

Art Theater

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Abstract: *By creating the "Art Theater," along with Nemirovici-Dancenko, Stanislavski sought to create a complex realism, a refined and profound psychological realism, preserving the exact historical reconstruction, paying special attention to the execution of the decoration, replacing the painted canvas with practicable, an extremely important place, and carefully guiding the ensemble. The desire to escape the clichés used in the theater of the times made the two associates form this New Theater, a theater that will change the theatrical destiny in Russia, Europe and the United States of America. He is an actor and director, but first of all he discovers the mechanisms of artistic creation in the actor's art by asking questions and always experimenting until he identifies the necessary answers for learning the scenic truth.*

Key-words: *Theater; Art; Stanislavsky; Method; System*

1. Founding of the art theater

The theater Stanislavsky wanted to have an older model for a generally accepted present, when rigor was imposed by playwright Gogol and actor Mihail Şepkin. Although Şepkin practices acting using technique and crafts, he has a revelation by seeing the prince Meşcerki on a stage in Sumarov's comedy. At the time, the words had to be spoken loudly, certain words such as love, passion, betrayal had to be exaggerated, gestures had to be extremely proverbial and strictly adhered to ridiculous conventions such as: leaving the stage always with the face at the public and with his right hand raised, the stage was divided into three parts, in the avant-scene were the main characters, the secondary ones in the middle, and behind the figuration, each exaggerated gesture symbolized a living, etc. On this strict background, Şepkin's revelation is easy to understand: he sees a role interpreted with simplicity, that simplicity that gives the greatness of thought and superior understanding, a deconstruction and then a subjective-analytical reconstruction. This will make him say that what I have seen... is not art, it is life simply. Briskly, he tries to imitate the style that impressed him so much, but he will not be able to break the silver horse's² template, destroy his own gesture and mimic form, so hard-working, with which he technically created the characters. Soon, he will abandon the idea. At a tortuous repetition when he was tired of fatigue, he stops trying to interpret his role and gives simple, effortless lines. Then he realizes that this is the key to true and honest theater.

Gogol, better known as a writer, is at the base an actor. He has, over time, identified the same principles as Skepkin in approaching scenic construction. His theories will not be accepted by contemporaries, who think his thinking is too "simplistic and without effect". Gogol will team up with Skepkin and will work together at Malia Theater, which had one of the most famous theater crew of the era. From this duet one of the most important questions of the Stanislavski research will be born, to which Scepkin will give the voice: does the actor really feel or they imitate the feelings by external means? The searches and experiments of the two will be taken over by Stanislavski and theorized, but the subject, new then, will not

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² The expression belongs to Eugenio Barba and refers to the hardness and the perennality of the craft made by craftsmanship, but which, despite the exterior beauty, will never succeed in enlivening

find echo among the people and the theater critics. On the contrary, the questions will bring sarcastic answers and urges to get hands to learn the trade.

Stanislavski realizes that the theater functions as a great, perfect mechanism and that any change must first be transformed into a routine to be inserted into the great structure. In the theater, nothing can be left to chance. From the first lessons at the Drama Art School to the establishment of the Art Theater, it has been more than a decade, which is the transition from an amateur, to the professional actor, the director and the theorist.

"When you want something with all your power, any project seems simple and easy to accomplish. It was equally easy for us to realize this dream: to make the necessary funds, the membership fees and the occasional donations. Like an avalanche that, coming out of the mountain, takes with it everything that meets in the way, so our new concern, as it grew - deepened, bringing new and new problems, always demanding more and more complicated organizations " (Stanislavski 1958, 128)

With the establishment of the Art Theater and the Society of Art and Literature in Moscow in 1888, both Stanislavski and Fedotov and the rest of the artists and intellectuals of the Society want to get rid of the amateur and infant performances they have taken up until then. Fedotov, who was in charge of choosing the repertoire, gave up vaudevilles, ballet performances and light/easy songs in favor of classical universal pieces: Shakespeare, Moliere, Gogol, Racine. The approach of these world-class playwrights inflates and provokes them.

"It does not matter that on the stage things are different than you create in your imagination. You often do not even believe that your inventions can be done in practice. But these fantasies arouse and unleash fantasy. " (1958, 131)

1.1 Actor's Art in Stanislavski's view. The theory, methodology and "silver horse"

Actor's art is a vast domain, because it refers to all the sciences of the spirit, the physics, bound indissolubly by faith. Without faith, art can not be made, and its servants are like the monks who start instinctively on the complicated journey of seeking revelation, without marks, without immediate satisfaction and without joy. Actor's art means, first of all, the discovery of self, the overthrow of all inner demons, and the pouring of a space in which spiritual sowing so specific to this art begins. There is no "given recipe", no one guides you and no one stops you in time, before you make a mistake. It's a labor that never ends, because at the end of each show, you wonder what you could do better, what you could change, how you saw yourself in the mirror of the audience, always changing it too. Stanislavski explains in my *Life in Art* that no one teaches you how to discover your character. Both the director and the stage directors are interested only in the final result. The indications an actor receives during the rehearsal are only energetic releases in hurrying the final act. "It's not good!", "You're too soft!", "Exaggerate now!", "See that you do not understand what you're saying!", "What did you want to do with this move here?" Actors have to listen to this remarks during the rehearsals of any play. More serious is when the directorial vision does not match with the actor. And most of the times the actor is to blame. The need to imitate gestures, characters, feelings, voices is the easy way to get to the character. Stanislavsky has struggled many times with this problem: the actor's inability to create and his need to imitate. And how else do you think of living a role that is forty years older than you, of another nationality, another social class, and another kind of thinking than imitation? But this easy way, though it can be a real success for the public, does not thank the actor, he feels he plays stupidly, unjustifiably. And when the audience ovals the show, confusion makes its presence felt, and the actor can no longer realize whether that sense of guilt is real and just or are just the final emotions of the show.

"Learn in time, even from the first steps, to listen, to understand and to love the very truth about yourself! You will also need to find out who is the right person to tell you, and with such people you talk more about art and let them criticize you as often as possible!" (1958, 138)

For his dreams to become reality, he realized that discipline is needed. When you have a role to play, you have to lead the body, voice, mimics and gestures. Without proper discipline, the amateur actor often leaves the emotions and will end up being driven by body and action. This can block the actor, any intention to move a hand to a suggestive gesture may seem like an impossible mission or on the contrary, the body can move frenetic, without a specific purpose, the voice is thinning or thickening without reason, and the mimic does not, and finds the relationship with the gesture and the word. In order to lay the foundations for a system, a regulation, Stanislavski conceives a notebook that later turns into a manual, a "bible" of the actors. It's about the actor's work with himself, the book of every actor. *My life in art* is the great artist's memorial from the beginning to the end of his career.

1.1.1 *The relationship between scenography, direction and actor's art. Functionality and deconstructivism*

As far as the scenographic and directorial perspective is concerned, we are at the beginning of the realistic theater, when the proportions and dimensions were not designed to be used by the actor, but they were only a simple functional decoration at the level of primary intelligibility. In fact, the decoration was reduced to the painting of the space (palace, castle, market or street) and, a door or a piece of furniture visually disturbs because the scenic vision of the 2D type do not respect proportions.

1.2 *Gordon Craig - The actor and overpuppet, an impossible competition*

At the beginning of the 1900s, however, a brilliant polyvalent glamorous appeared on the European scene: Gordon Craig. He was actor, producer, director, theorist of the theater and a great set designer. It is he who invented, in 1909, the mobile décor for the Hamlet show, which Stanislavski put in the Moscow Art Theater in 1912. And his attributes do not end here. He was also the editor and chief editor of the first international theater magazine, called *The Mask*, a magazine in which he published some of his innovative principles about the theatrical performance. Even though not all of these principles are applicable in stage space, an important segment will still remain in the history of theater. And, as is normal, we are talking about the most controversial principle, namely that artists should be replaced with puppets. "The actor, a perfect puppet in the hands of the director - the true and only artist of the theatrical process - was his vision against some star actors, who often created false, pseudo-artistic problems, to stand out in spite of the " whole " the show itself ".

(<http://www.scrivub.com/arta-cultura/Gordon-Craig-si-Adolphe-Appia14296.php>)

Thus, the overmarionette is his proposal for solving all the problems in the theater, and the theory built around it impresses with accuracy. And his scenic experience gave him the right to put his opinion into the theatrical panoply, for he had worked with Henry Irving³, the first British actor who was honored with the title "Sir" and raised to the rank of knight. Craig then turned to scenography, another love for him. He preferred to give life to the whole (to build scenes for the stage) rather than enlivening characters. He had two great master

³ Sir Henry Irving, one of the most famous English actors, has been knighted for his services to the scene - www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Irving

scenographers and friends - James Pride and William Nicholson, who practically opened their way to modern stage art and accompanied him along this spiny road. Craig left this world in Paris in 1966 at the remarkable age of 94 years.

1.3 *Adolphe Appia - the "explorer" of scenic tridimensionality*

Another prominent promoter of the new theatrical trend, and who will remain forever in the universal history of art as the stage designer of Wagner's works, is Adolphe Appia. Born in Swiss, he will quickly bind his name to the grandiose and impressive assemblies of Wagner's opera performances. He is declared pioneer of modern scenography for his construction principles that eliminated the two-dimensional decor and used parts of the scene that was never used until then. Also, verticality will give his scenography the impression of grandeur. Moreover, he is the first professional "master of lights" to use the stage-lightning not only to "light" the scene, but also to "shadow" it, the space, temporal and content games thus discovered, augmenting dramatically. Adolphe Appia used 3D space - and through the differences in nuances, intensity and the way they used the projectors, he managed to create a new perspective on stage design and on the way of light expression. One of Adolphe Appia's basic principles was the one that proved to be the primordial aspect of the artistic image of the show, a perfect collaboration between the director and the stage designer.

Appia considers three elements as the basis for creating a unitary kingdom, in terms of the entire spectacular gear:

1. Dynamics and movements of actors in three-dimensional spaces.
2. Raising the workpiece decoration on the vertical, so on the third dimension - most often ignored in the specific decorations of that period.
3. Use of scene movements in both the horizontal plane and its depth. (Brockett, 1994)

Human body, space, and body are the most malleable and workable possibilities that need to be integrated coherently and correctly into scenic space to create the most conducive scene, Adolphe Appia said. He basically thought scenic light as a primordial element that could merge with all other aspects of theatrical production, corroborating the music, the actors scenic gestures, and setting the décor into its real symbolic value, in relation to the subject of the story itself.

These innovations by Craig and Appia reach Russia around the time when Stanislavski and A.P. Chekhov were looking for a new form of the show and not its essence. A more commercial, more spectacular form to increase the attractiveness of the entire theatrical mechanism in front of the theater viewer, but also in front of the general public. The aesthetician and theorist John Gassner identifies, without any doubt, the echoes of the spectacular act of that period.

"The composition of the realistic pieces after 1875 saw, at least virtually, a certain return to the neoclassical structure. Writing parts with tightly-built construction, requiring only one decor, or at most two or three changes. The realistic pieces became masterpieces of the concision. Strindberg maximized the action, reducing it to psychological crises; Ibsen radiographs the dilemmas of entire existences, exposing only moments of apogee of choice and revelation. The main structural feature of Ibsen's plays, beginning in the middle of his career, is the presence of retroactive action." (Gassner 1972, 49)

The search for form does not reside in the context of this period in an empty superficiality of content, but on the contrary. The inner quests and the increasingly fierce styling of the action naturally lead to a necessity of the plenitude of the form, which builds on a long-established background. It is just a sign of the fact that scenic tendencies needed something else, that the theater was heading for a new road to its exploitation and visual

exploration. It is an important moment of crossroads, in which the director, the stage designer and the composer equalize the importance, if not the performer, of the dramaturg. The fund remains the very serious basis of the mechanism, but the spectacular form is the one that will be the first in the search of the specialists of that period. The form and the background must, however, live in a perfect symbiosis, to merge, to serve one another and to support themselves, all in perfect balance.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the directors, who are now an important part of the theater performance (until then, the role of the director was to balance the distribution and to deal with the administrative part of the production of the performance) to constantly bring new ideas for the installation of shows. They diminish the importance of dramatic writing and focus on new methods of representation. Stanislavski, however, is not satisfied with the importance of the show's director, neglecting the actor's creative process. At that time, the realistic sceneries were extremely wide, the emphasis was on the beautifully crafted decorations and the fine-grained sails.

"At that time, the issue of decors is as simple as possible. A backdrop and four or five arcade backstage plans were ordered, on which a room of a palace with doors was painted, with a sunken or covered terrace overlooking the sea and others. (...) If a door was needed, it would be placed between the decorations; it did not matter that there was a hole above the door. Whenever needed, it was painted in the background and sloped down a street in perspective, with an enormous market, deserted, with no scream of man, with fountains, monuments, and more. When the actors were standing by the background, they were taller than the houses. " (1958, 240-251)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the acting was clearly undermined by the opulence of the scenography. We can not omit, however, that Stanislavski conceives a new method of representation and the appearance of the Chekhovian texts. In order to be able to follow the new ways of writing, attention should also be focused on the acting, without neglecting the scenography. Another issue that Stanislavski raises is the material used by the actor. If the painter have the cloth and brushes, the musician the voice or instruments, the actor works with his body. Of course, in ballet is the same, but the dancer is a technician, the execution of the movements is at the forefront, the interpretation arises from choreography. The actor uses his body gestures in everyday life and he has to do the same thing on stage, but in imaginative situations and with different biographical data. Stanislavski has worked all his life and has never put his point of sale. From the amateur actor who came from a family of industrialists and who ensured a comfortable living, a man and a traveler would turn into the greatest personality of the century with strong echoes not only in Russia but around the world. His inheritance through this system is of invaluable value for both actors, directors, critics, and theater people. He had numerous collaborators and disciples, including Vahtangov, Tairov, Meyerhold, and Western artistic characters who confirmed and practiced the method: Isadora Duncan, Gordon Craig, Anthony Hopkins, and others.

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