

ПИТАННЯ ТЕОРІЇ ТА ІСТОРІЇ

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K. S. STANISLAVSKY “SYSTEM” AND ITS PLACE IN THE ACTOR’S FORMATION AND SPIRITUAL OF THE XXth AND XXIst CENTURY THEATER TRANSFORMATION

The **purpose of this article** is an attempt to outline the range of literary and practical sources that can bring the “system’s” key issues to an effective solution that can influence the content and the actor’s course level of performance based on the Stanislavsky “system’s”. To clarify the content the “system” author has put into the concept of “nature – the only character creator”. **The methodology of the research** is to apply theatrical and arts criticism, systemic and structural as well as comparative methods, which allowed considering the investigated object as a necessary factor in the contemporary actor education. **The novelty of work.** For the first time, there was made an attempt to outline a range of factors, due to the influence of which it becomes possible to enrich the content of work with the actor’s course on the of K. S. Stanislavsky “system”. A particular attention has been paid to the analysis of the Theater of Objective Art’s emergence, formation, development and establishment. **Conclusions** Summarizing the above mentioned, it can be argued that a special attention should be paid not to the very Stanislavsky system reconstruction, but to the need for creation and practical mastering the work with an actor method corresponding to the level of science development in the second half of the XXth century and at the beginning of the XXIst century. The universal multicultural methodology should harmonize the practical component of the actor’s pre-expressive practice with its scientific justification.

Key words: theater; spirituality; human nature; artist; method of work with the actor.

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«Система» К. С. Станіславського і її місце у формуванні актора та духовній трансформації театру ХХ століття

Метою статті – окреслити коло літературних і практичних джерел, що наближають ключові питання «системи» К. С. Станіславського до ефективного розв’язання, здатного вплинути на зміст та ступінь продуктивності роботи з акторським курсом; прояснити зміст, який автор «системи» вкладав у поняття «природа – єдиний творець образу». Застосовано театрознавчий, мистецтвознавчий, системно-структурний та компаративний **методи**, які дали змогу розглянути досліджуваний об’єкт як необхідний чинник виховання сучасного актора. **Новизна роботи.** У статті вперше здійснено спробу окреслити коло чинників, завдяки впливу яких стає можливим збагачення змісту роботи з акторським курсом за «системою» К. С. Станіславського та підвищення рівня продуктивності такої роботи. Особливу увагу приділено аналізу причин виникнення, формування і становлення Театру об’єктивного мистецтва. **Висновки.** Стверджується, що особливу увагу потрібно приділяти не реконструкції власне «системи» Станіславського, а необхідності створення і практичного опанування методики роботи з актором, котра відповідає рівню розвитку науки др. пол. ХХ – на поч. ХХІ ст.. Універсальна полікультурна методика повинна гармонізувати практичний складник доекспресивної практики актора з її науковим обґрунтуванням.

Ключові слова: театр; духовність; природа людини; митець; методика роботи з актором.

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Цель статьи – очертить круг литературных и практических источников, которые содействуют эффективному решению ключевых вопросов «системы» К. С. Станиславского, способному повлиять на содержание и степень производительности работы с актерским курсом; прояснить смысл, который автор «системы» вкладывал в понятие «природа – единственный создатель образа». Использовано театроведческий, искусствоведческий, системно-структурный и сравнительный **методы**, которые позволили рассматривать исследуемый объект как необходимый фактор воспитания современного актёра. **Новизна работы.** В статье впервые предпринята попытка очертить круг факторов, благодаря влиянию которых становится возможным обогатить

содержание работы с актерским курсом по «системе» К. С. Станиславского и повысит уровень производительности такой работы. Особое внимание уделено анализу причин возникновения, формирования и становления Театра объективного искусства. **Выводы.** Утверждается, что особое внимание нужно обратить не на реконструкцию собственно «системы» Станиславского, а на необходимость создания и практического освоения методики работы с актером, которая соответствует уровню развития науки начала XXI в. Универсальная поликультурная методика должна гармонизировать практическую составляющую в экспрессивной практике актера с ее научным обоснованием.

Ключевые слова: театр; духовность; природа человека; художник; методика работы с актером.

Relevance of research topic. Only in 1938, in the year of its author's death, nowadays widely known K. Stanislavsky's "system", was made public. In our opinion, the decision on the year of the "system" origination plays an important role in determining the "system's" fate itself reflecting on its teaching methodology. This is because at various stages of the "system's" development it had a certain appearance; there were some or other accents. If the 1912 year is to be accepted the date of the "system's" content and design final formation, thus its teaching on acting courses should base exclusively on the 1912 edition. However, it is known that until the last days of his life K. Stanislavsky was not satisfied with its structure and content. The first Soviet publication of the first part of "The work of the actor over himself" book happened after the author's death. In addition, Stanislavsky did not leave after himself a textbook on practical exercises in his system. This is almost being a central issue. In case of the author's textbook absence, the Master's direct descendants and followers formed the practical plane of the "system" at their discretion. Since the end of the 1950s trainings on Stanislavsky's "psycho-engineering elements" have been developed in the light of modern science and, importantly and fundamentally, with the direct involvement of the Eastern experience, including yoga, Stanislavsky himself having begun to work on within the "system".

The "system" becomes a sign of a universal and multicultural phenomenon. At the same time, we partially agree with J. Grotowski that any new system becomes a response to Stanislavsky, since it is he, in perpetuity, to remain the author of the first acting art systematic theory. However, for more than forty years P. Brook has been practicing G. Gurdjieff's "fourth way", and J. Grotowski applied in practice his techniques. This is important in view of the fact that G. Gurdjieff is the authors of the "objective art" definition and the theory. But, in our opinion, it is the time

to agree that modern European methods of acting art are no longer correctly considered as means of “the system” development, given the contributed to long Western transformations and the special L. Kurbas experience, who did not recognize the “system” in general.

Analysis of the previous researches and publications. This problem has drawn much attention in books of T. Bachelis, “Shakespeare and Craig” (1983), K. Antarova, “On one creative path” (1998), V. Toporkova, “Stanislavsky on the rehearsal” (1949); N. Kornienko, “Les Kurbas: rehearsal of the future” (2007), etc. In addition, the author relies on the works of P. Brook, “Threads of Time” (2005), J. Grotowski, “Reply to Stanislavsky” and “Performer”(2003), A. Smiliansky “Profession of the Artist” preface to the 2nd volume of the K. Stanislavsky works collection (The profession of an artist, URL: <<http://biblioteka.teatr-obraz.ru/page/professiya-artist-smelyanskiy>>), “Literary Heritage” by M. Chekhov (1992).

According to the author, the most unsolved problem of the Stanislavsky “system” practical mastering of remains the reconstruction of the 1938-year form. In other words, the author’s early and last searches are ignored, in particular, the eastern vector in his “system’s” practical teaching for certain actors, an essential review of the crucial positions of the “system”, especially in connection with the invention of physical actions method and the effective analysis method. Such a reconstruction should take place on the basis of all available literary sources detailed analysis, step by step reproducing the practical methodology of the Stanislavsky’s work with an actor, released from censorship gaps, subjective interpretations of the Stanislavsky’s works publishers, and in case of returning to the “system’s” key concepts, which censorship declared to be sullen, thus forcing the author to exclude them from the “The actor’s work over himself” printed version. A. Tarkovskiy wrote that he wanted everything to be truthful, but there were problems, dangerous to be touched. One way or another everything would be adjusted, so he had to spend much theorizing (2008, p. 28). This, in our opinion, motivated K. Stanislavsky to largely theoretical presentation of his method, which, according to his closest students, was quite practical.

Relying exclusively on the undisputed experience of K. Stanislavsky, one needs to take a step by step in order to recreate an effective Stanislavsky “system” Textbook of exercises, as close as possible to the author’s “system” practice. Finally, this problem still remains unsolved and requires further documentary inquiries and practical researches.

Thus, the **purpose of this article** is an attempt to outline the range of literary and practical sources that can bring the “system” key issues to an effective solution that can influence the content and the actor’s course level of performance based

on the Stanislavsky “system”. First, we try to clarify the content the “system’s” author has put into the concept of “nature – the only image/character creator”, because there still exist a number of sometimes quite free approaches to the “system’s” concept of “nature” interpretation.

Highlighting the topically of the research. There is a great importance of the fact that K. Stanislavsky, in his process of searching and research, closely approached the “theater of objective art” sphere, further thoroughly studied by G. Gurdjieff, P. Brook, J. Grotowski, and others. If this hypothesis is correct, it will significantly affect the content of the actor’s pre-expressive practice.

The main material presentation. At the edge of the XXth and XXIst centuries, the theater turned out to be in crisis, largely similar to the situation that arose in the late XIXth and early XXth centuries when K. Stanislavsky and V. Nemyrovych-Danchenko founded the Art Theater as an alternative to the mass culture dominance. The realities of the present: the total commercialization of culture, the domination of the producer’s theater and cinema, the line of soap operas, humorous shows, etc. – give rise to spiritual inflation of acting art. The modern theater technical potential, resulted by the high technology elements usage, the domination of directing production, the dominance of “cash drama”, the growth of the annual premier and current performances number, a large number of theater groups and performances engagement, a significant reduction of rehearsal time – predetermines the changes of stage art from sacramentalism to *resprofana* (lat.: profanation of reality).

According to L. Levin, one of the leading specialists in the field of computer science, over time many complex proofs are becoming simplified, but not all of them, and not without long efforts (URL: <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/24797833.html>). In addition, according to L. Levin, the complexity of ideas often means their strangeness, the search for the most effective and natural method of the actor education, on the one hand, belong to the number of the most significant, on the other hand, the most intricate problems of at least the XIXth and XXth centuries. The problem is complicated by the fact that at the beginning of the XXth century the theater began to develop in a few ways, among which of particular importance are two directions: the “subjective” theater and the “objective” art theater – according to G. Gurdjieff’s definition.

L. Levin is convinced that this complexity is contrary to popularity. Therefore, the desire for popularity at any price is one of many madcap problems of democracy. In his opinion, Socrates was poisoned by the Democrats for being independent and unpopular.

That’s why K. Stanislavsky did not strive for popularity, as well as A. Arto despised it and J. Grotowski avoided. K. Stanislavsky called

V. Nemyrovych-Danchenko to remove his name from the posters, and J. Grotowski referred himself to the world theater rearguard. This was because they, first of all, tried to reach the origins of human spirituality, to define its archetypal signs and conscious ways to it. While K. Stanislavsky was trying to retire with a group of actors in the “theatrical sect” in Yevpatoria, G. Gurdjieff was looking for a shelter for his Institute for the harmonious human development in Istanbul and Constantinople, later in Soviet Russia, and finally in Fontainebleau (France), L. Kurbas and Y. Osteva were dreaming about arranging actor’s commune in an abandoned estate or an empty temple near Kyiv; J. Hrotovsky was realizing a such solitude in Brzeźnica (one hundred kilometers from Wroclaw, Poland) and Pontedera (near Florence, Italy); P. Brook allegedly hid his theatre from a third-party eye in Paris, and E. Barba did the same in Holstebro (Denmark). Each of them sought to concentrate on creating their own methodology and theater, consciously having refused the pursuit of super-profit or popularity (with the exception of G. Gurdjieff, but all the earned money and he spent mostly on his Institute maintenance).

It is not surprising, that these personalities in one or another way approached the phenomenon that G. Gurdjieff defined as an “objective” art, opposing it to the “subjective” one.

It should be noted that the “objective” art theater still remains terra incognita to some extent. Therefore, the problem of historical justification of the “objective” art theater’s emergence, formation, development and establishment factors. The “objective” art theater is directed primarily to the comprehension of the human nature as well as the artist’s nature in the process of spiritual formation and professional creativity. Based on J. Grotowski’s idea that any new theory and practice of the theater necessarily becomes the response to K. Stanislavsky, being the author of the first system of acting, there has been raised an urgent question concerning its place in the establishing and functioning of both the “subjective” art theater and its spiritual antipode – the “objective” art theater, because, in our opinion, K. Stanislavsky played a prominent role in the history of both theatrical art directions.

The modern history of “objective” and “subjective” art began almost simultaneously – at the edge of the XIXth and XXth centuries. Sometimes they have crossed, for example, in searches of K. Stanislavsky and V. Meyerhold, P. Brook and J. Grotowski. However, the “subjective” art holds an undisputed leadership in its spread and recognition, in its turn the “objective” art being an undeniable outsider on these determinants, despite the equally undisputable and legendary leadership of all the named proselytes of this rather marginal trend of art, in particular, theatrical.

It causes the theoretical and spiritual decentralization of “objective” art schools. K. Stanislavsky’s alliance with Craig and in his collaboration with

L. Sulyerzhysky are quite different schools of theater, acting and directing. J. Grotowski and E. Barba, jointly worked in Opole, are equally similar, as far as different. They are not tangible in attaching to one or another religious, spiritual, philosophical and psychological schools and theories of the West, in understanding and imitation of the Oriental ones. For each of them the balances of relations between the playwright/theater, the director/actor, and the performance/viewer look more like a Pryhozhyn pendulum, balanced for a moment before the unpredictable and chaotic movement, than the linear scales created for the unambiguous fixation of one-dimensional masses. Even professing the only Oriental schools, they have chosen their own vector of spiritual and practical mastery. In addition, J. Grotowski has quite substantially changed the direction, the meaning and the spiritual ground of his work for several times.

The reforms carried out by K. Stanislavsky have an exceptional significance. However, they are happened to be studied, examined predominantly by canonized sources, in particular, the “The actor’s work over himself” Soviet publications and the many comments and publications of the followers, and officially recognized researchers.

At all times, there found the circumstances spoiling the canonized image and returning the “system” to the chaos of “vague” terms and explosive “mysticism”. The “system” traditional interpretation defenders avoid these slippery themes. Why during the triumphal tours K. Stanislavsky confidentially wrote to V. Nemyrovych-Danchenko that there was no Artistic Theater anymore? Why at this time he had been convinced that experienced actors did not want, and the youth was not able to work on new principles? Why, on the background of an unbelievable triumph, R. Stanislavsky had finally been convinced that radical changes were needed, and the theater, that had conquered America, had no future?

Apparently, K. Stanislavsky had an idea about a different theater, another acting technique, and other performances. Even in 1921, V. Meyerhold was impressed by the fact that K. Stanislavsky demanded from the actors not the feelings, but the flexibility of the body, expressive gesture and rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm. According to the evidence of K. Antarova, who in 1918–1921 was a student of K. Stanislavsky at the Bolshoi Theater Studios, he interpreted the actor’s stamp as a spiritual inactivity (1998, p. 192). The K. Stanislavsky’s intuition and his sudden inspirations went much further, at least, of the canonized system. We believe K. Stanislavsky to have everything to have been ahead the P. Brooke, J. Grotowski, and E. Barba’s searches for many years before, if the general flurry of materialism in science, the Soviet ideology, the Moscow Art Theater, V. Nemyrovych-Danchenko, the old and young actors and he by himself had not become the obstacle.

In the spring of 1938, a few months before his death, Konstantin Stanislavsky with several directors of the Moscow Art Theater began his work on a laboratory performance named “Tartuffe” in order to give them the mysteries of the physical action method. The gray-haired Stanislavsky, barely moving his legs, put into classes by the hands, conducts rehearsals half-bed.

According to V. Toporkov, K. Stanislavsky considered physical actions to be the main element of stage expressiveness and demanded from the actor a “good diction” of physical actions. He considered exercises with imaginary objects to be the engine of their purity and expressiveness,

We completely agree that everyday exercises in memory of physical actions with represented objects form a concentration, that is, the concentration of the actor on the stage act essence.

“Nobody knows the technique that I am striving for. But it needs to be reached” (Toporkov, 1949, p. 140). It is strange that K. Stanislavsky said this in 1938, because he had developed the method of physical action in Nice in 1929–1930-s, that is, nine years before his desperate attempt to share the secret of his unique technique to a group of theater directors. For more than nine years, the Moscow Art Theater had been ignoring the discovery, which radically changed the emphasis of the system.

We note that according to A. Smiliansky it was in 1929, the very year the Moscow Art Theater was struck by a devastating blow: the Soviet government questioned its aesthetics, repertoire politics, organizational structure, “subjectively-idealistic” and even the “mystical” system of its “vague” terms: “life of the human spirit”, “autonomy of super-consciousness” and, ultimately, the very existence of the system. Thus, the officials decided to take care in advance the K. Stanislavsky “system” not to be put into practice.

K. Stanislavsky himself did not see and did not hear anything around; he worked as if nothing had happened around. V. Toporkov wrote that K. Stanislavsky was afraid of all kinds of views in the past (1949, p. 134). When one of the actresses told him that she was keeping detailed records of all his a few years ago rehearsals, the Master asked her to burn them. He also renounced the term “nature of state”, which he launched a few years before. “What is the state of nature? ... I have never heard about that”.

However, we are convinced that Stanislavsky is right when he says that the action comes from the will and intuition, but from the brain and the head. Thus, Konstantin Stanislavsky denies rational work on the role.

S. Hippius tries to reduce the objective phenomena to almost ordinary materialistic phenomena. The students are left to perceive the information purely intellectually and acquire one or another ability, relying on the suggestibility of their

psychics. As if in response to the meditative searches of M. Chekhov's of Don Quixote image, S. Hippius speaks about a second signaling system that "seems to supply movies to our internal screen, creating, under his verbal guidance, at the studio of the First Signal System" images that "will break the screen of the internal sight through the barriers of selective control" (2001). Meditation requires continuous silence, overcoming the "internal monologue", and only under such conditions gives rise to visualization, and, in S. Hippius's mind, the actor's brain works "as if filming a cinematic device and a spinning tape of the tape recorder – continuously, throughout life" (2001).

S. Hippius cites I. Siechenov: "Thought is – a reflex, restrained in its motor part, and every thought is a word in the state of the muscular activity beginning" (2001). The human's eye has been found out to begin moving when a person perceives any kind of image. This is an average person. We practice techniques in which students are looking at each other without any flashing, without the least movement of the eye for a long time. The eye of our actor does not give anything in life or on stage, thus, in combination with the internal chatter absence, it makes impossible casual reflex reactions.

K. Stanislavsky interprets the "prana" as a muscular sense of physical energy, "transfusion" of which the students performed in exercises for tension and muscles emancipation. The exalted youth "radiated prana" as a kind of airy fluid, that fills the soul.

In our opinion, the K. Stanislavsky eclectics is united by his original insecurity in the possibility of solving metaphysical essentially problems through materialist means. Finally, the phenomenal acquired the signs of materialism: K. Stanislavsky found, – at least for the book (first edition – 1938) – the subconscious creativity of the very nature – through the conscious actor's psycho technique and finally identified 14 elements of the psycho technique, which are subjected to "training and drill". Not only I. Berhman and mature P. Brook treat the "system" negatively, but also, for example, A. Tarkovsky, who wrote: "K. Stanislavsky did a bad service to the future of the Theater – almost the same as V. Stasov did for painting. As F. Dostoyevsky wrote, this ideology, the so-called "direction" – all this replaced the tasks and the meaning of art" (2008, pp. 60–61). A. Tarkovsky wrote, "the depth does not lie in the realism of extraordinary events, but in the desire for the depth" (2008, p. 593).

However, in our opinion, even at first glance, the obvious and rather "materialistic" K. Stanislavsky's demands towards the actor were based on metaphysical canons. Let's say a categorical ban on an actor rehearsing a role with the author's text, concealed something unproved by the Master aloud, in order the Moscow Art Theatre representatives not to be confused with his other "frills".

The prohibition of the author's text turns the actor's brain; his discretion refuses to perform Hamlet without the Shakespeare's text. He is not able to exist without any fluctuations in a high poetic drama with imperfect improvisational prose. What to do with the rhythm of the Shakespeare's poetic text in this case? Physical discretion is panicking and fading. This is exactly what K. Stanislavsky needs, because in this case there is no thought in the actor's head, and the probability of the real imagination awakening increases significantly. "When the actor, – quotes V. Toporkov the words of K. Stanislavsky, – is afraid to show his will, he uses reasoning. This is a horse trampling in place caused by inability to move the cart" (1949, p. 136). It is also proved by G. Gurdjieff and J. Grotowski's experience.

Such a seemingly innocent discourse, as a "passion for action", conceals the ability to total actor's concentration that cannot be imagined without the absolute "internal chatter" stopping, which should not be confused with the "internal monologue".

At first glance it seems almost sensational the news that K. Stanislavsky prohibited directors-performers to search for a *mise en scene* while working on "Tartuffe". It is a strange approach altogether with the author's text prohibition accompanied by physical action with the imaginary object to be the main means of actor's expression.

For many years, studying the little-known sources concerning the "systems", we have been convinced that every year K. Stanislavsky became more and more materialistic, almost conservative. It was a false thought. The mastering of the actor's psycho technique elements is now becomes clear to have been based on the search for the human nature archetype. The "discipline", K. Stanislavsky always demanded from the actor, was an "organic discipline", which should be conscious and should not require constant external control. It is a discipline that arises and continues throughout the whole actor's life without giving any effort, thus indicating one thing: the actor has mastered the decisive element of the psycho technique – the total concentration on the object, the character and his actions. In addition, the lack of discipline means that the actor to be governed by his own ego, pride, narcissism. These particular factors overthrow any efforts to gain a state of a complete concentration, and thus making it impossible to awaken a real, rather than a fictional imagination, with all the signs not to be imagined, but fantasized, being an attribute of physical discretion. Thus, one can argue that imagination is an attribute of spiritual thinking, activated only under the condition of complete peace and quietness in the realm of physical discretion.

In the conditions of boundless domination of materialism, the pursuit of instant material gain, the reorientation of the vast majority of theaters to the cash repertoire levels the person, the theater, and its spiritual dominant, the very spirituality becomes

an urgent problem of society. Under such conditions, a purely materialist interpretation of the actor's nature sometimes drastically changes the nature of the theatrical art, which requires a certain approach to the very basics of the actor's upbringing.

At the same time, there is a noticeable increase in the number of higher educational institutions acting departments and sections and their annual graduates. However, due to the long time dominance of one technique, namely the K. Stanislavsky system, the actor's skill curriculum is oriented towards "external skills" mastering, focused on the problems of "given circumstances", "reincarnation", "image", "character", etc.

Thus, there is a need for a historical substantiation of the factors of the Theater of Objective Art emergence, formation, development and establishment, aimed primarily at the cognition of the human nature itself and the artist nature within the spiritual formation and professional creativity process.

Conclusions. In our opinion, nowadays it's not so important what is the way of a certain actor's school, what particular leaders' ideas are taken for a sample and professed profoundly, whether it retains certain traditions, or finds its own special way and works according to an author's technique, which has no analogues in the past. In all cases, no school and methodology has the right to ignore the fact that K. Stanislavsky and L. Sulierzhytskyi, L. Kurbas and M. Chekhov, R. Steiner and G. Gurdjieff, A. Arto and P. Brook, J. Grotowski and E. Barba each in their own way investigated the human nature, the archetypal factors of this nature and their preliminary sources. In our opinion, when K. Stanislavsky proclaims nature to be the only possible creator, he refers to the human's nature, his powerful energies and organic creative sources.

In the restoration of K. Stanislavsky "system", especially its practical side, first, one should abandon the belief that the whole world recognized it as the only method of working with an actor, because it does not correspond to reality. Secondly, our own "system" research experience shows that its reconstruction is impossible without addressing to a number of other authors finding, primarily A. Arto, E. Barba, P. Brook, Y. Vakhtanov, J. Grotowski, G. Gurdjieff and R. Steiner, L. Kurbas, L. Sulierzhytskyi, M. Chekhov and others. Scientific researches of such scholars as K. Kerényi, I. Pryhozyn, D. Lauenstein, K. Jung and others worth adding to this list, because they made a powerful breakthrough in understanding the primitive human nature, such phenomena as consciousness, over consciousness, human energy resources, etc.

Consequently, the conversation should not be about the reconstruction of the Stanislavsky actual system, but about the creation and practical mastering of the working with an actor methodology, corresponding to the science development

level at the beginning of the XXIst century. In addition, such a universal multicultural methodology should harmonize the practical component of the actor's expressive practice with its scientific grounding. In our opinion, there is no other way to create a truly scientific and effective system of the actor education. Any attempt to isolate any figure and to imitate anything exclusively on its personal "system" will lead to the absence of the personal scientific and practical discoveries, which in the second half of the XXth – early XXIst century drastically changed the world.

Бібліографічні посилання

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