of his creation. The staging of the writer's ideas, feelings, dreams, torments, ideals, joys is the super-objective of the play.

- The tendency towards the super-objective must be complete, continuous, to go through the whole play, through the whole role, but not formally, acting, but authentic, human, active, because only in this way can it come to life.

- The real super-objectives are those that stimulate the engines of psychic life, the elements of the actor, his moods.

- The super-objective detaches from the core of the piece, there being an indissoluble, organic connection with the piece. The super-objective must penetrate as

deeply as possible into the artist's soul, to continuously remind him of the inner life of the role and purpose of creation.

- The through-line of action is a direct continuation of the lines, the tendencies of the motors of the psychic life that started from the intelligence, the will and the feeling of the artist who creates them.

Lecture 13 –The subconscious in the stage mood of the artist

The final chapter of the book, (ch. 16) begins with the reinforcement of the idea that conscious psycho-technique could lead actors to their subconscious, the root of artistic inspiration. The psycho-technique of the actors means to transpose into an inner creative state that will help them find their super-objective and the through-line of action. Conscious psycho-technique is a sequence of events that begins with the freeing of the muscles under a strict focused attention on the body and continues with the transfer of attention to the supposed circumstances of the exercise. Then, the actors have to create new conditions for the fictional life of the role (which they have to make credible to the audience). To do this, they must identify obstacles and find solutions for them, as well as a constant search for ways to facilitate the process.

Conclusions:

- Without the subconscious creation of the spiritual and organic nature, the actor's play is cerebral, false, conventional, dry, lifeless, formal. The basic task of the psycho-technique is to bring the actor to the state in which the inner creative process of organic nature is born in him.

- The artist through conscious psycho-technique stimulates the inner creation of the organic nature of the soul.

- the super-objectives are some of the best psycho-technical means that the actor seeks to influence, from one end to the other, the soul and organic nature together with its subconscious.

- The main action is created from a long series of super-objectives. In each of them there is a large amount of small objectives that are subconsciously fulfilled. The main action is the most powerful means of stimulation to influence the subconscious.

- The artist on stage must believe, to be convinced of the authenticity of his actions, of their consistency, logic, truth, only in this way the creativity of the subconscious can be provoked.

Seek to delve into the psychology of the characters around you. For those you dislike, try to find some good, positive traits that you haven't noticed before. Try to live the states they live in, ask yourself why they are and act that way and not the other way around. Remain impartial and you will immeasurably expand your own psychology. All these imposed feelings, due to their own weight, will gradually penetrate your being and will make you more sensitive, more noble, more flexible. And so your ability to penetrate the inner life of the characters will be sharper.

Course 14 –Speaking on the stage

- The artist must master perfectly the language in which he interprets the role.

- In life we do everything we say with a purpose, so we say what we must and what we feel. On stage, the text is given to us by the author, the feelings and emotions do not belong to the performer, he must assimilate them, in order to later interpret them justly, naturally, authentically.

- Main action = subtext

The word is the most concrete expression of human thought. The word for the artist is not simply a sound, but a source of images. Therefore, in the verbal communication on the stage, one mustn't speak only to the ear, but also to the eye.

- To speak means to act. Activity, authentic action, conforming to a purpose is essential both in creation and in speech.

- The study of speech must begin with the division into cadences, that is, with the placement of logical pauses.

- In addition to the text, the artist must know thoroughly the correct, logical punctuation of the language, and use it fairly.

- Pauses can be *logical* and *psychological*. Along with the pronunciation of words and pauses, intonation has a very important role. The intonation and the pause, by themselves, beyond words, possess a force of emotional influence on the listener.

- The force of speech, the accents, the elements of phrasing create the sound planes and the perspectives that give movement and life to the phrase.

- The harmonious coordination of the elements of the language leads to a coherent, intelligible and logical phrasing of the text.

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