

## The theatre game. Stages in realization and understanding

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**Abstract:** Any line of work requires time and space in preparation and training. The field of performing arts has however a different approach. Learning can be fun if challenges are involved, since they help us in creating new ideas. Whether you are an actor, opera soloist, ballet dancer, actors, singers, and ballet dancers are subjected to a specific training. We must understand through game/situations that there is a problem which must be solved. The answer cannot be found at the end of the book, as we can see in textbooks, and it has to be you the one who searches answers, the one who proposes solutions for the situation approached in a play. There is a dialogue, a partner with whom to interact and build a relationship.

**Key-words:** game; action; text required; character sheet

...,the actor must get not only the essence of the poetic spirit or of the role played when it is adjusted according to his external and internal individuality, but he must also complete, fill gaps or find transitions while resorting to his own creation... all these while showing his profound master traits." (G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*)"<sup>2</sup>.

### 1. Introduction

The educational process needs to permanent stimulate the creativity and independency of the student, to help In this way in the professional skills training and to build inside of the student the deep tendency of colaboration with everyone around, encouraging to trust each other and create motivation in the space between them. Through every step and every exercise proposed, the scope is always to pay attention, self observations and constious search , team work as well with the search for the development of the knowledge.

**The game** can find its definition in various manifestations, either collectively or individually, as a means to ensure implication and personal liberation necessary in artistic creation under certain rules. In order to interact with others through game, the means of adapting to what surrounds us, there are further activated: spontaneity, enthusiasm, pleasure in acting and remodeling being as a whole, while helping the process of self-discovery. Thus, there is required focus towards the purpose of the game, there is permitted the release from physical and psychic constraint, there is permitted the release from personal problems. Thus it is activated a relaxing sensation, which helps the discovery of the manifestation of spontaneous creation, of the unpredictable, of the direct communication between partners, of the team spirit *awareness*, of the coordination and harmony with the other participants in **game**. Everything the game requirement stipulates must be carried out as if it happens for the first time. The instinct, the intuition, the straight, direct, or immediate understanding of the scenic truth that must take place in the proposed situations is observed and allows a manifestation without trying to manipulate or control consciously an event. For an actor, it is not essential to lead mentally the moments of a situation, but to learn how to allow the natural occurrence of actions, gestures.

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<sup>2</sup> Neacșu, Gh. 1971. *Transpunere și expresivitate scenică* [Transposition and scenic expressiveness]. București: Editura Academiei Republicii socialiste România, p. 29.

In the personal development of each participant in game, there takes place the realization of the personal contribution in solving the problem, the situation, **the game**. The actor acquires self-confidence, respect and they should take responsibility in what is to be solved and completed with self and the others.

The actor first must be modeled /shaped on the inside. They themselves must learn how to use consciously their own body, their own breath, their own movements, their own focus and control on emotions and reactions. They must build their personal method/working technique while using physical and mental exercises sets which enrich their inner world of creation, thus becoming present on stage with the aid of imagination, which helps them in reproducing the active manifestation of the created world. Starting from Brook's assumption, who mentions, "to never stop evolving as an ACTOR...means to never stop evolving as a HUMAN BEING"<sup>3</sup>, team spirit is beneficial in solving *understanding*, evolution, *realization* and development problems. We have mentioned these details in order to highlight the fact that team work, the development, evolution and experimentation of the human condition tightly related to others contribute to one's progress as an individual.

**The game** does not have a limited duration or space. During workshops, each participant has their own rhythm through repetitiveness of a physical, vocal ritual training, followed by speaking exercises, then by constructive games, the student-actor thus acquiring a certain rhythm while shaping their own working time. From day to day, the group becomes compact; the individuals learn more about each other, find their partner according to the working method or the integration degree as an individual in group situations.

## 2. The text. Requirements and solving rules in situations/proposed text.

The moment we reach the *required text*, *the Poem*, the student-actor learns to decipher the text that must be interpreted. We have mentioned the required text in order to highlight the importance given to solving problems in diction, phrasing, logic, intention of message. It is beneficial that the student-actor understands the logical phrasing by uttering the intention proposed in text and they must master it correctly. This is the first step, the step of *realizing* the way in which a poem is read or recited. The student-actor must learn to undertake the text, not simply narrate it. The first contact with the required text helps them discovering the message and the emotion they must undertake from the moment the required text becomes the gaming score they must solve. The recitation, the reading of a poem does not mean only reading a lyrical text as it was written, but one must learn to read the poem exactly as the poet has thought of it when it was written. The poem has a subtext which must be deciphered alone. Those are not only lyrics learnt artificially, technically and then reproduced in a singing voice. In order to make them understood and decipher the thoughts and story behind the poem, one must understand precisely what the poet meant to transmit. Only after one gains certainty that the text has been deciphered correctly, understood and undertaken, only after these stages the student-actor can recite the Poem. Immediately after this first stage we can complicate through exercise, while changing: situations, the method of reproducing the text: either through difficulty in uttering, or movement and action. This is the personal and original way through which the rules of the game can be modified and complicated in order to raise difficulties which further will aid a deeper understanding and realization of the student-actor, since they are constantly required to be presently acting, reciting the text through their own body, not only with their voice.

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<sup>3</sup> Banu George. 2005. *Peter Brook. Spre teatrul formelor simple* [Peter Brook. Towards the theater of simple forms]. Iași: Polirom, Unitext, p. 108.

With each particular stage, the student-actor is not a simple performer, but is part of the solution proposed in the **game**, solution found by them in the creative interpretation of the **text**, by being helped wherever he did not understand and did not manage to decipher little errors automatically presented because “this is how we’ve been taught”. We have been taught to look for approval, to be told that “this is alright”; “this is how it must be done”. Only after learning how to cancel this approval, the student-actor can feel the freedom of expression, and where they feel something is wrong, they will solve themselves the mistake, while not being told how it “must be done”, because there is not a unique way to act, express things or live. By **understanding** what is to be solved, acted, one gains the freedom of expression, the freedom to act according to their feelings, the freedom to decide **alone** how it must be done.

“*The text is pretext*” is one of the first things a student-actor must learn and understand before specifically working with a **text**, because the situation and the approach of a scene, of an artistic act are expressed first by using the body in motion, and only after comes the *word* which adds: *feeling, mood, sensation, emotion*. “On the stage, one must act internally and externally”<sup>4</sup>. The issue a student-actor must solve ever since the beginning of this stage is how they can acquire the necessary *emotion or feeling* in a certain situation. In everyday life, we do not plan our happy and sad moments, we do not schedule our emotions or our feelings, we do show them at the time of their occurrence, they are the result of the situation lived in relation to the ones present in the given situation. According to the proposed text and the character given, since the moment of the *reading at the table*, a term used frequently in the discovery of the details regarding the characters, one can meet difficulties in expressing and understanding the *subtext* proposed in the play. With each role/character brought in public from show to show, the Actor gains experience and they discover the path to the ideal, aware that work, availability, pleasure and passion are the small ingredients they must use frequently. „I even think that he not only has to live the emotion of the role once or twice, as long as he studies it, but he has to try this emotion not a few times until he studies his role, but in a bigger way. or to a lesser extent, at each interpretation of it, and at the first, and the thousandth time...”<sup>5</sup>

Through the work stages we follow in the creation of the stage act, the student-actors have to decipher the following: *the ownership of the role –the characteristic sheet* by which they can find out who the character is, the period when the text was written, all these while researching the era and the role they have in the text/situation to be solved. *Playing a role* is the stage of realization of what was acquired by *owning the role*, continuing to create and experiment it. The courage to give free rein to feelings, moods in order for them to develop spontaneously at a particular moment means creating the role. The entire world is a field of research which spreads in front of our eyes. In order to reveal a character, we use first the indication given by the author, but sometimes, those are short or incomplete and our participation, with our data in contact with our own information regarding the situation in which we are meant to develop, must be objective. For each character undertaken, the Actor resorts to different approaches in order to build and shape a character (affective memory, the assimilation of the character details given by the author or asked by the director, in game, in creativity and spontaneity, and they must point out themselves the situations to be solved and actions to be taken). As we have already noticed, creating a role, building a character, start by reading the text, the play, the script, by filling the Character sheet, steps followed by the discussions between characters and the coordinator/director. The early stage of work takes place until the

<sup>4</sup> Stanislavski, Konstantin. S. 1955. *Munca actorului cu sine însuși* [The work of the actor with himself]. București: E.S.P.L.A., p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Tomaso Salvini. 1891. "Câteva gânduri despre arta scenică" ["Some thoughts about the performing arts"]. *Artistul* [Artistul] nr.14, p. 58 (n.red.ruse).

moment when the situations and relations between characters have been discovered. Immediately after this first stage, we replace the readings at the table with the rehearsals in motion, in order to build the small artistic act. To understand the importance of setting, the student-actor is asked to think and propose the setting the scene needs. The way they see the space of the play is important and, at the same time, after arranging the setting proposed, other discussions follow, discussions which help and explain with arguments why it is good/it is not good to take care of the proposed setting, or how to use it in the scene. After completing this second stage, we decide together the entrances and exits in and from the space of the play. There follow the improvisation exercises where there is a proposed situation, possibilities of solving, the conflict, the relation. Step by step, these exercises become solutions in solving the proposed artistic act.

The student-actor's duty is to understand the mechanisms underlying the process of creation. The engagement, the ownership, the availability, and the responsibility they demonstrate during this training help and at the same time, train the future actor for the career they will practice. The life experiences, lived, felt, until the moment they become students are not sufficient for the variety of characters they are going to study for three years. Though, through reading, through their own contribution to their development, they will manage to discern and build characters needed for the situations to be further solved.

Our main purpose in working with students is the stage of realization and understanding towards their own self. To become an actor implies a veritable harmonization of one's self with the reality represented on stage. An actor must discover and learn the coatings and stories through their own personality. The Art of the Actor cannot be taught as it is discovered through work, practice, learning, and game. It is a game of imagination, of creativity, where, even though there are rules involved, there are no clear rules, but only comments and indications leading to the creation of the artistic act. The artistic act is a continuous repetition where the public is present, the moment when the game is defined. The game ends with our inability to create, to give free rein to imagination and to our capacity "to play".

William Shakespeare mentioned in Hamlet that, "Theatre is to hold a mirror up to nature, virtue, vice, and to the spirit of the times their own face"<sup>6</sup>. In addition, Mihaela Tonitza-Iordache states in *Despre Joc* that, "classifying the act of creation as an adequate and specific reflection of reality, where all the capacities of the human maker psyche are put in the service of the mediated experience, represent the optimal way of understanding the aesthetic attitude-taking position towards social life"<sup>7</sup>. The ratio between daily reality and scenic reality is defined by the main moments when the Actor discovers and takes part in the creation of the artistic act and raises a principal issue, the issue of creating a human model. Tudor Vianu mentions that, "Lucid and intuitive, tossed by strong affects and endowed with a lively and original fantasy, the artist is at the same time the master of a superior expressive ability to his kin"<sup>8</sup>.

K.S. Stanislavski, theoretician in the art of the actor, the founder of a System, has mentioned three categories which define the actor's function in the creation of the artistic act: the theatre of the craft, the theatre of representation, the theatre of experience, stating for the latter that,

„In the theatre of experience, each moment of the role and the role in its entirety are embodied with artistic faith, each representation having as a model the normal life. Experience

<sup>6</sup> Neacșu, Gh., 1971. *Transpunere și expresivitate scenică*, [Transposition and scenic expressiveness]. București: Editura Academiei Republicii socialiste România, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Tonitza-Iordache, M. 1980. *Despre joc*, [About the game]. Iași: Editura Junimea, p.7.

<sup>8</sup> Vianu, T. 1968. *Estetică*, [Aesthetics]. București: E.P.L. pp.240-241.

helps the artist in accomplishing the main goal of their scenic art: the creation of human spiritual life of role and the transposition of life on stage in an artistic manner”<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. Conclusions

Despite all the methods of teaching the students will start to be aware that the learning will be a health habit and a dependency, and they will understand that only studying they can become a lot more competent and can have success. In our artistic field, the process of learning doesn't mean only hard work, for example in Improvisation with text or without text, the learning is a process with fun, and in this way the students development goes on a superior level.

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<sup>9</sup>Stanislavski, K. S. 1955, *Munca actorului cu sine însuși*, [The work of the actor with himself], București: E.S.P.L.A, p. 31.