

Poetry - A Complex Phenomenon of Language

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Abstract: *Before uttering a text, be it poetic or prose, it is necessary and compulsory to understand it in depth. The work on the text begins with the study of phrasing which is not a simple act of acknowledgment, but a creative analysis. The first reading of the text is the moment when the delight is triggered in the receiver. It is the moment when a spiritual connection is created between the reader and the artistic material. Thus, the incitement leads to the study process. This is followed by thorough research, analysis of sentences and phrases, search and discovery of meaningful, essential details, beyond what appears at first sight. Once the theme of the text and the idea proposed by its author is identified, we establish our own position towards the work (fragment) in question. Starting from the idea, it will lead to the discovery of feelings, affectional nuances serving as basis for the establishment of emotional highlights.*

Key-words: *poetry; actor; speech technique; versification*

1. Introduction to artistic reflection and expression

The artistic personality of the actor of yesterday, today and tomorrow, is based on the study of lyrics. Poetry, through the passion it emanates, is the first step in the study of the actor's art and has educated the great actors of all times. Today, things have not changed. The modern actor, bearer of a long stage tradition, discovers and develops themselves, bringing with them innovation through contemporary poetry.

The study of lyrics aims to educate sensitivity, reasoning, fantasy and dramatic temperament, vocal and physical expressiveness. The technique of "saying" the lyrics aims to learn how to properly breathe, to ennoble the stage utterance versus street speech, develops a sense of rhythm and pauses that accompany the thought, shape the voice by projecting a personal tone, pleasing to the ear, specific to actors. With the help of poetry, the young actor will broaden his horizons of sensitivity and imagination. The sober, stylized form of poetry focuses the uproar of thoughts and feelings in the outline of the utterance, taking care to respect the authenticity, the purity of the literary language, the musicality and its force of suggestion. And since no new thing under the sun, the tradition created by our great forerunners, to which we always refer, is very important and very instructive. The development of auditory education, by avoiding mechanical imitation, considerably amplifies, creatively, the actor's "saying" possibilities. In the uproar of knowledge an actor acquires, in what refers to the technique of stage speech is the information that is the basis for supporting the stage process, the actor's work with himself. Without a clear show, without a well-directed thought, without an initial implosion of feelings that know the sure way to explosion, to communicate with the audience, the art of any actor is compromised, regardless of the native talent he has. Therefore, the knowledge and correct application of the versification will support and refine the sensitivity of the actor.

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2. Obiectiv

Finding orality through natural speech. The act of reading a text, poetic or not, brings with it the feeling that the actor's voice could be detached from the subject, while in the act of speaking, it seems to be attached to the subject and the performer is involved in the given situation. "Before reciting an excerpt, before learning it from the outside, it must be read. [...] There is, however, an art of reading. The actor will read his roles or fragments to be recited, rarely, clearly, in order to penetrate, as deeply as possible, the author's intentions."² The actor must find the orality of the written text, to bring it to life so that the text does not remain a simple mechanical, inexpressive reading. Not infrequently, I have met poets who, out of the desire to read their own artistic composition, had managed to bring it a great disservice. The white, flat voice, that literal voice used by creators made the text pass by them and not through them. Vocal expressiveness is studied and acquired following exercises related to the technique of stage speech, being extremely important in theater.

3. Versification

How should a verse be recited or how should we search the sensibility of a verse? A first step would be to know its structure and components. It is also equally important to find the key to the poetic text both in terms of style and the emotional background of the core.

The study of poetry from the perspective of versification takes into account the laws of rhyme, measure, caesura and metrics. In essence, poetry is made up of the same words as prose, but the musicality of poetry is different from that of prose. This musicality results from the rhythm of the verse, from intonations and vocal inflections that belong to the actor's personality when an affective nuance is desired penetrating the core of the poetic content. Every language has a specific musicality, the composition of which includes metaphors, stylistic images ... If we refer to modern poetry we could make some similarities with prose. Warning, confusions can be created due to the breaking of the classic, formal, versification patterns. This could be a mistake that pushes us to platitude in artistic interpretation, to gray tones, lacking in form and content. The emotional feelings contained in the text must be taken into account so as not to fall into the error of using false, declamatory and monotonous tones. Also, another error that can affect the oral quality of poetry is the mechanical repetition of the same inflections and intonations, which do not take into account the content of ideas and instead of giving the feeling of direct communication with the listener causes the perception of -singing-, which must be avoided. The lyrics must be uttered in their own rhythm, naturally - like prose otherwise - avoiding any damage, abruptness, exaggerated intonation devoid of thought. The measure, the caesura and the rhyme contribute to the rhythmic fluency, as well as the composition of the stanzas (couplet, triplet, quatrain ...) and sometimes the fixed form of the whole poem (ghazal, sonnet, rondeau ...). Technically speaking, verses are groups of words that have: measure (a fixed or variable number of words), caesura (inner or final pause of the verse; rhythmic pause inside a verse, which regulates the cadence), rhyme (an identity of sounds indicating, most of the times, the end of the verse, grouped two by two but not always). The measure determines the category of the verse (octosyllabic verse, dodecasyllabic verse, etc.) In the verse, the syllables are grouped in pairs of two or three, forming the so-called metrical feet. One of the syllables is highlighted, becoming the tonic syllable. The highlighted place can vary from one syllable to another and depending on this, another metrical foot with a different name appears. In modern poetry the measure is highly variable and imbuing a variety of rhythms. However, this

² Bulandra, Lilly. 1929. *Actorul și arta lui*. București: Institutul de Arte grafice -Lupta, p. 3.

can lead to an utterance of poetry with deficiencies in terms of the logic of highlights and implicitly of what the actor would like to convey with the text. It is necessary, in this sense, that the start in deciphering a poem be taken from the logic of the ideas expressed in its content. Here comes the caesura or pause that separates the lyrics. In this way, another element of versification is obtained, important in marking the rhythm. The interruption of the sound emission, which is not always indicated by the poet, can also be done depending on what the actor feels. Moreover, the punctuation marks are happened to be used only for the written quality of the text and not for the orality of speech.

Another case where the caesura is welcomed happens during refueling the lungs with air - inhaling - which will be mandatory in the logical development of the idea. Therefore, it cannot be said that there are precise places where breaks must be taken. Used correctly, the caesura can become an asset for the actor. Poetry is special and famous because it is dressed in a garment that cannot be tailored by just anyone. Rhyme, that repetition sound at the end of two or more verses, is again an important element of versification. However, rhythmic but meaningless words are not poetry: "It's easy to write lyrics / When you have nothing to say, / Stringing empty words, / So they don't sound in dismay."³ In addition to measure and caesura, the rhyme comes to complete the musical quality of any poem.

4. The poetic content. Means of vocal and facial expression

Poetry is not just versification. We showed above that the musicality of the poetic text also derives from the content. The background of ideas and feelings generates the intonation corresponding to the poetic message that overlaps the sound layer of the words ... Its procedures include not only versification, but also what we call - poetic language -, that chosen, neat expression - constructed - as well as versification, which gives rise to new, vivid and captivating meanings. Knowing the procedures of poetic transformation of the meanings of words and stylistic norms, the actor will notice in the poetic text the affective states, the inner vibration, more easily. He will process these by passing them through the filter of his feeling, he will interpret them applying a color specific to the musicality of the verse, in tone with his own personality, rendering through voice and mimicry the implosion of the state he lives.

Joy – Disappointment – Wonder – Uncertainty - Sadness



Hamlet's advice to actors is still valid today in the modern art of acting. "Hamlet: Please say the triad clearly and fluently as I said it; but if you start shouting, as many of your actors do, I'd better put the announcer of the fair to shout my verses."⁴

In order for the poet to amplify the power of evoking an image, he sometimes gives a new meaning to words. In this case, they no longer have a meaning of their own, but a figurative

³ Eminescu, Mihai. 2010. *Poezii*. București: Biblioteca pentru toți, p. 571.

⁴ Banu, George and Tonitza-Iordache Michaela. 2004. *Arta Teatrului*. București: Nemira, p. 104.

one. Example: “In this world there are women / with eyes that spring sparks”⁵... a new meaning appears attributed to concrete words, by combining them . The actor will have to be aware of the meaning of the words and the transformations they can undergo, and if he does not bear fruit in their interpretation, he will produce an alternative lacking in meanings and feelings. Tropes are combinations of words in a figurative sense, in order to increase the suggestive power of images. Among them we mention: metaphor, allegory, hyperbole, emphasis, euphemism. Knowing all these poetic procedures, the actor will deepen the expressiveness of his dramatic interpretation. He will harmoniously combine formal and content elements in a unitary sound expression. His inflections and intonations, the specific rhythm, the musicality of the utterance will render - interpret - both the text and the subtext.

The poetic text involves the choice of a special form of expression. This requires a well-developed voice, toned, with large variations of tones, a well-controlled, dosed breath to support the vocal effort, a clear, correct, artistic utterance. The dull and expressionless voice, the defective speech, cannot support an artistic interpretation. The musicality of the text must be rendered in all its nuances. The actor's work on their own voice and utterance is a continuous and long-lasting process. Also, the practice of costodiaphragmatic breathing supports the effort of stage interpretation. It is an integral part of the actor's craft. “Speech is one of the most delicate processes that the human body does. The outer part of the brain (cerebral cortex) receives and processes sensory information and is divided into four lobes: frontal, occipital, parental and temporal. The latter is involved in the emotional response, in memory and speech. The center of speech is hosted by the brain. Breathing, articulation, phonation, is achieved by involving certain mobile anatomical units of the body, which through contractions and relaxations produce the voice. The frontal bone and the frontal sinuses are involved with other surfaces of the face, in creating the resonance effects of the sounds emitted.”⁶ Without a wide and well-dosed breath, the performer of a poem can change their rhythm, can force their voice, even falling into the situation of being embarrassing in front of the audience.

5. Conclusions

Theoretical knowledge of the elements of versification does not, however, suddenly solve the problems of an artistic recitation. Their practical study, the personal experience we gain from hard work, will help us to feel the musicality of the verse, without falling into that false, monotonous and overly unnatural song. “The actor must also know how to use the technique and art of stage speech so well that he can consciously go beyond the limits of his own speech [...]. The difficulty of doing this makes some actors, especially young ones, consider - declamation - or – theatricalism- any beautiful, correct stage utterance, in which each sound is clearly heard and the words are finally supported.”⁷ The art classes and the technique of stage speech from the acting specialization, are meant to come to the aid of each student, so as to help them find their own variety and artistic nuance, measure, proportion of tones, acknowledging meanings, shedding light upon the subtext, selecting the essentials from all that is unimportant.

⁵ Eminescu, Mihai. 2010. *Poezii*. București: Biblioteca pentru toți, p. 581.

⁶ Enache, Trifan, Dana. 2016. *Lecția de vorbire. Volumul 1: Antrenamentul personal*, Constanța: Ovidius University Press, pp. 11-12.

⁷ Stan, Sandina. 1972. *Artavorbirii scenice*. București: Didactică și Pedagogică, pp. 4-5.

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