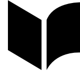
ACTING TECHNIQUES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

VEDA



VEDA

Publishing House of the SAS

Slovak Academy of Sciences
Art Research Centre
Institute of Theatre an Film Research

Reviewers
Božidara Turzonovová
Anton Kret

© Miloš Mistrík, 2003, 2018, 2024

ACTING TECHNIQUES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Miloš Mistrík

VEDA

VEDA, Publishing House of the SAS,
Bratislava, 2024

CONTENT

6 Introduction

9 Forerunners

27 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTOR AND THE PHYSICAL ACTOR

29 The Psychological Realism of Konstantin Sergeievich Stanislavsky
58 From System to Method: Mikhail Chekhov and Lee Strasberg
74 Vsevolod Emilievich Meyerhold's Biomechanics

109 ACTOR OF A PERFECT FORM

111 Edward Gordon Craig's *Über-Marionette*
132 The Living Art of Adolphe Appia
146 Émile Jaques-Dalcroze's Eurhythmics
158 The Actor of Several Arts

167 THE DRAMATIC AND LUDIC ACTOR

169 Jacques Copeau and the Actor on a Naked Stage
183 The Cartel: Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin, and others
195 Étienne Decroux's Pure *mimus*
202 The Theatremaker Jean-Louis Barrault

209 THE ACTOR OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

211 Bertolt Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*
235 Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop

243 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ACTOR

245 Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty
260 Jerzy Grotowski's Poor Theatre
296 Eugenio Barba's Theatre Anthropology
310 Peter Brook's Shifting Point

323 Conclusion

324 Notes
336 Name index

INTRODUCTION

This book does not aspire to be a history of twentieth century acting. To be that, it would have to be much longer, mention many more actors, directors, theatre companies and schools, and refer to many more productions. The pages of this book do not address every detail of theatre acting. The essential idea behind this book, assigned to it from the very outset, was to inspire. To stimulate. To boost creativity. To encourage actors on their paths of innovation. The reader does not need to feel drawn into the pages from the beginning to the end. The book allows its readers to keep their distance, to search in it freely, skip ahead or go back and forth as their current interest dictates. It is because the intention of the author was to introduce to the readers, especially actors, theatre artists, and all those who are interested in theatre, exceptional moments in its history, extraordinary people, and great impulses that still have something to say. The book might be about the twentieth century, but it is aiming to address the twenty-first century.

Of course, if one writes about the most significant impulses for theatre acting, one will inevitably get to – just like other authors writing about acting – to more or less identical sets of important and most influential personalities. These need not include only actors, but also directors, stage designers, literary writers, great visionaries of their art. The many ingenious artists include such personalities as Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Chekhov, Craig, Appia, Copeau, Artaud, and Brecht, or later Grotowski, Barba, and Brook. But there are also others who are mentioned in the book, selected because their exercises, rehearsals, courses, and trainings became the source of the greatest inspiration.

When reconstructing the opinions and programme ideas of these personalities, my approach was to rely primarily on their own statements, memories, manuals, textbooks, manifestos, and theatre practice. This is because we deem it the most authentic and immediate material, the information that is closest to the truth. Only if these

direct sources were not sufficient or available did I turn to mediated information, descriptions, secondary historical literature written by students, contemporaries, and later interpreters. Each artistic personality in this book did, of course, go through some development, their opinions matured and often changed. That is why I focused on their peak periods when their programmes were mature enough as well as tested and tried in practice. The objective was not to present their comprehensive portraits, but to highlight their most significant contributions to the theatre world.

My aim was not to write a guidebook for beginning actors, or an instructions manual to organize acting training. Acting is not discussed here as a craft, but as an aesthetic phenomenon. I wanted to describe the inner contexts and aptly depict the theoretical dimension of the ways in which the most outstanding reformers contributed to acting. They are introduced individually as well as in mutual interactions, on the backdrop of historical conditions, with emphasis on the context of their inspiration, something that transcends the decades of their lives and cultural borders. Studying these reformers of theatrical practice inevitably led to their exceptional dedication to their vocation which determined the production of the best possible results, as well as their extraordinary ability to restrain themselves, sometimes even a portion of latent pathos they took to approach their work.

I wanted to be true to their legacy, trying to understand and explain it, rather than criticize or confront it with what their successors later introduced. I did not want to drown out the live sources, ideas, flashes of creativity which illuminate the stages of theatres even today. Each reader will certainly find in the book what they are looking for, what they like, or what might hit them like an impulse helping them to find themselves in their art. That is why I have claimed that this is mainly a book of inspiration.

When discussing the various ways in which twentieth-century acting developed, one cannot ignore its sources of inspiration from previous centuries. Everything has its continuity, and actors and directors in the twentieth century drew on the messages they received directly or indirectly from those who had stood on theatre stages before them.

No one can say exactly how acting traditions were passed on. Some were conveyed directly from teachers to students, and experiences were shared between fathers and sons. Information was spread orally and in legends, truths, and half-truths. There were written and pictorial references. Nevertheless, nothing can restore a true picture decades later. A theatre performance lives and perishes in the moment it takes place; no one will ever see again what was performed yesterday, even if it was documented on film or a series of photographs. While we can admire an ancient sculpture even today, appreciating its original beauty, we cannot do the same with an ancient actor.

This is why it can be said that the forerunners of twentieth-century performance art provided inspiration for future theatremakers only through a very general set of ideas, sending a message contained more in metaphor and abstraction than in actual fact. And yet, their existence proved to be of great value for theatre as we know it today – they inspired many, and many should be thankful for it. Of course, not all stimuli from the distant and recent past were equally strong, and quite a few were never acquired by twentieth-century actors. While classicist theatre, for example, saw itself as a reflection of the ancient and mostly Roman theatre tradition, twentieth-century theatre sought its own inspiration that it would later draw on.

From a chronological perspective, an important source of inspiration was Italian popular comedy: the improvised theatre of the markets, squares, and intersections known as *commedia dell'arte*. Its peak occurred between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. During the whole of the twentieth century, theatremakers would often

☛ *A scene from* Commedia dell'arte*, late 16th century. Horacio is about to stab Arlecchino, Dottore is watching.*

acknowledge its legacy. *Commedia dell'arte* actors of old performed on simple makeshift stages and used no stage machinery that would help create an illusion: there were no trapdoors or fire machines. They did not learn verbal tirades in advance. There were no dramatic texts, only so-called *sogettos*, that is, brief sequences of scenes noted in bullet points reminding the actors of the plot, which was improvised on the spot in front of the audience using only the actors' memory and their inspiration from the given moment.

Still, there were typical and fixed dramatic characters that behaved according to habitual personality traits. These included servants (Brighella and Arlecchino), lovers (Lelio, Florindo, Isabella, and Angelica), wealthy old men (Pantalone and Dottore), bragging soldiers (Capitano), and others who were divided among the actors and carried around from one place to another and repeatedly reinvented, improved, and modified. Each actor knew what his or her type should and would do in the story and was aware of the character's reactions and

expressions. The role of the actors was to mutually create a plot and then freely give themselves to their own ideas and improvisations. They would wear a mask and costume assigned to their character type, and they had to focus on gestures, dynamic movement that often verged on acrobatics, and concise caricature. *Commedia dell'arte* was a Renaissance product and the actors, just like all of society, found in it a source of free expression by exposing their live bodies and disclosing the laughter and joy of play.

From the Apennine Peninsula, Italian popular theatre found its way to other European countries. It was well received in France, and its traces can be found in most of the southern and central parts of the continent in all of the places the itinerant performers visited. They would always meet local jesters, comedians who had always been part of any bigger party and who drew on the much older traditions of the ancient Roman *Atellana*, or the itinerant mediaeval *ioculatores* and *igrics*.

After a few centuries of its existence, *commedia dell'arte* ceased to exist and was replaced with more refined forms in the eighteenth century. However, its legacy and the notion that acting was a creative improvisational skill and that actors were, by origin, comic performers with virtuosic control of their bodies, capable of dynamic movement on the stage, and possessing a sense for improvisation and humour, persisted for a very long time. In the twentieth century, it became an example worth following.

For acting in the twentieth century, other inspirations emerged as well. Denis Diderot [5 October 1713, Langres–31 July 1784, Paris] wrote a treatise in dialogue containing far-seeing meditations on performance art. *The Paradox of Acting*, published in 1778, captured the fundamental contradictions felt by a person who is an actor. On the one hand, an actor pretends to be somebody else when in character, but on the other hand he is still

Denis Diderot.

himself with his own face, body, and voice. How can an actor dress up as an imagined character every evening? How can he carry out all of the emotional transformations during a performance? Diderot had an answer to that: the actor has to be above this. "He must be a cool and calm observer. That is why I require him to be sharp-witted, not emotional. I require an actor to know how to imitate everything."[1] An actor should be able to easily go from one emotional state to another and put on one and then another character without identifying with them. An actor should study the human character, search for models, imitate, and then combine all of this, arrange it, and commit it to memory. That is the only way to avoid succumbing to momentary feelings and making fellow actors and spectators feel awkward. Diderot admired how some actors were able to learn their roles so well that they changed their whole appearance within a few seconds: "Garrick pokes his head through the folding doors and, in the space of four to five seconds, his expression moves from unrestrained to moderate delight, from delight to tranquillity, from tranquillity to surprise, from surprise to astonishment, from astonishment to sadness, from sadness to despondency, from despondency to fear, from fear to horror, from horror to despair, and goes back from this low to the expression where he began. Can his soul have experienced all these feelings, and played this kind of scale in concert with this scale?"[2] Diderot thus leaned towards the technical actor rather than the psychological one. He even believed that in order to be able to play many changes and characters, the actor should not have any character himself as this could be a burden. Indeed, actors can play any characters only because they "have no character [themselves]."[3] This is, of course, an extreme opinion, but Diderot was quite persistent in this, also in light of the reality of that time, when the acting craft was not among the impeccable. In his view, acting talent was equal to the capacity to become well acquainted with the external attributes of a loaned soul and the ability to deceive the audience by imitating these attributes. The paradoxical aspect of this acting paradox is that Diderot aimed these ideas at improving and elevating performance art. He did not like to see actors defy the message of the work they performed because they lacked a sense of conceptuality and used

cheap, fast-produced emotions. The subtext of his work was to make the actors focus more on the technique of their expression, gesture, movement, and declamation.

In the nineteenth century, theatre reached a stage when it started to realize the need of a clear theoretical self-definition. Besides, the time was ripe to replace what had been merely craftful acting, acting voluntarism, domination of stars, prima donnas, and audience darlings with organizational principles and a harmonization of individual theatre professions. Some theatre ensembles found eminent personalities to act as their leaders and a kind of predecessor of future directors. Between 1791 and 1817, the Weimar Hoftheatre's intendant was Johann Wolfgang Goethe [28 August 1749, Frankfurt am Main–22 March 1832, Weimar], who attended the rehearsals and vigorously imposed his own ideas on the company.

For the further development of theatre, it was important how its new theoretical definition would be shaped and how it was going to be positioned within broader philosophical and aesthetic coordinates. In this process, an important role was played by the theoretical ideas of Richard Wagner [22 May 1813, Leipzig–13 February 1883, Venice], which were based on general aesthetics as well as his own experience as a composer and theatremaker. He formulated his idea of the integration of arts that became known as *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Wagner used this term to envision such a work that would aim to become the most exquisite artwork of the future. In addition to the term *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Wagner also referred to "a common, general artwork". He mainly compiled his opinions on this issue in the studies *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (1849), *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1850), and *Oper und Drama* (1851). They were all products of the revolutionary period in Europe and represented Wagner's struggle to resuscitate its ideals. New art could be made only by the people and for the people. Only a collective creator, not a mindless mass, could guarantee the revival of art.

Wagner claimed that when individual art forms became independent at the end of Antiquity, they ended up weak and unable to express everything, thus becoming servants to a witless audience. Therefore, art forms would need to unite again. According to Wagner,

Richard Wagner.

three main forms of art – dance, music, and poetry – enter into *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Ancient theatre was supposed to be the model for their synthetic union, especially the tragedies of Aeschylus, which were an example of grandeur. During his time, Wagner could not find anything similar, not even in contemporary opera, as it was dominated by music and not drama. Poets who wrote librettos only served a musical purpose. In *Gesamtkunstwerk*, however, the various art forms would unite under the dominant wings of drama, which has the greatest potential for the most precise artistic expression.

And how should the different arts cooperate within *Gesamtkunstwerk?* Wagner assumed that they would not lose their identity; on the contrary, they would strengthen it and act in mutual balance. Each form of art was capable of expressing something different, but in aesthetic terms they were all equal. Music mediated expression and was best at conveying moods. Drama was the objective of expression and therefore contributed to the whole with ideas and content. The trio of music, drama, and dance made use of the visual component in acting representation and movement elements. Wagner held a negative opinion of contemporary ballet, which he considered to be a mentally empty form of art. He saw the future of dance in mime, which emphasized gesture and facial expressions. Architecture and stage design also contributed to the visual appearance of the overall artistic work. All forms of art would not have to operate concurrently; sometimes they would be highlighted together and sometimes only two were active, often also in isolated operation and always according to the needs of the dramatic action.

Wagner's vision of the synthesis of art forms revealed his personal creative ideal, which he endeavoured to fulfil in his opera work. For him, only musical drama could be the best art form. Naturally, music would have to give up on some of what it had gained during the development of absolute music. Priority should be given to a melodic quality which is derived from words and which, depending on the

psychological content, conveys a dramatic dialogue. Because music is heard throughout each production, owing to the singers and orchestra – not like in ancient drama, where it was only heard during the Chorus – it gives rise to a new unparalleled unity between drama and music. As a result, all arts are joined into one: the old unity of time and place is no longer necessary, because now there is a new unity of common expression.

The vision of a synthetic *Gesamtkunstwerk* became one of the impulses that led to the establishment of modern theatre direction by the end of the nineteenth century. A total artwork implicitly counts on the existence of an organizer who will compose and aesthetically arrange the individual forms of art and their collaboration. The idea of total artwork inevitably led to the question of how artists would cooperate and even who these artists would be. In an attempt to address the question of who the artist of the future would be, Wagner responded that it would have to be a poet. But who would this poet be? An actor. And who would be the actor? The collective of all artists participating in the artwork. A total work of art is thus always collective art and not "egotistically" individualized art as some art forms

Sarah Bernhardt as Marguerite in The Lady of the Camellias *by Alexandre Dumas fils, 1880.*

☛ *Georg II, Duke of Saxe--Meiningen.*

☛ *Ludwig Chronegk.*

might appear when they act independently.

The ideas about *Gesamtkunstwerk* brought about a shift in the aesthetic discourse of the nineteenth century. Early in the twentieth century, many other artists came with their own slightly adjusted versions of cooperation in art creation. For example, there was Adolphe Appia, the Russian symbolists, and the interwar avant-garde (Vsevolod Emilyevich Meyerhold, Nikolai Pavlovich Okhlopkov). There was also the French Cartel (mainly Gaston Baty), Antonin Artaud, the Austrian–German Max Reinhardt, and the Bauhaus group, as well as the Pole Leon Schiller and the Czechs Emil František Burian and Jindřich Honzl. In the second half of the twentieth century, there were others, such as the Laterna Magica in Prague, Polish theatre (Józef Szajna), the Slovak Jozef Bednárik, modern visual art which penetrated into theatre (minimal art, happenings), happenings by Allan Kaprow, musicians such as John Cage and Berndt Alois Zimmermann, and newly established multimedia. Nonetheless, besides the efforts to synthesize art forms, twentieth-century theatre also experienced opposing trends – for example, the poor theatre of Jerzy Grotowski – which will be discussed later. As early as in the first half of the twentieth century, the Wagnerian tradition was opposed by the rationalist Bertolt Brecht.

But let us return to the late nineteenth century and the most important impulses that would later be reflected in twentieth-century acting. At that time, it seemed that there was an increasing need to establish what would

later be termed "mie-en-scéne".[4] Theatre struggled with a system of acting categories, that is, dividing actors not according to the genuine needs of the dramatic text but according to the momentum with which the actors performed certain types of characters – a lover, an old man, a comic, and so on. This was the aftermath of old conventions which once, or at least in the period of *commedia dell'arte*, might have stimulated creativity. Now, however, they only restricted it. Actors protectively guarded their categories, because they defined the hierarchy in theatre companies and affected the actors' economic position. However, this had a negative effect on the productions. Actors would determine the shape and cost of their costumes, and behave on the stage according to the clichés assumed by their acting category, thus deforming natural expressivity, gesture, and facial expressions. With the onset of realist and naturalist tendencies, such dramatic types" became obstacles and could only be removed by the director as a new, higher authority. After all, not all actors were as exceptional as Sarah Bernhardt, whose own imagination and talent allowed her to keep herself and her own eccentricity in check and – even though she was a remarkable star of European and American theatre – become one of the first figures of the emergent acting of life truths at the turn of the twentieth century.

Realist and naturalist theatre, however, needed a director not just because of such a petty matter as the removal of the anachronistic system of untouchable actors. The task of a new element in theatre synthesis drew on the essence of collective art. Because it turned out that each production was a complex system comprising several arts and professions, because the overall organizational work mainly increased in large theatres, and because it also transpired that neither the playwright (by means of his or her play) nor the actor (owing to his or her privileges) could reliably harmonize the entire system, the establishment of the independent profession of director became inevitable. The arrival of naturalism only accelerated this process, because it transformed theatre productions from an ordinary stage presentation of drama (declamations using statically arranged mise-en-scènes) to a new arrangement where actors were given a new mission. Some of them had to get off their pedestal, but

together they moved closer to reality and started to represent people truthfully, behaving on the stage as if it were reality and according to the mimetic principle. In such an environment, theatre simply needed the role of director.

The process was gradual and occurred in various places across Europe, often simultaneously, so it is hard to award a prize for who came first or who ranked highest in chronological charts. In general, though, historical literature has granted the origin of modern direction to the theatre in Meiningen, Germany. Thanks to Georg II [2 April 1826, Meiningen–25 June 1914, Bad Wildungen], the ruler of a small duchy who ascended the throne in 1866 and was an exceptional fan of this type of entertainment, favourable conditions were created for his court ensemble. The group helped shape several principles that would later become models for European and American theatre. Georg provided his theatre with a suitable building, invited famous German actors, engaged his subjects in stage work, and put the entire duchy and his authority in the service of theatre art. After several years of performing locally, the Meiningen theatre went on a long tour from

☛ *A sketch by Georg II depicting a crowd scene in Friedrich Schiller's* Fiesco's Conspiracy at Genoa*, 1874.*

1874 to 1890 which took in Europe's capital cities and inspired actors as well as future theatre reformers.

The principle used by the Meiningen productions was to thoroughly copy reality. In stage design, this meant using everyday objects such as antique furniture and materials used in the given period and environment. Actors did not dress in costumes but in real clothes, actual armour, iron shirts, genuine fur coats, trousers, and shoes. Georg himself was a master stage designer; he studied historical documents, engravings, and searched through ancient books. He also led rehearsals himself or had it done by his aides; the most famous of these was Ludwig Chronegk [3 November 1837, Brandenburg–8 July 1891, Meiningen], a former actor who, along with his master, is considered to be one of the forerunners of theatre directors in Europe. But there were also others, such as Ellen Franz, Georg's wife, who contributed to the production preparations.

Their theatre's repertory mostly included great playwrights like William Shakespeare, romantic writers like Friedrich Schiller, and contemporary authors of that period. The style of plays was always identical. Actors had to talk using common intonation without any pathos or raised voices and no artificial rhythm. In physical expression, emphasis was put on naturalness and precise movement. This meant no general gestures or symbolic stances but rather real action and movement, as if everything was really taking place in the given moment right before the audience's eyes. Georg did not allow actors to create any symmetries, parallels, or direct lines, as he deemed them unnatural. For example, if an actor was to walk from one side of the stage to the other, he could not follow a straight line; his walk had to slightly interpose this line for subtle reasons. If several actors were performing, they could never be standing in one line and the distances between them had to be irregular. Regularity, the ruler would say, reminded one of the arrangement of chess pieces. Everything had to be in motion, and the stage was divided both horizontally and vertically. The floor of the stage in Meiningen was not a common flat-board surface but rather an irregular space with elevations, stairs, trunks of trees fallen across the road, and so on. An actor was never supposed to stand like a soldier, straight and with his heels touching; he was

supposed to be in a relaxed position with his feet apart, or with one foot placed higher or lower than the other.

The crowd scenes at the Meiningen theatre were a speciality. The ensemble was divided into smaller groups with each one led by one of its members. Individual positions, gestures, speech, movement, fights, and crowd scenes were all rehearsed to the tiniest detail. Nothing could be repeated twice on the stage, and each actor's movement had to be original and characteristic for one specific detail. There was no mass fine tuning and no common rhythm. Rehearsals were long and exhausting, because nothing was to be left to chance and there was no space for improvisation. Nothing could be left unsaid or ambiguous. The skills of the actors who were hired to participate in group scenes were rather poor; they were Georg's subjects, not artists, so it made sense that rehearsals had to be so strict. However, it was true that grandiose manners were not tolerated in Meiningen, and even the more eminent actors had to perform small background roles, sometimes as a punishment.[5]

The Meiningen productions greatly influenced European theatre. They were the predecessors of naturalism, where theatre would shed its old skin and return to reality. The theatre produced in Meiningen could not yet be considered mature art, but the productions had good arrangements and were thoroughly rehearsed. Nobody tried to address issues of acting technique or think about long-term acting training. As such, direction at that time did not have the status of being the autonomous interpreter of the dramatic text; it did not take the position of the conceptual centre of the production. Nevertheless, there was a naturalist tendency which gradually developed.

In Brussels in 1888, Georg's theatre was seen by the Frenchman André Antoine [31 January 1858, Limoges–19 October 1943, Pouliguen]. For him, it only confirmed that the path he had decided to take was right. He also believed that naturalism would contribute to a revival of theatre practice. In 1887 he established the Théâtre Libre in Paris, where he produced plays by such authors as Émile Zola, Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, Henrik Ibsen, brothers Goncourt, and Eugène Brieux as well as other contemporaries of a similar leaning. Antoine wanted to make theatre as if it was reality and as if there was no audience in

the auditorium. He rejected all the theatricality of the previous forms and aimed at creating a perfect illusion of reality. In his productions, he thoroughly maintained the “fourth wall”, the illusory dividing line between the stage and the auditorium. Plays were rehearsed as if it did not matter from where the spectators would be looking at the actors, and the angle of the stage in relation to the audience was disregarded. Plays could be performed even with the actors’ backs to the audience; sometimes the furniture blocked the view because it was arranged around the walls. In one of the productions (Émile Zola’s *La Terre*), there were hens running around the stage.

This negation of the theatrical illusion, however, also benefited the theatre in a way. Antoine taught actors to be natural and to focus on the tiniest details. Instead of romanticizing the declamation technique, he looked for ways that actors could express emotions with their bodies, focusing on gestures and facial expressions. He was aware that people in real life also frequently moved without speaking, and this sparked his interest in mime. Gesture, which until then was a rather ornamental element, became a carrier of meaning: “In certain moments, the action of the [actor’s] arms, back, and legs can have multiple meanings like a tirade of words,” Antoine claimed.[6]

A scene from the production of André Antoine’s The Earth*, 1902.*

Like the Meiningen artists, he also enjoyed directing crowd scenes. He could use a relatively small group of actors and place them around the space of the stage to create the impression of a madding crowd. He started addressing the questions of how a production should be composed and how movement was to be fragmented in order to be put together in a mosaic of expression – clearly a forerunner of the principle of montage.

Antoine himself was a poor actor, but his training was later attended by some of the eminent personalities of French acting, such as Firmin Gémier, who much later, and in a different (symbolist) type of theatre, performed the character of King Ubu in the eponymous and scandalous play by Alfred Jarry. For Antoine, actor training was finding ways to motivate, encourage, and enthuse them. He rejected what he considered the inappropriate practice of the Conservatoire in Paris, which trained actors according to old principles: declamation and static sculpture-like physical expressions which were supposedly dignified and noble. Such an approach to training might have met the requirements of the Comédie-Française but did not relate to new (living) theatre, which responded to more liberal relationships in society, more strongly reflected the social changes, and made use of technical inventions. Enthusing actors also meant ridding it of a certain stiffness and ceremonial status in order to make room for truthful expression. In the preface to the novel *Thérèse Raquin*, Émile Zola highlighted the scientific character of naturalism, meaning that the formal exteriority in art should be replaced with a principle of deep analysis like that of a pathologist analysing the human body. Antoine took such decisive steps in this direction that the response to his productions effectively spread abroad, similarly to the response to the Meiningen productions.

In 1889, two years after the establishment of his ensemble in Paris, a theatre with the same name – the Freie Bühne – was founded in Berlin. The theatre critic Otto Brahm [5 February 1856, Hamburg–28 November 1912, Berlin] was asked to be the director. In addition to the legacy of Antoine and Meiningen, the new theatre's work could also draw on the already existing Deutsches Theater, founded in Berlin in 1883 by Adolphe l'Arronge and the actors Friedrich Haase, August

Förster, Ludwig Barnay, and Joseph Kainz, who turned away from the empty pathos of German court theatres and offered their city audiences a more realistic and critical perception of the world and the human individuality within it. However, while the Deutsches Theater focused mainly on classical repertory, Brahm's Freie Bühne was naturalistically oriented and mostly preferred new dramaturgy, including plays that were even banned by censors. Playwrights who were produced included Henrik Ibsen and Gerhart Hauptmann. For that time, some of these dramas were very truthful and revealed what was not common back then: the intimate aspects of conjugal life, social conflicts, and so on. The programme manifesto of the Freie Bühne included the following: "The slogan of the new art, inscribed in golden letters by leading minds, is the one word: Truth. And it is Truth. Truth in every sphere of existence, which we too are demanding and striving for."[7]

Direction would attempt to suppress the actors' exhibitionism, and Brahm found inspiration in the ongoing work of the Meiningen company. Freie Bühne attracted guest actors, who would return to their home theatres after a production was over, and therefore the theatre did not become a school of new acting. However, many eminent personalities acted in its productions, such as Emmerich Robert, Marie Schanzer von Bülow (who also used to perform in Meiningen), and Agnes Sorma.

The idea of establishing a new type of theatre moved from Paris and Berlin to elsewhere. In 1891 the Independent Theatre in London, led by Jacob Thomas Grein, had its first premiere. The theatre's dramaturgy drew on Antoine, and it took its cue from Otto Brahm in terms of organization. It introduced another outstanding playwright – George Bernard Shaw – to the theatre scene. All these theatres, whose pendants were also created in Vienna, Copenhagen, and other cities, were the predecessors of the ultimate theatre in this respect: one which followed up on their work and took the initiative to its climax. This was the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT), established in 1898 by Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky and Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko. Even though the theatre also addressed dramaturgy issues and acquired excellent playwrights (Anton Pavlovich Chekhov

☛ *King Ubu as imagined by Alfred Jarry.*

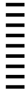
being the best example), its main focus was on new acting and direction. In addition to making sure that a truthful image of reality would be technically mastered, an emphasis was also placed on something that had long been neglected: the inner, psychological dimension of man. Within just a few years, this aim allowed the theatre to make one of the most outstanding contributions to the development of modern acting in the twentieth century.

At a time when the realist and naturalist initiative peaked in Moscow, it was resolutely rejected in some theatre cities and symbolism came to the fore. Symbolism heralded the following stages of theatre growth and became the first sign of the emerging twentieth-century avant-garde. In 1890 in Paris, Paul Fort [1 February 1872, Reims–20 April 1960, Monthléry] established Théâtre d'Art with Aurélien Lugné-Poe [27 December 1869, Paris–19 June 1949, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon], who later founded the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre (1893). In Théâtre d'Art, the well-known production of Alfred Jarry's *King Ubu* premiered in 1896. In 1907 Germany saw the establishment of the Munich-based Künstlertheater under the management of Georg Fuchs [1868–1949]. In Stockholm, August Strindberg's symbolist plays were produced in the Intima Teater, while in England William Poel [1852–1934] prepared a similar production about mediaeval morality titled *Everyman*. In 1907 Nikolai Nikolayevich Evreinov [1879–1953] founded the Starinny teatr in St Petersburg, Russia. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Western theatre culture started to witness the arrival of representatives of Japan's traditional Noh theatre, the Peking opera, and performances from other Asian cultures (notably India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Turkey). Because the role of director was highlighted in this artistically increasingly diverse environment, other efforts to formulate new performative poetics became visible as well: efforts to elaborate new acting techniques and define theatre as

an autonomous form of art, whose most important and existentially necessary element was its actors. As a result, the incentives from the previous stages of development passed on into twentieth-century theatre as a legacy that was still very much alive.

THE PSYCHO-LOGICAL ACTOR AND THE PHYSICAL ACTOR

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM OF KONSTANTIN SERGEYEVICH STANISLAVSKY



Today there are very apt terms for some acting techniques which were coined by those who created these techniques in the past. For example, the term "biomechanics" articulately captures the essence of Vsevolod Meyerhold's approach to acting. Similarly, Bertolt Brecht called his vision of acting technique *Verfremdungseffekt* ("estrangement" or "alienation effect"), and Jerzy Grotowski came up with the term "poor theatre". However, one of the techniques which contributed most extensively to the development of twentieth-century theatre is only known under a collective term that is overly general and unfitting. It was authored by Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky (his original surname was Alekseev) [17 January 1863, Moscow–7 August 1938, Moscow], who talked of a "system" of acting. This term, however, did not apply only to his own set of concepts and exercises. Stanislavsky was convinced that his system directly drew on life itself, was life as such, and was based on natural laws. It was, therefore, much more than just a technique used to train actors.

Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky.

Stanislavsky's system become a collective name for all of the tools this theatremaker used in order to enable his actors to work creatively. Later, mainly in the West, it became known as "the method", particularly by

Alexey Tolstoy: Tsar Feodor Ioannovich. *The first production of the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT) in 1898. Directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Alexander Sanin. Ivan Moskvin (Feodor), Alexander Vishnevsky (Boris), Olga Knipper (Irina).*

Stanislavsky's followers as well as the students of Lee Strasberg and Mikhail Chekhov. While the word "system" is very general, "method" implies – perhaps less ambitiously, but more correctly – that there is essentially one distinctive directorial, acting, and pedagogical procedure. This appears more appropriate because even though Stanislavsky imagined that his and Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko's [23 December 1858, Ozurgeti, Georgia–25 April 1943, Moscow] contribution to theatre would be universal, a more detached and objective historical view only showed that this was not the case and that Stanislavsky's system was actually just one distinctive (and in some aspects a very one-sided) procedure.

While Stanislavsky's system might seem to be only one of several other possible approaches to acting in comparison with other acting schools and techniques, it perhaps relates more than the others to the most essential and fundamental issues in performative art, issues that emerge in various types of acting and acting techniques. Even today the system is one of the foundation stones of acting as a craft, and once it is mastered it opens possibilities for the acquisition of other techniques as well.

If we wanted to find more exact aesthetic terms to name and historically categorize Stanislavsky's contribution to acting, two more terms which were closely related to the stage of development in which Stanislavsky made his art and co-founded the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT, 1898) with Nemirovich-Danchenko would have to be used. This was also related to the time when he started advancing his system just as realism and naturalism were about to end. What realism and naturalism contributed to art was mainly an interest in the human personality in its realistic and mimetic form: something not made romantically heroic, as had been done before, and not embellished and made into symbols. The nineteenth-century novels by Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, and Émile Zola focused on questions of the human soul and psyche as well as the social dimensions of life. Playwrights did the same – particularly Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov – and theatre, including directors and actors, turned its attention to the same goals.

It should be noted that in the European context, Stanislavsky was not alone or even the first to be included among realist directors. The German group mentioned before, led by Georg II in Meiningen, provided a strong impulse in this respect to both Russian and European theatre. In 1874, after assembling and training its actors in its local court theatre, the company set out on a tour all over Europe. The ensemble visited virtually all important theatre cities and performed their productions. Georg II, Ludwig Chronegk, and numerous other realist and naturalist theatremakers applied "mimesis", the Aristotelian perception of reality representation which demanded external similarity and a selection of characteristic features of human psychology. These were subsequently transferred onto the stage in an artistic transformation.

Stanislavsky remembers that when the theatremakers from Meiningen came to Moscow, he would not miss a single production; he did not just watch the performances, he studied them.[8] He noticed that the perfectly rehearsed plays were performed by average actors. For them, drill was more important than art. This experience sparked his interest in looking for a way to promote the psychological depth in staged scenes. Stanislavsky purposefully became an inspiration for

both the realist acting technique and its psychological dimension. This exceeded the purely naturalist approach of that time represented by André Antoine and Otto Brahm. As naturalists, it was important for them to remove pathos and falsehood, and they focused on observing and even copying human action. André Antoine wrote that "movement is the actor's most intense means of expression; his entire physical personality is part of the character the actor performs [...]; however, every time the actor is felt underneath the character, the dramatic plot is disrupted."[9] In the actor's movement, as well as in other elements of acting, what mattered most was the overall thoroughly depicted naturalist image; the person inserted therein was secondary. At that point, the concept of the imaginary fourth wall that Antoine developed – a barrier dividing the stage and the audience – strongly supported the naturalist, truthful, self-centred manner of acting. Simultaneously, however, it suppressed artistic creativity and obstructed any projection of the actor's psychological and physical personality. According to Antoine, the actor was only an instrument: some material in the director's hands that was in no way different from the other material used to create the naturalist audio-visual image on the stage.

Founders of the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT), Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and Konstantin Stanislavsky, in 1906.

Naturalist theatre made in the spirit of such principles never showed any deeper interest in creative acting. Its objectives were elsewhere: dramatic gestures were used to approximate the world of the theatre to the real one to unload the burden of Romantic and declamatory acting. At a time of ground-breaking technical inventions and rapid social changes, naturalist theatre aspired to restore the connection between art and the arrival of modern civilization. It centred as much of its attention on dramaturgy as it did on actors. Otto Brahm's fight "against the theatres of star actors, his demand that expression not

be pathetic, absorbed, and concentrated on words, his theatre devoid of gestures, images, and metaphors: these were all features of essentially dramaturgical theatre."[10]

Stanislavsky's later attitude was much more comprehensive, which was why he was the one – even though he and his theatre came only after the mentioned innovators – who became the first and most eminent creator of the psychological and realist acting school. His system was intended to use the actor's psychology in order to create a realistic representation of a character. His instructions and whole system of work were aimed at enabling the actor, with full participation of his personal psychology, to achieve a richly structured dramatic character and make it an essential component of a theatre production.

The Art of Experiencing

One of the key elements of the acting technique described in Stanislavsky's theoretical work and practically verified in dozens of his productions is the actor's "art of experiencing". The essence of the idea is the assumption that an actor is "transformed" onstage into a character, the image of another person. In order to represent an initially unfamiliar character as fully and realistically as possible, the actor has to identify with the character's psychology and express "the life of the human spirit" of the character, experiencing with and within him all of his emotions and the world of his thoughts. This should not be something artificial, requiring just the use of the actor's technical or professional skills. The actor has to draw on life: "Art and work is not a game or something artificial, nor is it a 'virtuoso technique', but rather *a creative process of applying mental and physical naturalness*. This process has much in common with other creations of nature." In acting, Stanislavsky emphasized naturalness and the actor's feelings and intuition. "The creative application of emotions is performed as part of *the normal process of genuine life of the human spirit of a role, a natural embodiment of the experience*. That is why the process of creative experiencing is the foundation of an actor's work, and it is called *the art of experiencing*," Stanislavsky declared.[11]

He elaborated his system on the basis of his own acting and direc-

☛ *Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy:* The Power of Darkness. *MAT, 1902. Directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky. Each character is expressing different mental states.*

torial experience in order to teach actors how to "experience" their characters better. In his opinion, the actor had to fully feel what he was portraying every time when creating and transforming himself, even if he was already performing a complete character. Not once or twice, not perhaps only during rehearsals, but always, a thousand times if necessary, the actor had to be emotionally tuned to feeling adequate excitement when performing.

It was very important that the felt passion and emotions were genuine. The actor should not feign them. On the contrary, they should be experienced as if they were real. "Truth of the passions, feelings that seem true in the supposed circumstances, that is what our intellect requires of a dramatist," Stanislavsky claimed, citing the poet Alexander Pushkin.[12]

Stanislavsky himself was aware of the difference between the actor's experience onstage and the psychological life of a real human being. This very realization was the most striking difference between his concept and naturalist theatre, which did not mention experience but rather defined the actor as the director's instrument truthfully representing any given character. In naturalist theatre, a dramatic character had its own life: it was the character that lived and experienced things, not the actor. This was, of course, a non-accomplishable kind of actor–character identification; however, it was

typical for naturalist theatre. After all, as later turned out, not even high-quality authentic decorations and props transported onto the stage could be identifiable with the reality outside of the theatre. And yet, naturalist theatre still tried to follow this particular path of staging productions. André Antoine, for example, had furniture made from Norwegian fir-tree wood for the Paris production of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* in order to approximate the original Norwegian environment in which the play's plot took place.[13]

And so if Stanislavsky wanted to be honest to his actors, he had to tell them that they were not experiencing primary emotions onstage after all. More frequently, they were repeated emotions or emotions that had already been lived, experienced, and resurrected in memories. This fact was ultimately very positive for the work of actors, because it helped them eliminate marginal and inessential details, sediments, and associations. Repeated emotions related only to the essence as they were rid of all ballast: "Time cleanses emotions of useless details, crystallizes feelings, and leaves in memory only what is most important and essential – emotions or passion in their purest form. [The audience also perceives such cleansed, repeated, and condensed emotions much more strongly.] At a production, the actor speaks about what he has experienced in a clear, disciplined, and beautiful manner. The actor is quite calm – it is the spectator who is crying."[14] In order for this to take place, the actor had to have developed his own "affective" or "emotional" memory, where he stored already experienced emotions. From this memory, like from a repository, the actor would pull out emotions according to the needs of the character.

Stanislavsky's system aspired to teach actors to know how to handle emotional memory, how to stock it up, and how to use it to its full potential. There were two stages of this process: during the actor's work on himself – which is a permanent stage – and during the actor's work on any given role, which is a specific process limited to the time of rehearsals and productions.

When the actor was working on himself, he would eliminate everything that stood in the way of natural art and experiencing, while at the same time supporting in himself all that might be helpful in this process. The actor was expected to avoid stereotypes and routine. In

☛ *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov:* The Seagull. *MAT, 1898. Konstantin Stanislavsky directed the play with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and played the role of Trigorin (in the middle, seated at the table).*

his memoirs, Stanislavsky remembers that when he acted as a young man in the Hunting Club, his whole troupe succumbed to craft-based methods. They got used to the stage, became resourceful and certain in action, and their voices got firmer. They also got accustomed to speaking in a loud voice and moving around the stage with confidence. This all was deemed a success until they understood that these were all external features and that this path would not take them inward.[15]

Most of all, actors should develop universal "creative capabilities": their imagination and capacity to endow the creative process featuring their emotions, will, reason, concentration, emotional memory, sense of truth, beauty, rhythm, logic in emotions, vivid feeling of objects, and interaction. It was important to develop both mental and physical abilities. "Working on oneself and on the role establishes the necessary technique. The technique, whose objective is to help nature in its creative work, is on the one hand a way of knowing nature and its laws, and on the other hand a systematic exercise and habit which is initially conscious, but which gradually becomes subconscious, or just mechanical (motoric). [Stanislavsky divided acting technique into inner and outer – mental and physical.] The inner technique is focused on kindling the creative process of experiencing, while the

outer technique addresses the embodiment of what the actor has experienced using voice, intonation, and the entire physical body."[16] Critics of Stanislavsky often objected to the fact that in his contemplations as well as in his practice as a director he would mostly focus on the inner technique and neglect the outer one. This was true, but he was also well aware of it; however, his priorities lay in the psychology of the human being as the actor.

The strictly defined time frame of the actor's work on a role begins with the first reading of the play. It is followed by an entire series of activities: approximating the character, identifying with it, and experiencing it. Emotional memory helps confront a literary character with the personal experience of the actor. In his thoughts, the actor attempts to live in the same conditions and circumstances as the character he is portraying. Using his own acting technique, the actor creates an illusion, a notion of the character, as if the character was alive in real life. Metaphorically speaking, the actor's soul is fertilized by the seed of the role. A soul is created, and an inner image of the role is made. The life of a human spirit is reflected in the actor's live body. This gives rise to a new and living picture of man.

The actor's work on a role includes several procedures and technical means allowing the creation of a psychologically faithful, likely, and realistically depicted image of man. The art of experiencing is the foundation stone of this whole technique; on its own, however, it has no technical form but is only derived from the natural consciousness and talent of the person who wants to be an actor. Therefore, even though some parts of Stanislavsky's acting technique might be learned in school or on the stage, the primary condition for an acting career is still an inherent talent, which allows the actor to experience the fate of someone else and express his inner movements through spontaneous, informal, and non-schematic action. Every person can empathize with the sentiments of another; we feel the emotions of other people. However, not everyone is gifted with the art of experiencing, that is, the kind of talent that paves the way to the acting profession. This is what Stanislavsky emphasized in relation to what he witnessed in the Meiningen theatre and in naturalist theatre in general, where acting talent was not the prerequisite for enlisting someone in an acting

company. It is ironic that Stanislavsky was later reproached for not having sufficient trust in natural talent and for overly focusing on the technical issues of acting.

The Instruments of the Art of Experiencing

During his work, Stanislavsky realized that all routine- and craft-based habits, which were commonplace in (not only) Russian acting at that time, had to be eliminated. He himself remembered several types of formulaic acting, for example, placing a hand over one's heart in love scenes and ripping one's collar upon the arrival of death. He called such acting "clichés". In order to help actors avoid such stereotypical templates, Stanislavsky had several procedures ready that enhanced the abilities of experiencing and got actors to know the portrayed character and more generally the mental life and subconscious of the person better.

One of his principal demands was that actors should improve their imagination. What an actor performed on stage was, after all, always authorial fiction, and the actor had to turn this into a coherent story. As opposed to fiction and fantasy, which created what did not exist, actors would create imagination which, in turn "creates what is, what exists".[17] Imagination has to be focused so as to contribute to the actor's stage expression, inducing first inner and then also outer action. The actor must cultivate his inner vision to be able to see what he is experiencing and thinking. It is this inner vision that enables the actor to capture and store emotions and experience what would otherwise be blurry, inconsistent, and impossible to capture or stabilize. All that appears in the actor's imagination, however, can be left amorphous, but the actor should try to define it and clarify the circumstances of the scene by asking simple questions such as: "Who, when, where, why, for what reason, and how?"[18]

In order for the actor to improve his imagination, he can use a simple aid: "the magic if". The actor should keep imagining that something might really happen – what if…? The imagined situation catalysed by this question is given logical justifications. The action that results from this is then possible also in reality. The word "if" incites

an inner creative activity and the desire to act. This, however, takes place only under "given circumstances", which are framed beforehand by the dramatic author and the director. The circumstances include "the plot, the facts, the incidents, the period, the time, and the place of action, the way of life, how we as actors and directors understand the play, the contributions we ourselves make, the mise-en-scène, the sets and costumes, the props, the stage dressing, the sound effects, etc."[19] The actor's inner and outer action reflects the process in which these circumstances are gradually mastered.

Whenever the actor attempts to express an emotion, experience, particular situation, or idea, he has to maintain a balanced feel for the truth. In real life, truth and belief might come along independently, "[b]ut when there is no reality onstage and you have acting, then the creation of truth and belief needs to be prepared in advance."[20] The actor has to learn how to move from reality into the world of imagination. In this world, the truth of his emotions and imagination prevails, not the truth of the facts of the material world. The actor can rely on

☛ *Maxim Gorky:* The Lower Depths. *MAT, 1902. Directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. Konstantin Stanislavsky (Satin), Olga Knipper (Nastya), Vasily Kachalov (Baron), Alexander Vishnevsky (Tatar).*

a small physical action that is characteristic for certain moments and mental states, exercises with imaginary objects, while making an effort to maintain the logic and meticulousness of his physical action. Each internally important emotion has to be justified and interconnected with all given circumstances.

The actor's imagination, which is applied to create a character, comprises many details, emotions, ideas, relationships, and connections with the surroundings. But in the creative process, all of these individual elements are strictly lined up: the inner unity is the result of linking many elements. These include interruptions, development gaps, and incomplete spots. From an overall perspective, however, it is all joined in one meaningful whole. A "course line" of a mental life is drawn up as the meaning and essence of all action. It is the continuous lifeline of a person. It is not determined externally by the actor or director. It develops from the logic and inner continuity of mental forces.

According to Stanislavsky, the actor should strive to meet the main requirement of his task. This task is assigned to the actor primarily by the dramatic author:

> These individual thoughts, feelings, living dreams run through the writer's life like a golden thread and guide him when he is creating. He makes them the basis of his play and from this seed he develops a work of literature. All these thoughts, feelings, lifelike dreams, the eternal joys and sorrows the writer has, become the basis of the play. It is because of them he takes up his pen, the main task of the production. The transmission of the writer's feelings and thoughts, his dreams, his sorrows and joys is the main task of the production. Let us agree that in future we will call this fundamental goal, which draws together each and every Task, and stimulates the creative efforts of the inner drives and the Elements that comprise the creative state of the actor-role: *The Supertask of the Writer's Work.* [...] Everything that happens in a play, all its individual Tasks, major or minor, all the actor's creative ideas and actions, which are analogous to the role, strive to fulfil the play's Supertask. Their common link with it, and the sway it holds over everything that happens in the play, is so great that even the most trivial detail, if it is irrelevant to the Supertask,

> becomes harmful, superfluous, drawing one's attention away from the essential meaning of the work. This pursuit of the Supertask must be continuous, unbroken throughout the whole play and the role.[21]

The actor's "through-action" is a direct continuation of the driving forces in his mental life – forces which originate in the actor's reason, will, and emotions.

The psychological approach to art, as formulated by Stanislavsky, means that each actor has to perceive, collect, arrange, and cultivate emotions inside himself in order to universally apply them in the creative process. The psychotechnique, i.e., using the technical means of the art of experiencing, should help the actor reach a stage in which he will cease to realize the causal context of his feelings and action and start creating spontaneously using "the actor's psychotechnique, which stimulates his natural, subconscious creative powers."[22] However, this psychological approach cannot be likened to the psychoanalysis of the human subconscious as introduced by Sigmund Freud.

Stanislavsky does not go "beyond" or "above" reality; he does not analyse a person through the subconscious dimension of his psyche. Stanislavsky's priority in the art of experiencing also meant that such formal and representational means of acting expression as tempo-rhythm were considered the result or product of experiencing, something that occurs naturally to some extent. He did not underestimate the above aspect – after all, he dedicated much attention to it in his instructions and offered some pioneering ideas in this area – but it was only secondary to his idea about performing art. The priority in his school of acting was the "psychotechnique" as the art of experiencing and the art of using the technical means for its development. Then the process of experiencing the actual role, the assigned character, would start. And only then could the embodiment process begin.

Embodiment and Rendering a Character

According to Stanislavsky, the actor "transforms" by means of "expressing the life of the human spirit of the character" before "embodying" the character. The actor gives the character a physical and

embodied form. This approach upholds the psychological and realistic principle, where the physical ensues from the mental. There is no rupture between what the actor–character is experiencing and what the actor–character is expressing using his physical means. Stanislavsky's idea was "to make the *invisible* creative life of the actor *visible*."[23] The actor should submit fully to the character. In an essay, Stanislavsky criticized an actress who adjusted each role to herself and relied solely on her charm. She did not need embodiment and transformation, because she feared that in her character, she would appear uglier than she was in reality. "You love *yourself* in the role more than the *role* in you," the director would say. "That's a mistake. You're quite capable of showing not only yourself but the character as well."[24]

The actor's primary task in the process of transforming into a character was to find the character's typical traits. This procedure would go from the general to the particular. Any type of categorization (e.g., aristocrat, farmer, or soldier) had to be deepened and specified in order to particularize more features of the character – its social category, nature, and individual traits – in which outer appearance and action would meet with the inner mental shape of the character.

The actor's action and means of expression – such as attitude, gestures, movement in space, and walking on stage – had to be in accord with the inner flexibility of the character. For Stanislavsky, the spatial lines of the actor's movement corresponded with the inner lines of the movement of energy. The actor was expected to acquire a special sense for movement described as "an inward, invisible energy as the basis for flexibility of movement."[25]

In addition to the classical and naturalist European school, Stanislavsky also knew other types of acting. In his memoirs, he recounts spending several months with Japanese teachers in his youth: "During all that winter our house resembled a nook of Japan. A troupe of Japanese acrobats, who were appearing in the circus, stayed with us day and night. They proved themselves to be very decent people and they helped us very much. They taught us all the Japanese customs: the manner of walking, deportment, bowing, dancing, the handling of a fan. [These were good exercises for our bodies.]"[26]

☛ *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov:* The Cherry Orchard. *MAT, 1904. Directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. The mise en scène shows two groups of actors on a wide stage space.*

And yet, it seems that he did not fully capitalize for his system the possibilities of inner energy and mental strength transformed into real physical power. The inner sense of energy he talked about was a feeling based on mental life and the changeability and mouldability of the psyche. For example, when he spoke about the role of the voice, he expressed an opinion corresponding to his vision of acting energy in general: "Powerful sound in speech [...] must be sought not in 'high-voltage', not in loudness or shouting, but in the rise and fall of the voice."[27] He did not mean to awaken the inner, unknown energy that could be concentrated only by other than rational means (as attempted by some oriental theatre schools as well as by his student Mikhail Chekhov). The energy of Stanislavsky's actors was made from real human psychology and put to use in the process of rendering characters using the body, just like in real life.

In Stanislavsky's system, physical expression has a very specific and theatrically structured form. The character embodied onstage receives a particular tempo-rhythm. Stanislavsky usually spoke of various means of expression only in a very basic outline; however, in the matter of tempo-rhythm his immense knowledge was also conveyed to other schools, even those that opposed his system.

The issue of tempo, or pace, was elaborated mostly by the theory

☛ *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov:* The Cherry Orchard. *MAT, 1904. Actors are scattered across piles of travel luggage.*

and practice of ballet theatre as early as in the eighteenth century. Together with rhythm, issues of harmony in music and opera were addressed. However, Stanislavsky felt that for modern direction, which aspired to disassociate itself from describing the phenomenal aspects of reality, addressing the tempo-rhythm of a production was one of the most principal issues, particularly the tempo-rhythm of the acting element. This was also noticed by other founders of modern direction such as Edward Gordon Craig. Fundamental ideas about "rhythm" in stage design and acting were introduced by Adolphe Appia as the result of his collaboration with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. When Stanislavsky was elaborating his system, he could utilize the results of Jaques-Dalcroze's practical research of rhythm.

Stanislavsky always connected both tempo and rhythm. He distinguished between them but would always speak of them together as "tempo-rhythm". He would say: "Inner tempo-rhythm is one of [the] main features [of a performance]. It's much more convenient to talk about inner tempo-rhythm at the same time as outer tempo-rhythm [...] Tempo is the rate at which equal, agreed, single length-values follow each other in any given time signature. Rhythm is the quantitative relationship of active, agreed length-values in any given tempo or time signature."[28]

Tempo-rhythm manifests itself everywhere both in the inner and outer context. It is part of an actor's experiencing, the organization

of a person's inner life, his psychology, and emotions, and an internal preparation to portray the assigned role. However, tempo-rhythm does not operate on the individual level only; it constructs the dimension of super-individual and social matters as well.

A work of art has tempo-rhythm, just like a production performed before an audience does. It is interesting that although Stanislavsky applied a one-directional procedure in other cases – from the inner psychology outward and from experiencing to embodiment – in the case of tempo-rhythm he not only admitted but even demanded a two-directional movement: "From feeling to tempo-rhythm and, vice versa, from tempo-rhythm to feeling."[29] This means, at least in this case, that it is not only the inner world of the characters that can determine their expressions and action. It is also the other way around: if we acquire a certain tempo and rhythm, this can influence our feelings, our mood, and our psyche.

Tempo-rhythm seemed to have taken Stanislavsky to the boundary of his concept. Rendering a character, even in his own staging practice, did not only involve the process of embodying feelings and thoughts. Had he thoroughly required only gestures or facial expressions directly drawing on particular mental affectations, his production would have been fragmented not just in terms of tempo-rhythm, but also in meaning. This, of course, never occurred. In addition to being the author of an elaborated acting system, Stanislavsky was also a talented director who influenced the production of Russian theatre for a long time. Besides a traditional arrangement of the stage space and movement of actors, analytical and instructional dramaturgical and directorial capabilities, and ultimately in addition to the preparation of acting material according to Stanislavsky's system, the tempo-rhythm issue in his productions seemed to be one of the most important contributions affecting their formal and content unity: "The tempo-rhythm of a play is the tempo and rhythm of through-action and subtext. [...] Just as painters lay out their colours in their pictures and try to achieve a proper balance between them, so actors try to lay out the tempo-rhythm of the through-action."[30]

I have already indicated that one of the principal elements in the acting technique elaborated by Stanislavsky was stage speech: "Dyna-

Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev: A Month in the Country. *MAT, 1909. Directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky. Romantic, festive atmosphere, and an easy pace.*

mism, genuine, productive, purposeful action is the most important thing in creative work and in speech too! Speaking is action."[31] When explaining the role of speech in acting, Stanislavsky first explained the difference between a declaimed text and its subtext, that is, its deeper meaning. According to Stanislavsky, subtext is synonymous with through-action. The dramatic text of a play is only a set of unaccomplished words. As soon as their inner meaning is uncovered, a meaningful statement will emerge. These contemplations are seen in the influence of dramatic work by Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, for whom essential ideas were communicated in textual gaps and dashes, in indicated but unsaid statements, and in the subtext. Direct speech between characters does not seem to make any sense, as it is always used for a mediated message, an evasive response, and talk of something else – all of which replaces the actuality. According to Pierre Valde, this is similar to a game of billiards: A player does not use a direct line to make ball A move ball B, but will aim at ball A', so the whole shot is made in the following sequence: A–A'–B.[32]

Only once the importance of the subtext is highlighted can Stanislavsky explain the role of speech in the portrayal of a character. Just as the entire process of an actor's transformation and embodiment cannot be separated from experiencing and the expression of the character's psychology, neither can the phenomenal aspect of speech

be separated from subtexts. Information, changes in intensity, accents and stresses, and logical and psychological pauses are all instruments for the actor in using speech to build a character. Tempo-rhythm is incorporated into the presented text by means of speech bars that phrase the whole speech expression.

Stanislavsky's list of means used by the actor to render a character is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. If one aspired to be systematic, the list would have to include more detailed contemplations concerning facial expressions, gestures, body stances, and spatial movement. But Stanislavsky concentrated more on voice expression, diction, singing, and stage speech. Of course, issues related to tempo-rhythm are present during the whole process of the actor's transformation. However, Stanislavsky did not attempt to apply them to the individual means of expression in detail.

In all of his instructive contemplations, he dedicated only one chapter to the broad area of gesture, stance, and movement. He gave it a summarizing title: *Flexibility.* In it, he encompasses all of what he refers to as bodily stances. In the spirit of his concept, he posits the following: "Only through inner awareness of movement can we begin to learn to understand and feel it." But movement should be

☛ *Knut Hamsun:* The Game of Life. *MAT, 1907. Directed by Konstantin Sergeievich Stanislavsky. Maria Lilina as Mrs. Kareno. The photograph shows a vivid acting gesture.*

perceived and executed based on the "inner line" of the character. "We call this inner awareness of the passage of energy through the body a sense of movement."[33]

It was in his scrutiny about the outer portrayal of a character where Stanislavsky reached the outer boundaries of his system and had to face its limitations. Convinced about a kind of automatism through which the formal shape of a character is based directly on his mental essence, he could not go any further and talk about an actor's means of expression consisting solely of his technical tools. Even though the history of theatre schools is full of examples of physical exercise with no deeper context of meaning – such as acrobatic elements and juggling, mime, creation of mime masks, and improvisation of situational displays – Stanislavsky never emphasized this. Sometimes, he would even link formal techniques to harmful manifestations of acting clichés, the uncreative acceptance of empty gestures that was good enough only for complacent performers:

> We also know some dramatic actors who need expressive movements to quell the hearts of their female admirers. These actors create *poses* by combining the beautiful twists and turns of their bodies; they trace complicated, external lines as they move their arms through the air. These 'gestures' originate in the shoulders, hips, and the spinal column; they run along the outside of the arms, the legs, the whole body, and then return to their starting point, having accomplished no productive action whatsoever, bearing no inner intent to fulfil a Task. Such movements are like a messenger-boy delivering letters when he has no interest in what is in them. These gestures may look expressive but they are empty and meaningless, like dancers waving their arms so as to be beautiful. We don't need either balletic techniques, or histrionic *poses* or theatrical *gestures*, which follow an external, surface line.[34]

But Stanislavsky also underwent some development. The presentation of his system, summarized in book articles, could include the many proofs from theatre practice demonstrating how he too accommodated contemporary trends and tried other procedures that those which are generally connected with him as a theatre director. It is important

☛ *Maurice Maeterlinck:* The Blue Bird. *MAT, 1908. Directed by Konstantin Stanislavsky. An evident departure from realism; the work features mostly symbolistic sculpture-like acting.*

to understand that after the famous meeting in the Slavianskij bazar restaurant, where Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko came up with the basic principles of their future theatre, the former theatremaker also attempted other directorial approaches which were mainly artistically akin to symbolism. He himself admitted that these attempts had been unsuccessful and that he had made them along the lines of his lab theatre. Despite the fact that the MAT, which he established with Nemirovich-Danchenko, would later be awarded the attribute of "academic", Stanislavsky considered his mission to be to search for something new and a constant experiment. This was indicated by the dramaturgy of his theatre as he tried to produce contemporary modern realist and symbolist drama as well as the fact that at one point in his career he handed over his own acting ensemble to a wholly different type of director, great theatre experimenter of the time, Edward Gordon Craig, in order to rehearse Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1911). However, in his theoretical inquiry and directorial work, Stanislavsky could not transcend the fundamental principles of his system. Whenever he tried, it was unconvincing and unsuccessful. On one such occasion, his student Vsevolod Emilyevich Meyerhold reacted with a short, ironic essay: "We are on the verge of a tragic

event. Just one drop more and – horror of horrors! – our beloved master will be lost to the stage for ever; he is about to dissolve into the mists of an early Moscow spring..."[35] Let us not forget that following such productions as Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1898) as well as *Uncle Vanya* (1899), *Three Sisters* (1901), *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), and *Ivanov* (1904); Gorky's *The Philistines* (1902) and *The Lower Depths* (1902); and Gogol's *The Government Inspector* (1908), Stanislavsky also rehearsed with the MAT company Hamsun's *The Game of Life* (1907), Andreyev's *The Life of Man* (1907), and Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird* (1908), which were all symbolist plays. However, it needs to be acknowledged that of the three symbolist plays directed by Stanislavsky, the latter two were dead-end trips, attempts that Stanislavsky could not successfully complete and which forced him to return to his style. The problem was not that his actors were not able to do symbolist theatre, or that the director did not have enough other collaborators around him to help him make a symbolist stage, costumes, or dramaturgic and directorial concept. Rather, part of the issue around that time was that he had befriended Vsevolod Meyerhold and had begun to carefully observe modern global playwriting and the search for new creative paths for himself and his ensemble. But how could the symbolist approach have ever been realistic for him if the principles of his system had always involved the realist art of experiencing as the fundamental aspect of all of the actor's work on a role?

The Art of Representation

The little attention that Stanislavsky dedicated to the art of representation was mostly critical and disapproving. He spoke of it as something that was not directly related to his system. Besides, he did not want to allow any independent external technique without its internalization in the primary and psychological experience of the character. Without experiencing, the art of representation was only practical craftsmanship (also referred to as hackwork or stock-in-trade acting): "There is no genuine art where there is no experiencing. [Stock-in-trade] begins where creative experiencing, or the artistic reproduction that results from it, ends."[36]

While the art of experiencing brings along true emotions, the art of representation only creates the probability of an emotion. "At a public performance, it does not matter what the actor is experiencing, but what the spectators watching him are feeling," Stanislavsky claimed, interpreting the opinions of the advocates of the art of representation and disagreeing with them.[37] Actors who engage in the art of representation try to create a kind of formally flawless and beautiful stage version of their inner experience, as if the actors were sculptors of their own imagination. It is an exceptionally difficult and complex task. It requires excellent technique, beautiful artistic form, acting tact, reason, knowledge of human psychology, and adroit use of all skills to make public art. Nevertheless, Stanislavsky was sceptical when it came to the results of the art of representation, claiming that the artistic results achieved by representation, including all of its difficulties, were not worth the effort: "This kind of acting has beauty but no depth. It is effective rather than deep. Form is more interesting than content. It acts on the eyes and ears rather than on the heart and, in consequence, more readily delights than disturbs. True, acting of this kind can make a considerable impression, one which grips you while you are watching and leaves you with beautiful memories, but these impressions don't warm your heart or go very deep."[38] His great actors achieved extraordinary acting success owing to their great competence in the art of experiencing, which was always their fundamental quality in helping them win the hearts of a large impassioned audience.

In collaboration with Leopold Sulerzhitsky, Stanislavsky could forever repeat some of his procedures and demand entry into and identification with the psychology of characters, but the implicitly expected automatic transfer from the inside out – from the mental to the physical and from content to form – just did not occur. He would attribute this to the fact that actors were overwhelmed with everyday theatre operation, and in order to improve they would need to have more intimate laboratory conditions created for them in a newly opened studio. The exquisite actors of the MAT were certainly too busy, occupied with interpreting difficult characters from classical Russian and European realist drama. It was such realist drama that helped

many actors – Olga Knipper, Mikhail Chekhov, Ivan Moskvin, and Vasily Kachalov, among others – to gain their experience. However, the fundamentals of Stanislavsky's system could not be bypassed: the resulting form of the performed character was realistically bound to the character's literary model, and any unrealistic positions would be impossible and unwished for.

The Actors' Experiencing and the Audience

There is another important consequence of using Stanislavsky's system of acting. It is the relationship to the audience and the determination of the audience's role in the communication model of a production. Stanislavsky wrote that his art of experiencing "wishes to affect the audience by using the actor's direct inner emotions", while the art of representation "relies on affecting the audience by means of an acting technique that expresses only the outer results of experiencing."[39] For him, therefore, the most important thing was what the actor felt, and the audience's reaction reflected that. The actor transmitted his feelings and experiences to the audience and won them over through his acting, enthralling the spectators and making them interested.

It needs to be noted that in his whole system, Stanislavsky mainly focused on issues concerning the actors, or on the relationship between the actor and director. He paid much less attention to the interpretation of the written dramatic work and the relationship with the visual or musical elements of theatre. As mentioned earlier, much less space was provided for the actor's means of expression. But Stanislavsky devoted the least of his attention to the context of the audience, the individual spectators. In his published essays, he did not analyse in detail such issues as the arrangement of the theatre space, the relationship between the stage and the auditorium, the shape of the stage, and its orientation to the audience. Instead, he strongly presented his opinions on these issues in his practice – particularly when he had a new building constructed for his theatre in 1902. There, he opted for the traditional structure of a theatre space with a stage facing the auditorium, using a slightly improved classical "Italian" layout. It is

☛ *The view of an auditorium which maintained the principle of spectator equality.*

still visible today, because in the building where the MAT produced Stanislavsky's and Nemirovich-Danchenko's productions after 1902 one can still find the arc-shaped portal of the stage extended to its maximum and only feebly architecturally highlighted. This weakens the old function of delineating and defining space, or of indicating the "fourth wall". This shows that Stanislavsky never accepted naturalism and that even the spatial solution used in his own theatre – whose construction he personally influenced – followed his priority of focusing on the characters' psychological dimensions and not on making a naturalist copy of reality. He opened the stage as much as possible to face the auditorium, allowed for an emotional communication between actors and spectators, and did not use a made-up wall to limit the perception of what the actors were experiencing and embodying.

The MAT auditorium was arranged in a way so as not to create barriers; there were no walls dividing the individual boxes in order to keep the audience close to the stage platform. Seats on the ground floor as well as on the balconies were arranged according to principles of egalitarianism. There were no huge differences in the quality of the view, and therefore the individual segments of the auditorium did not have to be divided from one another as was usually the case in

☛ *Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky:* The Brothers Karamazov. *MAT, 1910. A group of girls – their psychology of naïve contentment, folly, and vulgar cheerfulness acts as a counterpoint to the tragic story.*

the majestic aristocratic theatre buildings. This principle seemed to allow Stanislavsky to get actors and spectators closer together, while also providing the actors with the dark, quiet, and simply-equipped audience section of the theatre. The communication between the stage and auditorium was intended to be one-directional, and the audience was expected to submit to the art of the actors. This is also evidenced by Stanislavsky's extraordinary interest in using the electric lighting of the Moscow theatre as well as very advanced (for that time) stage machinery.[40] Such equipment only emphasized the dominant role of the stage.

Naturally, the theatremakers counted on an emotional response from the audience, such as laughter, suspense, applause. But the spectators were not expected to be involved in the game; they were only to be affected by the actors' work according to "instructions" from the stage. Everybody in the audience had the opportunity to empathize with the characters and plot individually, separately, and on their own. Of course, because this process was effectively controlled from the stage, all of the single experiences of individual spectators resulted in the same emotional states and occurred at the same time. These responses, however, were essentially the results of each spectator's separate communication with the stage; communication among the

spectators was secondary. The dimmed auditorium left each spectator alone with their feelings and thoughts, and any potential expression of the personality of a spectator – such as taking up a standpoint and presenting it to those sitting around, or even to those acting on the stage – would be disturbing. This was a far cry from the idea of an audience sitting in a lit auditorium, as imagined by Brecht, the Shakespearean Globe Theatre, or the Renaissance market environment of *commedia dell'arte*, where the spectators would not only gleefully discuss their opinions during the performance, but generally keep on living their everyday lives, sharing their interests, eating, and drinking, all while watching the action on stage. In short, Stanislavsky's spectator was individualized.

Later critics of this principle noticed that it overly emphasized the role of the actors. The actors could influence the audience as they wished: it was even their role as well as a criterion of the artistic

Carlo Gozzi: Princess Turandot. *The Third Studio of MAT, 1922. Directed by Yevgeny Vakhtangov.*

performance. However, this also meant that a level of emotional and intellectual subordination of the audience was expected, because the actors on the stage were thinking, feeling, and acting on their behalf. This was, of course, still progressive in comparison with the old theatre of the nineteenth century, which presented action and people only externally. In the old theatre, actors would show off using their declamatory capabilities and enthral the audience with their opulent costumes (which often did not even correspond with the presented reality). The entire enclosed microcosm containing the visitors to the theatre building was more of a social event, a kind of promenade, or a ball, where people would meet in order to be seen. Stanislavsky, just like contemporary naturalist theatre, rejected such falsehood and wanted to offer the audience an embodiment of genuine emotions and actions. However, his condition was that the audience had to submit to the psychologist–realist creations, step into the background, and let the force of acting art do its work on them unidirectionally.

Stanislavsky was also convinced that another consequence of acting and theatre in general was that the spectator should be accepted as he is, and the scenes on the stage would not attempt to change him. The relationship between the stage and the auditorium is driven by focusing on the latter; this is because the spotlight of meaning is on the stage and there is little ambition to expand this to the auditorium, or even to real life. In contrast, for example, the agitational theatre in post-revolutionary Russia in the 1920s was an example of how actors wanted to directly influence people in real life. Even the actors of the Renaissance *commedia dell'arte*, who obviously originated in market peddlers and craft fair tradesmen, were close to their audiences, because they themselves were like dressed-up spectators who would temporarily put on masks and then mingle with the surrounding crowd immediately after the performance when they jumped off the makeshift stage on the square.

The productions of Yevgeny Bagrationovich Vakhtangov [13 February 1883, Vladikavkaz–29 May 1922, Moscow] might have become an inspiration for the further development of Stanislavsky's system. Unfortunately, this promising Russian theatremaker died early, when he was only thirty-nine. He left behind only very few written notes

which could help reconstruct his pedagogical and theoretical thinking – something that could potentially extend and enrich the work of his teacher Stanislavsky. What is known, however, are his deliberations about "fantastic realism", developed shortly before his death. These thoughts indicate the direction he wanted to take to overcome the limitations of psychological realism. Sadly, "Vakhtangov's ideas about synthesizing the romantic visions of the future with spectacular theatre, a fusion of the realist school of the Maly Theatre, the MAT's psychological acting, and Meyerhold's stylized theatre, could not be verified in practice. A majority of productions directed by Vakhtangov had pedagogical objectives."[41] Such productions as *Dybbuk* (1922), performed at the Jewish Habimah Theatre, or Carlo Gozzi's *Princess Turandot* (1922) at MAT's Third Studio remained proof of his progress and unfinished promise. *Princess Turandot*, in particular, showed that even acting techniques inspired by the Renaissance *commedia dell'arte* style could be useful for the psychological portrayal of characters. In this, Vakhtangov's most outstanding production, the general risk of the pensive ponderousness of psychological realism was reduced by a carnival-like use of masks, boisterous talk, an ironic distance from the "tragic" plot, and the fresh movement-focused comic rendering of characters.

Even in the later decades of the second half of the twentieth century, the number of admirers and disciples of Stanislavsky's system did not decrease. He became one of the principal personalities of modern theatre in Europe and the world in the twentieth century. His successors cannot all be listed here; however, let me mention one of the most important: Oleg Efremov, who co-founded the Sovremennik Theatre in Moscow in 1957 and who in the 1970s returned to the MAT, a fossilized institution by then, in order to push it closer to being a modern theatre without having to lose the fundamental creative principles and working methods formulated by its founder.

FROM SYSTEM TO METHOD: MIKHAIL CHEKHOV AND LEE STRASBERG

Stanislavsky's system did not remain limited to the MAT theatre company. Studying the psychology of characters and their expressivity through the actor's psychological and physical personality had always attracted actors and directors alike in Russia and abroad. Stanislavsky's psychological and mimetic approach became a good foundation and launching pad for his successors, even though some would come to criticize their teacher: for example, in Stanislavsky's Theatre Studio, Vsevolod Meyerhold would develop an artistic opposition to his teacher. Similarly, in MAT's Third Studio, the future theatre of Yevgeny Vakhtangov was formed. After spending a long time on the Moscow scene, actor and director Mikhail Chekhov emigrated and would spread Stanislavsky's ideas abroad. The American actor, director, and teacher Lee Strasberg also became a successor of the system. Alongside the onset of other novel avant-garde trends in theatre in the 1920s and 1930s, Stanislavsky's principles of directing and acting spread to several European and American countries. Ultimately, they became much more than just a technical system of acting used by one Russian ensemble. They became globally significant.

Mikhail Chekhov

One of Stanislavsky's most outstanding disciples and successors was actor and director Mikhail Chekhov [28 August 1891, Saint Petersburg–30 September 1955, Beverly Hills, USA]. He started in the MAT, but in 1928 he left Soviet Russia. Then he worked for Max Reinhardt in Germany; directed in Latvia and Lithuania; performed in numerous European countries; and worked for a longer period in the United Kingdom, where he led his own theatre studio in Dartington, until he

finally ended up working as acting teacher, director, and theatre and film actor in the United States. In a twist characteristic of the controversial twentieth century, as Stanislavsky's system and his interest in psychological realism were gradually accepted by the official Soviet government ideology (which used schematic axioms to transform it into socialist realism), Mikhail Chekhov, who was a graduate of the same system, used it to oppose the materialist worldview: "Under the influence of materialistic concepts, the contemporary actor is constantly and out of sheer necessity suborned into the dangerous practice of eliminating the psychological elements from his art and overestimating the significance of the physical,"[42] he wrote.

Chekhov never explained things at great length and never tried to extensively describe the actor's psychological practice, but he wrote essays to offer various exercises and instructions to improve acting abilities. This ingenious actor, whose qualities had been appreciated by great European cultural figures, drew his opinions about acting techniques primarily from Stanislavsky's system. However, his theoretical contemplations did not elaborate as comprehensive a system. Chekhov's "method" focuses only on certain aspects of acting: some aspects confirm and deepen Stanislavsky's system, whereas others transcend Chekhov's teacher.

The essence of Chekhov's new approach extends Stanislavsky's objective circumstances in which a character acts, and it emphasizes the actor's subject, i.e., his ability to control and express physical and mental movements that do not need to be in insuperable dependence on existing facts. Chekhov disagreed with the way Stanislavsky emphasized the role of emotional memory, because he believed that this kind of memory restricted an actor's creative flight and forced him to merely imitate what he had experienced before and store it in his consciousness. Chekhov wanted other impulses to be at work when a character was

Mikhail Chekhov.

being created, focusing more than Stanislavsky on the actor's present personality rather than his memories. However, this should not mean that Chekhov approached this issue from the other extreme. After all, he radically rejected another alternative, which was becoming increasingly more apparent in European theatre from the 1920s onwards, that an actor should project himself on stage, performing mainly himself and his personal emotions. According to Chekhov, giving precedence to the actor over the portrayed character led to a monotonous performance:

> One of the most disappointing results stemming from this accustomed treatment of the actor has been that it makes him a less interesting human being on the stage than he invariably is in private life. (It would be infinitely better for the theatre if the opposite prevailed.) His "creations" are not worthy of himself. Using only his mannerisms, the actor becomes *unimaginative*; all characters become the same to him.[43]

The actor should not keep asking what he is feeling in the given role, nor should he look for what he put aside in "the drawer". He ought to keep in mind primarily what the portrayed character is feeling. As opposed to emotional memory, Chekhov stressed the importance of being able to imagine and improvise. The less an actor focused on his own feelings, the more space he could find to be creative as an artist. Paradoxically, however, it ought to be said that the emphasis on the actor's personality as mentioned by Chekhov is supposed to result in exactly the same outcome as required by Stanislavsky. The person on stage should transform into a fictitious person and embody another psychological and physical personality who approximates reality as vividly as possible.

Mikhail Chekhov was influenced by "anthroposophy", the mystical teaching of Rudolf Steiner, which was inspired by occult sciences and Eastern philosophy. As opposed to European Christianity, this teaching introduced an emphasis on the human idol and faith in human spiritual power, which could be used to overcome the fatal restrictions of earthly life. The structure of a Chekhovian character and the composition of a future production was not built on the foundation of the

"common self", drawn from everyday life, but from the "higher self", which Steiner claimed represented the genuine and creative aspect of our personality. Chekhov interpreted the higher self as the artist residing in us who is behind our creative action. It affects the actor in four different ways: it is the source of his creative individuality that aids the actor in surpassing the text; it is saturated with ethics, owing to which the actor can feel the conflict between good and evil; it helps the actor see the play from the audience's perspective during a performance; and it liberates the actor from his petty ego, allowing him to work on a character with distance, harmony, and humour.[44]

This knowledge specifically stimulated actors to create inside themselves, in their own bodies, "imaginary centres" from which various kinds of energy would gush out, helping to embody the needed characters. For Chekhov, the process of creative acting was a process of struggling with negative influences and inhibitions; it was a process in which healthy and liberating traits were accumulated, strengthening the inner energy and creative courage. Only an actor who got rid of his inferiority complex, his megalomania, his fear of the audience, and his jealousy and envy could fully concentrate on his inside and find all the necessary emotions there.

One of the key approaches of Chekhov's acting method was training the "psychological gesture". The term also latently contained mental characteristics, outer appearance, and physical movement. Chekhov considered the actor's body, physical movement, and gesture in character development to be more important than Stanislavsky did. He noticed that when we speak about mental processes, we frequently use terms that describe movement, such as "drowning in emotions", "letting an idea pass", and so on. This allows the actor to express the inner qualities of a character using an external form. While working on himself – during rehearsals and training – the actor should seek such comprehensive links between gestures and body positions that most vividly, yet in a sufficiently abstract manner, present some of the fundamental inner states. In the spirit of the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, this does not refer to "the natural and usual gesture", like a gesture from everyday life, but to an "archetypal gesture" that serves as the original model for all related and similar common gestures.[45]

Psychological gestures are defined physical forms expressing some basic and original mental content. The physical force put into a gesture by the actor should transform into will power and the capacity to precisely formulate meaning. For example, an actor stands with feet apart, spreading his arms upward. He tilts his head back as if trying to concentrate all of his inner strength into the heights and push it up, but also he is receiving impulses from above and demanding new inspiration from there. This kind of psychological gesture defines aggression as a stubborn self-enforcement. Another contrasting gesture can be when the actor kneels down on one knee, coils up, lowers his head, and embraces himself with his arms crossed. This is an expression of introversion, an unwillingness to communicate, pensiveness, and a strong will to be isolated. Chekhov also created psychological gestures with his students to express despotism, egoism, weakness, mistrust, suspicion, and so on. The psychological gesture is mostly an auxiliary and educational instrument, and in its original, enclosed, and static form, it should not be presented to the audience during a production. Once it is part of a production, the gesture is invisible because it is incorporated into the character's actions.

The psychological gesture is a basis for the approach to the character. During the preparation of a production, the actor first creates a preliminary version of the psychological gesture of the character assigned to him – a gesture that describes the character as a whole. It is demanding because it requires the use of the principal types of human features. When such physical representation formulates the essence of the character, the actor can proceed to focus on details, searching for developmental variations of the character and various inner states that might be contradictory or disparate. He will move from one basic psychological gesture to others in order to capture all transformations, individual stages, and relationships to other characters. In the end, the psychological gesture is a continuous sequence, a flexible form of the actor's role. This form was not reached by means of the analytical approach known from Stanislavsky, i.e., by using literary text analysis and the predefined biographical data of the character (and the gestures created from such data and based on what the actor could find in his own emotional memory). On the contrary, results were achieved

☛ A psychological gesture. *Strong, unyielding will, despotism filled with hatred and contempt.*

☛ A psychological gesture. *Openness and expansion, a fanatically ardent character, mystical feelings, aggression.*

☛ A psychological gesture. *Pensiveness and solitude, introversion.*

☛ A psychological gesture. *Egoism, mistrust, dishonest action.*

through the actor himself, starting from his universally characteristic psychological gesture that expressed his idea of the character as a whole, gradually progressing to particularities, the details of the character, his action, and physical expression. Chekhov's training of psychological gestures favours an emotional and intuitive approach to embodying the character over a rational and analytical method. Several exercises were gradually elaborated to improve the ability to create and refine psychological gestures. Here is one of them:

> Take as one illustration the psychological gesture of calmly closing yourself. Find a sentence corresponding to it, perhaps: 'I wish to be left alone.' Rehearse both the gesture and the sentence simultaneously, so that qualities of restrained will and calmness penetrate your psychology and voice. Then start making slight alterations in the psychological gesture. If, let us say, the position of your head had been erect, incline it slightly downward and cast your glance in the same direction. What change did it effect in your psychology? Did you feel that to the quality of calmness was added a slight coloring of insistence, stubbornness? Do this altered gesture several times, until you are able to speak your sentence in full harmony with the change that has occurred. Do a new alteration. This time bend your right knee slightly, transferring the weight of your body to the left leg. The gesture might now acquire a nuance of surrender. Lift your hands up to your chin and the quality of surrender can become stronger and new slight nuances of unavoidability and loneliness will introduce themselves. Throw your head back and close your eyes: pain and pleading qualities may appear. Turn your palms outward: self-defense. Incline your head to one side: self-pity. Bend the three middle fingers of each hand: a slight hint of humor might occur. With each alteration speak the same sentence to conform with it. [...] The range [of similar alterations] can be limitless. Always be free in interpreting all the gestures with their alterations. The slighter the change in your gesture, the finer the sensitivity that will develop in you. Continue this exercise until your whole body – the position of your head, shoulders, neck, the movements of your arms, hands, fingers, elbows, torso, legs, feet, the direction of your sight – will awaken in you psychologically corresponding reactions. Take any psychological gesture, exercise it for a while in slow tempo and then

> increase it by degrees until you reach the quickest possible tempo. Try to experience whatever psychological reaction each degree calls up in you. For each degree of tempo find a new, suitable sentence and speak it while making your gesture. This exercise on sensitivity will also greatly increase the sense of harmony between your body, psychology and speech. Developed to a high degree, you should be able to say: 'I feel my body and my speech as a direct continuation of my psychology. I feel them as visible and audible parts of my soul.'[46]

The psychological gesture is the essence of what Chekhov called the "imaginary body". The actor imagines what the embodied character looks and acts like and what the characteristic features are. Ideas about the character's appearance should help the actor to turn his attention to the inner topography of the character's psychology. He should look for "inner tempo" and "outer tempo", and their synchronization or asynchronicity. "The inner tempo can be defined as a quick or slow change of thoughts, images, feelings, will impulses, etc. The outer tempo expresses itself in quick or slow actions and speech. Contrasting outer and inner tempos can exist simultaneously on the stage."[47] Chekhov thought that Stanislavsky neglected the actors' imagination. This was why Chekhov required actors to do more "improvisation" and fewer dramaturgical analyses, less slavish obedience to the given circumstances, and a less detailed study of the character's historical, social, and psychological context, which had all been approaches his former teacher had strongly emphasized. Through improvisation, the actor breaks free from the role of being just a loudspeaker of the creative art of other people, especially the writer. The actor himself can bring along his personal creative input by deciding how he will present the text and how he will arrange his performance. When the actor reject clichés, he can experience liberation. Also, he can leave loneliness behind and will learn to be aware of his partners. He will open up to their performance and can improvise owing to their stimuli.

According to Chekhov as well as Stanislavsky, the art of acting is a reverence of the psychological image of man with a realistic form. But this image is not arrived at by walking the same paths: Chekhov also highlighted such acting technical means as a shift from physical

expression to mental content. In this respect, he certainly learned a lesson from Meyerhold.

Chekhov's specific approach involved an emphasis on the creation of the "atmosphere" of a play as one of the essential elements of his method. If the atmosphere is appropriately evoked, the actor will work more easily and precisely. Without the overall atmosphere, the actor's expression appears overly technical and untruthful. Also, the atmosphere is helpful for the members of the ensemble as well as the audience. If the spectators are "tuned-in", they will begin to "act" too: they willingly communicate with the stage, they do not need to have everything explained to them, and they will collaborate on the final result using their emotions and making the actors' work easier.

The atmosphere is objective. It is a general mood characterizing a place, situation, or group of people. For instance, an old castle will have a different atmosphere than a hospital. Every kind of atmosphere has some effect on the people who fall under its spell. An important principle applies here: if two types of atmosphere meet, the stronger one always suppresses the weaker one. For instance, if a group of cheerful people enters a haunted house, the atmosphere of the place might either suppress their laughter or make them overcome their fear so that they start making fun of the ghosts and monsters. An actor has to know how to handle the atmosphere. He also has to build his own inner atmosphere, which results from a formulated psychological gesture. Chekhov attached great importance to the ability of creating one's own inner atmosphere. For him, this is quite similar to Stanislavsky's emotional exercises. The actor's atmosphere should emerge from within and then join the other actors when creating the overall atmosphere.

In the preparation process, Chekhov stressed four aspects: ease, whole, form, and beauty. In order to improve these, he came up with a series of exercises called "the four brothers". Every action should be characterized by a sense of ease regardless of how difficult it is for the actor to execute. The sense of whole emphasizes the fact that every activity has its stages – a beginning, middle, and end – that have to be clearly yet subtly delineated. Form refers to the ability to work with the body in harmony with general aesthetic principles. Beauty

is an internal (not external) feature, and Chekhov believed that only an actor who is fully engaged in his work, and who is doing it easily and without visible coercion, can be considered beautiful.[48]

In his resulting staged work, Chekhov's acting technique transgressed the boundaries of psychological and realistic representation. In addition to the materialistic, he applied the mystical. In addition to the descriptive, he provided the metaphorical; and, in addition to harmony, he provided contradiction. However, for Chekhov being mystical did not mean being wholly irrational, but rather just being that which remained unspoken. After all, every work of art ought to make room for the imagination of both the creator and the percipient. In his own acting work, Chekhov himself knew very well how to oscillate between the real and irrational. He loved fantasy and all things fantastic, as well as things that were contrasting and dramatically disjointed.[49] The dynamic personal life of the actor and the rapid changes in his life seemed to have been transferred into his theoretical contemplations and methodical instructions. Very naturally, he acquired the ideas formulated by his teacher, and just as naturally, he enriched them with goals that got liberated from earthly ballast and aimed for the highest meaning of existence.

There is another remarkable thing. Chekhov's method includes a brief but crucial remark about the audience. It goes beyond Stanislavsky's idea of the actor's radiance and discusses the ever-present correctional device in theatrical imagination. Yevgeny Vakhtangov allegedly "never directed without imaginary spectators",[50] and Chekhov went along with this attitude. His aesthetic objective was to give a work of art ease, form, beauty, and wholeness. A mystical goal was to apply the mentioned qualities through a live actor and his super-personal work, a transcendental community of actors and spectators in a theatre during a performance. Somewhere along these lines, in his perception of the audience and actors being one joined community, Chekhov drew on – quite shyly during his time – the live art of Adolphe Appia and foresaw the future work of another great theatremaker of the twentieth century, Jerzy Grotowski, who rather purposefully started addressing the questions of common action on the part of the actors and spectators.

Lee Strasberg

The young American Lee Strasberg [17 November 1901, Budaniv, Ukraine–17 February 1982, New York] personally witnessed the work of MAT actors during the performances of the Moscow theatre in the United States in 1923 and 1924. Even though he was not enthralled by the technical perfection of the production, lighting, or stage effects, as they were not as advanced as what he was used to in American theatre, he was won over immediately by the work method focusing on the preparation of actors to delve deep into the psychology of the portrayed characters. For Strasberg, this encounter with the MAT was so significant that it influenced his decision to become a professional actor. He enrolled in the American Laboratory Theatre, which was led by two Russian expatriates from the original MAT ensemble: Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya.

Later on he started directing as well, but he mostly focused on educating a new generation of American theatremakers. After several years with the Group Theatre, Strasberg became a teacher in the Actors' Studio in New York (established in 1947 by Elia Kazan, Cheryl Crawford, and Robert Lewis), where he achieved the best results with his concept of actors' education based on Stanislavsky's system. His students included such later stars as Marlon Brando, Paul Newman, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Dustin Hoffman, and Al Pacino.

☛ Founders of the Group Theatre – Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman, and Cheryl Crawford.

Strasberg termed his system of work "the method". According to his own account, he drew on both Stanislavsky's system and the "improvements introduced later by Vakhtangov, as well as his own interpretations of the original concept."[51] Particularly the performances that Strasberg saw later, in 1934 in Vakhtangov's theatre, made a great impression on him. Inspired by this approach, he aspired to complement the initial method used

in Stanislavsky's system. While respecting the essence of an actor's work on a role and himself in line with the Stanislavsky method, Strasberg shifted his focus to other aspects of an actor's work. The "magic if" – which a Stanislavsky actor should react to in line with the given circumstances and authentically reflect reality – prompted Strasberg (as well as Vakhtangov) to realize the necessity to answer another question: "What makes an actor behave in this particular way and not in another one?"[52] Strasberg did not require the actor's full devotedness to psychological processes but rather a stronger realization of his own personality in the role.

Marilyn Monroe during Lee Strasberg's classes.

According to David Krasner, the specific nature of Strasberg's method can be summed up as follows:

> (1) the actor must justify everything he does on stage, and this should be done before he enters the stage; (2) to find the character's motivation, actors have to define his or her goals, principal meaning, or "spine" of action; (3) the character's main goal ("super-objective") has to feel inevitable (Krasner uses the terms "urgency" and "immediacy") even though obstacles appear in this process; (4) in order to fixate the role, the actor should create subtext as an unsaid, latent foundation aiding him to specify the inner dimension of the character; (5) while defining the subtext, the actor must not succumb to generalizations but rather rely on the relevant contemporary facts and behaviour of people; (6) in order for the actors to express the above, their behaviour onstage should correspond with the given circumstances and the subtext; (7) special attention ought to be paid to the truthfulness of action – nothing should be suggested to the actors externally, and they must not superficially imitate anything; (8) in order to reach genuine feelings, actors must react immediately – they should speak and listen as if the stage events were taking place spontaneously at that very moment; (9) during rehearsals, actors have to improvise – this leads actors to their own interpretation and liberates them

> from "a dependency on words"; and (10) the actor impresses the role with his own meaning – drawing on himself, his own emotionality, psychology, and imagination as well as his own experience.[53]

During his practice, Strasberg realized that while many actors had a good capacity to experience certain emotions, they also had problems expressing them. In his teaching work in the Actors' Studio, he focused on exercises aimed at eliminating this problem. His actors would gradually learn to complete four stages of preparation: "relaxation", "concentration", "sense memory", and "emotion memory" (here, he used Stanislavsky's well-known term). Firstly, internal tensions were relieved and the actors' muscles and psyche were relaxed. They also needed to be able to relax before the eyes of the audience, because if an actor's cramped and constricted body got blocked during the performance his emotions would not be able to be expressed freely. The actors also learned to concentrate and focus their attention on stimulating experiences within themselves that were needed to build their roles in the production. They would pull various personal stories out of their memory, trying to remember their sensory forms. Thus, when an actor tried to concentrate, he had to reach into his sensory memory: touch, taste, sight, hearing, and smell, and ideally all of them simultaneously. Through the senses, even distant memories and remote objects could be reached. As opposed to Stanislavsky, Strasberg claimed that it did not matter what the object or idea was but rather what the result would be in evoking in the actor a state of concentration and contemplation. This was all directed to one goal: to bring about the emergence of certain typical actions, not for the purpose of these actions themselves, or some shallow mime, but in order for the actor to find psychological motivations of memories and behaviour. The actors should follow the principle of selecting very personal stories from their memories: intimate details related to as many memories as possible, memories allowing them to achieve the greatest relaxation because they brought back moments in their deepest and most private lives when they behaved without excessive social conventions. Actors should not only know how to adequately relax before the audience, they should also know how to focus and act in an entirely private manner onstage.

☛ *Paul Green – Kurt Weill:* Johnny Johnson. *A shot from the last production staged by Lee Strasberg with the Group Theatre in 1936.*

During Strasberg's exercises, actors were expected to recall all feelings mediated by their senses (e.g., the sour taste of a lemon) and allow their bodies to react to the stimuli. Step by step, they were asked to focus on the particularities as well as their entire bodies (e.g., all sensations felt in the shower or sauna) in order to be able to react comprehensively using all of the senses. The objective was to teach them to wholly experience their roles in the future while taking in the surroundings, remembering their lines, and following the director's instructions: "This is exactly what an actor is capable of, what elevates him into a higher stage – being able to do several things at the same time."[54] In this higher stage, in addition to sensory memory, actors also activate their emotion memory as defined by Stanislavsky. As opposed to the Russian director, however, Strasberg never thought that emotions retrieved from memory should be transformed into the emotions of a character on stage. It was because any emotion spontaneously born on stage can get out of the actor's control. Besides that, it is usually unrepeatable and will be different in a repeat performance. Just like Diderot, Strasberg was looking for such a technique for the actor that would guarantee multiple repetitions of the same emotion. For him, emotion memory was a way how to fixate a role. The actor

was supposed to create a repertory of personal emotions and readily use it when acting. Emotions produced on stage are dragged behind an unfolding story which might be developing faster than the performer is experiencing it, whereas emotions picked from a repository can be used immediately.

The second stage of actor training according to Strasberg involved the cultivation of his emotion memory, means and skills of expression, and being able to act with authenticity and logic. This stage was reached by developing improvisational skills.[55] Strasberg knew very well that every actor's emotion memory was full of all kinds of experiences. "[The actor] has his drawers and boxes – big and small. Some are more vivid than others. But how can an actor find the right pearl in his memory, a gem that was illuminated just before it vanished forever? Stanislavsky thinks that this is the actor's true role."[56] Strasberg started with this role to construct his entire working method. He used improvisations to teach actors how to find logic in the character's behaviour – an approach that Strasberg considered to be more important that just focusing on "illustrating" the meaning of the character's lines.[57]

Strasberg's contribution to realistic acting on a psychological basis was that he used specific exercises and improvisations to extend Stanislavsky's original system of teaching by an extra field. While Stanislavsky in the MAT, and subsequently also Strasberg in the United States, tried to make their actors answer the question "How can an actor in himself feel and embody what he should then present on stage?" then Strasberg and his American actors in the Group Theatre and Actors' Studio also tried to answer another question related to a concrete problem: "How can an actor express his feelings directly on the stage?"[58] That is, how can the actor be helped to eliminate all of the superfluous inhibitions and habits that prevent him from rendering the character truthfully and honestly? There must have also been great differences between the spontaneity of the Russian and American actors, so issues that Stanislavsky did not consider problematic were challenging for Strasberg and he had to address them individually with his actors. He was thus ultimately able to contribute to extending and deepening Stanislavsky's system of teaching and transforming it into

a method. According to his contemporaries, Strasberg, who was also one of those theatre reformers that were more dedicated to education and less to production practice, allegedly led his classes more like a group therapy session than a preparation for an artistic mission.

Apart from Strasberg, there were also other American teachers who drew on and further developed Stanislavsky's system. However, they took their own paths. One of the most eminent ones was Strasberg's collaborator Stella Adler, who, however, would later emphasize different aspects of acting art. According to Adler, an actor's priority was not to look back at the biography of the portrayed character or for a most authentic depiction and inner justification of the character's development. The actor is on stage in order to apply his imagination as the true "well" of his art. Among other things, Adler released the actors' imagination and allowed impulses that were not related to the place and time of the play's plot. Much more than her teacher and collaborators, she incited in her actors the drive to endow their characters with a unique form. Adler wanted to spark their interest and enthusiasm for the role, intriguingly enough, while continuously stressing the fact that they should look for inspiration primarily in the text and not in their own lives and feelings. Similarly to Stanislavsky's system, she also claimed that the crucial element was the work's main idea, and she subordinated everything else to it.

Stanislavsky had successors in Russian, European, and later on American theatre in the twentieth century. His system became one of the foundations of modern theatre, and to varying degrees it was incorporated into many acting schools as a fact that could not be overlooked.

VSEVOLOD EMILYEVICH MEYERHOLD'S BIOMECHANICS

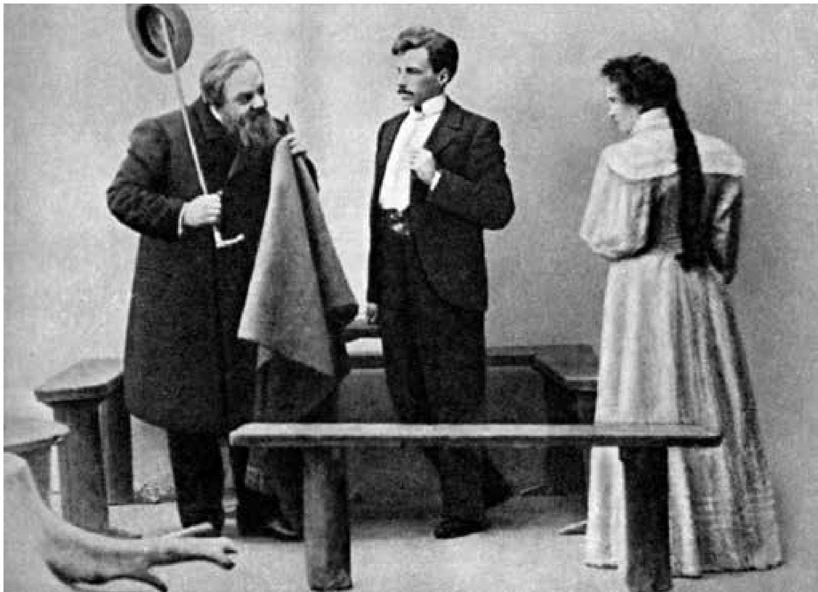
Just like Edward Gordon Craig, Vselovod Emilyevich Meyerhold [10 February 1874, Penza–2 February 1940, Moscow] aspired to create the actor of the future. The critical standpoint that Meyerhold took against Stanislavsky, his teacher, became more intense after the 1917 revolution. Along the lines of the radical slogans about the transformation of people and society, Meyerhold was, like Craig, interested in the aesthetic aspect of this transformation but also in the social and political context: how theatre acting could penetrate practical life. In a 1922 essay, he wrote: "In the past, the actor has always conformed to the society for which art was intended. In the future, the actor must go even further in relating his technique to the industrial situation. For he will be working in a society where labour is longer regarded as a curse but as a joyful, vital necessity."[59]

Meyerhold's idea was that theatre art and acting should accommodate the needs of the revolution and transformation of society. This could not be accomplished if theatre remained psychologically introverted, unable to catch the attention of the working masses, and had never drawn its practice directly on the act of working and industrial production that was believed to become the engine of future progress. These tasks, which Meyerhold set for himself to complete together with those who were on the same wavelength (i.e., the apparatus of the new power structures made by Bolsheviks and communists), helped advance his artistic approaches and led him to the achievement of "biomechanics", which was his most important invention of actor development in the twentieth century.

Realizing the Idea

Naturally, Meyerhold's life work cannot be reduced to one discovery. He received his basic acting training during his short stint at the MAT between 1898 and 1902. He was, however, dissatisfied with the realistic concept of the theatre, and after parting ways with his teachers he co-founded the Society of the New Drama in 1902 and moved to the Russian provinces (Sevastopol, Tbilisi, Poltava, and other places).

An almost tragically comic twist occurred as this "lost son" returned to Moscow when Stanislavsky started his experimental company, the Theatre-Studio, at the MAT in 1905 and became its head along with Meyerhold. The young hothead rapidly took over the studio leadership, and, in order to prevent discontent, he literally hid the rehearsal outcomes from Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky might have been "initially impressed by Meyerhold's results but would gradually take



Vsevolod Meyerhold as Treplev (centre) in The Seagull *staged at the MAT in 1898. His co-actors are Vasily Luzhsky (Sorin) and Maria Roksanova (Nina Zaryechna).*

Vsevolod Emilievich Meyerhold.

an increasingly critical approach. [...] That's how things developed, culminating with the scandal at a dress rehearsal when Stanislavsky refused to accept a preview of *The Death of Tintagiles*."[60] It was because Meyerhold did not take the psychological approach to the roles as his boss desired and exchanged the realism for the new (and for him much more attractive) symbolism, which prepared the ground for his concept of theatre that was just taking shape. Because Stanislavsky ended up not allowing the opening of the Theatre-Studio, which he himself was funding, the situation was resolved by a second parting of break-up of the teacher and his student.

In consequence, Meyerhold left for Saint Petersburg, which was then the seat of the government. Once there, he was forced to direct for various and mostly traditional theatres (the V. F. Komissarzhevskaya Theatre from 1906, the Alexandrinsky Theatre from 1907, and the Mariinsky Theatre from 1909), while his visions, that were maturing at that time, were confronted with the operational conditions of these theatre houses. But even these traditional scenes witnessed Meyerhold as a reformist director. Among other titles, he ventured to stage such works as Wagner's *Tristan and Isolda* (1909), Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (1911), Strauss's *Electra* (1913), and Stravinsky's *The Nightingale* (1918), all of which were ground-breaking productions. In various theatres in Saint Petersburg, Meyerhold got to work with Mikhail Mikhailovich Fokin, who would later become the most eminent figure of Russian avant-garde ballet in the West.

This period in Meyerhold's artistic activity is very significant, as it was the time when he started using biomechanics. It was here that he laid the foundations of his art form in several areas. He rejected descriptive realism, established a new relationship to the actor, and created his own dramaturgical direction. During the first years, he staged plays by authors that he would later often return to, including Anton Pavlovich Chekhov; Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky; Henrik Ibsen, whose *Nora* he produced five times; Maurice Maeterlinck; Gerhart Hauptmann; August Strindberg; Maxim Gorky; Arthur Schnitzler; Alexander Blok; Leonid Andreyev; and Stanisław Przybyszewski. Despite all of the restrictions imposed by the Tsarist administration in Saint Petersburg, Meyerhold could continue studying Russian market theatre, the *Balagan,* a pendant of the Italian *commedia dell'arte,* and experiment with puppet theatre. In order to have more leeway in realizing his ideas, Meyerhold repeatedly tried to direct in smaller companies and theatres such as Intermedia House (1910), the Terioki Theatre (1912), and the theatre studio in the Alexandrinsky Theatre (1914). He expressed his admiration of *commedia dell'arte* by leading the experimental studio on Borodinsky Street, where he used the pseudonym Doctor Dapertutto. At that point in his career, he systematically focused on acting technique and advanced mime acting, and he sought inspiration in classical Asian forms. He explained his ideas in the journal *The Love for Three Oranges* (1914–1916). He rejected illusionary direction and demanded his actors use indicative gestures. Meyerhold attempted to develop a certain plasticity of the body at the expense of the opulent use of make-up and costumes. His theatrical ideas shifted from following Stanislavsky's mimetic emulation of life to using a new style, which, however, even symbolist theatre fell short of satisfying.

A great deal about his work as director and teacher in the late 1910s was found in the recorded lessons he would give in 1918 and 1919 in Saint Petersburg, shortly before his departure to revolution-stricken Moscow. These brief documents as well as stenographic files demonstrate that at that time his project had already been well elaborated and focused on the most important aspects of acting skill. The language used in the School of Mastering Acting Project from

October 1918 was very much similar to the terminology that would later blend into the overarching term of "biomechanics". As part of the project, Meyerhold made a resolution that, as early as in the first semester of his acting school, acting would be taught according to the following system:

> Movement on the stage:
> 1. Gymnastics (not focused on one-sided growth of physical power, but on the development and strengthening of flexibility and nimbleness): (a) exercises with sticks and bottles, (b) apparatus: pommel horse, parallel bars, horizontal bar, wall bars, uneven bars, (c) jumps – high jump, jumping down, long jump, (d) rhythmic gymnastics. Recommended sports: (a) running, (b) discus throw, (c) horse riding, (d) circus riding, (e) tennis, (f) yachting, (g) skiing
> 2. Fencing
> 3. Juggling
> 4. Dancing
> 5. Stage movement. [...] (a) movement regularities, (b) movement schemes, (c) understanding the rhythm of movement, (d) developing the feeling of time, (e) creating links between emotions and movement, (f) movement improvisation (without a theme, on a theme)[61]

After the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, Meyerhold found an opportunity to fully devote his career to the realization of his ideas. He joined the revolutionary movement and in 1920 became of the prominent representatives of the Theatre October movement, which was bent on radically reforming theatre in Soviet Russia. The goal was to get rid of the traditional organizational structures and to hand theatre art over to the masses. First and foremost, theatre was supposed to have an agitational role and aid in the re-education of old and new audiences along the lines of Bolshevik ideology. It was expected to sculpt a new man, unburdened by the past, a man who would be optimistic, forward-looking, mentally strong, and physically fit. In this period, Meyerhold formally diverged from symbolism and turned to the more recent futurism, as it suited his notions about theatre melting into the modern machine and times of electricity. Hand in hand with this shift, he took a fall for artistic constructi-

vism because it too seemed to be a good instrument to express this turbulent period.

All radical ideas, obviously, could not fully take root because they eventually collided with the sober thinking of the contemporary public awareness commissioner Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky [23 November 1875, Poltava–26 December 1933, Menton, United States]. A few ground-breaking productions, however, were successfully performed. A typical example of a production that met the standards of the Theatre October was *Mystery-Bouffe,* based on a 1921 play by Vladimir Mayakovsky. It was staged in Meyerhold's First Theatre of the RSFSR[62] in Moscow. It was an agitational poster put on stage and expressed by acting buffoonery and gymnastics. "The production was fiery, cheerful, and bristled with energy, getting closer to the traditions of meeting theatre and circus and being comprehensible to a broad audience."[63] A similar production was Verhaeren's *The Dawn* (1922, First Theatre of the RSFSR), which was an evident attempt at introducing and putting to use the new way of working with actors. The production presented Meyerhold's stark polemics with older and more traditional theatre forms. Agitational theatre, distant from the writer's symbolism, was anti-illusionary and was reacting to the current situation in the country. The stage was rough and made of hard materials, while the actors took a declamatory approach full of pathos. The stage and auditorium merged. Then, finally, the first highlight of the season came with a production of *The Magnificent Cuckold*, staged in 1922 in the Actor's Theatre. The production was rehearsed by Vsevolod Meyerhold's Free Workshop company. This theatre would soon become part of the GITIS's school theatre and then became independent in 1923 as the Vsevolod Meyerhold Theatre until it eventually became the State Theatre of Vsevolod Meyerhold (known under the acronym TIM and later GOSTIM). In 1938, during the Stalinist reprisals, the theatre was closed. On 20 June 1939, Meyerhold was arrested and he was executed on 2 February 1940.

Nonetheless, *The Magnificent Cuckold* was produced at a time when Meyerhold was just starting the strongest stage of his career. In the 1920s, he could still rely on the authorities that would, less than two decades later, take his life. He polemicized with Stanislavsky and

publicly disagreed with him,[64] while managing his own theatre and making decisions about others. Above all, he had his own ensemble of actors at his disposal and the freedom to experiment. During Meyerhold's most progressive stage, he drew on the pre-revolutionary repertory (Ibsen, Ostrovsky, Molière, and Shaw). It is symptomatic that after 1917 he returned to Stanislavsky's "exclusive" playwright, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, only once and that he shifted his focus to other authors who suited his theatre poetics and life philosophy better (such as Mayakovsky and Erdman).

The dramatic developments after 1917 and the rule of Joseph Stalin brought about a tragic turnaround. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, it could have been expected that Stanislavsky's psychological realism would be doomed as a system that did not take into account class and social issues, and therefore would be forever eliminated along with bourgeois theatre. But the very opposite thing occurred; gradually, a schematized form of Stanislavsky's system helped this very type of theatre become standard and a model for socialist realism, whereas Meyerhold, though initially siding with the revolution, was eventually listed among those condemned and rejected artists who were accused of formalism. He did not have any other choice than give up on his life's work, and in 1936 he presented a self-castigating lecture titled "Meyerhold Against 'Meyerholdovshchina'".[65] Little by little, his relationship to Stanislavsky also changed. Meyerhold wrote him several personal letters filled with devotion.[66]

The Baselines of Biomechanics

The contradictory life of this director and co-creator of modern twentieth-century theatre cannot erase what he really contributed to the Russian avant-garde and to the theatre of his time as such; these contributions are still sources of inspiration today. In the period preceding the revolution, Meyerhold gradually worked his way towards *biomechanics*. Later on, under increasing ideological pressure, he would slowly start to abandon it. Alongside several of his students, he left behind a sufficient number of notes about their quest for the perfect technique so that later on the idea and technique of biomechanics

could be comprehensively reconstructed. Biomechanical exercises underwent the greatest progress in the first half of the 1920s. They were preceded by a stage in which Meyerhold himself was trying to find his own place as an experimenting artist and innovator. Then, starting in the 1930s in particular, biomechanical exercises were on the decline, as they could not be correlated with mimetic realism and the psychological and social pathos of enforced socialist realism.

After the 1917 revolution, one of the ideological backdrops of biomechanics was created by the Theatre October movement; the *Proletkult* programme, which proclaimed collectivism, social justice, and equality, turned to the healthy workers and peasants, usually of the lower social strata, who had the strength to overcome obstacles when building a new society and the new art within it. At that point, not many people saw the risks of this ideology and did not want to doubt its accomplishment. On the contrary, enthusiasm clouded the judgement of quite a few soberly thinking artists with an advanced cultural background, including Meyerhold himself.

Of course, these ideological attitudes alone did not push Meyerhold to his specific way of working with actors. He took that path even before 1917, and the fact that it led him to fully exploit it even after the revolution was only lucky coincidence. In part, this was also due to the fact that he took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves to him. According to Karel Martínek, Meyerhold drafted the first practically applicable biomechanical method as early as in 1912, when he produced Fyodor Sologub's play *Hostages of Life* for the Alexandrinsky Theatre. The play was about the unchangeability of human nature, eroticism, and the cult of death. Meyerhold took it as the basis for a dynamic production filled with rich symbolic images created by precisely defined movements of characters engaged in cheerful and vigorous dance. However, Meyerhold did not use the term "biomechanics" until 1921. Before that time, he spoke instead of a "technique of stage movement."[67]

In the early years of the twentieth century, Meyerhold was looking for inspiration in the theory of emotion as elaborated by American philosopher and psychologist William James.[68] According to James, no emotion exists without its external form. In turn, this very form

can induce an emotion. All external stimuli are transformed into actions which a person modifies according to their mental attitude. James used a very specific example to demonstrate this: "I see a bear, I run, and I feel fear." In other words, a person feels fear only after they "take to their heels", i.e., in a reflex-driven and specific physical action. For Meyerhold, this realization brought about a fundamental contradiction with the concept of acting according to Stanislavsky who, in total contrast, encouraged actors to first grow emotions inside themselves and then derive their subsequent actions from them. And so Meyerhold commenced his work on teaching actors how to first create an external situation, find themselves in it, and give an adequate physical reaction, letting themselves be affected by the situation and then submitting to it emotionally. As a rational thinker and an adherent of futurism and constructivism in art, he was drawn by this approach because of its logic and obviousness when using it to teach and educate actors. Stanislavsky's experiencing, even though reliant on such procedures as writing characters' biographies, evoking emotions, and so on, must have seemed intangible to Meyerhold as something occult-like and questionable, because it occurred as if invisibly, deep inside each actor. It allowed actors (at least those who knew how to do it) to pretend to have emotions they were not really experiencing. Meyerhold's actors, by contrast, had to engage in visible exercises, difficult physical movements, and acrobatics in order to train their bodies and, in line with both James's and Meyerhold's convictions, also their mental apparatuses. Meyerhold was not the only one to take this approach to actors. Edward Gordon Craig had very similar ways of expressing his ideas via the über-marionette.

In his 1922 lecture titled "The Actor of the Future and Biomechanics" (the title is reminiscent of a study by Craig[69]), Meyerhold claimed the following:

> [W]ith the acting methods which have prevailed up to now, the "inspirational" method and the method of "authentic emotions" (essentially they are one and the same, differing only in their means of realization: the first employs narcotic stimulation, the second – hypnosis), the actor has always been so overwhelmed by his emotions that he has

> been unable to answer either for his movements or for his voice. [...] By correctly resolving the nature of his state physically, the actor reaches the point where he experiences the *excitation* which communicates itself to the spectator and induces him to share in the actor's performance: what we used to call "gripping" the spectator. [...] Throughout this process of "rousing the emotions", the actor observes a rigid framework of physical prerequisites.[70]

He used the following formula to explain his concepts: "The actor embodies in himself both the organizer and that which is organized (i.e., the artist and his material). The formula for acting may be expressed as follows: $N=A_1+A_2$ (where N = actor, A_1 = the artist who conceives the idea and issues the instructions necessary for its execution, and A_2 = the executant who executes the conception of A_1)."[71] The resulting form (N) is thus the sum total of one part of the actor's

☛ *Agitational brigade of Meyerhold's GOSTIM theatre at the* Sovkhoz *field in Donbas in 1931.*

personality, which in collaboration with the director creates a physical shape and gives it a biomechanical start, and the other part, which does the exercise. It is all about the director's command and physical performance. Psychology is left out.

It is important to note that in this lecture Meyerhold spoke about the intention to train actors and not create particular characters in particular productions. The abstract definition of an actor using a mathematical formula was very much in the spirit of the times. Even Karl Marx's philosophy was often criticized, because it defined man primarily as part of socioeconomic relationship and somewhat forgot about the psychological facet. Meyerhold aspired to do new theatre for the masses and theatre performed in squares and in factory halls. He wanted to educate the proletariat and teach workers how to understand the developments in society after the revolution and during the civil war. The aim was to explain to workers in rough, poster-like, and simplistic features the struggle between the red "good" and the white "evil", while keeping in mind that the uneducated and primitive audience cannot be captivated by sophisticated and detailed argumentation, but mainly by good entertainment, comedy, farce, clamour, and astonishment.

Meyerhold's opinions were also influenced by other contemporary approaches. Besides mechanics and physio-psychology, there was also reflexology, energetism, and Taylorism. According to Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, reflexology examined conditioned reflexes. It supplemented the director's ideas about how external stimuli could affect the reactions of the body and the mind, bestowing his theory with a scientific and experimental nature. Another frequently cited author, Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev, made several attempts to address this issue. Energetism added to these attempts evidence about energy transformation; the performing actor would discharge excess energy and "the study of an actor's body used the following definitions of three principal functions: 'recipients, conductors, and producers' of energy."[72]

For Meyerhold's art, Taylorism was perhaps the most important extra-artistic source of inspiration. The American scientist Frederick Winslow Taylor examined and implemented modern forms of the

working process, drawing on the needs of a rapidly growing industry that could no longer incorporate people in the production process as a separate entity in the style of a good craftsman. It was developing mass production, the use of conveyor belts, the enlargement of manufacturing spaces, and the concentration of large numbers of workers that required the elaboration of general rules governing movement and preventing production losses. Apart from the chance that human labour would be unscrupulously misused, there was a positive side as well; regulation and order brought a lower risk of work-related injuries, higher work productivity, and, last but not least, better income and social standing for workers. After the socialist revolution, this was very much in line with what the Soviet society strove towards, and Meyerhold soon became not only a great expert but also a practitioner of Taylor's principles.

While Meyerhold was influenced by Taylorism as a theatre artist, and he integrated it into his biomechanics, he initially also desired to initiate exercises that would be applicable outside of theatre and art and incorporated into mass physical education, physical culture, and sport in general. The idea was to use such a physical approach to improve the work capabilities of all people in the country. Meyerhold became involved in the *Tefizkult* project, seeking new forms for large and numerous assemblies, processions, military parades, and national celebrations. The project was aimed at applying a schematic grammar of movement of the human body; however, it was too restrictive for artistic imagination and mostly suited those who envisioned discipline and order to be a part of the workplace and present even elsewhere, such as in the streets, in parks, and in private life. Despite the fact that Meyerhold abandoned his collaboration with the social application of Taylorism, he did not go against it. He just focused his attention on how to use it in theatre.

Taylor's principles were simplified by his successors in America first to sixteen and then ultimately to seven fundamental movement rules to be used in the working process. The principles were very reminiscent of what Meyerhold later developed into his biomechanical exercises in theatre. According to the rules, while working, one should give preference to the following:

1. Smooth continuous curved motions of the hands are preferable to straight-line motions involving sudden and sharp changes in direction.

2. Both hands should begin and complete their actions simultaneously.

3. The two hands should never be idle at the same time, except during work pauses.

4. The motions of the arms should be made in opposite and symmetrical directions, and should be made simultaneously.

5. Hand and body motions should be confined to those muscles that require the least amount of exertion [...].

6. Movements involving the single contraction of a positive muscle group are faster, easier, and more accurate than movements caused by sets of antagonistic muscles.

7. Rhythmic movements are, generally, the most efficient.[73]

Biomechanical Exercises

Meyerhold saw the inspirational power of Taylorism that could be used for actor training. He heard the social and production processes organized by Taylor's tenets translated into the language of the theatre, mostly to the movements of actors' bodies. Little by little, making use of his previous experience as well, Meyerhold introduced something similar, now wholly on a scientific foundation. The movement exercises were intended to aid in actor training, the initiation of their inner energy, the development of their skills, physical fitness, and quick-wittedness. He took the elementary laws of the physiology of movement and developed them into a more extensive system. Rejecting psychological acting, Meyerhold started to shape action acting. Actors were supposed to react to external stimuli from other actors or from the space they were in. Meyerhold demanded that they be energetic and dynamic, use reflexive movements and counter-movements, and apply the inner drama of their acting. "Physical culture, acrobatics, dance, rhythmics, boxing and fencing are all useful activities," but they should only be provided as "auxiliary exercises in a course of 'biomechanics', the essential basis of every actor's training."[74] Meyerhold stressed that

the essence of biomechanics was different from just acrobatics. It was something that could go further, from an external physical expression to the communication of meaning. In a retrospective passage in 1930, he stated the following:

> First, the muscles had to be stretched, the skeleton positioned appropriately, the body taught how to do rhythmical movement, and the head positioned in a given perspective. Then, however, came the moment when we would say: "Comrade, why is it that you're walking around mindlessly? Why are you not thinking?" Before we could start working with words, we had to complete the previous two stages: first movements, then thoughts, and only then words.[75]

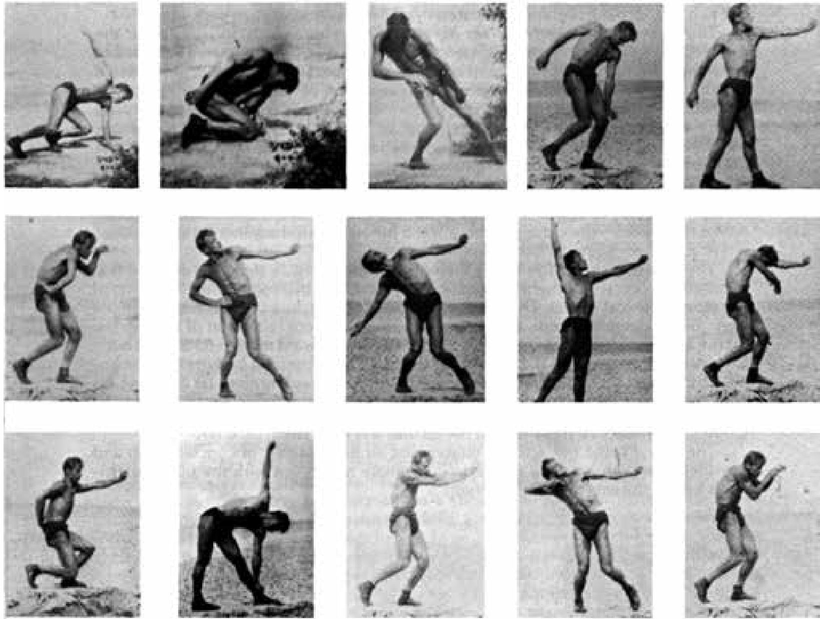
Meyerhold never noted down his ideas as systematically as Stanislavsky did, and so it was his students, actors, and collaborators (Alexey Lvovich Gripich, Alexander Vasilyevich Smirnov, Erast Pavlovich Garin, Alexander Konstantinovich Gladkov, Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein, Valery Mikhailovich Bebutov, and Igor Vladimirovich Ilyinsky) who recorded the details of his creative and pedagogical method. Based on their testimonies, Meyerhold's fundamental philosophy and experimental sources of biomechanics could be reconstructed, including the exercises he would do with actors as a part of separate training or when rehearsing entire productions.

Some of his movement studies are recorded in great detail, whereas others are only in brief notes. Christine Hamon-Siréjols mentions twenty-two study variations: (1) shooting a bow, (2) leaping on the back and carrying weights, (3) letting a weight fall, picking it up, and throwing it, (4) a punch in the nose, (5) a slap in the face, (6) a fall to the knees, (7) playing with a stick, juggling, (8) throwing a ball, (9) throwing a stone, (10) a leap onto the chest, (11) a stab with a dagger, (12) quartet, (13) rope, (14) horse, (15) four skaters, (16) tripping up, (17) a bridge, (18) a saw, (19) a scythe, (20) a burial, (21) a madman, and (22) vault jumping.[76] These specific movement variations, repeated over and over in Meyerhold's studies and workshops, were the result of diverse, often larger and more complex acts and scenes which would gradually eliminate superfluous ornaments, movement descriptiveness

and narrativeness, and acquire condensed, exceptionally dynamic, but physically very demanding form. For example, “shooting the bow” developed into a hunting scene, which Meyerhold rehearsed with his actors before the revolution. He concentrated into the scene a lot of his inspiration from *commedia dell'arte* and Russian market fair theatre, as well as from Japanese stylized theatre. The Japanese motif involved actors who, like horse riders, entered the stage and started chasing a bird. They pointed their bows at a bird, shot it, and bagged it. The entry and exit were ritualistic, while the hunting itself – an act the whole variation was later narrowed down to – exercised the ability to divide a whole into stages and create an internally balanced sequence of movements and counter-movements. These, in turn, would gradate the brief story and apply dynamic mime to present all stages of the act to music:

> (1) a ceremonial entry, (2) stopping, (3) a dactyl, (4) a 180-degree turn, (5) a gesture to mark the location of the bow (the bow is imaginary), (6) the actor bends down, (7) grabs the bow, (8) straightens up, (9) picks up the bow, (10) gets the body ready, (11) checks himself, (12) a counter-movement to pulling the arrow out of the quiver, (13) a rapid hand movement, (14) the arrow is pulled, (15) the hand turns in the air, (16) the arrow is put next to the cheek, (17) the bowstring is checked, (18) a counter-movement to the shoulders being stretched apart, (19) the shoulders are stretched, (20) the legs are adjusted, (21) the bowstring is checked, (22) a look into the distance, [(23) through to (26) the shot] (23) the hands meet, (24) a jump (legs together), (25) the weight is shifted to the left leg, (26) a kick with the left foot, the arms move apart, (27) a shout, (28) the end, and (29) a ceremonial exit.[77]

This exercise was done by about five actors, while other exercises were intended for pairs; the goal was individual practice, not mass scenes. Meyerhold, who was always present at these exercises, would stop the actors frequently, show them the movements, and improve and tune them to harmonize them into perfect action. Because he was originally an actor himself, he could demonstrate his vision to the actors, embodying the instructions expressed in words prior to the exercise. His rehearsals seethed with improvisation, cascading



☛ *The stages of the biomechanical exercise* Shooting the bow.

new ideas, which he himself would immediately visualize and demonstrate to the others. Then he encouraged them to try to imitate the visualizations or render it even more convincingly. Meyerhold always contained his own imagination, however spontaneous, into the rational framework of his philosophy.

The common path he took with his performers went from improvisations and movement training all the way to polished études, which were presented using professional and often nearly circus-like acrobatics. Even back in the pre-revolutionary period, it was Meyerhold's collaborator Vladimir Nikolayevich Soloviev who tried to achieve a mathematical precision of movement on stage. Soloviev, who assumed that if "unchangeable human emotions exist, then there has to be also an unchangeable range of dramatic situations that keep repeating themselves [and] used mathematical methods to translate this opinion into the factual language of numbers," perfected the formal style of all stages of the étude.[78]

Meyerhold, though resistant to prioritizing the psychological aspects of action, never achieved a similar level of abstract and schematic model of training. For him, the inspiration taken from the principles of *commedia dell'arte* also evoked the typology of characters and

pushed him towards emphasizing the improvisation of the characters' emotional traits, which were all individual. Of course, for the purposes of the acting exercise, Meyerhold had to direct his students' attention primarily at more distinctive and schematized études. In doing so, he would need to keep repeating to the scenes designed to cover several areas of human action, various social relationships, and various mental states. More than thirty years after Meyerhold's death, and with the help of witnesses and contemporaries, the American director Mel Gordon managed to reconstruct thirteen of the twenty-two variations listed by Hamon-Siréjols. As he wrote on the occasion of the first published description of the études in 1974, even Meyerhold himself had a very realistic view of this approach: "In my Biomechanics, I was able to determine altogether twelve or thirteen rules for the training of an actor. But when I polish it, I'll leave perhaps no more than eight."[79]

The first movement the actors had to learn was the "dactyl", a short movement exercise to activate the whole body and concentrate the actor's energy. In poetry, a dactyl is a foot in verse meter with one stressed and two unstressed syllables: –∪∪. In Meyerholds exercises, the dactyl was an integral part of the études, mostly used for their delineation or gradation. Two types of the dactyl were remembered by witnesses: a complete and simple form. Gordon reconstructed the dactyl as follows (the letters in brackets denote the individual stages and refer to their photographic depiction):

> In the complete form: (a) beginning with a complete relaxation of all muscles, (b) the actor suddenly claps his hands twice in a short upward motion, (c) which his body follows until he stands on the balls of his feet. Then, (d) bending his knees, (e) he immediately claps his hands twice in a violent and downward motion, (f) throwing his arms back as they separate after the last clap. Then (g) this abrupt movement is transferred to the actor's entire body in a forward and downward motion as the momentum of energy is conveyed to his calves and feet. The actor is now prepared to perform the étude. The simple dactyl eliminated the second and third steps (b) + (c).[80]

Quite obviously, the dactyl was more than just a vague movement exercise; it also defined a precisely set tempo-rhythm, while concentrating energy that the actor's body could later use to perform the étude. Gordon also reconstructed some of the actual exercises. Let us describe two of them:

Dactyl.

> Throwing the stone:
> (a) The actor executes a dactyl. (b) He then leaps, turns to the right, and lands with his left foot forward. His knees are bent with his right hand in front, the left behind. (c) The actor runs. (d) He jumps again landing on his left foot with his left shoulder forward. (e) He straightens his body. Both arms hang loose and are perfectly symmetrical to each other. (f) He rises on his toes and then drops to his right knee. His body is swayed backward and forward. (g) Picking up an imaginary stone in his right hand, the actor rises, swings his right arm around in a wide arc to the left, across to the front and back, behind his body, where it hangs. His left shoulder is high, the right low with the right hand at knee level. The knees are slightly bent. (h) He steps backwards. (i) With the imaginary stone still grasped in his right hand behind the body, the actor begins to run. His left shoulder is raised. (j) He stops with a slight jump, landing with his left foot in front. (k) After his right arm is swung across the chest, the left hand grips the wrist. (l) The body weight is transferred to the right foot. Still clasped by the left hand, the right arm is swept back and is swung in an arc with its base at the shoulder. The actor releases his left hand, permitting the right arm to form a wide, complete circle. (m) Arresting the circular movement, the right arm is held out in front while the actor searches for an imaginary target. (n) He runs a few steps forward and jumps. (o) Preparing the throw, he swings his right arm and leg back. (p) He throws the imaginary stone, twisting his right side forward and the left side back. (q) Kneeling on his right knee, the actor claps his hands, then he cups his right ear as if listening for the result. (r) (The imaginary mark is hit.) He points with his left arm and leans back with the right arm on the right hip. (s) Rising, he executes a *dactyl*.

Objectives: Example of a complex acting cycle with multiple preparations, actions, reactions, and pauses. Development of free curved motions and balance. Use of arms and shoulders in establishing the centre of gravity while in movement. Exercise in reflex excitability to sound stimulus (q).

Comment. The étude is performed in alternating tempos.[81]

The leap onto the chest:

(a) Two actors standing at a great distance, execute a *dactyl*. (b) The first actor, running at a great speed, thrusts from his right foot and leaps at his partner, whose balance is firmly fixed.[82] (c) In the air, the first actor directs his knees at his partner's chest. (d) Landing against his partner, the first actor hooks his elbows behind the partner's shoulders. (e) The partner leans his upper torso backward to support the weight of the first actor, who holds the back of the partner's neck in his left hand. (f) Then, the first actor slowly pulls an imaginary dagger from his belt with his right hand. (g) He stabs his partner drawing the imaginary dagger across his throat. (h) The partner slowly begins to bend his body backward, and makes a sound as if dying. (i) Releasing his grip from the partner's neck, the first actor begins to slide down his partner's body, continually stabbing it with his imaginary dagger. (j) They both fall to the floor at the same time.

Objectives: Exercise in precisely estimating distances. Supporting weights against chest cage through positioning of legs. Development of reflex excitability through complex stimuli.[83]

This étude was inspired by Giovanni di Grasso, a temperamental actor from Sicily, who had visited Russia before the revolution. In Meyerhold's ensemble, those who were capable of applying biomechanics included, for example, Igor Vladimirovich Ilyinski, Maria Ivanovna Babanova, and Vasiliy Fyodorovich Zaychikov. His collaborator and future wife Zinaida Nikolaevna Reich played the main roles. For Meyerhold, positive examples included other actors whose work he could not personally influence but who he appreciated immensely because they "intuitively guessed the correct method, i.e., approaching the role not from the inner to the outer, but the other way around, from the outer to the inner."[84] Such actors and actresses included Eleonora Duse, Fyodor Shalapin, and Benoit Constant Coquelin.

The result of Meyerhold's exercises with actors was that he could

☛ *The leap onto the chest.*

produce plays that repainted the picture of reality into constructivist rationalism and calculable precision. He made distinct arrangements in larger spaces, simplified and formally clean gestures and facial expressions, and intelligible whole-body movements. Meyerhold effectively emphasized some specific details of acting work and revealed their role in character building.

One such detail was “counter-movement” (originally in Russian: *otkaz*): a primary rejection of what was supposed to follow, an element used in most biomechanical exercises, whose importance was stressed by Meyerhold on numerous occasions. Counter-movement was not only physical. It was mainly about the contrast that allowed the actor to highlight specific passages for the audience. The counter-movement preceded the actual action that was to play a significant role. For example, if the actor was to throw a stone, he first had to move his arm back in order to make the throw most effective, both in terms of acting and affecting the audience.

The fundamental counter-movement in acting always occurs in the highest point of action. Once he reached the highest action point, the actor had to vividly express or make visible the last complication in his journey and execute a counter-movement to manifest a brief step back taken in the counter-direction to what he was about to do. Physically speaking, it meant a movement in the opposite direction

(e.g., swinging an arm backwards before throwing a stone forwards). In an abstract sense, it appears as a moment of apparent hesitation, resistance, betrayal, or doubting of the intended action before it is performed by the actor with full force (a similar idea is present in Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" decision-making monologue). Meyerhold likened this moment to the tightening of a bowstring before shooting the arrow. Béatrice Picon-Vallin explained the term as follows:

> *Otkaz* (literally "refusal") is an essential concept of biomechanics. Defined in 1914 in the Saint Petersburg studio, it is both a component of the fragmented main action sequence (separation from the preceding movement and preparation for the next movement) and the opposition to the collective movement (backward movement before forward, flexion before standing). *Otkaz* allows to control both composed and unfolded movements, capture the audience's attention, and above all, keep the partner's focus on the team play. In addition to this, it also aims to increase the expressivity of the play by introducing a preliminary excitement.[85]

In the process, Meyerhold applied the "braking" principle. Braking included "all obstacles, decelerations, and idle time on the way to the directed movement."[86] If an actor had to make a positive movement or take action aimed at a specific goal, this action should make it obvious that great inner and outer forces working against the action must be overcome, something that is inhibiting his action, obstructing it, and making it difficult. A spectator or observer should be able to see that the actor's positive action also has a dark side, a negative aspect, or an opposing dynamic preventing the achievement of what the actor intended and towards which he was working. Meyerhold's "brake" was incorporated in all action to highlight elements of conscious human effort and foster a comprehensive and vivid expression of action.

Concentrating acting exercises into movement études seemingly taken out of context was a result of Meyerhold's way of directing. Even before the revolution, when he was working on developing stylized symbolic theatre, critics objected to Meyerhold making actors only parts of his visual concept of a production. Such decorativeness initial-

ly affected Meyerhold's approach in such a way that he wanted actors to be live puppets that were only following the director's orders. This also included Meyerhold's attempts at mime and drive towards physical vividness, expressivity of attitude, gesture, and facial expressions. Taylorism positively influenced Meyerhold's views in incorporating rhythmization into his artistic approach. Symbolist tendencies, with all the related metaphysical meaning and dreamy atmosphere which Meyerhold manifested in the first decade of the twentieth century, would later be replaced by dynamic and rational anti-illusionary acting. This was much more in line with the modern era as well as the director's artistic type. The anti-realist and anti-naturalist principles, which caused his break-up with Stanislavsky, gradually transformed from having a symbolist nature to a newly stylized approach to movement. This was initially inspired by the Balagan folk theatre, Japanese kabuki, and Peking opera, and was later incorporated into the rational structure of acting as a social fact, a super-individual unit which, besides its traditional roles in the depiction of an individual, also had the task of portraying contemporary people.

Meyerhold's biomechanical exercises, focused on flexibility of movement, also stressed the importance of the overall arrangement of the stage space and the actors' presence in it. Even if the études would not become part of the productions, they indirectly affected their resulting form. They helped actors learn, in a concentrated physical form, how to perform all the tasks required by the director during the rehearsal phase.

Another important component of Meyerhold's exercises was music:

> All biomechanical exercises were done with a musical background. The hunting mime, for example, originally performed to the accompaniment of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, was in its biomechanical bow shooting version done to Grieg's *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* in the opening ceremony. It was then followed by Chopin's *étude* in C-minor, Bach's prelude and fugue, and finally Schlosser's *étude*. Only excerpts from the mentioned musical pieces were played.[87]

☛ *Fernand Crommelynck:* The Magnificent Cuckold. *Actor's Theatre, 1922. Directed by Vsevolod Meyerhold. Circular movement on the wooden scaffolding.*

Meyerhold's assistant Mikhail Korenev summarized his teacher's instructions to make the following list of the basic principles of biomechanics:

— the entire biomechanics is based on this: if the tip of the nose is working, the whole body is working. Most of all, the actor has to achieve stability in his whole body. The body will show even the slightest tension.
— In biomechanics, every movement consists of three elements: (1) intention, (2) balance, and (3) performance.
— If there are numerous characters, spatial orientation is of special importance. It is the task of each actor to find their own path in the complex set of movements of the crowd.
— Group rehearsals and exercises require that everybody know their place, which has to respect others as well as the spatial boundaries to work in. Precise orientation, exactness of calculating coordinates, certainty, and swiftness of vision – all these have to perform at the maximum possible level (similarly, inhabitants of large cities also develop, perhaps unconsciously, a capability to adjust and use vision effectively).
— The basic requirements of biomechanics include good coordina-

tion in spaces and plays, the ability to find oneself in the waves of the crowd, the art of adjustment, calculation, and a firm gaze.
— Absolute calm and genuine balance are the prerequisites of good and precise work.
— During exercises performed with a partner performing his own procedures, each actor has to indicate a "counter-movement" or use another instrument (which should be understandable to the audience) to signal to the partner his readiness to execute the next task.
— During an exercise, expressions of "fire" or "temperament" should be prohibited; there is no need to hurry or take ownership of the space too much. What matters most is self-control, serenity, and a methodical approach.
— Everyone has to understand and be aware how they are standing: on their right or left foot, or on both. Every intention to change the body position, or its parts, has to be evident at once.
— Gestures are the result of the work of the whole body. Every gesture is the result of what the performing actor has in his technical repository.
— The art lies in the way the material is arranged. The actor needs a large repository of technical means to be able to arrange his own material. The difficulty and specific nature of acting art lies in the fact that the actor is both the material and its arranger. Acting is a subtle matter. At every moment, the actor is also a composer.
— Each movement has to be under control until it is completed. In all parts of a performed task, the actor has to have firm support. The beginning and end of the performance must be clearly highlighted. The starting point has to be indicated. Every exercise comprises a set of moments that are related to one another.
— Movements cannot be given freedom. When executing movements, the actor has to be economical.
— *Piano* and *forte* are always relative. The audience must have the impression that there is still an unused reserve. The actor should never use all of the reserve. Even the broadest gesture must contain the potential of something even broader.
— Biomechanics is not in need of anything accidental; everything must follow a plan made in advance. Each working actor must know and take the position of his body precisely, using each part of the body to execute the intended movement.
— The fundamental law of theatre: if an actor lets all of his tempe-

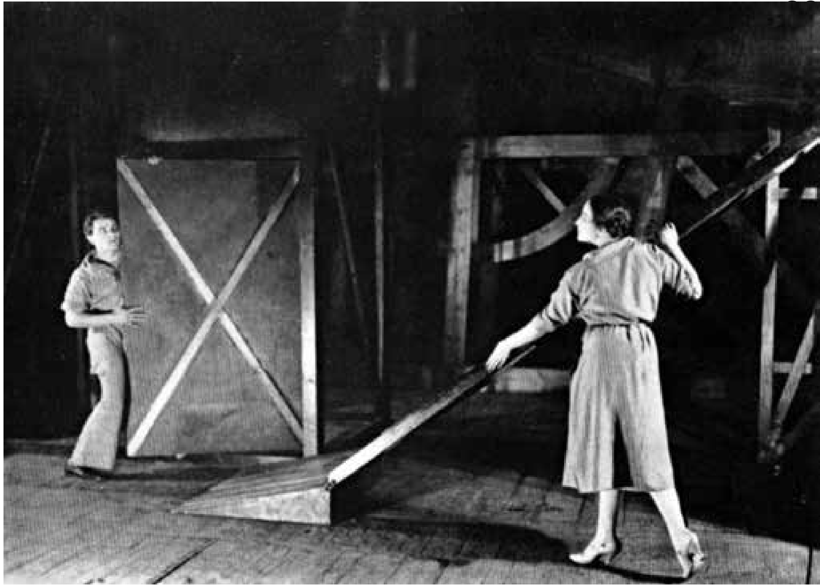
> rament loose at the beginning, he will irretrievably waste it before the production is over, thus sabotaging the whole interpretation.
> — When an exercise consists of small parts, these should be done *staccato*; when it is performed as a continuous flow, it gives rise to *legato*.
> — When using hands and fingers, exceptional tautness and stability of the whole body is of great importance.
> — The principle of biomechanics: the body is a machine and the person working with it is a machinist.[88]

Biomechanical exercises were an integral part of Meyerhold's acting technique and methodology and became a necessary component of his everyday work with actors. The development in the thinking of theatre in the twentieth century was influenced by biomechanics also because it emphasized a scientific approach to actor training and introduced one of the possible transitions from psychological realism to the interwar theatre avant-garde.

Biomechanics in productions

Meyerhold directed some of his productions in a way that turned them into showcases of biomechanics. The first great success came with his production of Belgian playwright Fernand Crommelynck's play *The Magnificent Cuckold*. The director himself gave away that "the production was intended to lay the foundations of a new acting technique used in a new social arrangement", adding: "In the production, we wanted to lay the foundations of a new manner of theatre action, one that would no longer need illusionary decorations or intricate props. [...] We fully succeeded in fulfilling this principle."[89] *The History of Soviet theatre* presents Meyerhold as an artist who "did not work towards a production, but rather towards an experiment, aiming at confirming the new staging principle and new methodology of acting."[90]

The stage for *The Magnificent Cuckold* was made of wooden platforms, inclined boards, and staircases with revolving doors. It was a fully abstract stage set in a constructivist style. The material used to build the stage was visually complemented by bricks in the background, which was later covered by draperies. The characters were dressed in



☛ *Fernand Crommelynck:* The Magnificent Cuckold. *Actor's Theatre, 1922. Revolving door. Nikolai Bogolyubov and Zinaida Reich.*

what looked like working apparel: V-neck blouses, men wearing slacks, women wearing skirts, and all dressed in blue. Distinctive details in contrasting colours were added to the costumes. Almost no props or furniture was used. This visual solution, authored by young visual artist Lyubov Sergeyevna Popova, was revolutionary. People were moving around the stage, which was designed like a huge machine. The stage could even move itself. The actors' actions alternated quickly, and the rhythm was accelerating. Each member of the ensemble could demonstrate their preparedness for the exhausting dynamic of motion: the virtually acrobatic physical movements and the group work. The individual scenes were composed as tiny sections of the acting symphony, exact and fitting into each other, supporting each other, and always gradating. The protagonists – Ilyinsky (Bruno), Babanova (Stella), and Zaychikov (Estrugo) – performed their roles with ease, humour, and virtuosity. Theatre critic Alexey Alexandrovich Gvozdev bore the following witness of the performance:

> Ilyinsky's swift pace and creativity was responded to by Babanova's exceptional sense of rhythm and musicality, while Zaychikov became an integral counterpart enhancing every gesture with remarkable

> precision. Like the Chorus in a Greek tragedy, he provided accompaniment and mimed multiplication of everything his partners produced in this great storm of passions.[91]

In this production, Meyerhold used biomechanics as an exercise to prepare the actors and incorporated one of the *études* – The Leap onto the Chest – directly into the plot. Bruno, who finds out that the cooper from Oostkerque wants to send a love letter to his Stella, gets aggravated and starts smacking the cooper's face. The young man seems to escape him and peeks back through the revolving door. When he realizes he can take Bruno by surprise, he jumps on his chest and swings back his arm as if trying to hit him in the chin. This gag, based on a well-known *étude*, was presented onstage as if it had been pulled directly from a *commedia dell'arte* piece. The production teemed with similar individual and crowd acts, chases, and cheerful rows. At that time, Meyerhold's company was – as per usual – composed of mostly young actors. Apart from some of the central characters, they were mostly students – less known and not always mature actors. This kind of ensemble was, however, ideal for fulfilling the director's wishes, because it was well versed in collective creation and welcomed the new elements of theatre art.

The Magnificent Cuckold enjoyed great success and was remembered by audiences for a long time. Of course, the unexpected novelties, ground-breaking and provocative at the same time, did not impress everybody. Anatoly Lunacharsky, for example, admitted to having left the theatre after Act Two.[92] In contrast, Mayakovsky was riveted. Alma Law noted that the production "was the first to give the public an astonishing demonstration of Meyerhold's new system of biomechanics."[93] Dramaturge and critic Alexander Viliamovich Fevralski offered a very apt description:

> It was surely the most progressive up-to-date approach to theatre. Meyerhold seemed to uncover the most essential elements of stage action, cleansing it from the sediments of many years, first exposing and then presenting them in their purest form. He created a work liberated from stage restrictions, a production whose action was taking

☛ *Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky:* The Forest. *TIM, 1924. Nestchastlivtsev is making fun of Gurmyzhskaya.*

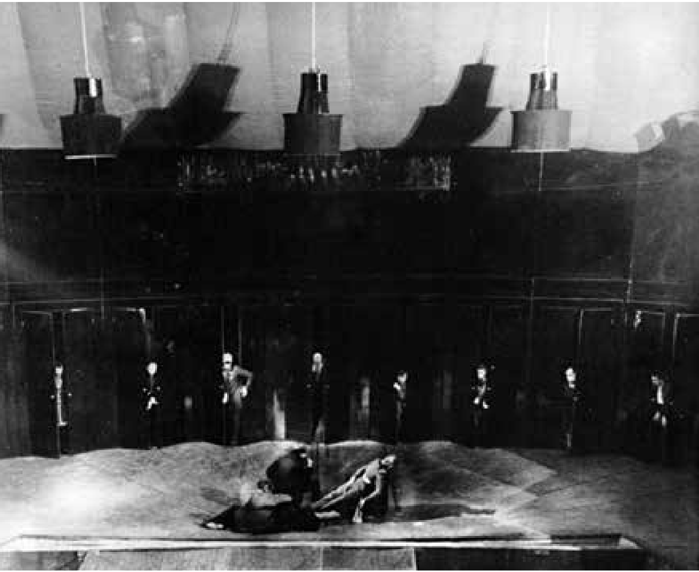
> place in front of a bare brick wall, set on a light, three-dimensional, abstract construction and a wide proscenium. Despite such ascetic theatre approach, or perhaps because of it, the production made a great impression. This was also owing to the performances of the actors who were wearing identical, loose, blue costumes ("actors' working clothes") and who were all young, healthy, and strong. The direction was also excellent. The actors' movements supported the words in dialogues, enhancing its meaning and rhythmical flexibility. [...] *The Magnificent Cuckold* became a symbol of new theatre as well as the whole Leftist Art Front. It was an eloquent manifestation of new humanism. At first, this humanism was visible mainly in its external manifestations: the actor's performance teeming with joy of life and expressed in the triumph of a free and harmoniously developed human being acting on an empty stage. But as the production progressed, the most important features emerged: the theme of protest against the suppression of human individuality, the theme of freedom of emotions, and pure love.[94]

In the productions that followed, Meyerhold kept developing the principles of biomechanics. He did not want biomechanics to become an empty and schematic technique, and so he used the prepa-

ratory exercises in specific stage plots. Using the individual *études*, he directed specific scenes in his productions. In 1922 he rehearsed Sukhovo-Kobylin's *Tarelkin's Death* and a year later Marcel Martin's *Night*, adapted by Tretyakov as *The World Turned Upside Down*. A year later, this was followed by Ostrovsky's *The Forest* (1924), in 1926 by Gogol's *The Inspector General*, and two years later by Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit* (1928).

As far as the application of biomechanics was concerned, the production of *The Forest* introduced a new way of applying the principles after *The Magnificent Cuckold*. Meyerhold divided the plot into thirty-three loosely connected episodes, each with a closed plot development: a kind of "drama in a nutshell".[95] The episodes differed in the use of variety show, acrobatics, mime, or drama. Each offered a distinctive perspective, variability, and persistent adaptability. In film, montage was used as one of the fundamental elements and Meyerhold introduced similar approaches to theatre. He was not content with the actors' only making acrobatic movements; he advocated "acrobatics" to be applied to the whole plot, scenes, and episodes. He would throw one episode against another and juggle with them in the production's macro-composition. The objective was to address the complex issues of his time and to predict what course society and its people would take in the new era, and what social changes would come. Meyerhold's composition procedure was not based on improvisation. What might have seemed like randomly arranged steps produced by flexible ideas was in fact the result of a precise concept, an elaborate composition similar to the birth of a theatre symphony. The individual parts of the production were calculated for their length and used particular tones and accents as well as the pauses between *études*. Contrasts and juxtapositions were precisely defined in advance. Meyerhold would address his actors as if he were an orchestra conductor and – like in other productions – he pushed them to unbelievable physical performances, never allowing any delays.

At that time, he would emphasize biomechanics and – as Lunacharsky put it – "sociomechanics" and "social mask theatre". Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit*, for example, offered a critical perspective on the morals of old Moscow. Meyerhold used the original version, which was



☛ *Nikolai Gogol:* The Inspector-General. *GOSTIM, 1926. Directed by Vsevolod Meyerhold. The door opens for the first time and the scene where bribes are distributed begins.*

more autobiographical and grotesque, and rehearsed it with his State Theatre (GOSTIM). The plot takes place over one day, and the director divided it into seventeen episodes. In line with his opinion on the importance of music in a theatrical production, Meyerhold decided to produce this play as a crossover between opera and musical comedy. The individual scenes were coloured as well as commented on by the works of Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, and Bach, among others. The result was a "dramatic revue": a chain of all kinds of fragments and movement exercises that included dance scenes, mini-plots, mime, boisterous companies, and intimate encounters. The virtually mathematical composition became apparent in the symmetrically arranged stage: it consisted of two elevated platforms on the sides, a balcony at the back, staircases, and translucent screens of the side walls.

Slovak director Ján Jamnický, who visited Moscow and Leningrad in 1936, saw the second version of the production (rehearsed in 1935). The production was upgraded to address the critical reviews of the Soviet power structures of that time, but it was still reminiscent of Meyerhold's better days. Jamnický captured his experience as follows:

> The stage arrangement was harmonious and cleverly simple, with no violent elements – no ladders, but two symmetrical staircases positioned about two metres high, a short bridge and stairways leading diagonally to the back (stage changes were built between them – like ghosts or candles seen behind a transparent white sheet). The direc-

> torial approach some of the actors took to render their characters revealed the master's influence [...]. The obvious effort to highlight the social types and environment of Moscow from a hundred years ago might have caused that the lyricism and Romantic rebellion of this play was erased – the whole production manifested too much rationality. Each scene, each detail was admirably elaborated, but the whole was like looking at a mosaic from too close up – one could see the grout between the stones. He admired reason, but not emotion. [...] A peculiar feature were dialogues performed with the aid of a staircase – spoken from the height of the proscenium downwards. This endowed the scenes with agitation, as horizontal communication was replaced with vertical interaction.[96]

The numbers of Meyerhold's admirers and followers were increasing, but so were ill-wishers and enemies. One of his most eminent students in Russia was Nikolai Pavlovich Okhlopkov. He started as director with crowd productions in Irkutsk, where he staged Mayakovsky's play *Mystery-Bouffe* in 1922. Later, he became an actor in Meyerhold's theatre in Moscow (TIM). When he got to direct again, his productions would become characteristic for pathos-filled monumental features with an imprinted, highly lyrical, and poetic atmosphere. Okhlopkov was also influenced by constructivism. Meyerhold later publicly renounced Okhlopkov (in his "Meyerhold Against Meyerholdovshchina" lecture, he said, among other things: "[Okhlopkov], in the spirit of epigonism, selects only the worst of my work."[97] It ought to be noted, though, that in 1936, Okhlopkov publicly renounced Meyerhold as well.) He did the same with his other faithful followers as well. Despite the fact that Meyerhold was executed during the Stalinist purges, an increasing number of theatremakers openly acknowledged his legacy and influence both in Russia (Yuri Lyubimov

Nikolai Gogol: The Inspector-General. *GOSTIM, 1926. Erast Garin in the role of Khlestakov.*

in the Moscow Taganka Theatre, Georgy Tovstonogov in The Gorky Bolshoi Drama Theatre in Saint Petersburg, and Mark Zakharov) and elsewhere (the Living Theatre with Judith Malina and Julian Beck, and the Théâtre du Soleil with Ariane Mnouchkine, to mention only a couple of the most significant companies).

One of Meyerhold's last outstanding productions, which has become the basic legacy of European theatre, was Gogol's *Inspector General* (1926). It was a production that remained in the repertory of Meyerhold's theatre until the very end. Meyerhold produced the play using a script in which he included parts from other works by Gogol as well as his own new mime scenes. As was usual for Meyerhold at that time, he divided the production into several larger fragments. Each of them had a dominant tone: grotesque, dreamy, or farce-like. Meyerhold would always emphasize the acting, which was why the set and production were always simple. The most important props were small platforms placed in different spots of the stage. The platforms were vistas that offered detailed views of the key moments in the plot. The complete stage was rarely used. At first sight, it all looked almost realistic; however, once the production got going, the tempo-rhythmical stylization of the actions became apparent. It seemed as if the characters were moving mechanically and in caricature of their maladies. The scenes started and ended in frozen tableaux in which the actors became puppets. At times, even during a dynamic section of the plot, the actors would "freeze" (for example, when they found out that the inspector had shown up). There were also moments when their movements were reminiscent of slapstick film actors such as Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin. The two extreme poles of such dynamic acting was burlesque followed by wax figures.

The production showed a new way of approaching a classical author, which was also why it was fiercely criticized. Meyerhold replaced the literary architecture of the play's text with the spatial and dynamic architecture of the production. In other words, he translated the poet's words into the language of stage metaphors. In doing so, however, he did not lose any of the original meaning. On the contrary, he extended and enriched *The Inspector General* by new content nuances and stylistically expanded the realist burlesque into a realm of fan-

☛ *Nikolai Gogol:* The Inspector-General. *GOSTIM, 1926. The party, the scene is full of people, gifts are all over the place.*

tasy, thus giving an indirect nod to Vakhtangov's fantastical realism. The peculiar type of realism created by Meyerhold in this production took account of the fantastic aspects of reality: a double-faced reality that blends the comical with the tragic and nightmares with the even worse state of being awake. Béatrice Picon-Vallin observed that the production mixed carnival themes connecting "life and death, the high and low, spiritual with material of the grossest kind."[98]

After staging Mayakovsky's plays *The Bedbug* (1929) and *The Bathhouse* (1930), Meyerhold had to endure the first dangerous political attacks. Soon after, he was devastated when his ally Mayakovsky took his own life. A slow retreat from positions began. In the hard times of the 1930s, Meyerhold sought to give up on his avant-garde directorial methods. He would repeatedly stage second or third versions of his older productions in which he withdrew from the experimental approach. Good examples of this include the second (politically and formally more conformist) staging of Sukhovo-Kobylin's play *Krechinsky's Wedding* in 1933, the second production of Griboyedov's

Woe from Wit (1935), and the second and third versions of Lermontov's *Masquerade* (1933, 1938). But the criticism against Meyerhold intensified. On 17 December 1937, the Soviet daily *Pravda* featured an article by theatre critic and apparatchik Platon Mikhailovich Kerzhentsev (Lebedev), who, among other things, wrote this:

> On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, there is only one Soviet theatre out of the total 700 which did not stage a production remembering the October Revolution or presenting a Soviet repertory. That one theatre is the Meyerhold Theatre. Meyerhold's entire theatre career before the October Revolution was a constant battle with realist theatre, which he suppressed at the expense of stylized, mystical, formalist, aesthetizing theatre. [...] It became absolutely clear that Meyerhold does not understand (and apparently does not even want to) the current issues in the Soviet Union, issues that every Soviet citizen is interested in.[99]

This was how one of the most creative currents of twentieth-century European theatre was violently broken.[100]

ACTOR OF A PERFECT FORM

EDWARD GORDON CRAIG'S ÜBER-MARIONETTE

The director and theatremaker Edward Gordon Craig [16 January 1872, Stevenage–29 July 1966, Venice] has left an extensive legacy of theatre work. He started making theatre at the turn of the twentieth century, when European theatre was still feeling the influence of naturalism (such as the Théâtre Libre in Paris headed by André Antoine, Freie Bühne in Berlin led by Otto Brahm, and the Independent Theatre in London established by Jacob Thomas Grein – all were variations of "free theatre") and symbolism (Théâtre d'Art with Paul Fort and Théâtre de l'Oeuvre with Aurélien Lugné-Poe in Paris, and the Künstlertheater under the leadership of Georg Fuchs in Munich, among others – all were variations of "art theatre"). Konstantin Stanislavsky led his art theatre, the MAT, in Moscow.

Craig did not step into a theatrical darkness. On the contrary, when he joined the scene European theatre had been already living a rich life. Even before Craig, European theatre had rejected the forms that were based on star actors and domineering prima donnas. The characteristic feature of late nineteenth-century theatre – and this was strongly contributed to by Craig himself – was that in the production preparation process, the role of the stage director was renewed. This occurred as part of a new

Edward Gordon Craig.

➸ Susanna. *Craig's woodcarving, 1908.*

concept aimed at establishing a role that would coordinate and inspire the content as well as the physicality of theatre. It is a known fact that even in early history, there were organizers or managers of theatrical events. In ancient Greece, the dramatic author and *choregos* could be such production managers; in the Middle Ages, there were the church organizers of religious events; and in the Renaissance there were the ringmasters, who were group leaders in *commedia dell'arte*. However, in the period under discussion the tasks of a modern director included organizing as well as artistic work. Direction was transformed into an integral and dominant element of production, and its most important function was to create a comprehensive stage work, aesthetically produce a work of theatrical art using directorial and interpretational approaches to the dramatic text, and use active and enterprising ideas and aesthetic procedures in relation to the acting, visual, and musical elements.

Craig was certainly not the first to start modernizing theatre, but he was the first to try and radically reform it. He was the first who did not want to keep improving the theatre and acting, or gradually re-educate the artists involved. He hoped to knock everything down and build a new and better theatre from scratch.

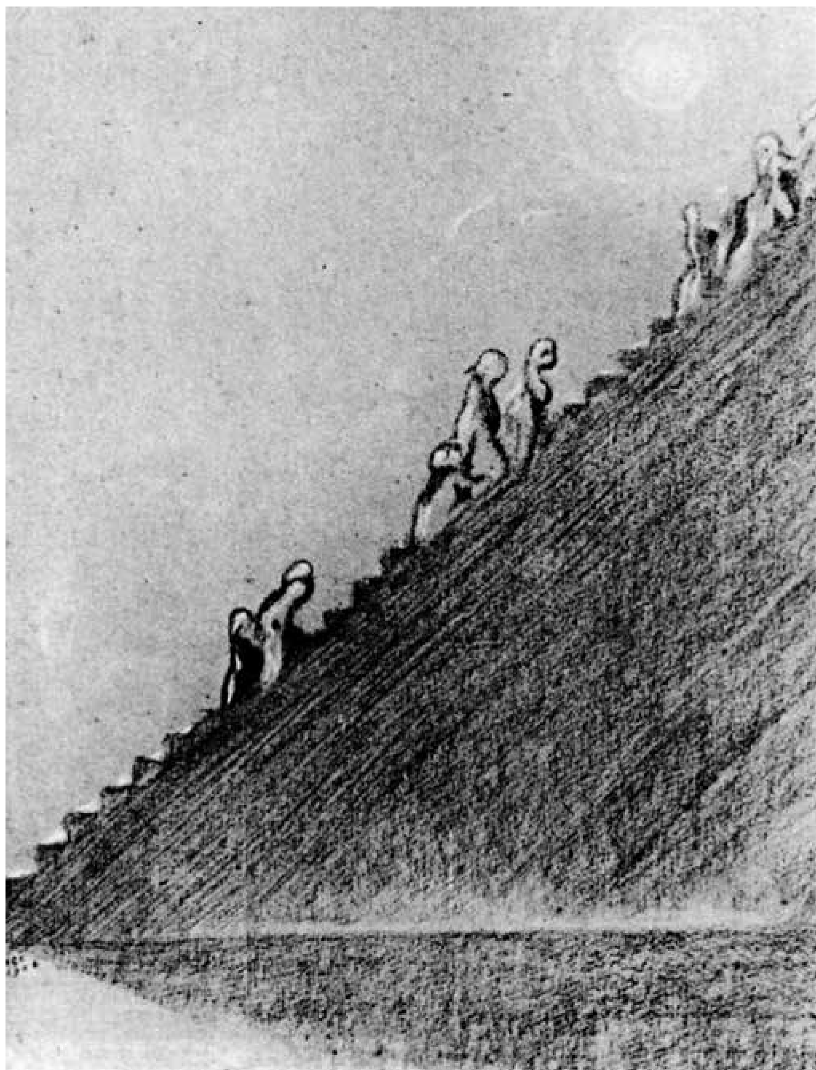
It is common that everybody who aspires to change something begins with criticizing those before him. As opposed to his contemporaries at the turn of the century, Craig was the one who went the furthest. His vision of a new theatre demanded the destruction of the old one, while aiming for something that would deny the previous tradition. In 1907 he introduced one of his most important essays, *The Actor and the Über-marionette*, with a phrase he borrowed from the actress Eleonora Duse: "To save the theatre the theatre must be

destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague... They make art impossible."[101] This was a truly radical view, expressed with the full weight of the personality of an early reformist of twentieth-century European theatre.

The Über-Marionette as a Vision

Craig did not direct many theatre plays. Those that he did were produced between 1900 and 1911. Initially, he directed opera (from 1900) and later he preferred the classical works of world dramatic literature. Many of his stage projects, however, remained in draft form as drawings and written notes. Many contemporary theatremakers wanted to collaborate with Craig, including Otto Brahm, Max Reinhardt, Jacques Rouché, and even Konstantin Stanislavsky. However, the only production that got to be finished was *Hamlet,* staged in collaboration with Stanislavsky in 1911. Craig was a theatre visionary who rejected the disturbing conditions of everyday theatre practice. He drew his ideas on the grandiose concept of theatre being a joint art form (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), an idea sketched by Richard Wagner. But Craig envisioned theatre differently. He did not think theatre was a synthesis of several art forms, with individual piece brought together, but rather an internally coherent, unique, and distinctive form of art – a seamless artwork. He became acquainted with the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and was inspired by his idea of the superman. From among his contemporaries, Craig held in high esteem the work of Georg Fuchs, who led the Künstlertheater in Munich, and in 1911 he wrote that he would like to invite to the theatre symposium "Hevesi, Appia, Stanislavsky (but also Sulerzhitsky, Moskvin, Kachalov), Meyerhold, De Vos, Starke, Fuchs, and others."[102] This, however, did not mean that he felt spiritually related to all of them. On the contrary, their meeting at another symposium ended in a quarrel because their approach to theatre was often radically different.

Craig's life manifested many features of a truly European artist. After his beginnings as an actor in England, where he was influenced, among others, by the famous actor Henry Irwing, Craig left for Weimar in Germany. Then he worked in Florence, Italy, and established *The*



☛ *Craig's stage idea – a staircase with ascending figures, 1907.*

Mask journal, where he published his most important essays between 1908 and 1929 with some interruptions. He also worked as a director in Moscow as well as other European cities. In 1942 he went to France where he would live until his death. His long and intricate life path, which wove through several European countries, was related to his desire to realize his own vision of new theatre. Craig rejected descriptive realism and psychologization, and fought for theatre of move-

ment, rhythm, and broad stage space. He emphasized symbolic and symbolist stage arrangement and the division of the stage into lines, areas, colours, and the play of light and shadow. His ideas about the theatrical space brought him close to the Swiss stage designer Adolphe Appia, and consequently also to the concept of rhythmical theatre introduced by another Swiss theatremaker, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. Appia in particular was a very similar artist because he was aware of the discord between a living actor and a painted stage set. He wanted to replace this apparent anachronism with a three-dimensional object – shaped electric lighting.

Craig's artistic and life path through foreign countries had its inner logic. He simply had to transgress barriers and boundaries because that was how he was trying to find himself as an artist. But he was never content and kept stumbling over the remains of old theatre, a concept he rejected. He rarely found such actors as Eleonora Duse or Henry Irwing – a teacher he admired. Craig's motivation to reject the old had its source in the conditions of English acting at the end of the nineteenth century. He was resentful, disparaging, and totally disapproving of it. He reproached English actors – with the exception of Irwing, his brilliant role model – for being overly emotional, insufficiently in control, exhibitionist, and "enslaved by their bodies". He believed they suppressed their intellect and allowed the protagonists to steal the show. He was also very pessimistic about the overall situation in theatre art, as it lacked any seriousness, originality, and honesty. The only mantra in theatre practice was "Do it like we've been doing it so far." Therefore, Craig tried to model his vision on international theatre and sought his inspiration elsewhere.

His rejection of English theatre shifted his attention to mythical personalities and supermen. His productions featured such beings as Dido and Aeneas, Vikings, Hamlet, Macbeth, and other big Shakespearian characters. Craig refused to serve playwrights; he wanted to serve big ideas. This all brought him to the essential element of his theatrical vision – the idea of the actor as an *über-marionette.*

It ought to be said again that Craig ultimately failed in fully realizing his ideas. The difference between his written texts and directorial work was that the notion of the actor as an *über-marionette* only existed

in his imagination. This *idée fixe* became something of a manifesto of Craig's, a legacy that would fruitfully inspire following generations of European theatremakers. However, it never became an instruction manual, a handbook, or an acting technique that could be taught in schools. While Stanislavsky, for example, and later also Bertolt Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski, managed to put their concepts of acting techniques into practice in their theatres, Craig remained only a prophet.

Craig did not believe that acting linked to a living person, an actor, could even be art equal to poetry, architecture, music, or painting. For him, genuine art was the result of working with those materials that could be calculated, whereas the human body was not calculable and had to rely on accident. The human body is subordinated to the actor's emotions and defies reason:

> Therefore the mind of the actor, we see, is less powerful than his emotion, for emotion is able to win over the mind to assist in the destruction of that which the mind would produce; and as the mind becomes the slave of the emotion, it follows that accident upon accident must be continually occurring.[103]

Old clown Gobbo from Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice. *Craig's woodcarving, 1909.*

The actor, as a living being, is not able to resist the floods of emotions, his reason loses the battle with emotions which overflow him like waves at the least suitable moments, that is, when he is trying to render a dramatic character.

According to Craig, the actor is a vain being who likes to exhibit his emotions to be admired. Better educated people know this and take advantage of it. They will write a text for the actor and use him as a tool to present it. Of course, this is not to make the actor, who conveys somebody else's ideas, stand out; on the contrary, the aim is to present literature through him.

➛ Iphigenia. *Craig's bas-relief with figures, 1907.*

Craig's proposition was to look for a different kind of actor and replace the old one. Traditional actors only impersonate characters onstage; they are imitators. New acting, on the other hand, should not just interpret but primarily create it. Actors should not create particularities, or a mimetic image of reality, but search for the essence of things. At the turn of the twentieth century, as naturalism was peaking, Craig postulated his ideas about new acting – visions of acting that would not reproduce reality, describe, or imitate nature. "Do away with the real tree, do away with the reality of delivery, do away with the reality of action," Craig appealed.[104]

Craig was a reformer (some may even say an enemy) of acting art, whose ideas were essentially very consistent, even absolute. He saw such fatal restrictions in actors that he believed they could never become perfect malleable material to make a work of art. Emotions, moods, human lowness, the inability to get out of the skin of a part, irrationality, and changeability all caused Craig to unequivocally dismiss old acting. Today, more than a century later, we could doubt Craig's resolve to attack the actual essence of acting and theatre art. After all, the presence of a live person in theatre was, in a historical perspective, the element that distinguished it from other art forms. Removing the actor would mean destroying the quintessence of theatre. Because Craig demanded that the perfect artistic material lack

any excitement, rush, or nervousness, he simultaneously excluded the possibility of having an active and live human being present in a theatre performance.

Of course, Craig was aware of the fact that in traditional theatre, actors had to be present. He also knew that audiences liked to applaud them. However, they "are applauding his personality, *he* it is we applaud, not what he is doing or how he is doing it; nothing to do with art at all, absolutely nothing to do with art, with calculation, or design."[105] Craig not only dismissed the actor – the live impersonator of a fictitious dramatic character – he also refused to accept any theatre that would put the actor in the foreground as a psychophysical personality. He was not fond of theatre where actors contributed to the theatrical product, where a creative presence was required, and where actors were made visible onstage in interpretational improvisation and self-projection.

But could Craig be considered a subversive and eliminating force in theatre? George Banu wrote the following in his study *Gordon Craig: Hate of the Theatre:* "For Craig, the only sense to challenging theatre was the improvement of inner composition and a faith in its essence."[106] The fact that he disdains the old actor does not mean he wants to destroy theatre as such. After all, he came up with an alternative, the abovementioned super-puppet, or, to be precise, what he referred to as the *über-marionette*. It is odd that an Englishman would use this German-French word.

And how did Craig define his idea of the *über-marionette*? He wrote: "[T]he aim of the Theatre as a whole is to restore its art, and it should commence by banishing from the Theatre this idea of impersonation, this idea of reproducing Nature." We should see the character onstage "as a statue in which the weakness and the tremors of the flesh are no longer perceptible. […] The actor must go, and in his place comes the inanimate figure – the über-marionette."[107] The über-marionette did not originate in the degraded tradition of tacky puppets from craft fairs. It is not of the family of squawking buffoons. It goes back to the magnificent tradition of ancient sanctuaries. It is an echo of the majestic art of past civilizations, a descendant of the Egyptian Sphinx as well as the goddesses of ancient Greece. It is an oracle from

☛ *Laurence Housman:* Bethlehem. *London, 1902. Direction, set, and costumes by Edward Gordon Craig.*

the temple in Thebes whose beauty relates to "noble artificiality". Its ideal is not the body and blood, but the body in a trance:

> Look at any limb ever carved by the Egyptians, search into all those carved eyes, they will deny you until the crack of doom. Their attitude is so silent that it is death-like. Yet tenderness is there, and charm is there; prettiness is even there side by side with the force; and love bathes each single work; but gush, emotion, swaggering personality of the artist – not one single breath of it.[108]

The *über-marionette* moves with dignity: it is tall, majestic, and beautiful. Its gestures are symbolic. It changes its rhythm as movements go through its entire body. It never shows a disfigured face or gesture. It expresses inner strength and courage. It does not compete with life; it rises above life. Its most emphasized feature is self-control along with the ability to avoid falling prey to emotions or passions. The *über-marionette* might be restrained in its outer expression, but it is very convincing and dominant when sending its message to the audience. It is part of the theatrical ritual that fascinates its participants, enrapturing them, and ultimately liberating and spiritually purifying them.

Therefore, the notion of the *über-marionette* cannot be identical with common, non-living puppets: lumpish wooden dummies hanging from ropes or wires. In his contemplations, Craig was not referring to

puppet theatre. If one reads his texts closely, it becomes obvious that the *über-marionette* is not supposed to be a realistic idea but rather an unattainable ideal. It was intended to be an inspiration for actors, an end which actors should try to achieve. Even though Craig wanted to throw the actor out of the theatre, he would repeatedly turn to him again, addressing him directly, desiring his improvement. Almost at the same time as Craig wrote about his visions of the *über-marionette*, he published a text dedicated to the future generation of theatremakers, a strong personality in the future that might one day take control of theatre and shape it anew.

In a study titled *The Artists of the Theatre of the Future* (1907), Craig did not want to expel all actors from the theatre but claimed that "the actor as he is today must ultimately disappear and be merged in something else if works of art are to be seen in our kingdom of the Theatre."[109] Craig repeatedly objected to actors' succumbing to their own emotions. While an actor should have:

> [A] rich nature [as well as] a powerful brain. [...] Of his brain we can say that the finer the brain the less liberty will it allow itself, remembering how much depends upon its co-worker, the Emotion, and also the less liberty will it allow its fellow-worker, knowing how valuable to it is its sternest control. Finally, the intellect would bring both itself and the emotions to so fine a sense of reason that the work would never boil to the bubbling point with its restless exhibition of activity, but would create that perfect moderate heat which it would know how to keep temperate. The perfect actor would be he whose brain could conceive and could show us the perfect symbols of all which his nature contains. [...] [He would] fashion certain symbols which, without exhibiting the bare passions, would none the less tell us clearly about them.[110]

In Craig's opinion, theatre and acting should be stylized. As opposed to realist art, Craig's recommendation was to eschew anything naturalistic and make artificial and graceful theatre. It was not important for the actor to act naturally, what mattered more was to consider whether specific actions were necessary for the meaning of the whole. Craig rejected the kind of theatre that was made in Meiningen. Movement

onstage was not supposed to focus on minutest details, to express a single concept; on the contrary, it should be ambiguous, compact, and complete: “But Beauty is so vast a thing, and contains nearly all other things – contains even ugliness, which sometimes ceases to be what is held as ugliness, and contains harsh things, but never incomplete things.”[111]

The actor’s action and movement ought to resemble music. In the past, the actor-dancer was a priest, a participant in a ritual. But since then theatre had lost its original face and grandiosity. Craig believed that a time would come when artists would be able to “create works of art in the Theatre without the use of the written play, without the use of actors.”[112] However, as mentioned earlier, his vision of the actor as an *über-marionette* remained only a vision. It was an ideal that could never be properly realized, and its initiator never came to accomplish it. He might have made several attempts at producing big puppets and

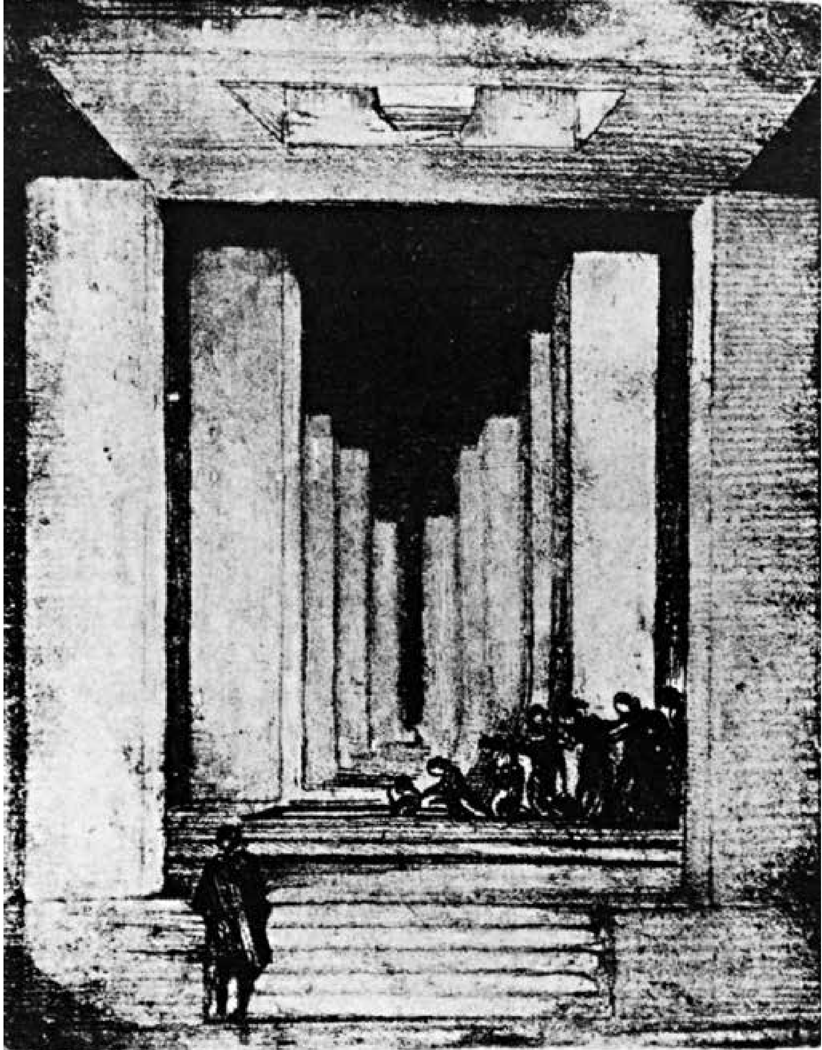
William Shakespeare: Hamlet. *MAT, 1911. Directed by Edward Gordon Craig, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Leopold Abramovich Sulerzhitsky.*

tried to use them in rehearsals, or when teaching courses to theatrical youth. But these were isolated endeavours which were never applied in actual productions. The most significant experiments with big puppets were made in Craig's acting school in Florence in 1914 and 1915. When producing *Hamlet* in Moscow (1909–1911) Craig had a large model of the set made that contained the figures of the characters. In the end, all he could say was that he believed "in the necessity of daily work under the conditions which are to-day offered to us."[113]

Craig drew the concept of the actor as a super-puppet on an invisible borderline between the real and imaginary, between life and theory, between the actor as a human being and the actor as a moving statue. He rejected old acting and sought a solution in the *über-marionette*, applying its attributes to living theatre. Surely, in this contradiction was encoded the entire artistic destiny of this theatre reformist, whose primary strength was in the ideas he wrote and spoke.

On the Path to Modern Direction

In the name of the perfect theatre of the future, Craig extended his idea of forcing actors out of the theatre and also to literature. Until the second half of the nineteenth century, the text was the dominant feature of European theatre and was prioritized in the process of rehearsing a production. A theatre company, or acting ensemble, would set out to perform a play. Rehearsing a play really meant practising the performance of a literary text written in dialogue. Because the actors' task was to reproduce the play's lines, theatre played second fiddle to the literature. Craig was convinced that this was all because the actors were vain, while the literary writers were clever and able to take advantage of this vanity. However, he himself must have felt that it was not the only reason, that there was something more significant that brought about the mentioned state of affairs. Craig was certainly not the only one thinking along these lines. He and several of his fellow theatremakers felt that theatre needed an organizer of all artistic elements of the work, and that this person could not be a literary author or actor. This was how Craig became a co-founder



☛ *Craig's stage idea* – screens*, 1907.*

of modern theatre direction. At the end of the nineteenth century, the profession of director in the present sense of the word had emerged in several forms of art and theatre – from naturalism, through realism, all the way to symbolism. Craig's views about theatre and the transformation of actors made him one of the first practitioners and theorists of theatre direction. "After you have been an actor you must become a stage-manager,"[114] he wrote, elaborating on what he

meant by the term: "About the ideal stage-manager I have written in my book, *The Art of the Theatre*, and I have shown there that the nature of his position should make him the most important figure in the whole world of the Theatre. It should therefore be your aim to become such a man, one who is able to take a play and produce it himself, rehearsing the actors and conveying to them the requirements of each movement, each situation; designing the scenery and the costumes and explaining to those who are to make them the requirements of these scenes and costumes; and working with the manipulators of the artificial light, and conveying to them clearly what is required."[115] In a concise definition, Craig had outlined the entire scope of the director's artistic responsibilities.

The problems that accompanied the execution of Craig's theories proved that visions and theoretical ideas could not always be easily applied. A good record exists of Craig's work as the director of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* produced by the MAT in Moscow. Craig collaborated on the production with Konstantin Stanislavsky, Leopold Sulerzhitsky, and Konstantin Marjanshvili. There are contradictory accounts of the final form the production took. According to some, it was an excellent piece of work that impressed not only Muscovites but also international spectators, while others thought the production was a failure because it tried to combine what could not be combined: the realist acting style of the Russian actors and Craig's poetics.[116] Craig worked on the production for two years, coming to stay in Moscow for some time before leaving again, only to return armed with new ideas and propositions. When working with the Moscow actors, he faced insurmountable barriers – the crucial one being the fact the neither party was in good command of the other party's language. Mediated interpretations (it was mostly Sulerzhitsky who assisted as a translator and director) caused grave misunderstandings when discussing the meaning of the plot and the characters' actions. Some witnesses even claimed that Craig and his ensemble of actors never really understood each other until the end. One of the actors, Konstantin Pavlovich Khokhlov, who played Horatio, made the following note about Craig's work: "He worked in total isolation from the rest of us… behaved as if he were a conspirator."[117]

Craig had a large model of the stage made in which he would place puppets representing the play's characters. He used the model and puppets to explain to the actors his ideas about the staging. Using a long stick, he would move the figures in the model like chess pieces. Craig's objective was to give the production a spiritual, mystical, and symbolist feel. He rejected the actors' ponderous thoroughness of always seeking psychological motivations, exhausting themselves in detailed rendering of each gesture and each line. For example, in the scene when Hamlet dies, Craig demanded that Kachalov highlight the impulsiveness and pathos, to let his body give in to the rhythm. The Russian actor, in contrast, emphasized the tragical aspect.[118]

Craig's Hamlet. *Danish King Claudius and Queen Gertrude (Olga Leonardovna Knipper) clad in heavy golden costumes.*

As an English director, Craig introduced the Russian theatre to a more complex view of Shakespeare's drama. He may have even helped Russian theatremakers and audiences understand *Hamlet* better, perhaps closer to what the play's ingenious author intended. At the same time, however, what he demanded from the actors could not be met. Russian actors were trained in Russian realist drama, but Craig's rendering of Shakespeare was beyond anything they had experienced. Stanislavsky remembered how the staging of *Hamlet*:

> [...] proved remarkably difficult. To start with, we once again encountered superhuman passions which we had to embody in controlled and extremely simple form. [...] Shakespeare demands a great deal of personal subtlety from each of the performers. So as to develop the score better and reach that of gold that runs through the play, we had to break it down into small parts. As a result the play was so fragmented that we could not see the whole. [...] The result was a fresh impasse, new disappointments, new doubts, momentary despair and all the other usual concomitants of any kind of research.[119]

➸ *Craig's* Hamlet. *Vasily Ivanovich Kachalov as Hamlet and Richard Boleslavsky as Laertes. A symmetrical composition of the duel.*

Craig imagined symbolist acting: restrained movement on the stage, at times having an even deliberately static and statuesque quality. But the actors resisted this. Craig would make such comments as: "But can't you really see Ophelia in this scene, crying and grimacing, but without any deep feeling, standing motionless in one place with hardly any movement?" Alisa Koonen, who played Ophelia, was defiant, saying that "no actress could do it."[120] The English director nourished the image of a strong visual impression, drawing on Appia's ideas about stage design. Actors were part of a rhythmically functioning stage unit made of tall folding screens of rectangular shape that could be moved around the stage. During the performance, the screens were to be parted or joined to form new patterns as well as to let in various rays of light. The costumes were supposed to coalesce with the set. For example, the coats of the king and queen, who were seated high up on their thrones, were rolled down and spread across the stage to make golden ripples of waves. The actors' heads would stick out of these waves. The dominant colours – purple and gold – would gradually turn darker until they became black as the shadows of the characters were roaming around the stage. In addition to the bleak colours, the famous *To Be Or Not To Be* monologue also featured the flickering silver figure of a woman. The alluring woman was standing on the side of the stage, enticing Hamlet to come to her.

The focus on the visual aspects of directing *Hamlet* for the MAT, as well as the communication issues (even with elementary interpretation of the play's text), did not contribute to the development of the technical elements of the acting. Craig wanted the MAT actors to be more creative and introduce their own ideas, which he would then assort, select from, and correct. His imaginative visions were confronted with the regular rehearsals in the MAT and with the fact

that even he himself sometimes did not know how to proceed. On one occasion, after Craig returned to Moscow after a long absence, Stanislavsky chose to present to him several acting conventions for him to choose from: "I read in the old and conventional French manner, then in the German, the Italian, the Russian declamatory, the Russian realistic. I showed the new impressionistic method also. Nothing of all of this was to Craig's liking."[121] Similarly, after a longer term of absence from Russia, when Craig returned just a week before the premiere in 1911, he went to see what the company had rehearsed in the meantime; he was outraged by the result, particularly by the costumes and lighting, and wanted to be crossed out of the bulletin as being one of the creators of the production.

The premiere was quite far removed from Craig's original vision. On top of all that, a few minutes before the curtain, the tall screens fell like dominoes and broke into pieces. The technicians saved the performance by fixing those parts that could still be used; however, the planned changes of the stage and the spatial and lighting effects were completely ruined. In spite of all these calamities, the production became a great theatrical event of European scale. Even the disagreeing opinions of critics and theatremakers could not cloud its importance. For Craig, this was important because he could try to realize his visions. For Stanislavsky, it mattered because he allowed his actors to be influenced by other than realist art.

In Craig's opinion, the stage director should be the dominant personality in theatre, not an equal element used in theatrical synthesis. The director should not just be there to inspire and organize things but had to be above everybody. The influence of Friedrich Nietzsche, which was evident already in the naming of the *über-marionette*, became apparent in Craig's concept of subordination in theatre and the role of the director. The French theatre scholar Georges Banu, who addressed this issue in his research, came to the following conclusion:

> A superman is to take over the responsibility for the condition of theatre in order to fulfil his mission to get closer to Paradise. 'The director is the possessor of theatre, so when one is found, he should be given full authority.' He will become an absolute master, owner

> of all of the elements, or a Messiah [...] Dictator or revelation. In his hatred to the state of the theatre, Craig always professed maximalism. [...] Craig does not open doors only to the super-puppet, which he had been dreaming of, but to a superman of theatre – the director with an unlimited authority.[122]

Banu considered Craig to be the first totalitarian thinker of modern stage direction, because he was bent on concentrating all power into a single pair of hands. Craig insisted on strict discipline, total and lifelong devotion to theatre, and unconditional identification with the actor's duty that could even result in cutting family ties because the actor is a person who will "leave father, mother, houses, and lands if they stand in the way of his art."[123] The working regimen that Craig

☛ *The production of* The Same Boat: The Passion of Chirico Mendez. *Bread and Puppet Theatre, 1989. Written and directed by Peter Schumann.*

required is documented in the code of conduct of the acting school he founded in 1913 in Florence. The code did not allow students to express their opinions and demanded that students be discreet, quiet, and focused on their work. Furthermore, students could not talk about school activities, methods, employees, or results outside the school, nor could they enter schools of a similar kind. Students were also forbidden to give any information to the press or publish their own articles without the principal's consent.

These facts, along with Craig's notion of the actor as a super-puppet, indicate that the essence and objectives of his theatre were very close to theatre as a ritual: an ancient psycho-social-artistic phenomenon which originally had a religious function. For Craig, the modern stage director was a successor of the priest or shaman who, together with his actors, illuminates the audience with grand and eternal ideas and emotions. In the process, the audience takes part in a séance mediating spiritual messages of ancient civilizations. In this respect, Craig liked to refer to ancient Greece as well as the beginnings of Christianity.[124] Among other things, he spent much time preparing (but never accomplishing) a project about Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. A close analysis of the sketches of the screens – which epitomized Craig's ideas about the rhythmical operation of spatial objects and the strong effects of rays of light – clearly shows that Craig not only conceived of technical solutions of the stage space but also started creating new artificial worlds in which the actors of the theatre of the future were to perform riveting theatre rituals. Craig's spaces seemed to stop all movement, light would change to a pure glow, and the concentrated emotions were perfectly balanced in utter harmony and weightless before they were transformed to new ideas. If the integral part of any ritual is the cleansing of its participants, or as any dramatic work includes catharsis as part of its climax, then Craig's theatre, as expressed by his use of screens, is the same thing: the culmination of the previous stages of development and a return to the original form and a link to eternity. It is *über-theatre*. Craig simply saw no other way out of the crisis of the theatre of his time than an approximation to the divine. Let us say, therefore, that Craig was the first and greatest idealist of modern theatre.

He did not have many students of his own, and those that he did were his followers. This was partly because he occasionally acted like an eccentric. He did not talk using exact terminology, but metaphorically and in symbols instead. He demanded the impossible. He could be very sarcastic and often obscured the meaning of his words and visions. Perhaps it was because of this ambiguity that he became the subject of polemics. But as time went by, he gradually became the prophet of the new theatre. It seemed that directors, actors, and stage designers could only accept his initiative after some time, but the same could also be said about his contemporary Adolphe Appia. A new reaction to Craig's work appeared when theatre had spent itself and when the spark of interwar avant-garde had started to fade. In the late 1950s, Craig's theatrical approach was revived by theatremakers, which was a reminder of the ways he anticipated the progress in theatre. In the early twentieth century, Craig postulated ideas that were still valid when the century ended:

> Theatre art is neither the play of actors, nor text, direction, dance; it is made of a combination of elements these comprise: movement, which is the spirit of the play; words, which are the body of an idea; lines and colours, which express the existence of decorations; and rhythm, which is the essence of dance.[125]

Jacques Copeau got personally acquainted with Craig's opinions during his visit in 1915. A year later he also visited Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and became intrigued by his ideas as well. This opened a direct path to the dissemination of such reformation efforts in French theatre in the first half of the twentieth century. As a result, acting drew much more attention in Western theatre practice. The era of symbolism and naturalism was over. This resulted in the diminished importance of prima donnas and high-ranking actors, of clichés and exuberant costume designs, as well as of declamatory acting. This period heralded a return to the traditions of *commedia dell'arte*, the mime art of Paris boulevards, imaginative acting, movement, and dynamics.

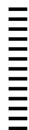
It is understandable that Craig's ideas served as the foundation for the twentieth-century development of puppet theatre and mime.

After all, these two theatre genres had the best means of expression to accomplish his vision. For puppetry, Craig became a prophet because he elevated the degraded art form to the highest possible pedestal of modern theatre: "For him, a puppet symbolized creativity, which was why his theory helped revive the puppet's importance."[126] Avant-garde theatre of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the new forms from the 1960s onwards, emphasized the possibility of connecting the actor and an inanimate puppet. This enabled the revival of theatrical sign language.

One of the most outstanding makers of large puppets was Peter Schumann. With his American company *Bread and Puppet* (established in New York in 1961 and residing on a farm in Vermont), Schumann made huge puppets that were several metres tall. Puppeteers would move them slowly and majestically. These puppets were reminiscent of Craig's super-puppets. For Schumann, theatre was not a commercial or experimental place, but a sacred place. He believed it should become something as necessary as our daily bread. Actors were not expected to aim for professional perfectionism. Their role was to penetrate into communities, where they performed during their long tours across the country, and to engage the audience during the performance, make them control the large puppets, and gently initiate their participation in creative action.

Craig might not have fully accomplished his ideas on theatre stages, but they had a long-lasting effect and created a momentum for future theatre schools in the twentieth century.

THE LIVING ART OF ADOLPHE APPIA



Adolphe Appia [1 September 1862, Geneva–29 February 1928, Nyon] did not have any acting training. He studied music and got acquainted with the opera works of Richard Wagner. He was so spellbound by Wagner's operas that he dedicated his life to them. He would personally go to Wagner's theatre in Bayreuth, was well acquainted with all of his operas and their productions in Europe, wrote knowledgeable studies about them.

Appia was convinced that Wagner elevated theatre art because he could ingeniously synthesize the poetry of words with the poetry of music – *Wortdrama* (drama in words) and *Tondrama* (music drama) – into a higher artistic form expressed in the term *Wort-Tondrama*. Appia referred to this form simply as "Wagnerian drama" and assumed, probably not quite correctly, that the foundations were laid for a new, supreme theatre genre that would be developed by other artists after Wagner. The greatest contribution of Wagnerian drama was that the composer created works of both unique musical form and dramatic prowess because he projected the poetry and music into the inner lives of the characters: "Wagner put in place a single principal reform. Using music, he could start dramatic action whose entire weight rested on the inner life of the heroes," Appia wrote.[127]

However, there was one complication. While Wagner innovated musical and dramatic art, and invented the *Gesamtkunstwerk* theory, the German stages produced operas in the traditional way using illusionary painted scenery in the pseudo-realist style and relying on static acting. This detracted from their overall impression. Having learned from Wagner's work, Appia set out to create a new style of production. In 1895 he published his book *Staging Wagnerian Drama*. He took advanta-ge of his knowledge about Wagner's art and used it against those who

interpreted Wagner on theatre stages. First and foremost, he focused his attention on the removal of the painted canvases that were not compatible with the poetic and dramatic tension of Wagner's operas, let alone the three-dimensional shapes of the performing singers. After the invention of the lightbulb by Thomas Alva Edison in 1879, Appia could design new types of stage lighting. He demanded that the old gas or candle lights placed around the proscenium be removed and that light be diffused from above to illuminate the silhouettes of the performers, while disrupting the secret illusion of badly lit set pieces and actors throwing long shadows towards the back of the stage. He also invented moving lighting using rays from spotlights.

The first stages of his reform, however, presented Appia with an obstacle from Richard Wagner himself. The art synthesis theory (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) turned out to be the main cause of the unsuitable approach to producing his operas. It was Wagner's notion of the collaboration of all arts that allowed the juxtaposition of two-dimensional and static-painted sets, the dynamic music, and the three dimensions of the actors' bodies. Appia, wanting to resolve this contradiction, rejected the *Gesamtkunstwerk* theory. As opposed to Wagner, who kept blending all art varieties into one whole, Appia set out on a quest for ways to connect their individual elements and forms. From among all the arts, for his theatre he chose only those that existed in time and space and were capable of movement. In Appia's view, Wagner's operas were naturally united by the music, which had a time dimension and could be spread in space. But in order for it to be projected into space, it needed an actor–singer. The central figure for Appia was a living, changeable, and temporally and spatially performing artist: the actor–singer. In this way, he introduced a regulatory principle into the art synthesis as well as a strictly defined and maintained hierarchy. From among the other

Adolphe Appia.

☛ *Adolphe Appia. Proposed set decoration of Richard Wagner's opera* Parsifal. *Act One.*

equal art forms, acting – and actors – went up to the very top of the pyramid. Appia even completely excluded some of them (e.g., painting) from theatre.

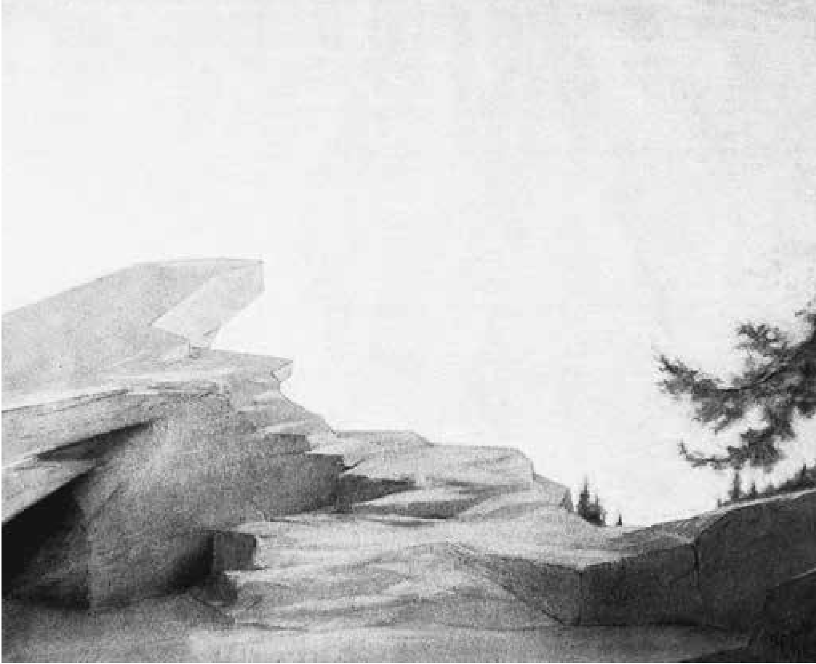
Appia's contemplations concerning Wagner's art became his launching pad for a "radical" (his favourite word) reform of direction, scenography, and acting. Appia used the late nineteenth-century period of painted canvases, flat decorations, and artiste-like singing as a symbolic gate to a new era. He emphasized the important role of the director, which made him one of the first theatremakers with enough foresight to lay the foundations of new art. For Appia, stage direction was primarily necessary in order to enforce the hierarchy; this could not be self-regulated and required the central authority of the director. In addition to direction, Appia underscored the importance of flexible scenography aimed at creating three-dimensional stage spaces – also made more vivid by electric lighting – in which the actor would become an authentic element of dramatic art.

A decisive moment for Appia's further development was his quite random 1906 meeting with Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, the pioneer of dramatic eurhythmics. What Appia might have sensed, and what he had written about before, suddenly emerged before his eyes as

something already existing and partly accomplished. Jaques-Dalcroze's eurhythmics considered the structure of dramatic expression determined mostly by music and acting (or the other way around), something which Appia called for in reference to Wagner's operas as something very natural. Appia's slightly visionary ideas could suddenly be realized. The collaboration of the two men enriched both of them. It is hard to say today who really influenced who, but Jaques-Dalcroze was clearly the more practical one and had been doing his training even before he met Appia. After the two met, he did not need to change his chosen path. He might have achieved what he did even without Appia's assistance. But it is also possible that he would have remained a practical music teacher like before, whereas having his path cross with Appia's brought him to higher aesthetic levels, which helped shape the principles of the art of theatre and the acting of that time.

In 1909, Appia drafted several scenographic models of "eurhythmic spaces". These included systems of ramps, inclined planes, columns,

☛ *Adolphe Appia. Proposed set decoration of Richard Wagner's opera* Parsifal. *Act Three.*



☛ *Adolphe Appia.* Valkyrie Rock.

stairs, and landings made of platforms. These structures allowed an interplay of shadow and light, where spotlight rays play an important role. The three-dimensional and purist theatre architecture, without any ornamentation, painting, or realistic details, was brought to life when a human – an actor – stepped on it to perform his role.

The stage acquired a human dimension. The focus on the actor came at a time when European society was witnessing a general emphasis on physical freedom, sport and tourism were developing, and the Olympic Games were being revived. The body was being liberated – also for hygienic reasons – from beneath the layers of clothing, corsets, and veils. The new era thus also became expressed in the theatre arts. Appia claimed:

> The body begins *to exist for the eye;* we begin to dress the body, rather than to cover it. [...] We feel our body underneath our clothing, and when we undress, we sense the anomaly in regarding as a precaution of morality (in this sense our morality is always sexual) what is merely a climatic necessity. [...] The result of all this is that the beauty

> of the human body is slowly tending to re-enter our society. [...] To be an artist is first of all not to be ashamed of one's body but to love it in all bodies.[128]

The best performer to interact with music, lighting, and rhythmical space was an actor-dancer, or an actor in movement theatre. Appia, assisted by Jaques-Dalcroze (or perhaps the other way around) studied the possibilities of physical stance, spatial movement, and the development of gestures used for communication. They wanted to eliminate the common gestures used by the actor and bind the movement of the body to music. Conversely, Appia wanted music to draw on real life:

> Unless music first receives life, it can give nothing living to the body. That is obvious. Hence, the body must deliver up its own life to the music, only to receive it anew, regulated, and transfigured. [...] The human body, if it voluntarily accepts the modifications that music demands, assumes the rank of a means of expression in art; it forsakes its life of caprice and of accident so that it may express, under the control of music, some essential characteristic, some important idea, more clearly and fully than in normal life.[129]

Adolphe Appia. Two set decorations for Richard Wagner's opera The Valkyrie. *Act Three* – The Beginning and Odin's Arrival.

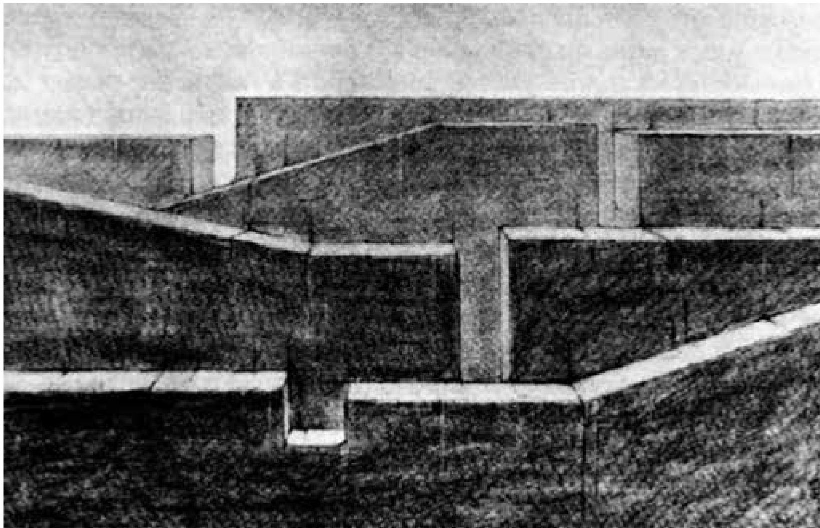
In order for the actor to be able to use his body to clearly render the required meanings, he needs support in the stage space and also often a resistance or counter-balance to give him an impetus for action. The moving, flexible, and reactive body has to be contrasted with stiff and unchangeable spatial arrangement set up in simple geometric lines. The actor might lean against a column, walk on the hard ground, crawl over immoveable cubes of stage platforms, or climb stairs; all of these actions make the space come alive. Appia created his stage design exactly for such purposes. The goal was not only to create some spatial arrangement but to also introduce the actor, whose job was to fill up the space and make it come alive. In line with Appia's theoretical postulations, scenography should always serve the actor; stage design would always be made for the actor and in the actor's interest. The decorative function of stage design was completely suppressed. Appia referred to such stage design as a "living space".

The exteriorization of music through the actor allowed Appia to search for ways to express music by using other elements of the theatrical synthesis. The rhythmical spaces were sometimes reminiscent of graphs recording the flow of music. A good example is a sketch of stage space entitled *Scherzo* (1910). It showed four parallel platform systems, like four little Great Walls of China, which were very similar to each other yet separated from each other. The platforms were either flat on top or inclined with interruptions and gaps in places. It was a structure waiting to be filled with the movement of dancing bodies. "Scherzo" refers to a musical form, "the happiest form of all, as long as it is based on unconventional repetition, various levels, and strong rhythmical figures."[130] The sketch did not include the dancers, but its arrangement inadvertently evoked them, allowing imaginative viewers to visualize them easily.

Appia's stage structures were not as monumental and static as Craig's famous screens. His aim was not just to prepare suitable conditions for movement, dance, and acting rhythm; he also wanted to provoke and prompt such actions onstage. The best example of this is stairs and staircases, which always evoke the feeling of movement and unrest. One cannot stand around on them because they are uncomfortable, yet they are also inspirational for all kinds of step variations.

While stairs and stairways had been parts of theatre stages since at least ancient amphitheatres, it was Appia who introduced the scenographic element of stairs as one of the fundamental components of space division. Stairs were meant to interconnect the different heights of the stage and allow for spatial connections, while also making the performances more dynamic and rhythmical, including all of their parts, which were led by the actor. This is why Appia is considered to be a pioneer in European theatre, and his ideas and concepts persisted without losing their vigour throughout the twentieth century.

Appia's sense for visual art found numerous fellow artists in contemporary ballet – not in its habitual expressivity, but in the work of excellent modern dancers such as Vaslav Nijinsky from Diaghilev's Russian Ballets and Isadora Duncan. Appia admired people who could move around with dignity; he observed naked male bodies with affection and watched female dancers from a respectful distance. He was a sensitive soul, a man who lived in seclusion without a wife. The world he believed in was the world of his theatrical dreams – visions he sustained with the consumption of intoxicating beverages.



Adolphe Appia. Scherzo, *1910. A spatial rhythmic vision. A synthesis of visual art and music.*

The living space he imagined would always be presented with the aid of light and colour: "Light is to space what sounds are to time – the perfect expression of life."[131] Appia realized the exceptional importance the invention of electric lighting had for the theatre. He knew that in the near future, when it was technically improved, lighting could become a pendant of music. Therefore, he used lighting to:

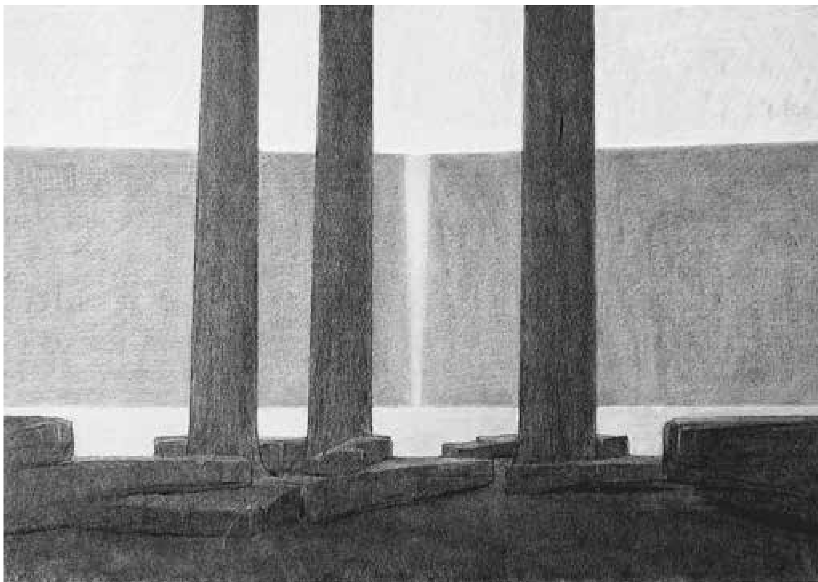
> emphasize the actor in the space, ensure the fusion of the individual visual elements of a performance, make the decoration unique, and help evoke dramatic atmosphere. A neutral backdrop, a few sideboards, bundles of light rays, light spots on the floor – that was all that was needed to evoke the image of a clearing in the woods. The shadow of a cypress cast onto the wall completed the decoration made by using inimitable elements. The light was capable of producing mental excitement, materializing moral differences between the characters and presenting their state of mind.[132]

Appia was the first to formulate the principles of "painting with light" in an attempt to go beyond the traditional painting of stage scenery. He began using colour filters, and, besides light, he also produced shadows as well as their density and direction. In the end, audiences would not see overly bright colours either onstage or on the actors' costumes. Appia's intention was to prioritize changeability, rhythmization, and the movement taking place in a colour-neutral environment of pastel hues. He de-individualized the actors' clothing, because he was not fond of realistic details and the costumes were ahistorical. This was around the time that cubism was paving its way through visual art, and Appia got very close to a new geometrical perception of space.

Appia and Jaques-Dalcroze developed the new principles of acting in the *Bildungsanstalt für Musik und Rhythmus* in Hellerau, Germany. The building in which the institute resided as well as its performance space were directly inspired by Appia's drawn or described principles. Appia's and Jaques-Dalcroze's desires became reality there. The theatre hall was thirty-three metres long, sixteen metres wide, and twelve metres high. One side featured steps for five hundred spectators and the other had a free space to build a stage, or stages, using standard

components such as stairs or curtains. There was no portal or division between the action and audience. Behind walls made of white cloth, delineating the hall's circumference while allowing light to pass through, there were thousands of electric bulbs creating an overall ambience and allowing rays of spotlights to pierce through.[133]

Appia and Jaques-Dalcroze felt free in this new theatrical space, which was variable and sufficiently extensive. Here they could realize their dreams of an organic unity of music, body, and space. Actors were required to produce spontaneous physical expressions and slowly assign gestures to words, not reciting the text but using it to perform. In 1921 Appia published the book *The Work of Living Art*, where he summarized all of his recent opinions on theatre. It was this book where he compared the actor to Robinson Crusoe on a desert island, a man who had forgotten to speak and only kept in his memory scenes of the distant past which, as he was unable to remember any spoken lines, he would express using his own body. The actor himself became his own library, symphony, poem, or fresco. He himself became art:



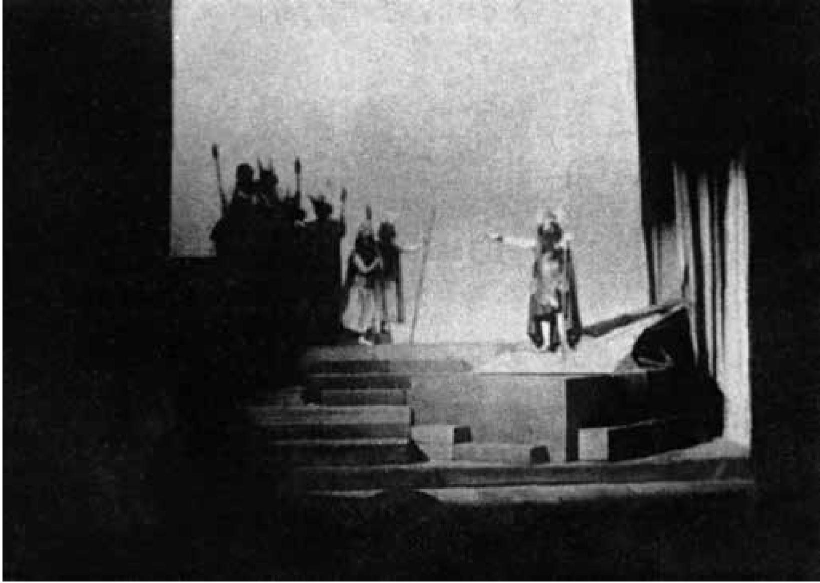
☛ *Adolphe Appia.* The Last Trees in the Forest, *1909. A rhythmic space.*

> And our eyes are opened at last: they see the step and the gesture that grew out of an inner feeling; they consider it. The hand is advanced this far, the foot is placed there; [...] It is not merely mechanically that we possess Space and are its center: it is because we are living. Space is our life; our life creates Space; our body expresses it. [...] There is no auditorium, no stage, without us and beyond us. There is no spectator, no play, without us, without us alone. We *are* the play and the stage, because it is our living body that creates them. Dramatic art is a spontaneous creation of the body; our body is the dramatic author.[134]

According to *The Work of Living Art*, Appia's actor does not present a dramatic character, does not transform into him or her, does not identify with the character, and does not interpret the character. The actor himself is art – there is no difference between the human and his or her work. This is what distinguished theatre from other art forms. It is the only art:

> whose existence is certain without spectators. Poetry must be read; painting and sculpture, contemplated; architecture, surveyed; music, heard. A work of dramatic art is lived: it is the dramatic author who lives it. A spectator comes to be moved or convinced; therein is the limit of his role.[135]

This brings us to the roots of why Appia arrived at the term "living art" – a term eponymous with the title of the abovementioned book. Appia admired Wagnerian drama and professed to it from the very beginning for its musical essence and beauty, but not because of the aesthetic justification of its creator. He deemed the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* incorrect, because the blending of arts simply based on assigning one form to another did not in fact exist and arts were interconnected differently in their mutual subordination and following a unifying principle of an actor being controlled by music. Living art was not limited to isolated individuals. Actors normally perform in a group and in front of an audience – that is what unites them:



☛ The Valkyrie, *1925*.

> Living art is social; it is, unconditionally, the social art. Not the fine arts lowered to a plane within the reach of all, but all rising to a plane within the reach of art: this is the ideal. This is merely repeating that living art will be the result of a discipline – a discipline which, though it may not affect all human bodies, will at least affect all human souls, through the awakening of bodily feeling.[136]

Appia dreamed about the stage and auditorium one day becoming a single space that would give rise to "performances in which the audience would take part, both in its musical aspect as well as the action."[137] He aspired to connect the actors with the spectators, imagining art that would be interwoven with life itself.

In his contemplations, Appia would increasingly search for more sizeable teams to be involved in theatre work: big audiences and large theatrical events. He may not have produced a great number of works in his lifetime, but he experienced one of the happiest moments of his career when he was able to collaborate with Jaques-Dalcroze and Firmin Gémier in 1914. The three artists prepared a magnificent production on a sixty-metre wide stage commemorating the anniversary of Geneva joining the Helvetic Confederation. Inspired by the Greek

arrangement of the stage and proscenium, Appia added stairs to give the space a rhythmical quality, offering the large audience remarkable sights set against the panorama of a lake.

His desire to achieve a flawless fusion of art and life surely had an aesthetic cause. Appia spent most of his life in an idealized and dream-like environment and had very little experience with everyday theatre operation or the various tastes of commercial and boulevard theatre audiences. This was why he could remain an idealist and his message could be so bright and poignant.

Some of his visions were translated in Hellerau production of Gluck's *Orpheus* in 1913 and then in 1923, when he was invited by Arturo Toscanini to collaborate on the production of *Tristan and Isolde* in La Scala in Milan. In Basel he did the stage design for Wagner's operas *The Rhinegold* (1924) and *The Valkyrie* (1925). His most influential production ideas, however, were those that were never executed; Appia only described them in his books or drew sketches, drafts, and scenographic plans. Unfortunately, not many of these plans were preserved. The radical reform of acting – advocated by Appia and later picked up by modern theatre – took place as if there had been a kind of blueprint for it. This is because Appia's concept of actors mostly included his own opinions about the other elements of theatre – especially stage design – as well as the role and importance of music, lighting, direction, and so on. It was like a plaster mould which had to be opened before a sculpture of the actor could be scooped out.

Appia became part of the great movement trying to revive the theatre. In some aspects, he was the primary source of inspiration while in others he was more of an admirer and part of a long list of various international networks of his time, nonchalantly summarized by Kazimierz Braun:

> Rodin makes a portrait of Duncan and Fuller. Fuller is friends with Duncan. Duncan asks Stanislavsky to invite Craig. (She is Craig's lover. They have a child.) Craig meets Appia. Appia has worked with Dalcroze for years. Dalcroze invites stage designer Appia to take part in a rehearsal of *Orpheus*. He also invites Diaghilev, with whom he then keeps in touch for many years. Diaghilev, a critic, uses his pen

to help Stanislavsky, before introducing Picasso to the theatre alongside Léger and Chagall as well as many other painters who did stage design for Lugné-Poe and Fort or programmes for Antoine. Antoine inspires Brahm. Antoine and Brahm inspire Grein. Grein promotes Shaw. Shaw promotes Ibsen. Ibsen inspires Hauptmann. Hauptmann inspires Andreyev. Andreyev is produced by Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky cooperates with Craig. Craig's interpreter is Sulerzhitsky. Sulerzhitsky teaches Pitoëff. Pitoëff meets Dalcroze. Dalcroze produces Claudel. Claudel inspires Lugné-Poe and Rouché. Rouché travels to meet Craig, Appia, Fuchs, Reinhardt, and Stanislavsky. He writes about their work for the readers in Paris. Craig visits Paris, and the Parisians visit Craig. He is visited by Rouché and Antoine. Leon Schiller introduces himself to Craig. Copeau travels to Florence to meet Craig. He also visits Dalcroze and Appia. In Paris he meets with Stanislavsky. Stanislavsky's guests in Moscow are Osterwa, Wysocka, Limanowski, and Szyfman. Stanislavsky visits Jouvet in Paris. Meyerhold is allied with Baty. Baty invites Meyerhold to be a visiting artist in his theatre in Paris. Jouvet and Dullin come to the premiere. Dullin used to be an actor working for Antoine, Rouché, Copeau, and Gémier. Gémier introduced Baty to the theatre. It was Fuchs who "infected" Baty with theatre. Fuchs influenced Reinhardt, who fascinated Rouché, who introduced Copeau to theatre work; Copeau taught acting to Jouvet and Dullin, who was the tutor of Barrault and Vilar.[138]

Émile Jaques--Dalcroze's Eurhythmics

The artist whose ideas and artistic practice made him most akin to Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig during their creative period was the Swiss teacher Émile Jaques-Dalcroze [6 July 1865, Vienna–1 July 1950, Geneva]. Even though Jaques-Dalcroze never got to collaborate with Craig on actual theatre productions, the Swiss theatremaker became the Englishman's artistic successor. Jaques-Dalcroze was more than just Craig's disciple or epigone because he achieved his concepts on his own, treading the path he chose when teaching music. Jaques-Dalcroze's concept was based on rhythm as the fundamental component of musical and, as he realized later, also physical expressivity. It was Appia who provided the strongest artistic impulse to him. After seeing the presentation of Jaques-Dalcroze's eurhythmics, Appia immediately realized that it can be an important tool of expression for both acting and music. But Jaques-Dalcroze was primarily a teacher of music, not a theatre director, which is why his training was mainly pedagogical and technical, not artistic. For theatre, though, such training was very inspirational despite the fact that it covered only a narrow section of the overall psychophysical theatre expressivity.

Émile Jaques-Dalcroze.

For his students in Geneva, where he worked at a conservatory, he started experimenting with the most efficient use of the *solfeggio*: a voice exercise without verbal text which was

☛ *Adolphe Appia's set in Hellerau built for a production of* Orpheus *by Christoph Willibald Gluck. Directed by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, 1912.*

aimed at improving the student's musical ear and intonation. After numerous attempts, he realized that students would master the voice exercises faster and better if they were connected with physical movements. "The mere *thinking of* a tune arouses in the throat the muscular movements necessary for its vocal emission," he wrote.[139] And so he began to train young actors in simple rhythmical gymnastics and rhythm exercises until he completed a comprehensive pedagogical system which he termed "eurhythmics". From then on, he quickly reached a point when he could train improvisation and stage art. The latter became an area of interest after meeting with Appia in 1906 as well as in 1911, when two sponsors made it possible for a theatre building to be constructed for Jaques-Dalcroze in Hellerau near Dresden. That very building would become the residence of his institute known as *Bildungsanstalt für Musik und Rhythmus*.

The construction of this "building for music and rhythm" was full of innovations; the theatrical space included one large hall without ramps or curtains but with a variable arrangement of the stage and auditorium instead. The interior also allowed for the creative lighting of any part of the space. Owing mostly to Appia's ideas and inspiration, the rectangular ground plan was designed so as to enable the required rhythmical movement of students and actors as well as the

☛ Rhythmic gymnastics. Flower bouquet. *1909–1910.*

rhythmical arrangement of the stage space. The organizing principle was to let the actor be the dominant element onstage with his own means of expression.

Initially, Jaques-Dalcroze assumed that his eurhythmics would be just a pedagogical course teaching students to physically express musical quality. However, as he worked more as a choreographer and director, he began developing his own theoretical and pedagogical concept. He was not impressed by classical acting or traditional ballet; he objected to their empty mannerism. He saw a potential revival in new movement and dance acting, which were not affected by the gracefulness of the body but rather by its rhythm. New acting was to be distinguished from static acting, which only imitated sculpture art, and was to aspire to be like a living sculpture of the body. This partly corresponded with Craig's views, even though his idea of the super-puppet was overly static and emphasized an aesthetic approach to movement. Jaques-Dalcroze considered movement to be a constantly changing bodily shape and not a sequence of restricted stances. For him, movement that was insufficiently fluid or interrupted, copying individual positions from Egyptian or ancient statues, vases, and paintings (i.e., movement that one could imagine with Craig's puppet actors) was movement that simply offended the eye. The only truthful and authentic movement was one that was constant, rhythmically

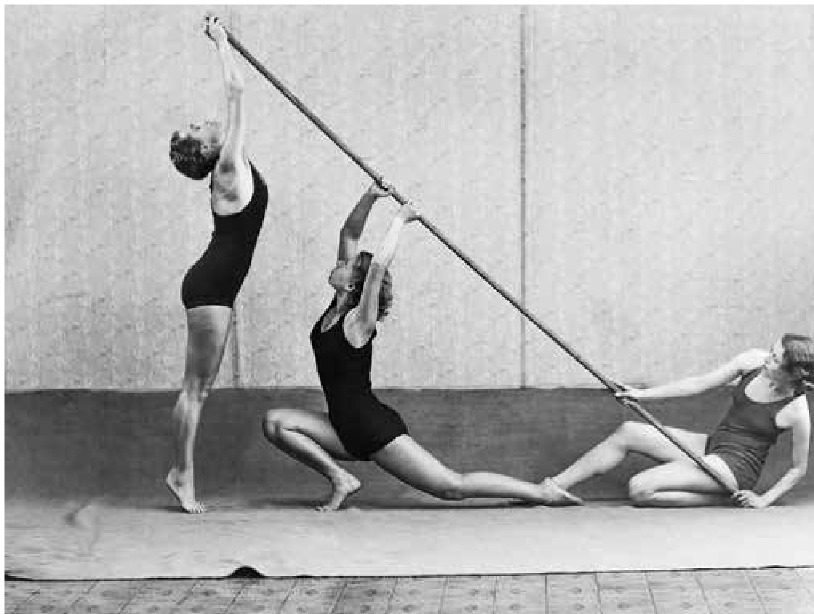
fixed, and characteristic for progressive and fluent changes of the sculpture of the body. Such sculpture was not the traditional ballet-like expression and embodiment of music; rather, it became the equivalent of music. It was the music of the body and was equally capable of expressing emotions.

Craig also valued the role of rhythm in a theatre performance and knew that it was one of the basics of the actor's physical speech. Craig's understanding of rhythm, however, was purely abstract, symbolist, and even mystical and dream-like. Jaques-Dalcroze, on the other hand, stressed the direct bond between rhythm and the body, and between music and a person's musical feeling. He imparted structured form onto movement without quelling its emotive content. He would say:

> Rhythmics aims at the bodily representation of musical values, by means of a special training tending to muster in ourselves the elements necessary for this representation – which is no more than the spontaneous externalisation of mental attitudes dictated by the same emotions that animate music.[140]

Jaques-Dalcroze was not interested in the aesthetic harmony of gesture and dance, like in traditional ballet schools,[141] but rather in achieving a special state that would help overcome obstacles and barriers and enable the blending of emotions and movement of the body. It turned out that music was not the primary source of rhythm, but that rhythm came from the essence of the human being and was present in every physical movement. Rhythm was dependent on basic bodily functions: breathing, the heartbeat, and even walking. So, despite the fact that Jaques-Dalcroze started his pedagogical contemplations in the genre of music, he ended up realizing that rhythm originates in a reverse process. All rhythmical elements derive from the rhythms of the human body:

> (1) Rhythm is movement. (2) Rhythm is essentially physical. (3) Every movement involves time and space. (4) Musical consciousness is the result of physical experience. (5) The perfecting of physical resources results in clarity of perception. (6) The perfecting of movements in time assures the consciousness of musical rhythm. (7) The perfecting



☛ Rhythmic gymnastics.

> of movements in space assures the consciousness of plastic rhythm. (8) The perfecting of movements in time and space can only be accomplished by exercises in rhythmic movement.[142]

The gauge of the whole world, including the musical and theatrical worlds, is the human being. However, this human has to be well prepared for the task of expressing the desired thought or emotion:

Rhythm-based education is focused mainly on developing in students psychophysical sensitivity, which will evoke a desire to externalize the musical rhythm they perceive and interpret it using all kinds of approaches while being aware of the relationship to the space, time, and weight of the body.[143]

> Rhythm is the basis of all vital, scientific, and artistic phenomena. It produces alike the element of order and measure in movement and the idiosyncrasies of execution. The study of rhythm conduces to the formation of an individuality for all purposes of life – that is, a manner of expressing oneself according to the rhythm most natural and native to one's being, which again is largely dependent on one's constitution, blood circulation, and nervous system.[144]

Jaques-Dalcroze summarized his ideas in order to allow for an easier understanding of the similarities and differences of music and the moving plastic. He did not necessarily refer to theatre, but rather to his training procedures. If these procedures applied to theatre, this was all the better because his pedagogical practice thus acquired a broader artistic dimension. The means of expression used in music correspond to the means of expression used by actors:[145]

MUSIC	**MOVING PLASTIC**
Pitch	Position and direction of gestures in space
Intensity of sound	Muscular dynamics
Timbre	Diversity in corporal forms (the sexes)
Duration	Duration
Time	Time
Rhythm	Rhythm
Rests	Pauses
Melody	Continuous succession of isolated movements
Counterpoint	Opposition of movements
Chords	Arresting of associated gestures (or gestures in groups)
Harmonic successions	Succession of associated movements (or of gestures in groups)
Phrasing	Phrasing
Construction (form)	Distribution of movements in space and time
Orchestration (*vide* timbre)	Opposition and combination of diverse corporal forms (the sexes)

When programming the rhythmic training, Jaques-Dalcroze focused on several interconnected areas. They can be summed up in sixteen points which constitute the basic areas of his pedagogical work, In some way, they are remotely reminiscent of Vsevolod Meyerhold's biomechanical études, however, their affinity is not with the theatre stage, and there is not even a short minimal plot. But they are desig-

ned for the gym, which can potentially be transformed into a theatre stage, as was the case with the hall in Hellerau:

1. Exercises involving short and long breathing, disjointed and continuous movement connecting the human body as a whole with abdominal, costal, and pectoral inhalation.
2. Orchestration of body movement: studying various ways in which movement can be induced, prepared, combined, completed, and then re-started. Relationships between movements of the upper body, the chest, and the head with the lower extremities as well as overall body stances. Studying the various dynamics thereof.
3. Studying impassioned and poetic action in all its nuances and their mutual support as well as its obstacles.
4. Studying what flows directly from the body in order to create a feeling of naturalness and psychophysical harmony.
5. Counterpositions of lines (direct, curved, irregular), their development, branching out, contrasts, specifications, and architecture.
6. Transfers of body weight for longer or shorter periods of time. The role of space in the shaping of gestures. Exercises on a flat surface, in a tiered space, and studying the relationships between temporal duration and the energy of the space. Spatial obstacles: columns, walls, staircases.
7. Relationships between dance and music, words, and light. Phrasing. The relationships between metrics and rhythmics of various degrees of physical elasticity, which is perceived as a uniting element. Accents and ornaments. The basic tasks of the individual elements of the body and controlling them (head: big regulator; shoulder: barometer of feelings; upper limb: mediator of strong emotions; arms: commentators of thoughts, etc.). Arrangement and disarray.
8. Starting positions for movements (a gesture can start in the elbow, shoulder, or by bending the knees, etc.). Studying centripetal and centrifugal gestures, and their connection and disconnection.
9. Bending, twisting, extending, lifting, and looping in all their various consequences and contradictions.
10. Moments just before and just after a movement.
11. Relationships between the colouring of tones and the various movement expressions.
12. Continuous movement of the body in space and while walking.

Combinations of *legato* and *staccato* in the shoulders or arms, skips and jumps, movements of the torso, shoulders, head, etc. Alternating the movement of lower and upper extremities (circles, spirals). Positions taken following a jump.

13. Nuances of dynamics and agogics, crescendo and decrescendo, accelerating and decelerating. Accents. Canons and nuances.

14. Musical and plastic phrasing. Stopping a movement. Punctuation and breathing. Punctuation and gesticulation. Studying interruptions and silence.

15. Rules of crowd scenes. Dynamic and spatial value. Studying various ways of connecting points in space. Combinations of even and tiered surfaces. Transfers of body weight. Movements of upper and lower extremities in relation to space. Opposition of soloists and groups. Muscle feelings and their influence on the art of collective creation. Studying relationships between space, energy, and time. Spatial obstacles, columns, walls, staircases, screens, etc. Group direction.

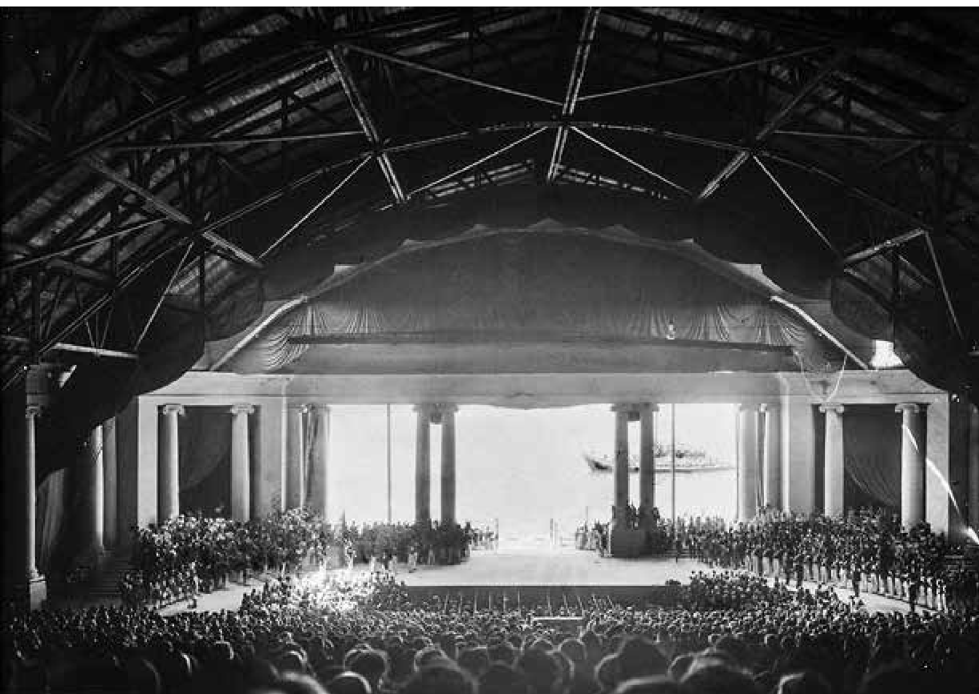
16. Polymetrics and polyrhythmics. Orientation and disorientation of movement.[146]

Because Jaques-Dalcroze wanted his students to be well prepared in line with the above principles to stage a moving plastic, i.e., the living art of acting organized by eurhythmics and expressing unrestrained

☛ *Timing the movement.*

emotions, reflections, and ideas straight from the essence of humanity, he had to use the exercises to develop two areas in particular: (1) dynamics, i.e., training the transformations of the used strength, and (2) agogics (division of time), i.e., nuances and speed changes. In order to ensure the wholeness of the exercises, these two areas of acting art were also linked to exercises of orientation in space and the actor's ability to segment the space and find expression within it. The actor would do dynamic exercises to train his muscles' contraction and decontraction in his whole body as well as in individual organs; he would learn to maintain balance, relax the muscles, and keep the body flexible. This all accompanied a development of the actor's nervous system which controlled the changes in dynamics. Agogics were acquired by actors mostly because the human voice was capable of interpreting sounds in all pitches and lengths better than anything else. The ability of the entire body to orientate in space when moving on the stage should be natural for the actor and should offer infinite variations. Like an exquisite musical instrument, the human body can express various lengths of movement as light limbs move at a fast pace and heavy limbs at a slow pace. Acceleration, deceleration, and stopping as well as various kinds of rhythm, including polyrhythmics, are all achievable and technically manageable by the human body. The point of all rhythmic exercises and rhythm-based gymnastics was to become aware of natural physical rhythms. Students were expected to find these in themselves automatically. Once they could, their task was to finalize the rhythms in their brains and then use them in performances onstage.

Jaques-Dalcroze also envisioned a series of physical drills to learn how to create meaning at the moment of transition from one stance to the next. All kinds of variations were rehearsed, but it could be rightfully doubted whether his extensive career as a teacher and director was long enough to cover at least a fraction of the entire set of variations. Although he mentions a set of drills of physical stances, he never specifies the individual drills. There is an infinite number of them. The actual body stances trigger the actor's movement across the stage, the ways and types of his walk, the movement forward and backward, various positions against imagined spatial points, and



☛ *Celebrating Geneva's accession to the Swiss Confederation. Written and directed by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, stage set by Adolphe Appia (1914).*

other expressions of the live flexibility of his body. It ought to be mentioned here that the same issues were also addressed at around the same time by Rudolf von Laban, an eminent choreographer and dance theorist who became known as the author of the system of the graphic recording of movement.

The exercises were done so as to fully cover all of the actor's means of expression in the given space. The training techniques focused on the time aspect of the actor's action, which was integrated with the spatial aspect. The techniques included, for example, seeking relationships between the opposing muscle groups initiating a movement, trying to find balance and time–space stability, and focusing on gestures that would not be too fast or too slow, thus keeping the tension (crescendo) on the one hand and the relaxation (decrescendo) of muscles on the other. Emphasis, pressing on a musical instrument, which in acting becomes a physical accentuation, and its gradual intensification (crescendo) is often easier to do than the subsequent releasing of pressure, detachment, and weakening of the emphasis

(decrescendo). The actor has to practice this as tenaciously as a musician. The required unity of movement, uninterrupted in a series of stances, was achieved by phrasing the movement. In music, phrasing means dividing a unit into elements that justify each other, thus giving the phrase a comprehensive meaning. The same applies to the plasticity of the movements of the body. Jaques-Dalcroze extended the search for a time dimension and its rhythmization through an individual's human body by also expressing rhythm through a set of human bodies in space. This was achieved by movements in which the bodies were moving away from one another (decrescendo) and then getting closer and creating denser figures (crescendo), as if they were contracting and relaxing muscles.

Starting with partial rhythm exercises, the training would proceed to training chains of gestures which expressed not only abstract meaning, "the music" of the body, but also specific actions. Jaques-Dalcroze maintained his focus on the importance of the aesthetic value of each plastic gesture. For Jaques-Dalcroze, all-embracing coordination among several actors did not constitute extension, but rather orchestration of human movement, which for him was equal to composing music: "The marching, running, and dancing to fugues of Bach will not constitute a *lèse-majesté*."[147] If a body influenced by music is soaked with rhythm and its nuances, the moving plastic will become a total work of art and will be self-sufficient. According to Jaques-Dalcroze, rhythm was the essence of all arts, even of an entire society. Jaques-Dalcroze's opinion, integrating art and society, intersected with Craig's early notions of the super-puppet as well as with Meyerhold's later revolutionary ideas about the necessity to organize people in society, work, and art. Jaques-Dalcroze expressed his view as follows: "[O]nce society is properly trained, from school upwards, it will itself feel the need for expressing its joys and sorrows in manifestations of collective art, like those of the Greeks of the best period."[148] Appia was of the same opinion when he wrote about the *Fête de Juin* in Geneva in 1914.

Unlike Appia, Jaques-Dalcroze was not content with just structuring the stage. He also made rhythm by unifying the foundation of the characters' actions. However, Jaques-Dalcroze was convinced that unity could not be automatically achieved by solely blending arts in

a work of opera, where the different art forms exist next to each other. He believed it was necessary to make every sound and every rhythm of music and of words find its expression of movement in the body of an actor or singer as the protagonist. In other words, every state of the soul expressed in sound had to also present itself in a physical attitude as a stance that was characteristic for it.

In addition to the institute in Hellerau, where in 1913 Jaques-Dalcroze produced the ballet *Orpheus* based on Christoph Willibald Gluck's interpretation of it, an important impetus also reached French theatre. This was mostly owing to Paul Claudel's fervour, who produced *The Tidings Brought to Mary* (1913) in Hellerau. Several artists confirmed being inspired by eurhythmics, above all Firmin Gémier as well as Charles Dullin and Georges Pitoëff, the future members of the Cartel. Jaques-Dalcroze organized the abovementioned *Fête de Juin* in Geneva together with Appia and Gémier as a grandiose production. For him, the most important aspect was this: "The lyric parts of my work were interpreted by two hundred rhythmic students, entrusted with the plastic expression of the orchestral and choral symphony on a flat surface, tiers, and monumental staircases."[149] He also admitted the sources of his inspiration:

> Adolphe Appia first gave me the idea of evolutions on a staircase and the Russian painter Salzmann designed for my exercise a highly ingenious set of units, whereby a whole series of practicable staircases could easily and speedily be constructed. Distinguished producers such as Reinhardt, Granville-Barker, and Gémier came later to adopt our methods, but only Gémier appears to me to have utilised them to really vital effect.[150]

THE ACTOR OF SEVERAL ARTS

Gradually acting would also become part of artistic productions that transcended the boundaries of the theatre. This was only natural; after all, theatre art involves acting and embraces visual, musical, and literary elements. Actors performed in various types of theatre experiments, which would then be transformed into visual experiments, happenings, or performance art. In such artworks, actors became part of vivid live images that drew on the concepts of interconnecting living humans with inanimate visual artefacts. Such productions were organized either by visual artists and architects or by theatremakers and performers who were looking for new forms of their art, for example, by linking a person to a puppet or to a large mask. Often, these were isolated and short-lived attempts, sometimes only unfulfilled visions published in manifestos. Usually, they reacted to what was happening in other art forms, groups of artists, and movements, which were given apt names: symbolists, expressionists, futurists, Dadaists, surrealists, Bauhaus, the theatre of the absurd, happenings, postmodernism, and so on. But in terms of what is being discussed here, these discontinuous initiatives did not provide acting with any decisive momentum that would bring about innovative possibilities for modern acting. Nonetheless, their provocative power helped them become landmarks in the history of theatre and part of its repository of inspiration sources.

In the early twentieth century, futurists put up their hands with much drive, verve, and many startling statements. They rejected traditional theatre and wanted to bury psychologism as such. Their request was for stage action to meet the demands for dynamic movement as one of the fundamental categories of the new world. If a live person could not accomplish this, he should be replaced with a machine. After all, machines were much more powerful and productive, and – the

futurists believed – even had aesthetic value. Machines were beautiful. For actors, these futurist ideas meant that they had to compete with machines. This, of course, required exceptional physical abilities, gymnastic power, and playfulness. Or they could face a future similar to the fate of mechanical puppets. The actors were expected to submit to the machinery of the stage environment controlled by technology. The actor was supposed to perform alongside automatons or react to sparks of electrical light and the noise of engines. The second futurist theatre manifesto took its cue from Music Hall: "Variety theatre was born simultaneously with electricity and has remained, fortunately, unburdened by conventions, old masters, and dogmas. It lives in ethereal topicality."[151] In variety theatre, there was no room for stagnation because all actors had to come up with new surprises and evoke astonishment. Variety used machines and film projection. It preferred caricature, mime, and bizarre acts. It introduced a new language of lights, sounds, and noises, elaborating abstract forms and prototypes.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, one of the central figures of Italian futurism, proposed that theatre fight against diverse forms of psychologism:

> (1) against the obsolete scientific–documentary psychologism; (2) against the Parisian semi-futurist, fragmentary, effeminate, and equivocal

☛ *The futuristic production* The Merchant of Hearts*, 1927. Visual project by Enrico Prampolini.*

> psychologism (Proust); (3) against the Italian psychologism with its uncouth, lawyer-like, heavy-footed, moralizing, professorial, and pedantic funeral analyses, as well as against life and the dreaming of age-spent relatives of Hamlet and their "To Be Or Not To Be", and against philosophical dialogue without any distinctive synthesis or movement which pretends to be futurist.[152]

Marinetti stressed that the new form of futurist theatre required "tactical, muscular, sportsmanlike, mechanical synthesis without any psychology."[153]

It must be difficult to imagine how such statements could have become the foundation of any comprehensive system of acting technique and practice; futurist productions were performed with visual artists and non-actors, were very brief, and their reception was often tumultuous. There were times when the provoked audience showered the performers with tomatoes and obscenities. In the productions, humans became objects, and objects sprang to life. The unity of the plot was lost because the plot would take place in parallel lines, expressing modern times but lacking mental depth. Enrico Prampolini, also a representative of futurism, discarded traditional acting because it divided its dynamic human element from the static element of the environment. Therefore, both elements had to be fused in one "living stage synthesis by means of theatre action."[154] The actor and the stage would merge.

In addition to visual concepts, futurists began developing stage speech and presentation. In accordance with their convictions, language was freed from grammar rules, and no attention was paid to spelling and flawless typography. The texts the futurists wrote were often miniature sketches with peculiar plots that were sometimes hard to decipher and contained ambiguous messages. Marinetti, who despised every form of imitating the reality of life, declared the programme *Parole in libertà* (Words in Freedom) and demanded from the actors onstage a "dynamic and synoptic declamation":

> Imagine that one of your friends [...] finds himself in a zone of intense life (revolution, war, shipwreck, earthquake, etc.) and then gets to tell you about his impressions. [...] First and foremost, his

☛ *Oskar Schlemmer:* Triadic Ballet*, 1922.*

> talk will ruthlessly destroy syntax. He will not lose time to construct sentences. He will not care about punctuation or correct positions of adjectives. He will not pay attention to polishing or nuancing his speech, but will breathlessly and hastily attack your nerves with his visual, aural, and olfactory perceptions instead, just as they force themselves onto him. The unbridled nature of his emotions, like the pressure of steam, will blow apart the pipe of the sentence, shoot out the valves of punctuation and the regulatory screws of adjectives. It will spew out a multitude of the most precious words without any conventional order. The only care of the speaker will be to express all of the vibrations of his self.[155]

Futurist manifestos and declarations (the first manifesto was published in 1909) gradually became manifest. Artistic companies were established which roamed the country presenting the quintessence of the futurist artistic programme. It was typical for them to produce compressed and short scripts, called *sintesi*, which were based on brief dialogues, absurd situations, and plots which were bold and provoked the petit bourgeois audiences as well as traditionalist reviewers. The excitement in Italy did not go unnoticed abroad. It received a strong response in Russia from such an important theatremaker as Vsevolod Meyerhold. His biomechanics had much in common with the futurist concept of art and the world. Edward Gordon Craig also found similarities between his views and the futurists' ideas, mainly when

he was conceiving his ideal of the super-puppet. Craig also desired to free acting from personality fixations and psychological burdens, and wished to perfect the form and turn it into an ideal akin to Marinetti's well-working machine. Craig's super-puppet might have still resembled a human being rather than a machine, but the common ground he found with the futurists was confirmed when his journal *The Mask* published the futurist manifesto in 1913.

The action perimeter of the futurists was diminished in the 1920s and got replaced by new theatre initiatives. The inspiration that initially came from Craig and Jaques-Dalcroze was later developed by Oskar Schlemmer, a painter and a member of the Bauhaus movement in Germany. As part of the functionalist theatre there (*die Bauhausbühne*), Schlemmer – enchanted by the modern times and its machines, mass production, and industrialization – composed his *Triadic Ballet* in 1922. This was performed by three actors – two men and a woman – whose dance movements were strictly defined by the laws of geometry:

> Alternating one, two, and three in shape, colour and movement was designed to use planimetry to create dance areas and a stereometry of moving bodies with such spatial dimensions that ought to ensue from a focus on elementary basic forms, such as a straight line, diagonal, circle, ellipse, and their mutual connections.[156]

The *Triadic Ballet* contained a lot of joy from movement, colours, and costumes – which were also made of geometric shapes and used new materials such as aluminium, celluloid, Plexiglas, and so on. Like the other Bauhaus artists, Schlemmer did not address the issue of actors' training despite the fact that the theatremakers László Moholy-Nagy and Lothar Schreyer also presented their theatre projects. The vocational school's goal was to train visual artists, designers, and architects. In the *Triadic Ballet*, however, it presented a special element, namely, a version of the actor as a mechanical puppet: "The effort to liberate man from the conditions that tie him down, to accelerate the freedom of his movement above a natural degree led to using an artificial, mechanical figure in place of a human body, using an automaton and marionette."[157] This approach bridged the gap between a live human being and visual art material.

In the second half of the twentieth century, a significant acting movement was driven towards an increasingly stronger engagement in social and political life. Already in the early decades of the twentieth century, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Brecht had aspired to become important personalities of their time. They wanted to achieve this directly from the stage. However, this was a slow and gradual process that over the course of many years led to the breaking of the conventional invisible barrier between the stage and the auditorium. At first it became a popular thing with theatre innovators and provocateurs, artists who liked attacking the audience, such as futurists or Dadaists. Later on, though, the barrier was broken even in projects that were approaching the issue differently: two worlds – stage scenes and reality – were joined and blended into one whole. More precisely, the stage and all the action on it would interfere with reality, and, conversely, reality would settle on the stage.

From 1916 to 1919, the Dadaist Cabaret Voltaire in Zürich, and later also the Dadaism that expanded to Germany and France, concentrated the creative–destructive powers of such personalities as Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Francis Picabia, Roger Vitrac, and their successive generation of surrealists such as André Breton, Philippe Soupault, and Louis Aragon. This list also has to include perhaps the most famous theatremaker among them, the actor and director Antonin Artaud. Another offshoot of this movement was the Autant–Lara duo (Edouard Autant and Louise Lara). The Dadaist theatre disrupted the traditional concept of a production:

> One no longer goes to the theatre to humbly sit in the auditorium and listen, and two or three hours later get up and leave in the same way one came there. The audience now has to feel dragged in; there has to be a chance for them to accept things or protest, as much as they wish to participate. However, they should never consider themselves to be outside of the performance unfolding in front of them, because it is life, their life.[158]

The Dadaist, and later the surrealist, programme did not leave much room for issues of acting art as such. The goals of the movement were

☛ *The opera* Einstein on the Beach*, 1976. Directed by Robert Wilson.*

better met with the use of words, poetry, literature, and its pamphlets despite the fact that the spoken words were disarrayed, in disrupted bonds, with an illogical setup, and subject to subconscious associations rather than rational arrangement. In spite of all this, Dadaism was born in the theatre.[159] Nevertheless, several years had to pass before its inspirations could be translated into stage forms. As will be demonstrated later, Artaud had to overcome a lot of obstacles in creating a handful of productions of this kind (which were challenged anyway). His ideas were acknowledged only posthumously. They started influencing theatre art only from the 1960s on. Reflections of Dadaism and surrealism can later be found in the theatre of the absurd, or in the works by Tadeusz Kantor, a visual artist and author of happenings, and the director and leader of the Cricot 2 company. Formal schools encouraged the direction of Robert Wilson,[160] an American who also found inspiration in Brecht.

In the last three decades of the twentieth century, postmodern theatre saw the blending of the traditional and alternative theatre. Richard Foreman and his Ontological-Hysteric Theater, established in New York in 1968, made use of the surrealist message. In acting, however, he got rid of all emotions and reduced it to minimalist proportions. He did not eschew Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* but mostly

focused his attention on purifying the stage image and gesture as the overall formal aspect of theatre. For Foreman, form was a tool to express an estranged world, introspective in dreamy visions that were at times soothing and calming while at other times explosive and traumatizing. The productions used fragmented composition and presented irrational actions that followed senseless directions accompanied by sudden and loud noises of strings, sirens, and bells. Again, these had no meaning, just like a voice played from a magnetic tape along with the real voices of actors whom Foreman directed to speak in a quiet and civil manner. Time would stop and start again.

In postmodernist times, the trend was to mix arts, forms, styles, and approaches in order to resist any attempts to categorize or organize. It was a trend making references to everything that had ever emerged in art. Július Gajdoš commented on this trend as follows:

> While modernism erased forms to get to the essence of things, postmodernism deliberately linked genres, styles, forms, originals, and copies, creating combinations thereof as a presentation of a very complex culture. As opposed to realism and modernism, postmodernism does not distinguish high culture from mass culture, because it lacks a metaphysical perspective. Copeland juxtaposed art projects and artistic cooperation between various genres in the 1970s to the "poor theatre" of the 1960s. For him, it was the kind of theatre that could be dubbed in a new manifesto, *Towards a Rich Theatre*. The joint art projects included cooperation between Merce Cunningham and John Cage; Robert Wilson and Heiner Müller; Richard Foreman, Kathy Acker, and Mel Gordon while working on the opera *The Birth of a Poet*; and the early collaboration between Robert Wilson and Philip Glass on the opera *Einstein on the Beach*. Postmodernism thus became a type of cultural supermarket in which the artwork of a diverse selection of artists could be viewed: from Andy Warhol, through MTV, Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, and Robert Wilson all the way to Karen Finley.[161]

The actor diminishes in the visual- and direction-focused form and becomes a colourful point onstage, a note in an orchestra of sounds, a provocateur of the audience, and a puppet in the hands of the director.

THE DRAMATIC AND LUDIC ACTOR

Jacques Copeau and the Actor on a Naked Stage

One of the people who helped shape twentieth-century acting was a man who started out as literary author, theatre critic, and journal editor. At the age of thirty-five, he founded a theatre and established an acting school as part of it. His name was Jacques Copeau [4 February 1879, Paris–20 October 1949, Beaune]. When the new theatre opened in 1913, it was named for the street where it resided – Vieux-Colombier.

Before the establishment of the theatre, Jacques Copeau had made theatre only once. Together with Jean Croué, he dramatized Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, which was produced by Jacques Rouché in his Théâtre des Arts in Paris in 1911. The production received a great response. The young Charles Dullin, who later became Copeau's actor, performed the role of Smerdyakov. Copeau was a writer with a literary background whose preparation for the start of his theatre involved him publishing the theatre's programme and goals. A few months prior to the first premiere, Copeau published his "Essay on Dramatic Renewal" in the journal *Nouvelle Revue Française*, where he was the editor-in-chief.

Though the aims were formulated very generally, it became clear how ambitious his plans were. Copeau put together the newly established theatre's acting ensemble from among young, independent actors who were enthusiastic and fully devoted to dramatic art. He rejected the contemporary Paris acting style and the commercial theatre of the boulevards, which relied on star actors and actresses yet lacked distinct directors and suffered from employing untrained and unprepared actors. He referred to such decimated acting as "cabotin" –

☛ *Jacques Copeau.*

the style of dabbling actors.[162] In order to improve the low-quality theatre scene, Copeau highlighted the importance of having an acting school affiliated with the new theatre. His goal was to get together young people, even children, to interact with older actors – of course, only those who had not yet succumbed to the mannerisms of boulevard theatre. For Copeau, the ethical was interconnected with the aesthetic. His actors were expected to use simple and straightforward means of expression. They should under no circumstances be allowed to even try to cajole the audience to like them at the expense of their fellow actors, nor should they try to act superior. Copeau imagined an ideal of collective acting in which the actors would live for a common goal and be utterly dedicated to theatre. All actors were required to submit their talents to the common work.

Hand in hand with such resolutions, Copeau presented his ideas about the repertory of the new Vieux-Colombier theatre as well as about its scenography and other technical and organizational matters. The theatre's programme was strongly inclined to artistic simplicity, almost a kind of ascetism. As Copeau put it, in contrast to several other contemporary theatremakers in France (or more generally in Europe), he never wanted to achieve a radical change in theatre. He did not wish to break it into pieces like Edward Gordon Craig. Copeau's

vision was to work as if in a laboratory, that is, to enjoy quiet working conditions as he needed:

> We do not feel the need for revolution. [...] We do not believe in the realness of such aesthetic formulas which are born and die every month in tiny chapels, and whose heroism is mostly based on ignorance. We do not know what the theatre of tomorrow will be like. We are not prophesying anything. However, it is our task to stand up against all the wickedness of contemporary theatre. The foundation of the Vieux-Colombier is the foundation of a house for the talents of tomorrow.[163]

When applying his founding principles, Copeau was very demanding both on himself and on his collaborators.

The permanent stage setting and the naked stage

For a better understanding of Copeau's contribution to the revival of acting, we have to look first – perhaps paradoxically – at stage design and architecture. From the beginning it was obvious that Copeau wanted to pay extra attention to scenography and architecture, spending a lot of money as well as time in organization. He would always take great care to thoroughly reconstruct the halls of his theatre. In the first theatre building, on Vieux-Colombier Street, he removed the Baroque-like decorative features in the auditorium. He shielded the side boxes to create a compact space which would not discriminate the spectators. Above all, he focused on the stage. He covered the orchestra pit, creating a new proscenium which put the performers closer to the front row of the audience. Copeau also removed the portal and lighting ramp to minimize the boundary between the world of theatrical illusion and reality. He simplified the entire disposition of the stage, creating straightforward lines and getting rid of all hidden spaces. He had strong lighting installed to avoid unnatural semitones and shadows, and to make the actors clearly visible. Copeau repeated this approach during his two-year stint at the Garrick Theatre in New York (1917–1919) and upon his return to Paris after the end of World War I, when he revived the Vieux-Colombier theatre (1920–1924). There

☛ *The auditorium of the Vieux-Colombier theatre following its 1919 reconstruction done according to Jacques Copeau's ideas.*

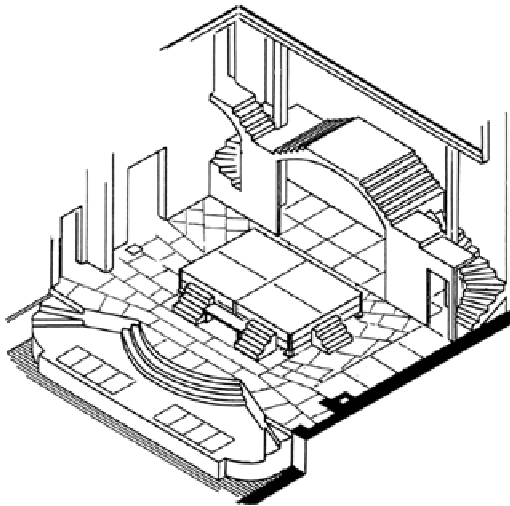
was something stubborn in his approach of demanding renovations to the three theatre buildings mentioned above, which followed one after the other. But this was a self-destructive tactic for Copeau. The construction works cost way too much money and resulted in a reduced seat capacity; in the end, Copeau's theatre could seat fewer than five hundred people which, in turn, negatively affected the theatre's income.

The most important effort made by this French theatre visionary involved his new arrangement of the stage. Inspired by Shakespearian theatre, he took a purifying and simplifying approach. During the tour of the Vieux-Colombier in New York, Copeau and Louis Jouvet created an invariant stage design that was reminiscent of the basic disposition of Elizabethan theatre. At the back of the stage, they placed an elevated construction with a kind of balcony. Two stairways twined around it from two sides. The fore of the stage featured an empty space with a cement floor protruding into the auditorium. There was no stage machinery or gadgets and no hoists with decorations. Copeau called this fixed arrangement a "permanent stage setting" (*dispositif fixe*). In his productions, he would complement the particular composition

with hints of light decorations and curtains. In addition, he would position a wooden platform frontstage with three to four steps leading to it from all four sides. It was reminiscent of the performances of market comedians who were popular in Europe during the Italian Renaissance. Copeau referred to the elevated performance space as "the naked stage" (*tréteau nu*) because there was literally nothing there apart from the actors. The theatre also used this wooden stage platform during outdoor performances on city squares.

Copeau always worked on projects with his actors. Jouvet was the closest to him; indeed he was his right-hand man, a stage manager, actor, and later also a director, co-author, and co-executor of all the renovations of the Vieux-Colombier. Copeau's intentions were also inspired by Jaques-Dalcroze's eurhythmics, because the rhythm he assigned to the spatial arrangement of the Vieux-Colombier had to harmonize with the rhythm of the acting. He found common ground with Adolphe Appia, accepting his ideas about the connection of music, acting, and stage space. He liked the focus on eliminating the boundary between the stage and the audience. Appia tried to convince him that dramatic art ought to be made into one whole, in which the auditorium would blend with the stage, the audience with the performers, and that the ceremonial character of what was called performance should be suppressed.

Neither of these two cases, however, brought authentic dramatic unity between the auditorium and stage. No fusion between ac-

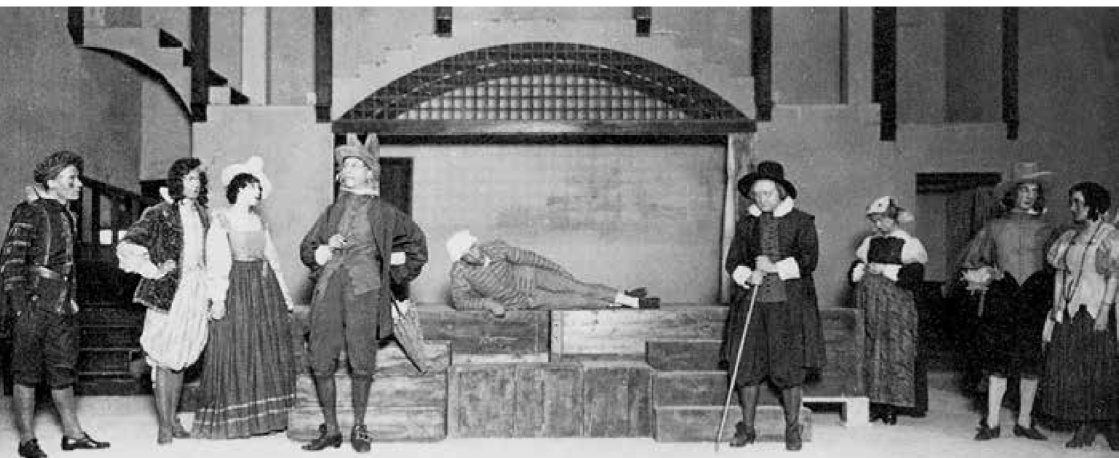


A sketch of Vieux-Colombier with a permanent stage. The front section features a naked stage.

tors and spectators in a work of art took place like they would later in the twentieth century, such as at happenings. Copeau's art still separated the fictitious world onstage and the real world beyond it. In contrast, Appia's ideas were already taking a different path; in *The Work of Living Art* (1921) he imagined actors interconnected with the audience. He proposed that the audience and the actors get closer to each during the performance as well as during intermissions. The idea was that the spectators should be able to freely move around between the stage and the stalls in the fashion customary in circuses, when people used the interval to have a look at the animals and the caravans next to the circus tent, possibly bumping into the heroes of the suspenseful performances and seeing the acrobats in plain clothes. The theatre that became the closest to Appia's notions at the end of the twentieth century was Ariane Mnouchkine's famous Théâtre du Soleil. Spectators coming to the Parisian Cartoucherie, where her theatre resided, could also have a peek backstage and observe the actors getting ready to perform, being made up, and talking to each other. The spectators could even approach them and start a conversation. However, when the performance started, the Cartoucherie would be clearly divided into two spatial units: the stage and the auditorium.

Copeau's permanent stage and the added naked stage were designed specifically to make the actor stand out. Decorations, construc-

→ *William Shakespeare:* Twelfth Night. *Vieux-Colombier, 1914. Directed by Jacques Copeau. Costume design by Duncan Grant.*



☛ *Molière:* Scapin the Schemer. *Vieux-Colombier, 1920. Directed by Jacques Copeau.*

tions, and, of course, the audience, presented no obstacles. On the contrary, the actor was there to give meaning to all objects. The actor was meant to enliven the static arrangements of stage constructions, use costumes to radiate colours against the lacklustre backdrop of all areas, platforms, and stairways, and insert live images into spatial frames prepared beforehand.

A character in the skin of the actor

In Moscow, Konstantin Stanislavsky elaborated his theory about the actor transforming into a character, identifying with the character and his or her emotions, and embodying the character so as to forget about his own self and relate to the imaginary person. Copeau, on the other hand, had different ideas. He believed that it was the actor's task to make enough room in himself to allow the character to enter his inner world. The actor did not transform into somebody else, on the contrary, he let the character enter:

> You say that the actor enters into a role, putting on the skin of his character. But I think it is not quite like that. It is rather that the character approximates the actor, who asks the character what he needs in order to be able to exist through him; then, gradually, the character takes the place of the actor, dressed in his skin. The actor only strives to leave the character as much free space as possible.[164]

☛ *The courtyard of the Vieux-Colombier theatre.*

Copeau did not want to have characters onstage who would submerge in their own selves during complex mental states. With his company, he endeavoured to create dynamic, radiant, bright, colourful, variegated, and clearly contoured types. In his directorial work, he was inclined to the tradition of *commedia dell'arte.* His theatre produced plays by authors whose work was related to this tradition (Shakespeare, Molière, Goldoni, Gozzi, Beaumarchais, Marivaux, Rostand, and Musset, among others). When his work for the bricks-and-mortar Vieux-Colombier theatre definitively ended in 1924, Copeau left with a group of the young followers and disciples for the French countryside, where the Italian inspiration could fully evolve. He aspired to make his own version of *commedia dell'arte,* which he called "new comedy". He teamed up with Roger Martin Du Gard and André Gide in an attempt to restore the tradition by transforming such old archetypes as Harlequin, Pierrot, and Columbine into modern types such as "townsman", "farmer", "peddler", and so on. This approach was aimed at simplifying the actor's performance and expressing elementary matters.

Copeau actively used masks in the theatre. The actor's skin, into which he thought the character should enter, was not real human skin but an outer layer – an expression shaped through a costume, make-up, or solid mask and wig:

> A mask perfectly symbolizes the relationship of the interpreting artist to his or her character, manifesting the nature of the bond between them. The cardboard prop offers the performing actor the reality of the rendered character. The mask leads the actor and the actor has to follow the mask. The moment he puts the mask on, he feels how an existence that he did not have in him before starts to blossom. [...] It is not only his face that changes, but his entire person and the nature of his movements. In these movements, seeds of feelings appear which the actor could not generate in himself before or portray with his face unmasked. If the performer is a dancer, the whole style of his dance will change; if he is an actor, the mask will determine the tone of his voice.[165]

Copeau taught his actors to live with their masks. They would even make the masks and props themselves. After performances, especially outdoor ones presented at wine harvest events or local holiday celebrations, the members of his company *Les Copiaus*[166] would not take off their costumes while touring Burgundy but would mingle with the crowd and keep cheering up the grateful, untrained audience.

Copeau was persistently returning to his original concept of ascetic art and life. He was afraid that his actors would be influenced by decadent contemporary theatre and did not want to accept new protagonists. In 1915, in line with the original plan devised upon founding the Vieux-Colombier, he established his first acting school:

> It is necessary to educate the young generation of performing artists and introduce them to the world of art from an early age; these artists should enrich the theatre with more than just technical perfection (which can sometimes deform talent). They need to receive comprehensive education by developing their harmonious body, spirit, and character. [...] No premieres, reviews, successes, or losses! Nothing, just work – honest, solid work without rest.[167]

The education was free of charge. Copeau taught together with Suzanne Bing, and they had twelve students who were all younger than twenty. The classes took place once a week every Thursday. The main focus was on controlling the body and physical movement. At first,

☛ *Molière:* The Doctor in Spite of Himself. *Vieux-Colombier in America, 1918.*

time, there were quite a few French theatremakers who had criticized the inflexibility and inefficiency of the Conservatory in Paris. And yet, no one seemed to try to show the right direction for actor training until Copeau, who became the first "to detail the reform of actor training".[168]

Classes were held every day in his school, and there were strict rules of conduct. Discipline was required from all students. Copeau preferred to have students who were young and not wealthy. During their studies, they were not allowed to perform in any other theatre than their home stage. They also had to agree to work for the Vieux-Colombier for three years after graduation. Because of all of these maximalist demands and bans, many considered Copeau to be a theatre Puritan: "Jacques Copeau's programme is a moral and aesthetic programme. Discipline is a right, frugality a rule, and authority comes from above,"[169] wrote Denis Bablet about the school. Conversely, James Roose-Evans claimed that Copeau pioneered the way to the poor theatre, which was a process completed by Jerzy Grotowski.[170]

As opposed to its beginnings, the school Copeau renewed after the war could boast a much more extensive study plan. In addition to Copeau himself, the faculty included Jouvet and Bing. In order to improve the students' movement skills, Copeau hired the famous trio of the Fratellini brothers (Paul, François, and Albert). They were Italian circus clowns whose art fused elements of *commedia dell'arte* and mime. Jules Romains was appointed as the principal of Copeau's

school. For Copeau, the acting craft was a skill to be revered: "Any art without a craft, which endows it with power and permanency, is an ever-vanishing apparition," he wrote.[171] According to Copeau, theatrical craft was not a decadent phenomenon but rather the basis of acting art. The three-year study programme contained lectures in theatre theory, the history of French and ancient Greek literature and culture, aesthetics and poetics, and, naturally, training in oral presentation, singing, dancing, eurhythmics and gymnastics, memory exercises, and improvisation. In 1924 Copeau's students rehearsed the play *Kantan* in the style of the Japanese Noh theatre.

In improvisation classes, extended periods of time were dedicated to working with masks. In the spirit of the mentioned bond between the skin as the surface of the body and the mask as the costume worn by the actor and its content, Copeau trained the actors to learn how to establish a link between the inside of a mask and its external appearance. The students were given a task to express themselves by changing masks on behalf of living people, inanimate objects, and often even abstract contents: a tree, a bridge, the city of Paris, and so on. The sessions started with complete relaxation and emptying of

☛ *Jacques Copeau:* La Maison Natale. *André Bacqué (Bernard Hersant), Gina Barbieri (wife Julie), 1923.*

the actor's inner space: his body and soul. Then energy was awakened, and the body would start to feel the first sensations initially expressed by simple movements or sounds. These were organized according to the rhythmical principle using gymnastic exercises, ways of walking, and so on. Once the actors were warmed up and ready for action – sufficiently open to all sorts of impulses – they could commence with improvising more complex and even allegorical meanings.

For all his innovativeness, Copeau the director maintained the more traditional opinion that the element that dominates and precedes the staging process is the original dramatic text. Despite his focus on training actors to master non-verbal expressivity, gestures, facial expressions and their rhythm, and despite the fact that his approach to acting was initiated from the use of the mask (i.e., from the visual aspect), Copeau did not yet aim at switching the order of importance of theatrical elements like Artaud, Grotowski, or The Living Theatre. In his work, drama always preceded the staging, not the other way around. Copeau's theatre revered classical literature and his productions served to put literary works onstage: he led the actors to learn how to interpret their characters well. His actors wore the skins of dramatic characters from plays by Molière and Shakespeare, not characters originating from their own imagination and improvised ideas of the director. That was why analysis and interpretation of literary works was as important in the courses at the Vieux-Colombier as the study of stage language. Copeau wanted his actors to understand the dramaturgical analysis of the text as a whole as well as the subtext and hidden meaning. This required them to have a sufficiently broad scope of knowledge and great erudition. Copeau

☛ *The Vieux-Colombier students in a production of André Gide's* Saül*, 1922.*

☛ *Masks for the* New Comedy. *Oscar Knie, Celestina, César. The Les Copiaus group, Burgundy, 1920s.*

himself spoke using advanced and sophisticated French; he was fond of his native tongue and demanded the same from his actors. He deemed the words used onstage to be means of expression designed to create punchlines and highlight the content.

The programme poster of the Vieux-Colombier always contained multiple productions. It was a repertory theatre and its offer of several titles distinguished it from the commercial stages of the time. Even though Copeau had always dreamt about popular theatre that would be intended for a broad audience, his productions – characteristic for their "laboratory" approach – initially attracted mostly intellectuals, artists, and the Paris elite. Copeau did not desire to have an audience like this despite the fact that he had predicted it. Some of the productions he staged – the most outstanding one being *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare in 1914 – became very popular and successful. Overall, however, his directorial work was rather mediocre; it can be said now that his ideas were much more beneficial for the development of theatre than the productions he staged.

Copeau was never willing to compromise. He kept stressing the need to "purify" theatre, which some of his collaborators mistook for a manifestation of Jansenism and were therefore driven away. The two most important ones were Dullin, who left Copeau in 1919, and Jouvet, who did the same in 1922. Eventually, under economic pressure and fighting his own inner uncertainty, Copeau closed the Vieux-Colombier down in 1924 and departed with the remaining members of the company to Burgundy. There he worked in an acting company called Les Copiaus in conditions that were even more modest than previously along with Bing, who was one of his most faithful collaborators; his daughter – the actress and costume designer Marie-Hélène Copeau (later married to Dasté); Jean Dasté; Decroux and Léon Chancerel, who worked there for a brief period of time; his nephew Michel Saint-Denis, who later became the director of the Royal Shakespeare Company in

☛ *Jean Dasté is making his mask.*

London; and Jean Vilard-Gilles. Copeau was permanently dissatisfied and did not endure working with Les Copiaus; he dissolved the ensemble for good in 1929. Nonetheless, his inspiration survived for years to come. His former actors established the Compagnie des Quinze, which was active for four more years without their teacher (1929–1933).

Copeau did not leave the scene and lived in seclusion after 1929. Towards the end of his life, he directed open-air crowd performances in Florence. For a short period of several months in 1940 and 1941, he led the Comédie-Française in Paris. His scattered literary legacy was belatedly published in the collections known as *Registres*. Copeau's training sessions were remembered only by a faithful few, but the younger generations of French theatremakers would later return to Copeau's ideas. Of many, these were mainly Saint-Denis, Decroux, Barrault, Dasté, and Vilard-Gilles. Later Jean Vilar, for example, based his ideas for the Théâtre National Populaire on Copeau's theatrical concept. Biographers wrote that:

> He would take over the concept of the permanent stage with curtains, a simple stage and the bright, colourful flame of a costume in motion; he would stage open-air productions in the natural scenery of the Avignon Palace; he would develop the idea of summer regional festivals of theatre for all – theatre for the masses.[172]

Also: "Copeau was in our eyes the Father of the whole modern theatre" said Barrault.[173]

THE CARTEL: LOUIS JOUVET, CHARLES DULLIN, AND OTHERS

The situation in French theatre in the 1920s and 1930s was far from stable. The government was funding very few theatres. The traditional Comédie-Française was thrown into a long-term crisis. Small theatres searching for new ways, willing to experiment with production approaches, trying out modern acting techniques, developing direction, and looking for playwrights all struggled with a lack of interest from audiences and suffered from a non-existent system of government subsidies. In Paris the only kind of theatre that prospered was commercial theatre. Outside of the capital city, theatre life was poor. French theatremakers looked enviously at how theatre was thriving in the Soviet Union and Germany. In 1936 they had to swallow a bitter comment made by Bertolt Brecht, who said that one could only speak about modern theatre in three capital cities: Moscow, New York, and Berlin.[174] He did not mention Paris.

This was true to some extent. Avant-garde theatre could be seen mainly in the three cities mentioned, and perhaps also in Prague and Warsaw. Copeau never wished for a revolution, be it social or artistic. The progress of the French theatre was much more moderate and lacked the clearly political and leftist orientation of its counterparts in Moscow, Berlin, and Prague. It was not as cosmopolitan and international either. Paris kept living its inclination to the classics, produced mostly French plays, and fostered that tradition which it was so proud of. The attempts made by the surrealists on Paris stages were unsuccessful, and Antonin Artaud was disrespected and ridiculed. The avant-garde was the feeblest in the theatre; while it dominated in

☛ *The Cartel's four directors: Charles Dullin, Georges Pitoëff, Gaston Baty, Louis Jouvet.*

visual art and poetry, it never made it in direction and acting.

This did not mean that French theatre would not witness any struggles for a new and modern form of the performing arts. Many French theatremakers had to endure tough conditions for theatremaking and face imposing theatre critics and journalists. Theatre artists felt resolved to do something about it. Their dissatisfaction with the situation led them to realize that their individual power would not be sufficient to bring about a change. After several years of tough struggles, in 1927 four of the most creative and artistically distinct directors and theatre principals of that time – Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin, Georges Pitoëff, and Gaston Baty – decided to sign an agreement on mutual aid and collaboration which became known as the Cartel (later on, they were joined by René Rocher as well).

It was no coincidence that the agreement was concluded by these four theatremakers. They were more than just exquisite actors, directors, and principals of relatively small theatres (with no more than five hundred seats), who rejected the contemporary commercial approach to theatre practice and aimed at higher and more artistic targets. Two of them – Louis Jouvet and Charles Dullin – had already met in the Vieux-Colombier, while Gaston Baty and Charles Dullin ended up working with Firmin Gémier. In 1922 all four of them met at Jacques Hébertot's; he was a famous theatre entrepreneur and benefactor. They were bound by long-lasting artistic friendship and a mutual interest in the modernization of French theatre.

The four-party agreement they signed addressed more than just their aesthetic convictions. The Cartel did not define a style or a single artistic direction like the futurists or surrealists did in their associations. First and foremost, it was an agreement between theatre

directors aimed at coordinating their activities in providing subscriptions, inviting visiting artists, planning international tours, managing promotion campaigns, and aligning repertory strategies in order to avoid unnecessary competition in their productions. Their common enemy was contemporary criticism, and it was the critics the Cartel had to fight its first battle against. At that time, it was common for spectators, including critics, to show up late for the shows. This was disturbing for both the actors as well as the audience. Therefore, the Cartel decided to be strict and prohibited late entry. When they first had to face this regulation in Dullin's Atelier in 1928, the Parisian critics decided to boycott the theatre. However, the unified move of all four directors broke the boycott after they all supported Dullin: they issued a statement that either there should be reviews of all theatres, or critics should not write about their theatres either.

Aside from similarly practical acts, the agreement also covered more general and artistic matters. The primary objective was that the four eminent authorities of French theatre were trying to prevent pressure being exerted on the theatre scene and help improve the economic conditions for non-commercial theatres. The remaining goals were purely artistic: fostering artistic freedom and underscoring the autonomy of theatre direction. Back then, it had to be repeatedly stated that a stage director was as important a part of the theatre production as the other elements, if not

Louis Jouvet in front of a stage model, 1917.

☛ *Charles Dullin as Harpagon.*

☛ *Charles Dullin as Jupiter in* The Flies.

the dominant one. In its statement, the Cartel acknowledged the work of André Antoine and Konstantin Stanislavsky. The quartet also agreed to maintain solidarity "in all situations when professional or moral interests ought to be protected."[175] This was an obvious reference to the principles of the Vieux-Colombier as well. The Cartel persisted in its resolutions until 1939, when Georges Pitoëff died and the fates of the others were complicated by the imminent war.

Out of the members of the Cartel, Louis Jouvet [24 December 1887, Crozon–16 August 1951, Paris] was the most faithful successor of the Vieux-Colombier theatre, where he had spent his younger years. He had aspired to be an actor since he was a young boy, but had been rejected three times by the Conservatory in Paris. This strengthened his agreement with Copeau's conviction that this institution was far removed from modern theatre. Yet it has to be admitted that Jouvet's acting was very unusual and even his hard work at the Vieux-Colombier could not eliminate all of his peculiarities. Karel Kraus summarized Jouvet's characteristics as follows:

At the beginning of his acting career, Louis Jouvet's speech was disfluent and his lines were difficult to understand. He was characteristic for his snippy cadence that phrased sentences into short rhythmical units. This frequently tempted others to imitate him. He would listen to his partner's lines with his mouth half open, pursing his full lips. When he did so, he looked like 'a fish that jumped on the stage and got stuck there. With his naïve look, he kept his cunning attention. His

> loose and free imagination concealed some harshness, something almost rudely penetrating, while his tone, used to give away delight and humour, was often oddly hoarse.'[176]

Jouvet had to work on himself a lot trying to understand the importance of a good teacher's training for an actor. He fully devoted himself to acting from 1934 after he was appointed a professor at the same Conservatory that had previously rejected his application. Jouvet, like the remaining members of the Cartel, did not introduce any broadly applied acting school or technique. But while he was working as an actor and director, he kept thinking about acting, published his opinions, and passed them on. While he was a student of Copeau's, he understood that a good craft was the basis of acting art. He was well aware of the fact that there had to be something on top of the daily hard work actors do in theatres. In addition to all the prerequisites, Jouvet believed an actor needed to have a special kind of intuition:

> An actor's emotions, constantly tangled and disentangled like in numerous dance figures, vibrate in his role, clustering and separating, transforming, developing, assembling and dispersing, and dividing and blending. Then, suddenly, these emotions are directed to a common point like a herd or a pack brought together, and they focus on a single idea, an element, *a leading emotion which is intuitive.* This process seems to be uncontrolled; however, it is born more from the drama itself, from the inner life of the work of art, rather than intellectual digressions and judgements that are based on *contemplations* – something that a critic can afford.[177]

Jouvet's actor was not transformed into a character. On the contrary, the character was embodied in the actor. "You are not embodied into anything," Jouvet would instruct actors based on the opinion of his teacher. "It is the character who, more or less, is embodied in you. That is the principal knowledge. That is why I speak of 'an unembodied actor'."[178] The director can identify the first stage of the character's presence when the character is "cocooned" in the actor. Then, the second stage occurs: the character doubles and is settled in the actor. In the third and final stage, the character exteriorizes and is projected outwardly, outside of the actor, escaping him: "The

☛ *Jean-Paul Sartre:* The Flies*, 1943. Directed by Charles Dullin.*

actor can see the character outside of himself instead of feeling it inside. [...] The character's existence is real and genuine only when the character, previously projected outside the actor, is embodied in the actor again and the actor feels this embodiment."[179]

Jouvet's contemplations about acting demonstrate how personally and emotionally aware he was of all the stages of approaching a role and of the process of character acquisition as well as of his ability to intuitively name these feelings and pass them on to his students. He would imbibe himself with some of his most favourite characters (Arnolf, Don Juan, and Tartuffe) before presenting them to audiences over and over again. It seemed he almost lived with some characters in his private life, communicating with them and discussing various issues. He was popular with audiences as a distinctive actor; for him, clearly defined roles were a natural part of his acting. While Jouvet was relishing the applause of Parisian audiences, the half-forgotten yet uncompromising Copeau was trudging along the country roads of Burgundy with his faithful collaborators. Jouvet did not follow his teacher's principles in this regard. He rejected ascetism and was sympathetic to actors' vanity. He yearned for applause and desired audiences to love his theatre, because he believed that a good theatre principal should want his institution to be popular. In this belief, he referred to Molière, the highest theatre authority in France.

In Jouvet's view, and according to contemporary French theatre practice, the actor was supposed to serve the literary author. Even though the Athénée Theatre, which he managed, produced predominantly French authors (Jean Giraudoux being among the most popular), Jouvet also respected the classics. He did not wish to experiment and go anywhere beyond the boundaries of what had been tried and tested. The role of his company was to produce good, artistically demanding theatre. Jouvet's goal was never to set up an actors' workshop or laboratory. While his teacher had such dreams when he established the Vieux-Colombier, Jouvet never did. He did not want to shine once and then fade away; he was planning on being a theatremaker all his life. "It is easy to be a genius at the beginning; but it's much more precious and difficult to be talented later," he noted.[180]

He extended his acting craft and talent, which were so hard to come to the surface, with other activities as well. He worked as an architect during the reconstruction of the Vieux-Colombier as well as when he started directing for his own theatre. His first move was to completely rebuild it, inventing technical details, taking care of matters that were the responsibility of the builders, lighting staff, costume designers, and operation personnel. Jouvet was very demanding on himself and on everybody else.

Another member of the Cartel, Charles Dullin [12 May 1885, Yenne–11 December 1949, Paris], was a more natural and unrestrained talent. He saw theatre as a means of entertainment as well as social reconstruction and cultural improvement. He demanded that everybody, himself included, fully submit to the profession. Apart from being an excellent actor, Dullin succeeded in assembling a large number of young artists to establish a medium to pass on the message of their predecessors: André Antoine, Firmin Gémier, and above all Copeau. Among Dullin's students and followers were such personalities as Jean-Louis Barrault, Marguerite Jamois, Raymond Rouleau, Madeleine Robinson, Jean Marais, and Marcel Marceau.

In 1921 he announced the establishment of an acting school at his Atelier theatre. At the school, classes of practical improvisation, dramatic acting, mime, and dance were complemented by lectures in theatre and art history. This was clear evidence that the concept

came from Copeau. Of course, Dullin managed the school with a more liberal approach. The school's establishment was aimed at training collaborators for his theatre and attracting young artists, such as writers and musicians. Dullin succeeded quite well in this because soon enough even the eccentric Artaud joined the theatre. The reason for that was that Dullin was an actor with a sense for collective work as well as with a charisma that attracted Artaud. As opposed to Jouvet, who was diligent and worked hard on himself, and whose schooling was limited to a few classes at the Conservatory, Dullin was always surrounded by enthusiasts, which was why he could become a connecting element in French acting culture.

In his search for models, Dullin returned to *commedia dell'arte* and Japanese traditional theatre. He did not desire to copy them or teach their technique, but he used them as an inspiration to elaborate his very own concept of acting pedagogy. In the laboratory conditions of the school, he was trying to find the most suitable elements of initiation. He persistently repeated that he was not interested in realism rooted in naturalism but rather in theatre of truth. The actor is in a special position and outside of reality in a way. Even though his action is based on this reality, he makes use of a very specific system of signs. In *commedia dell'arte,* symbols represent a simplified set of individual human types, while in the Japanese Noh theatre there is a detailed system of optical and acoustic signals precisely referring to selected content. Dullin frequently compared his objective to the Elizabethan theatre, which was very concrete and realistic, yet which used abstracted simplification.

During exercises he would ask actors to slow down the process of character acquisition. The actors were expected firstly to understand, sense, and feel the world around them. They were supposed to take a good look around, and listen to the questions before they could start answering them. For this purpose, Dullin invented a set of exercises to be used by actors in order to enhance all five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. The senses were supposed to help actors to acquire a sufficiently rich perception. The actor should listen to the "voice of the world"[181] and acquire information for his creative practice. The voice of the world was thus transformed into the "voice of oneself".

The encounter between the two voices gave rise to the actor's artistic statement. Dullin's exercises always took place as free improvisations. The director would only give broad instructions, and it was up to the actor to solve the puzzle. One of the études, entitled *The Discovery of the World*, was done as follows:

> Strive to forget your body and its weight as much as possible.
> Lie down on the floor, face covered by a half-mask, and strive for relaxation.
> A light breeze brushes your face, runs over your body; you will open your eyes and discover the world: the sky, the earth, vegetation.
> According to your temperament you will experience a feeling of we-ll-being, of joy or of force or even terror; you ill stand up still heavily riveted to the ground; clouds pass in the sky. You feel a desire to reach for them or fear their mystery.
> You see a fountain, you approach it; the water reflects your image, you want to capture this image, the water runs through your fingers.
> The sun appears and dazzles you.
> The blood which circulates in your veins, the life that you feel within you forces you to violent physical reactions; you tear yourself from the ground and you improvise a dance.[182]

Dullin used such improvisations to teach his students how to find their own means of expression. The exercises demonstrated the importance of the body's rhythm and flexibility. Because dramatic acting, as opposed to circus or cabaret acting, meant forgetting rhythm and the flexibility of the body, the actors would become amorphous. Therefore, they had to learn stylization to suppress common gestures. The only way to do this was to make actors imitate animals or have them wear masks and let their body's silhouette do the communication. For Dullin, an important part of this process was occupied by lessons in dancing, tap-dancing, fencing, and pure mime. Of course, these were all only training procedures, not objectives to be achieved by actual productions.

Using masks in school études was aimed at fully depersonalizing the student. While the majority of exercises allowed the actors to achieve a personal expression, once they put a mask on they were torn

away from their introspection. This allowed them to detach themselves from the process and observe themselves from the outside like dancers in front of a large mirror.

Dullin's improvisation exercises were complex and led the actor to realize himself on several levels and see himself from the outside and be able to find his place in a group. Audiences always appreciated the technical perfection of a performance, but they appreciated it even more if it was obvious that the actors valued their place, position, and presence in the whole. This realization of the actor's presence, flowing directly from his soul, was the most efficient way to address the audience.[183]

In his school, Dullin tried and tested the basic technical means of acting and also focused on voice, declamation, and breathing. Correct breathing was, in particular, the basis of good vocal competence. Each production genre required a specific way of respiration. The idea was that the actor would use his breath as if walking on a rope: if he lost his balance he could fall. Of course, the actor would not get killed after such a "fall"; however, bad breathing would result in distorted speech, shortness of breath (which annoyed the spectators), bad habits when accentuating words, unintelligible vocal expression, nervousness, loss of rhythm, and so on.[184] According to Dullin, correct breathing depended on relaxation and finding one's own form of a distinct way of breathing based on the physical abilities of the actor in question. How could it be achieved and practised? The best way was to mechanically recite the texts at full volume. For this purpose, however, there was no use of lofty poetry such as that by Baudelaire, Racine, or Verlaine. The exercises should take place in a theatre "kitchen" where "words should be chewed up like tough meat to make it easier for them to get out of the mouth".[185]

According to Dullin, acting technique was becoming more focused on developing improvisation skills, sparking inspiration through principles of play, and improving expression and interpretation competence when depicting characters. The fundamental mission of Dullin's art was to preserve theatre's ludic nature and vitality while remaining faithful to the literary work and dramatic character depicted onstage by the actor. For Dullin, love and fidelity to classical dramatic lite-

A caricature of Georg Pitoëff from 1932.

rature were connected with the effort aimed at endowing it with elements of modern and living theatre. Such theatre would be attractive for audiences, and aesthetically and artistically advanced. Dullin himself devotedly undertook his own meetings with dramatic characters. In 1911 he yearned for the role of Smerdyakov in Copeau's and Croué's dramatization of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov.* He eventually got the role after Copeau himself put in a good word for him. He liked playing other roles too, and like Jouvet he did not mind performing them several hundred times. He played, for example, Molière's Harpagon (for the first time in 1913), Jonson's Volpone (1928), and Shakespeare's Richard III (1933). Dullin understood that an actor had to approach a character primarily via his intuition. He did not believe that he had discovered some hidden rules or mythical laws of acting. For him, it was a lofty goal to facilitate an understanding of acting art for his students: an art that was born in hardship between "instinct and intelligence, intuition and deduction, and which comprises three equal components: our soul, our physical disposition, and our will".[186] In each era, the individual technique is actor-specific. However, Dullin considered his views to be only recommendations, a way of communicating experience, and a series of impulses rather than commands for students. He would tell them how he himself approached a role, listened to the author, took in a text through his heart, shuffled the words of a line for a long time, searched for the right intonation, and eventually let the character inside. As an experienced actor, he used a number of rules, gave away all of the secrets of his success, and enchanted everyone by his natural character and empathy. Dullin's acting training rarely felt like actual training.

The other members of the Cartel took the path of director-oriented theatre. In their view, the actor was also a significant part of a production; however, each in their own way as directors, both Georges Pitoëff and Gaston Baty wanted the actor to be strongly incorporated into the

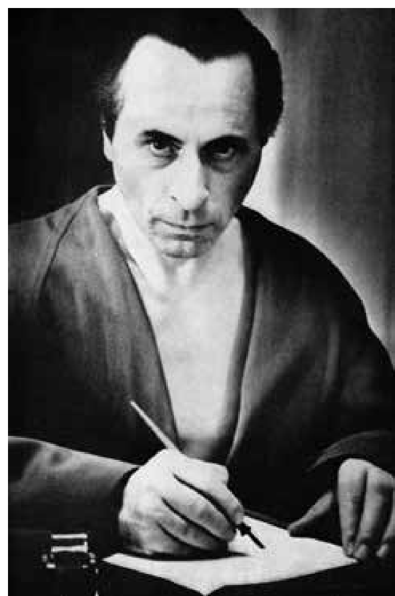
theatre synthesis. This was despite the fact that Pitoëff [4 September 1884, Tbilisi–17 September 1939, Geneva], originally also an actor, had enough reasons to idolize acting. First of all, he was well acquainted with the Russian scene. Prior to his emigration, he visited Stanislavsky's productions, performed at Komissarzhevskaya in Saint Petersburg, and knew the symbolists Yevreinov and Meyerhold. Another strong link to acting was provided by his wife, the great French actress of Russian origin, Ludmilla Pitoëff, who was the unforgettable protagonist of Shaw's Saint Joan. When Copeau first met her in 1915 in Geneva, when the couple had been married for just three months, he took a note: "She made a great impression on me [...] the extraordinary nobleness of the tiny, twenty-year-old Russian, who had beautiful moments as well as an attractive expression in her pale face, and an inner glow. I should like to take her away from him, the slightly garrulous and a bit vain but very eager boy. I'd take everything: the play [they read Chekhov's *The Seagull* for him], him, and her."[187]

Pitoëff's greatest passion was to direct eminent plays of his time and serve authors who he believed had a "modern soul". And so he staged Chekhov, Andreyev, Blok, Pirandello, Shaw, and Ibsen as well as all of the international repertory he could encompass. He also translated theatre works into French.

In one respect, Baty [26 May 1885, Pélussin–13 October 1952, Pélussin] was Pitoëff's total opposite. He spoke ironically about *His Majesty the Word* and set out on a journey of making theatre more theatrical. However, just like Pitoëff, Baty also concentrated his efforts mostly on issues concerning directing, and he would analyse these in his theoretical works. His idea was to replace words onstage with colours, lighting, voice, and gesture. He spent much time focusing on masks and props. He advocated synthetic and total theatre, in which, as if in "living polyphonies", drama would operate as a unifying element for dance, literature, painting, and music. Sometimes, he was reproached for an overuse of scenographic elements; even though this was true, Baty was unparalleled in his ability to work with sources of light. He was the only member of the Cartel who had not started out as an actor. His productions all relied on the work of his close collaborator, the actress Marguerite Jamois.

ÉTIENNE DECROUX'S PURE MIMUS

In a sense, the most faithful student of Jacques Copeau was a man who joined the Vieux-Colombier school too late, just a year before it closed down. While Louis Jouvet and Charles Dullin experienced the entire initial period with Copeau as actors and co-creators of his productions, spending his New York years with him as well, the younger Étienne Decroux [19 July 1898, Paris–12 March 1991, Boulogne] only came towards the end of the company's time in Paris. Later on, after 1924, he joined Les Copiaus on their tour around the French countryside. Jouvet and Dullin, as well as some of the other collaborators of Copeau, would gradually outshine their teacher and replace his original inspirations with their own acting experience and the desire to excel. Decroux, however, remained a stable element in the group and, just like Copeau, took an uncompromising path towards cleansing the theatre from any superfluous ornamentation. He did not choose realism or naturalism as his method; instead, he aimed at simplifying acting expression as much as possible: from primary lines all the way to geometrical shapes. Just like his teacher, Decroux professed an ascetic private lifestyle which became manifested in a similarly fanatical dedication to the profession as well as strict vegetarianism. He chose the path of poor theatre. An important part of his life mission was identical



Étienne Decroux.

to Copeau's: he wanted to study and improve acting, do laboratory experiments, and train actors.

In his youth, Decroux was lucky to have worked with great directors. After he left Copeau's school, Decroux spent a short time in Burgundy. Then in 1925 he started working as a professional actor with Baty.[188] Then he stood on the stage with Dullin and Jouvet, and he collaborated with Artaud. He was well acquainted with many of the best theatre artists of the French interwar period, and yet he never succumbed to the temptation to adjust his ways. He maintained his own reason and original focus.

During his apprentice years at the Vieux-Colombier, he became interested in the mask exercises led by Suzanne Bing. These allowed him to find a new direction, which would eventually inspire him to transcend the original approaches advocated by his teachers. The mask exercises were initially done to enable actors to learn how to make their bodies permeable for the dramatic character they were expected to portray. According to Copeau, when an actor wore a mask, he was well prepared to soak up the literary images provided by the playwright. The moment the actor put a mask on, a character could enter his body – a character he had not had in him before. This changed not only the actor's entire face but his entire person. New feelings were born, emotions he was incapable of arousing before. This idea was applied in the workshops of the Cartel directors and became an inspiration for Decroux as well. He then developed it further and aimed at highlighting the actor as an autonomous artist, not just a literary character. Decroux would, for example, wrap the actors' faces with thin gauze or put silk stockings over their heads to fully contain the individual features of their faces and voices. The masks were not personalized and did not relate to a specific character or express any emotions. Decroux did not like the face because it expressed physicality, but he loved the body because it expressed the soul. His actors were not burdened by psychologization; they tried to express the life harmony of the body and soul instead.

Their faces were covered also because the containment of this one part of the body allowed the whole to stand out. For Decroux, the torso – the chest and the flexible spine – was the principal means of

expression. He focused all his attention there. The remaining parts of the body (the extremities, shoulders, and the head) were only an extension of the central section of the body: "What I call the torso is the entire body, including the shoulders and legs... of course, the shoulders and legs only move if prompted by the torso, and they extend its line."[189] This allowed Decroux to approximate the ideas of Edward Gordon Craig, for whom an ideal actor was an *über-marionette*, a super-puppet working on the basis of primal movements of the body, not facial expressions or voice modulation. In contrast to Craig, Decroux's concept did not result in the idea of a super-puppet but rather a living, vivid, and flexible mime actor. However, he never imagined an imitating mime artist in the usual sense of the word. He did not want harlequins, comedians, or buffoons. The result of Decroux's type of acting was supposed to be "pure *mimus*" (le mime pure).

Étienne Decroux: Meditation

Decroux's pure *mimus* did not resemble traditional mime, dance, or drama acting. It was something different altogether. At first, he spoke of sculpture acting, but the term never covered the whole essence of his idea. This was because even though Decroux's actor was dominated by the torso (just like in a sculpture) the torso was not static and kept changing in elastic and variable stances. Therefore, a better term to capture his intentions was "statuary movement acting". Decroux's corporeal mime used the following hierarchy of instruments of expression: "First the body, then shoulders and arms, and finally the face. [...] Physical body parts are big and facial parts are small. The body is heavy and the shoulders are light."[190]

☛ *Étienne and Maximilien Decroux:* Ancient Combat*, 1945.*

Decroux approached the body intellectually, not emotionally or impulsively. He aimed at a harmonious operation of the whole and its individual parts alike. He wanted to communicate symbols instead of content. He chose the symbols from life itself. Decroux studied "the basic physical movement in sport, dance, circus art, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and reciting choirs."[191]

In his stage presentations, changes of physical attitude were flawlessly elaborated. They took place in clear lines, with an emphasis on the balance of the body in relation to gravity and equilibrium as an aesthetic element. Actors were required to maintain a high level of concentration. A mime had to move so as to portray virtually anything onstage. Costumes were not very helpful in the process because "the body was as naked as decency would allow."[192] As we already know, the actor no longer had his own face and was not given enough (if any) props to use. He had to use his body to express human action as well as objects used in the play. For example, he would use his hand to hold an invisible tray, which he simultaneously created by his action. In another production, a man would become an animal or a tree. He would conjure up branches, leaves, and roots not descriptively – tracing the lines of different shapes as performers in traditional mime would do it (which was rather superficial for Decroux) – but figuratively by

using metaphors. The sculpture that the actor moulded from his inner self was a sculpture depicting him as a lonely, nearly naked man and a human with his entire microcosm. While traditional mime only replaced words with physical actions, pure mime allowed for a creative freedom which ensued from depersonalization as well as advancement into a realm of ideas that were inaccessible to a conventional mime artist. Decroux's mime, therefore, could present both action-based and contemplative études which portrayed meditation processes. Jan Hyvnar commented on the mechanism of Decroux's expressivity:

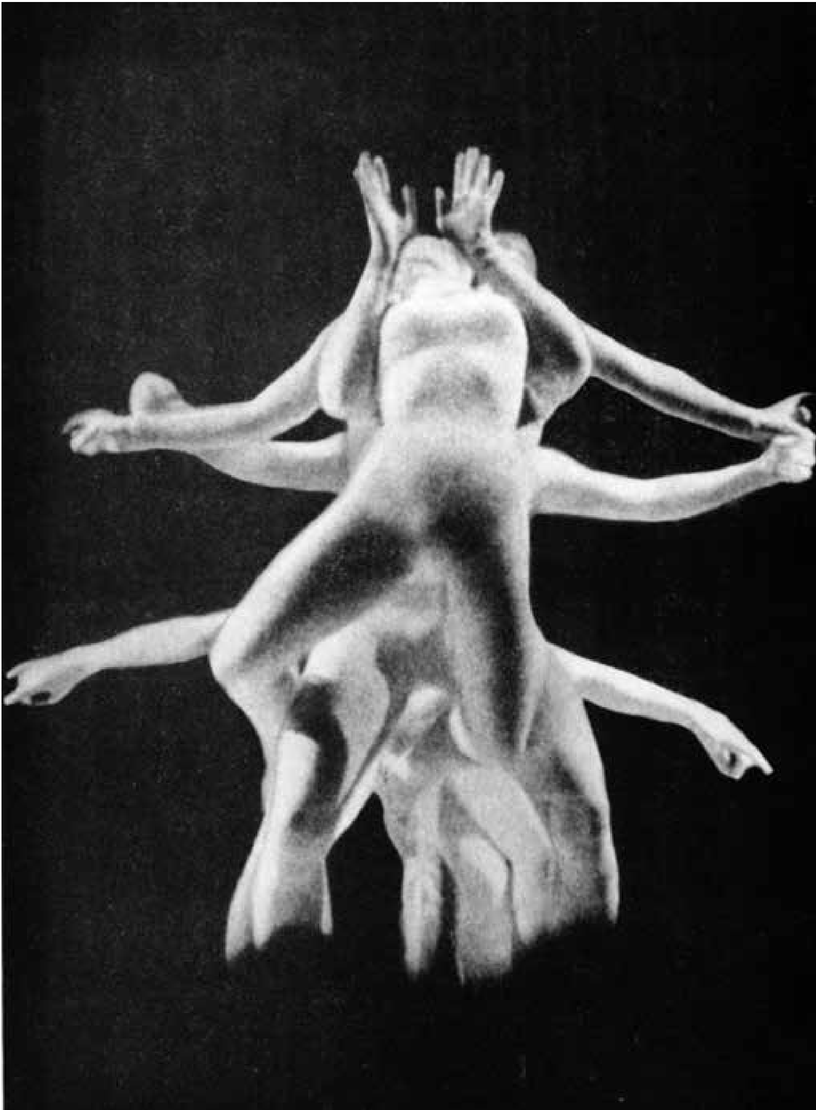
> These études used triads: *stance – movement – gesture*. Stance expressed dynamic stasis, which contained the tension from the previous action as well as an assumption of what was to follow. The inner tension disintegrated the stance into movement which gradually acquired a specific focus before it changed into a gesture. When the gesture reached its goal, it became a stance again.[193]

Decroux did not like to stage comedy pieces: "Art that respects itself undoubtedly has a sense for comedy, but primarily it has a sense for seriousness."[194] Decroux used the term "dramatic mime", which he applied in mime productions such as *Primitive Life* (1931), *Aesthetic Surgery* (1942), *Combat Antique of Antony and Cleopatra* (1945), *The Factory* (1946), *The Trees* (1946), and *The Little Soldiers*.

In the early 1930s, Decroux caught the interest of the young Jean-Louis Barrault, which resulted in the two artists doing research in

☛ *Étienne Decroux:* The Carpenter.

☛ *Eliane Guyon:* The Statue.



☛ *The composition* Trees*, 1946.*

pure mime for two years together. Their meditations focused on such issues as walking, which was an element of mime they both considered to be an essential problem of the art form.[195] In 1935 Barrault and Decroux parted their ways when the former started directing on his own. In 1940 Decroux established a school for mime artists in Paris

that would later be attended by many eminent artistic personalities. Decroux collected his experience and knowledge about mime in book publications as well. The books were as successful as his lecture tours and mime courses in the United States, where he found one of his best students, Alvin Epstein. Before that he introduced his wife Eliane Guyon and his son Maximilien Decroux to the theatre scene, and he frequently performed with them. Decroux also gave training to Marcel Marceau, the well-known mime artist who created the character Bip.

THE THEATREMAKER JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT

Jean-Louis Barrault [8 September 1910, Le Vésinet–22 January 1994, Paris] was an artist who synthesized all of the previous features of acting art in French theatre. He drew on the legacy of Jacques Copeau, mediated to him mainly by Charles Dullin, for whom he used to perform. Copeau first introduced Barrault to the stages of Comédie-Française. Collaboration with Étienne Decroux was also very enriching as it offered him a chance for long discussions about the essence of theatre. His close working relationship with Antonin Artaud was also well known. Barrault claimed allegiance to this theatre visionary with as much vehemence as to Dullin and Decroux. After the premiere of *Around a Mother,* which Barrault produced in 1935 as both the director and dramatic writer of what was originally William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying,* it was Artaud who offered an enthusiastic report:

> The production is magical; it is like the magical conjuring of black magicians, who drum their tongues against their palate to make the sound of rain. [...] In such a sacred atmosphere, Jean-Louis Barrault improvises the movements of a wild horse until one suddenly gets to see that he is changing into a horse. His production proves how irresistibly effective the gesture can be and demonstrates victoriously what gestures and movements mean in the theatrical space. He has proved how important theatrical perspective is and how this importance should never be lost. And he finally transformed the stage into a place filled with pathos and life.[196]

In 1935 Artaud asked Barrault to co-direct some parts of his production *The Cenci*, but then stopped the collaboration because he felt that Barrault was doing things way too independently, disrupting both his directorial concept and personal authority.

As a central personality of French direction, Barrault was able to transfer previous impulses into the art of the second half of the twentieth century. Owing to his work and his approach to directing and training, his collaborators and students could develop artistic trends that remained valid throughout the twentieth century. Barrault was an actor and director who also managed his own theatres. His wife Madeleine Renaud, an excellent actress, was his aide. He also published the expert journal *Cahiers de la Compagnie Renaud-Barrault*. However, as a director he never became the inventor of any specific acting technique. Barrault drew on the best traditions of modern French theatre and adopted their best recommendations. He cultivated acting that was relaxed, extending the tradition of the Italian Renaissance and Molière's legacy, acting that was emotionally saturated and ludic yet which still maintained the rationalist awareness of the rules and boundaries of state communication. At the same time, Barrault developed his acting so that it would never cease to be dramatic and always be inspired by dramaturgical and directorial interpretation of a literary work. His acting was in between theatre and dramatic literature: neglecting neither but bonding them tightly.

As a theatre practitioner, Barrault drew up recommendations for aspiring actors, which he summarized into basic principles to be followed by the actor. The first, seemingly minor principle, was the very important "rule of decency". Barrault wanted to make the actor onstage to be heard and to be intelligible. The second rule was to ensure

Jean-Louis Barrault.

☛ *Paul Claudel:* Christopher Columbus*, 1953. Directed by Jean-Louis Barrault.*

that the actor could observe the reality around him and approach it both objectively and subjectively. Objective observation improved the actor's perceptibility of the world around him and aided in collecting external stimuli. Subjective observation, on the other hand, helped the actor to empathize and "set his focus on imitation. The ability to imitate is a humour that can be developed by due work."[197] Barrault called these two inter-related observations the "rule of authenticity". The next rule was the "rule of truthfulness" as a realization of the real external environment and the internal psychology of a character. The actor was always expected to be ready to answer three questions on behalf of the character: Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my state? This was also related to the "rule of the present time" and action, depending on how the plot was unfolding. Again, on behalf of the character, the actor would answer the following question: What am I doing here? The "rule of control" forced the actor to be

constantly slightly detached from the portrayed character, observing from a distance whether his dramatic character, but not himself, was faithfully portraying the person in question. Barrault considered all five of these basic rules to be the fundament of good acting work.

A higher level of acting art brought more poetic tasks. Above all, it was the "rule of transposition", whereby the actor was supposed to use his artistic creativity to shift from descriptive realism to what was more truthful than truth, that is, the metaphorical and general interpretation of the given work. Barrault then stressed the importance of setting up the correct pace of the play, which would correspond to its content, the actors' physical capabilities, and the perceptibility of the

☛ *Paul Claudel:* Christopher Columbus*, 1953. Two actors performing the door on the left. Jean-Louis Barrault as Columbus in the centre.*

audience. This was what Barrault called the "sports rule" – a reminder of the extraordinarily demanding physicality of each staged play. Lastly, he highlighted three rules which are not mutually exclusive but aptly complementary – the "rule of relaxation", "rule of free will", and "rule of concentration".

Barrault thus summarized some of the original ideas he acquired in his youth. Owing to Decroux, he made a thorough distinction between mime and mimus. He explained it as follows:

> In fact, mime and mimus are one whole: *the art of gesture*. However, the starting points of the traditional mime (of the second half of the nineteenth century) and of the modern mimus are different. The so-called old mime is a silent art, while the so-called modern mimus is an art of silence! The old mime accompanies the action using the language of gestures, just like a mute person. The modern mimus, yearning for purity, often resists mute language. It aspires to be solely an action – if there is anything that joins the action, it might just be a lyrical song made of gestures, made of intoxication. It is only the result of a soul becoming open – in tragedy we call it a recitative. The novelty of the modern mimus is that it can contain tragedy.[198]

Barrault considered his theatre to be an image of life – and who could mediate it better than a theatre actor? His idea was that life in theatre is conveyed primarily by body language. Actors are "emotional athletes", a term known from Artaud. In Barrault's productions, the new *mimus*, the gesture language of the body, and the athleticism of the heart met with acting means, masks, and dance as well as the new technical possibilities of synthetic theatre, such as the power of lighting, sound, and film technology. Even more than Dullin and Jouvet, Barrault deviated from the strict one-sidedness of ascetic acting. With much verve, he professed the dynamics of life and showed them in passionate productions that stirred the audience's emotions. Barrault did not resist an eclectic selection of directorial means. He worked for a number of theatres, many of which he influenced artistically (Marigny, Odéon, Orsay, and Rond-Point, among others). His repertory was equally eclectic. It mostly contained French classics, but a few other authors were included as well: from ancient playwrights,

through Elizabethan authors, all the way to Paul Claudel. Barrault played in movies too; his best known film role was as the mime artist Deburau in the movie *Children of Paradise* (1945), directed by Marcel Carné.

☛ *Jean-Louis Barrault.*

One of the most inspiring historical lines of twentieth-century French theatre, which brought with it the detailed training of movement and a search for new expressivity, was bound to the development of mime throughout the entire century. From the Vieux-Colombier school, the line led to Decroux and then to Barrault and Marceau. A parallel line led from Copeau's student Jean Dasté to Jacques Lecoq and then to the Italian Piccolo Teatro to Giorgio Strehler, because Lecoq founded his vocational school with him. It was there in Milan, where Lecoq studied the legacy of *commedia dell'arte*, and later again in Paris, where he established the Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement (LEM) in 1977, as well as in many other places in Europe and America that dozens of mime artists studied and worked to modify the original French inspirations.

THE ACTOR OF SOCIAL TRANSFOR-MATION

BERTOLT BRECHT'S VERFREMDUNGSEFFEKT

Bertolt Brecht [10 February 1898, Augsburg–14 August 1956, Berlin] had it all worked out. Each of his ideas drew on the previous one; his concept was based on an internal logic and relied on a philosophical worldview. Brecht did not arrive at his theory through intuition or as a random creative impulse; rather, he based it on rational thought. This German theatremaker had many talents, but he was primarily a playwright and author. He was attracted by the theatre and wrote for the theatre from his youth until his old age. He was also a director and theorist who created a distinctive concept of theatre art and acting.

Epic theatre

Brecht drew on the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism and presented ideas about the necessity of transforming society by means of a revolution:

> The reason why the new way of thinking and feeling has not yet really penetrated the great masses of humanity is that the sciences, for all their success in exploiting and dominating nature, are being prevented by the class which owes its power to them, the bourgeoisie. [...] [O]nly a few gain from the exploitation of nature, i.e., by exploiting people. What might be progress for all becomes advancement for a few, and an ever-increasing part of production is utilized to create means of destruction for mighty wars.[199]

Brecht asks what a productive attitude towards society should be, and he immediately offers an answer: "In turning society upside down."[200]

In short, he wanted to change the world and used the best tools he had at hand – drama and theatre – in order to do so.

His art aspired to teach and re-educate people. In his view, art was not supposed to merely entertain, excite the senses, or provide an artistic experience; its primary role was in the service of progressive ideas. For this purpose, Brecht considered classical drama – which drew on the principles described in Aristotle's *Poetics* – to no longer be effective. Aristotle believed that "catharsis" – that well-known purifying feeling – could be achieved by "mimesis". The spectator identifies with dramatic characters on stage, who are similar to him by nature. The tragic plots, fatal blows, dangers, and pitfalls which the protagonist has to overcome establish feelings of "sympathy" and "fear" (*eleos* and *phobos*) in the audience. The spectators, though seated in the safety of an ancient amphitheatre, are holding their breath, crying and laughing along with the characters onstage. They are pulled so hard by the story and the portrayed destinies of the people that they forget about the real world and identify with what they see and hear on stage. In the process, the spectators switch off other thought processes which might bring in a rational or critical standpoint to what is occurring in the play.

Bertolt Brecht during rehearsals.

The audience of Aristotelian theatre, which had survived millennia with various alterations, does not think about the presented mat-

☛ *Bertolt Brecht:* The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny. *Tamara Lund (Jenny) and Elliot Palay (Paul Ackermann) are signing a song.*

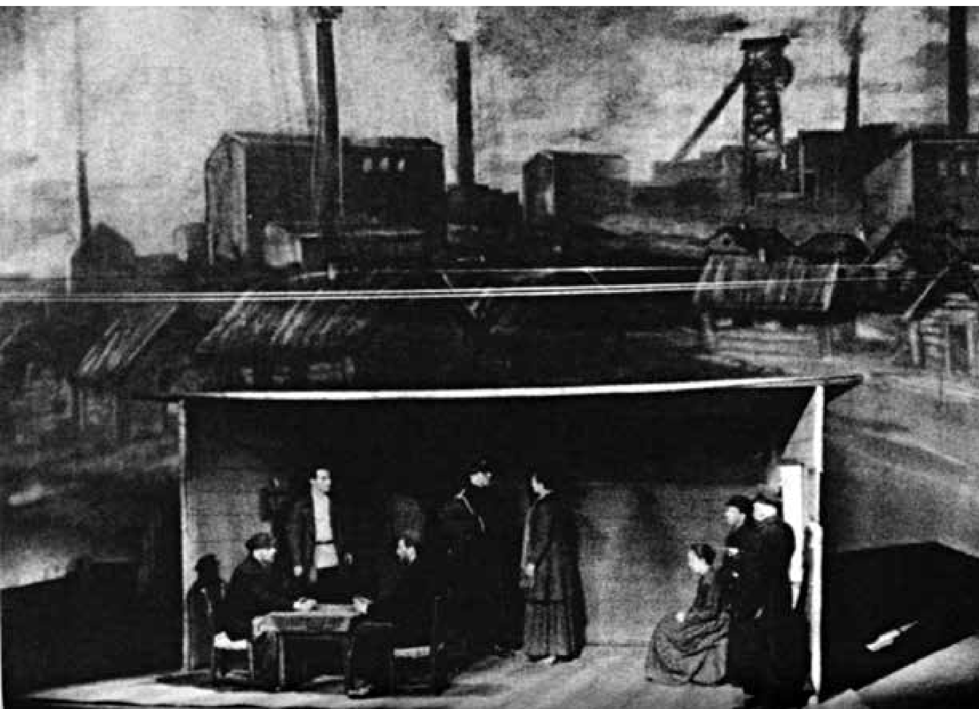
ters; it perceives them as definitive and unchangeable. Brecht, however, claimed that the world had to be changed and that this world, its social order, and the people living in it could be changed. Therefore, he rejected the classical idea of catharsis through lived experience and sought something different. If it is true that the rise of tension in drama, the arc of conflict from exposition, through climax, falling action, all the way to catastrophe, makes the audience lose the ability to keep a critical distance, then this construction pattern has to be changed. In place of the dramatic principle defined by Aristotle, Brecht proposed a principle of "epic theatre". In epic theatre, the plot is multi-dimensional because it is not affected so much by gradation as the desire to keep moving forward. There is room for digressions, interruptions, meditations, explanations, multi-sided views, and the author's interventions. Epic theatre allows the plot to be atomized; it is interjected with songs, illustrations, and descriptions.

The action presented on stage thus becomes the subject of discussion. Social phenomena and people are not depicted as unchangeable and eternal but rather as parts of the dialectic of development, which is full of growth and contradiction. The illusion that the presented matters are real is disrupted. Again and again, epic theatre tries to

point out that it is merely an artistic image of reality which is used with a specific intention and ambition to change this reality.

In two illustrative comparisons, Brecht formulated a basic distinction between the dramatic (Aristotelian) and the epic (Brechtian) theatre forms. He did this in his study "Notes on the Opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*" and then in a slightly altered version in the essay "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction". The two versions are marginally different and present a clear overview of the essence of Brecht's artistic conviction:[201]

DRAMATIC FORM	**EPIC FORM**
The stage "portrays" an incident	It narrates an incident
Involves spectators in an action	Turns them into observers
consumes their activity	arouses their activity
enables them to have feelings	forces them to make decisions
communicates experiences	communicates knowledge
Spectators are immersed in an incident	Spectators are put in opposition to it
Suggestion is used	Arguments are used and
Emotions are preserved	are turned into insights
Human nature presumed to be	Human nature is
common knowledge	object of investigation
Humankind is unchangeable	Humankind is changeable and able to change things
/ eyes on the finish /	/ eyes on the course /
/ one scene makes another /	/ each scene for itself /
Growth	montage
Events move in a straight line	in curves
Natura non facit saltus [Nature makes no leaps]	facit saltus [nature makes leaps]
The world as it is	the world as it is becoming
What humankind should do	What humankind can do
Its drives	Its motives
/ thought determines being /	/ social being determines thought /



Bertolt Brecht: Mother. *Berliner Ensemble, 1960.*

For Brecht the dramatist, formulated assumptions like this presented him with the challenge of how they could be put into practice in his plays and productions. Granted, he arrived at the starting points of epic theatre only very gradually, and his early work was strongly influenced by the peaking of expressionism: *Drums in the Night*, 1922; *Baal*, 1918–1923; and *In the Jungle of Cities*, 1923. Step by step, however, as he studied Marxist literature and shaped his own distinct artistic style of epic theatre, Brecht tended towards more rationalist forms. He wanted to write plays that would be instructional and illustrative, ever more often pointing out mechanisms of power, war, and social dynamics (e.g., *Man Equals Man*, 1926; *The Threepenny Opera*, 1928; and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, 1930). Finally, he wrote mature and socially relevant examples of epic theatre, including *Round Heads and Pointed Heads*, 1932–1934; *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, 1935–1938; *Life of Galileo*, 1938–1943; *Mother Courage and Her Children*, 1939; *The Good Person of Szechwan*, 1939–1941; *Mr Puntila and His Man Matti*, 1940; *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, 1941; *Schweik in the Second World War*, 1943;

and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, 1944. Brecht wrote these titles when he was forced to leave Germany and go into exile; the plays contain his entire artistic and philosophical conviction, and they react to the contemporary crisis and war in Europe. Brecht's epic theatre presented a new artistic charge and a challenge for intellectual resistance against Nazism. His plays, however, were more than just current news reports. Most of these texts survived the time of their creation and became part of the legacy of twentieth-century German drama.

Admittedly, Brecht also wrote news reports as dramatized schematic treatises which seemed to lack any aspiration to have artistic value. These mostly included *Lehrstücke* or "didactic plays", whose role was to instruct. Brecht wrote them to express his opinion on specific questions about the communist movement and its philosophy. On other occasions, he searched for model heroes or heroines who could enthuse working-class audiences (*The Mother* based on Gorky 1931; *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, 1937; and *The Days of the Commune*, 1948–1949).

It was characteristic for Brecht to want to write his plays and then stage them in order to put his theoretical principles into practice. Instead of "epic drama", the term he used was "epic theatre". He had to take into consideration the direct effect of the plays on the audience. Brecht's epic theatre comprised a literary and a staging element. In the latter, he deemed the acting performance to be the most important.

Verfremdungseffekt

Epic theatre changed the way theatre had functioned before. "The spectator was no longer allowed in any way to submit to an experience uncritically (and without practical consequences) by means of simple empathy with the characters in a play. The production took the subject-matter and the events shown and put them through a process of alienation," Brecht claimed.[202] And what did "alienation", or "Verfremdung", even mean? "Verfremdung estranges an incident or character simply by taking from the incident or character what is self-evident, familiar, obvious in order to produce wonder or curiosity. [...] Verfremdung is, then, a process of historicizing, of portraying incidents and persons as historical, that is, as ephemeral."[203] In order to achieve this

goal, the actor of epic theatre uses the "alienation effect" (*Verfremdungseffekt*).[204] The objective of this technique is to help the audience take an inquisitive and critical approach to what they see on stage.

How can actors achieve an alienation from the role they are trying to portray? First of all, they should try to avoid identifying and em-

☛ *Bertolt Brecht:* Mr. Puntilla and his Man Matti *produced by the Berliner Ensemble.*

pathizing with their characters. Actors should never entirely transform themselves into the people they depict. They do not personify, embody, or express the spirit; identify with the psychology; or acquire the destiny of their characters. They only present the characters. Actors ought to approach assigned characters as "a person who is astounded and contradicts".[205] They should question and doubt everything about their characters, even aspects that seem self-evident. Actors should study and analyse characters and penetrate their thoughts and emotions. However, these characters should never be adored or identified with. Characters are not defined forever; they are changeable. It may appear defined as someone today; however, tomorrow there may come a new understanding and the character will change. Actors cannot rely on their characters as something constant; they have to keep asking whether their characters are doing the right thing, whether there might be other possible kinds of action, and why their characters chose this and not some other path. Questioning characters in this way becomes the foundation of impartial observation, and a response to one question only leads to more questions rather than answers. Brecht, who was in need of intelligent actors, improved their ability to think independently and to work hard to make a comprehensive portrayal on stage. Before learning their lines, protagonists had to remember what they thought was unusual during the first reading and what made them wonder or show disagreement. It is important for actors to keep these first impressions in mind. When an actor then appears onstage:

> besides what the actors actually are doing, they will at all essential points discover, specify, [and] imply what they are not doing; that is to say, they will act in such a way that the alternative emerges as clearly as possible. [...] Whatever he does *not* do must be contained and conserved in what he does. [...] The technical term for this procedure is: fixing the *not – but*.[206]

In relation to the text of the play and the character, a protagonist's role is only to refer about the character. They do not pretend that spoken words and dramatic lines are originating right now; they are

not playing a role but are solely making reference about it, just like when they are making references about their attitude to what they are performing. The actor is, figuratively speaking, something like a double agent – one minute they are acting on their own behalf and in another on behalf of the character. They express the feelings of the character even though their own feelings at that moment could be entirely different. They are not trying to obscure them either. For example, if the character says something that they think is right, the actor should be able to say – and has to be able to say – that it is not right.

If emotions are at play, these are not genuine emotions lived and experienced on stage. Brecht opposed acting exercises aimed at helping actors achieve emotional states. He only allowed emotions in the initial stages of preparation, when actors should get acquainted with their characters. The second stage was empathy, and it preceded the final stage in which the actor could observe the character from outside as a part of social environment. "I don't act emotions," Brecht's actor Ekkehard Schall explained, "I present them as ways of behaviour."[207]

The actor who aspired to achieve something similar could use three rehearsal aids proposed by Brecht: (1) transformation into the third person; (2) transformation into the past; and (3) making sure that the playwright's notes could be spoken out loud. At a rehearsal, actors should try to talk about the assigned characters as if they were total strangers. Then, the actors should leave the present time and not play the characters as if they were living now but rather refer to them as if what they had done had already taken place. Finally, actors should not only say their lines but all of the author's notes as well. Brecht remembers the following scene: "I put in ten minutes Epic rehearsal for the first time in the eleventh scene. Gerda Müller and Dunskus as peasants are deciding that they cannot do anything against the Catholics. I ask them to add 'said the man', 'said the woman' after each speech. Suddenly the scene became clear, and Müller found a realistic attitude."[208] In the rehearsal room, the text may also be temporarily translated into an actor's native dialect, or the actor can be allowed to find a distinct, unusual, striking gesture to express the character's emotions. Conversely, actors could perform

their characters with exaggerated elegance and charm. Lines should always be said with a subtle question mark at the end. Actors should not try to prevent the audience from seeing that all has been well rehearsed; this is just in the same way an acrobat is not ashamed of revealing the details of his previous training and the fine-tuning of each movement to achieve physical perfection.

In order to ensure that the audience does not forget to keep a critical distance, Brecht thought beyond acting and required cooperation between other artistic elements as well; for example, he addressed the issue of the acting space. Brecht designed external technical instruments to support actors in achieving the given goals. The theatre hall should not be set in darkness, and the auditorium was to be lit even during the performance. Brecht's recommendation was to forego dim stage lighting and use bright lights instead. In addition to that, he wanted the light sources to be visible to the audience. The set was supposed to be implicit, and Brecht had no problem with the technical staff changing it even while the actors were performing. There was no place for curtains that would put a veil of mystery over the stage and advance the astonishment of stage transformations and tricks only when they were drawn. Brecht advocated a thorough removal of the "fourth wall" to make sure that both the actors and the audience were constantly aware of the existence of the stage. The plot location was only to be suggested. It sufficed if there was

Mei Lanfang in one of the female roles he performed in the Peking opera, 1915.

a sign placed on the stage or brought in on a plate, or if a brief announcement was made for the audience informing them of the whereabouts of the characters at a given moment. The stage and the auditorium were intended to be like a shared room during a meeting: a kind of discussion club. Brecht favoured Erwin Piscator's idea of the theatre as the parliament and the audience as the legislative body. Piscator used the most recent technical advancements, including a treadmill. Brecht, on the other hand, did not desire to use machines as much; his stage was rather a gym of the mind. He liked to say that man's greatest pleasure was the pleasure of thinking. In place of being offered psychoanalytical views, his audiences were prompted to consider ethical questions.

☛ The Caucasian Chalk Circle *at the Berliner Ensemble, 1954.*

Just like other theatre reformists, Brecht also found inspiration in Asian theatre. He believed that actors in Chinese opera created art that was very similar to what epic theatre and the alienation effect postulated in Western theatre:

> The Chinese performer is not in a trance. He can be interrupted at any moment. [...] After an interruption he will go on with his performance from that point. [...] [W]hen he steps on to the stage before us, the process of creation is already over. He does not mind if the setting is changed around him as he plays. Busy hands quite openly pass him what he needs for his performance.[209]

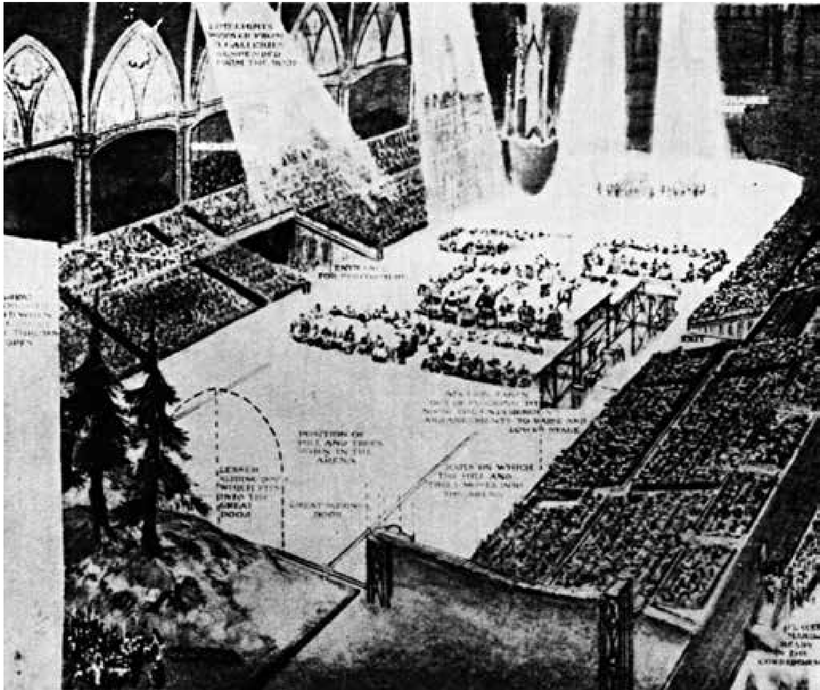
Brecht acknowledged the uniqueness of Chinese actor Mei Lanfang – the same actor who enthralled audiences in Moscow and inspired artists of the theatre avant-garde to improve their acting technique. In Mei Lanfang's case, the alienation effect principle relied on his ability to observe his own acting from the outside. Lanfang was evidently watching his movements:

> Thus if he is representing a cloud, perhaps, showing its unexpected appearance, its soft and strong growth, its rapid yet gradual transformation, he will occasionally look at the audience as if to say: isn't it just like that? At the same time he also observes his own arms and legs, pointing them out, examining them and perhaps finally praising them. An obvious glance at the floor, so as to judge the space available to him for his act, does not strike him as liable to break the illusion.[210]

Such an emphasis on the distance between the actor and the character – and the promotion of a logical, analytical, and non-emotional attitude to the action presented onstage – contradicted the psychological and realist theatre of experiencing represented by Stanislavsky. Brecht rejected illusion, embodiment, and psychologization so strongly that no verbal acrobatics could challenge the mentioned contradiction. In the history of twentieth-century theatre, the antagonism between the artistic approaches of Stanislavsky and Brecht is considered to be fundamental and irresolvable. Nonetheless, something very similar had already occurred when Vsevolod Meyerhold stood up against Stanislavsky as his teacher. In that case, though, it was a conflict between two mutually complementary artistic visions, whereas in Brecht's case it was the contradiction of two totally incompatible concepts of making art and theatre.

Brecht drew on a different cultural tradition than Stanislavsky; he drew mostly on German political theatre, the vision of Piscator, and, in his early years, also on expressionism. Piscator's political theatre was a platform for opinions and a space in which the masses could be ideologically affected. In its essence, it was also realist theatre which emphasized rationalism and a constructive approach to social phenomena. Brecht as a sage and a studious German theatremaker earmarked his own fictitious space in which he would work, even though he did not share artistic and philosophical ideas with all of the artists of this space:

> In reviewing the experiments of Antoine, Brahm, Stanislavsky, Gordon Craig, Reinhardt, Jessner, Meyerhold, Vakhtangov, and Piscator, we find that they have remarkably enriched the expressive possibilities of the theatre. [...] Vakhtangov and Meyerhold drew certain dance-



Reinhardt's production of Karl Gustav Vollmöller's play The Miracle *at the Olympia theatre in London, 1911.*

> like forms and created an entire choreography for the drama from Asian theatre. Meyerhold accomplished a radical constructivism, and Reinhardt transformed so-called authentic sites into stages: he played *Everyman* and *Faust* in public spaces. Open-air theatres performed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the midst of the forest, and in the Soviet Union there were attempts to repeat the storming of the Winter Palace using the battleship *Aurora*. The barriers between stage and spectator were dismantled. In Reinhardt's *Danton* production at the Grosses Schauspielhaus actors sat in the auditorium, and in Moscow Okhlopkhov seated the spectators on the stage. Reinhardt used the flower path of Chinese theatre [Kabuki hanamichi] and went into the circus arena to play amidst the crowds. [...] For the dramatic arts the boundary between cabaret and theatre and between revue and theatre was erased. There were experiments with masks, buskins, and pantomime.[211]

Brecht contributed to this boiling pot of the first half of the twentieth century with an original acting that used the alienation effect. His ac-

☛ *Bertolt Brecht:* The Threepenny Opera. *Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, 1928. Harald Paulsen as Mackie.*

tors made apparently uninteresting, scientific, and political matters seem distinct and interesting. This approach emphasized such processes in contemporary theatre that until then had been considered emotionally empty and unsuitable to be processed artistically in theatres. Brecht disagreed: "The rejection of empathy is not the result of a rejection of the emotions, nor does it lead to such. The crude aesthetic thesis that emotions can only be stimulated by means of empathy is wrong."[212] In Brecht's view, rational knowledge did not kill emotions but rather provided them with a different quality. Rejecting the mysticism of old theatre could brighten its face and even reveal some humour and optimistic knowledge. This knowledge is the reason why the difficult path to the alienation effect had to be taken: the realization that the world could be altered. It is knowledge about human freedom. Brecht's epic theatre was not a moral institution in the sense of how Friedrich Schiller construed theatre. He wanted theatre to be less moralistic and more a source of study and education. However, theatre should primarily be an artistic medium. It is "hardly thinkable without artists and virtuosity, imagination, humour, and compassion. [...] It has got to be entertaining, it has got to be instructive."[213]

The case against Richard Wagner

Brecht's polemic with German composer and philosopher Richard Wagner does not constitute an extensive part of his work, but it sums up a few articulate points. Brecht could not go along with Wagner's work, which glorified the great German nation. Brecht harboured a general aversion to the pathos of classical romantic opera. His disapproving attitude was not only motivated ideologically – which would not be unusual for Brecht – but also aesthetically. He opposed the monumental character of Wagner's operas in his anti-opera works *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (music by Kurt Weill). They were actually epic theatre plays interwoven with songs used as commentaries set to music and were explanations of the plot sung by the characters. When the latter of the anti-operas was premiered, Brecht published the abovementioned table comparing the dramatic and epic forms of theatre. The table was followed by his polemic with Wagner.

Brecht particularly disagreed with the appeal for a total synthesis of arts in theatre, known under Wagner's term *Gesamtkunstwerk*. He did not want the original art forms of dance, music, and poetry to join in the synthesis. He believed that it would only bring about a degradation of the individual arts. Above all, he felt there was a risk which he conceptually feared most: "The smelting process takes hold of the spectator, who is also melted down and represents a passive (suffering) part of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This sort of magic must of course be contested. Everything that aims to induce hypnosis, or is bound to produce undignified intoxication, or makes people befuddled, must be abandoned."[214] He rejected "Epicurean" opera.

When Brecht was writing his note, he might have been thinking about the massively popular productions of Max Reinhardt. The theatre works of this successful theatre entrepreneur and director were modern realizations of Wagner's synthetic theories. Reinhardt rejected the tradition of German theatre represented by the Meiningen company and later by Otto Brahm's productions. His shows were set in a magical world and rooted in symbolism. Kazimierz Braun posited that Reinhardt was "most certainly an immediate successor of Wagner and his concept of theatre as a synthesis of all art forms. Reinhardt

summarized his style in three principles: 'Radiance, Plasticity, Monumentalism.'"[215]

Reinhardt started his reform with a newly designed stage space. He went beyond the boundaries forced upon theatremakers by the traditional design of a theatre building with a portal and stage perspective. He aspired to deconstruct this artificial frame – being fully in accord with the contemporary opinions of Appia and Craig – and attempted to apply a new illusion to achieve it. He used light sources and stage mechanisms (e.g., a revolving stage), eliminated painted decorations, and stylized the stage with coloured curtains instead. Reinhardt created incredible symbolic spaces and sometimes also realistic landscapes with a fairy-tale atmosphere. He was a master of eclecticism. He developed spectacular synthetic staging procedures, which would be best termed "total theatre", and promoted visually fascinating acting, unbridled play of movement, and often mime as well as dramatic tension. Acting was exalted in gesture, body stance, and high-flown voice expression. Reinhardt always aimed at producing a suggestive effect: he conjured and used scenic metaphors, while always reminding the audience that they were in a theatre, in his illusion, and in a dream. Germany was torn in the crises before and during World War I and then had the social unrest of the 1920s before it was swept up by the Nazi regime in the 1930s. While Brecht and Piscator were passionate about socially engaged theatre, Reinhardt was making theatre that was apolitical, because he believed in "the power of theatre that was to last forever away from all politics as a purely artistic institution."[216]

In line with Wagner's ideas, Reinhardt imagined the actor to be primarily a poet: "All great dramatists were and are born actors, whether they formally accepted this title or not."[217] He was also willing to extend the definition; in a certain sense, the director, stage manager, musician, stage designer, and even spectator could be an actor. Reinhardt was criticized for sometimes seeing actors as puppets used to enliven his spectacular productions. This was not entirely true as Reinhardt had an exceptional sense for the selection of excellent collaborators. The actors hired to perform for Max Reinhardt were among the best in German theatre at the time. He employed

such personalities as Albert Bassermann, Emil Jannings, Alexander Moissi, Max Pallenberg, and Hermann Thimig. Many of his students and actors, mostly in Germany, fell under the spell of theatre expressionism, which, however, Reinhardt strictly rejected. Some of the artists became involved in politically engaged theatre, period cabaret, agitation, and resistance (e.g., Ernst Deutsch). In the United States, where Reinhardt was forced to emigrate after the rise of Nazism, a lot of his actors found employment in the film industry in Hollywood.

Brecht never followed Wagner's or Reinhardt's artistic approach. He was far from being as spectacular and willing to portray external elements like Reinhardt, who made a great effort to communicate as much as possible through theatrical means. Brecht was open about the fact that he was presenting a theatrical world and did not want spectators to forget that they were in a theatre. In contrast, Reinhardt used the magic of light, movement, and masked beings in theatres or city streets, creating new open-air illusions. Brecht made theatre which rejected any illusion. Their emphasis of theatricality turned them in different directions.

In Brecht's published treatises, in which he criticized Wagner's and Reinhardt's concepts of theatre and opera, he presented in detail his own requirements on actors of epic theatre. He rejected the false grandeur of operatic synthesis just as much as he ridiculed the pathos of opera mannerisms: "A dying man is real. But if he sings at the same time, the sphere of irrationality is attained."[218] Being saturated with false emotions is a mindless and uncultured Epicureanism that all theatre visitors indulge in without considering whether it is appropriate. Some actors are happy to help audiences in this indulgence. In his notes to *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht was very specific about this. He expressed his idea using an example of how songs should be performed:

> There is nothing more abhorrent than an actor pretending not to notice that he has left the level of everyday speech and started singing. The three levels – everyday speech, elevated speech, and singing – must always remain separate from each other. [...] The actor must not only sing but also show a person singing. [...] As for the melody, he should not follow it blindly: there exists a kind of speaking-aga-

> inst-the-music that can produce very powerful effects, arising from a stubborn, incorruptible sobriety independent of music and rhythm. If he does take up the melody, this must be an event; the actor can emphasize it by clearly demonstrating his own enjoyment of the melody. [...] During the song in particular, it is important that "the shower is shown".[219]

Brecht's actors do not disappear or dissolve in the synthesis of art forms. Their position is critical in relation to the presented and sung text. Actors are in a dialectical relationship with the characters, who they are portraying with detachment. Characters are also restricted in relation to the stage space, which is allusive, sketched out using signs and symbols, and lit by daylight. Actor–singers keep their distance from the music, which should not pull them into its rhythm or melody. They sing the songs as if there was a halt in the plot: actors should never smoothly and seemingly unconsciously enter into a song. They do not pretend that they have changed their regular voices into singing voices only because this helps express excitement and emotions. On the contrary, actors stop and demonstrate their roles within the scene in question without hiding

☛ *Helene Weigel and Erwin Geschonnek during rehearsals for* Mother Courage.

☛ *Bertolt Brecht:* Mother Courage.

the fact that they are trying to contact their accompanying musicians as well as the audience. Only then do actors sing their song.

A comparison of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* and Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* shows that these two principles constitute one of the fundamental antinomies of modern theatre. In his plays and productions, Brecht deliberately separated their individual elements and songs from the dramatic dialogue, the text from music, and the stage from performance space, but primarily the actors from their character (alienation effect), while Wagner tried to assimilate them all in one stream of synthetic art. Brecht's rejection of Wagner's art synthesis, however, did not bring about the danger that his stage form would fall apart. Brecht did not call for aesthetic anarchy: "Destruction calls for a return to construction. When Brecht demands a 'radical' separation of elements, he does not mean to support the rivalry among these elements," Philippe Ivernel posits.[220] Brecht aimed for a balanced and efficient connection of the elements to achieve the goal he was trying to reach throughout his career. He cared most about the theatre, and actors who were contributing to a revolutionary transformation of society.

Mother Courage and Her Paradoxes

The play *Mother Courage and Her Children* – staged in Brecht's home theatre, the Berliner Ensemble, in 1949 – is one of the most illustrative and artistically most successful examples of epic theatre and the use of the alienation effect. (At that time, Brecht's ensemble

☛ *Bertolt Brecht:* Mother Courage. *Berliner Ensemble, 1949. Directed by Bertolt Brecht. Ernst Busch (Cook) and Helene Weigel (Mother Courage).*

was hosted by the Deutsches Theater.) The play had already premiered during the war in 1941 in Zürich, but only the Berlin production fully met its potential. The title role of Anna Fierling was performed by Brecht's wife, Helene Weigel.

The play's message is based on a philosophical paradox presented in the life story of Fierling, nicknamed Mother Courage, who is capitalizing on a war that nonetheless gradually kills all three of her children. She is a sutler pulling a cart with food, alcohol, and sundry items through the battlefields of the Thirty Years' War, and she sells provisions to the soldiers. Tragic circumstances cause her to mourn the death of one child after another. This, however, is partly of her own doing since she puts money before her children, even in moments of the greatest danger. Nevertheless, she always finds an excuse that justifies her loss and never admits that she is living off evil and helping it with her actions. When writing and directing the

play, Brecht (together with his Berlin co-director Erich Engel) applied the main principles of his theory of theatre and drama. The production used the form of a chronicle containing an objectivist record of events. Before each scene, short texts were projected onto a screen briefly explaining the plot that was to follow. The cart, pulled by the children and eventually the lone Fierling, was only one of very few visual elements onstage. The stage was almost empty and featured a dark horizon, which left enough free space for the actors to be the dominant feature on the scene.

It was Weigel, in particular, who gave an unforgettable performance. On the one hand, she documented the reversals of her fortune and tirelessly fought to achieve small victories, filling everyone with optimism, courage, and a good mood, but on the other hand she was increasingly forced to stifle her pain and the foreboding of a personal disaster:

> The Berliner Ensemble performed the scenes without rapid changes in rhythm, because Brecht's theatre does not favour the external dynamic. There were entire episodes that would take place seemingly peacefully, with no change in the actors' positions, during which the contact between partners was expressed mainly through language.[221]

☛ The silent scream of Mother Courage (Helene Weigel).

What made the production dynamic were the rational paradoxes, which must have disturbed the audience. The spectators were forced to actively address these paradoxes using their own thoughts. The

show was composed as a large mosaic interwoven with songs. Weigel sang the *Song of the Great Capitulation* very subtly and matter-of-factly, speaking about her resignation, while Ekkehard Schall, who performed the role of Eilif, the elder son, sang the *Song About the Soldier and His Wife* with wild and passionate expressivity. Ernst Busch, the protagonist of the cook, the man who Mother Courage loved and yet could give up, did not abound in emotions, but was realistic and full of solemnity and acted with technical perfection. The audience could easily decode how important the character of the cook was for the paradoxical decision made by Fierling. A characteristic feature of all performances, regardless of their stylization, was the moderate and detached astonishment about their execution. Just like the actors, the audience could not understand the life pragmatism of the characters and kept wondering on its own, searching for answers. How can one succumb to such vain profits during a war? What attracts people, who are adequately wise and astute, to enter a pact with the mechanism that is destroying their lives? Are such people really so heartless, feeling no humility or fear?

When directing the play, Brecht did not want to let false emotions take over. During rehearsals, he did not allow Weigel to extend her physical expression even with the tiny gesture of tripping up and falling in the scene when the unfortunate and feeble Fierling is dragging her cart. Brecht said that he was in no need of compassion, which weakens a person, and that he wanted the audience to be scared: "The finale ought to *intimidate!*"[222] The actress did not identify with the character; however, there were moments when she simply could not conceal the pain inside. Those who saw the production also remember a small yet characteristic detail. When Fierling hears a gun salvo announcing the death of her youngest son, Schweizerkas, the actor Weigel – in spite of all the restraint and rejection of external effects – could not suppress a hushed sob that showed on her face as the momentary reaction of a woman and mother. At that moment, her mouth was wide open with her head thrown back; a scream should have come out of the depths of her soul, but her throat tightened and her voice was silenced by the enormous pain her character was feeling. She wanted to scream but could not. She was desperate to

let out everything that pained her, but she just stood there in a mute grimace, arms spread wide and frozen like a statue. There was so much she could have said, whole litanies of words were ready to come out – self-accusations as well as a condemnation of the terrible times she lived in – but she only stood there, centre stage, motionless like an exclamation mark. Brecht, as the director, did not allow anything more than this even in this most tragic moment. However, the forcefully suppressed pain might have had an even stronger effect on the audience than it would have if the director and the actress had given it free utterance. And besides, that one second of silence provided a brief moment for the audience not to feel compassion but to rather ask questions to assess what was going on.

In Brecht's theatre, the entire ensemble had to be much more aware about the play's context than in other productions and understand its idea as well as its dramaturgical and directorial interpretation. It was not enough if an individual addressed the peculiarities of their own character; performing a play was truly a collective matter. Brecht termed the collective interpretation of the text and the intention of such interpretation *gestus*. He was interested in the super-personal aspect that the actors in his theatre were expected to contribute to their performance as a kind of synthesizing view on society and a diagnosis that would be embodied in every act of their characters. A typical example of such *gestus* were the mentioned scenes of Mother Courage–Anna Fierling as performed by Helene Weigel.

It was rare that the principles of epic theatre and the Verfemdungseffekt would be strictly observed. Model productions were presented in the Berliner Ensemble. Brecht's successor in Berlin was the director Benno Besson; however, he extended epic theatre principles to elements of Renaissance theatre, and inspirations of Reinhardt's spectacular theatre. In Germany, Brecht had several successors, the most outstanding ones being the directors Peter Palitzsch, Manfred Wekwerth, Matthias Langhoff, and playwright Heiner Müller. In Italy, Brecht's ideas inspired Giorgio Strehler, who produced his plays in the Piccolo Teatro in Milan and who applied epic theatre principles in the classical Italian plays he directed. In Poland there was Konrad Swinarski and in France Roger Planchon. The American postmoder-

nist director Robert Wilson, who successfully integrated many of the older and newer elements of European acting schools, said:

> Bertolt Brecht said he wanted an epic theatre. What I found interesting from the little I knew of Brecht's theatre was that it was very simple. The same caught my attention about the work of Pina Bausch – the simplicity that makes it epic. The secret on the surface.[223]

Brechtian theatre, even though reformist and made by means of polemicizing with older forms of drama and production approaches (which Brecht deemed superfluous and obsolete), could not be considered purely novel when its theories were being postulated. The classical dramatic form as described by Aristotle and the actor's lived experience have not always had a dominant position in the historical development of theatre. Brecht could draw on any of the existing approaches in European theatre, or, as was already mentioned, in traditional Chinese opera. For example, in the Middle Ages religious plays and mystery plays were both characteristic for their epic plots. The Protestant school drama was also presented as an instructional aid: student actors performed the plays with a didactic detachment and student spectators could think about what they were seeing and hearing. In line with the social progress which Brecht had anticipated, many of the principles formulated by him were gradually transformed. Even though their subsequent development did not keep their purely Brechtian form, they significantly influenced modern European theatre. Particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, the creative dramaturgical and directorial approach typical for Brecht (such as discontinuous composition, multiple lines or thematic angles, changes in plot development using skips or reversals, and the incorporation of the acting expression in the stage collage among other theatrical elements) became integral parts of a theatre that was directed towards a more civil approach and a theatre that became an apt expression of its times. One cannot find the alienation effect in its elementary form in modern theatre; however, the emphasis on the actor as the representative of a character, and who simultaneously presents his philosophical attitude towards this character, has become commonplace in European theatre.

JOAN LITTLEWOOD'S THEATRE WORKSHOP

The English director Joan Littlewood [6 October 1914, Stockwell, London–20 September 2002, Paris] had the goal of bringing theatre all the way to common working-class audiences. The idea was to provide such audiences with knowledge about social injustice and give them hope about a new world order. It was an ideological and revolutionary programme which was closely related to the ideas of Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht.

Littlewood grew up in the United Kingdom in a well-established democracy that may have had its issues with censorship but which was not as threatened by the ruling regime in the 1930s as leftist artists were in Germany, Italy, and Spain. This allowed her to continuously develop her theatre from the mid-1930s. In 1935 she established the Theatre Union in Manchester's workers' agglomeration. She did this in collaboration with her husband Ewan McColl. The group was forced to dissolve during the war, but in 1945 Littlewood continued with her theatrical and political service and directed a whole series of successful productions. The pinnacle of her work in this period was the establishment in 1946 of the Theatre Workshop: a name that hinted at Littlewood's artistic intentions and her rejection of commercial theatre, and which demonstrated her association with the workers' factory environment.

☛ *Joan Littlewood.*

In acting terms, her work did not receive as much response as other theatremakers. The reason for the fact that her ideas were distributed on a smaller scale was her consistent avoidance of keeping a written record of her experiences with actors. As a result, her successors had only a few brief notes and manifestos or scattered interviews where she would reveal something, but which were never complete or systematically arranged. In attempting a reconstruction of Littlewood's system, the memoirs of her actors and collaborators, such as Howard Goorney, Richard Harris, Margaret Walker (Bury), Brian Murphy, Harry Corbet, and Clive Barker might be very helpful. These, however, are largely subjective.

Three names (Konstantin Stanislavsky, Rudolf von Laban, and Bertolt Brecht) provided the fundamental coordinates for the acting style at the Theatre Workshop. They introduced their distinct poetics, which found their expression in the acting of the Theatre Workshop. Stanislavsky was a basic requirement; Littlewood wanted her actors to empathize with the presented characters and convincingly embody them. Nevertheless, this basic relationship was disrupted during live performances because the agitational nature of Littlewood's theatre brought about a lack of dramatic arc or monolithic structure, which was necessary for psychological creation and deep experiencing. Thanks to Stanislavsky, Littlewood knew that she could provide her actors with a psychological foundation; however, her theatre was more suited to developing Brechtian-style acting.

Littlewood's productions bore many typical features of epic theatre as formulated by Brecht. The actors stepped outside of the plot and addressed the audience to discuss issues, tell jokes, and lecture. One actor would often perform several characters during one show, and the transformation would take place before the eyes of the spectators (in the 1936 production of *Schweik*, eleven actors performed seventy-six characters). The productions had a characteristic musical and dramatic form, with verbal parts being interrupted by songs. As director, Littlewood was skilled in using lighting to create separated environments onstage. These then structured the space itself as well as the plot, allowing for multiple angles in the interpretation of the presented story. Littlewood would project photographs onto a screen

which complemented the action onstage, displaying various written notes, comments, and documents.

This musical and dramatic form was a proof of Littlewood's inspiration in the work of Rudolf von Laban, who was another important theatremaker. In England von Laban was one of the most outstanding representatives of movement and dance stage art. He learned to think within the categories of spatial movement that determines an actor's proxemic relationship to the surroundings and other actors. Von Laban dedicated much of his attention to issues of gesture expression, conveying meaning through bodily stances, and, last but not least, rhythm. Though it might have seemed that the Littlewood style of acting could be a hybrid style of performance art, this was not the case. Despite various influences, her distinctive and widely recognized poetics was unified by two central motifs: a clearly defined political programme and an idiosyncratic style of leading acting rehearsals. Both features were eloquently and succinctly described by the English critic Kenneth Tynan: "Ms Littlewood de-

☛ Oh, What a Lovely War! *directed by Joan Littlewood, 1963.*

mands her actors know the art of improvisation not only during rehearsals but also during performances. She likes to see the morning headlines incorporated in the text of the evening performance."[224] Improvisation and updated action were the two main features of the acting technique used in the Theatre Workshop. As its director, Littlewood led the company in following these features in an original way, not wanting them to learn by watching others.

Improvisation was a central element of her style. She did not simply rehearse limited études, try tiny acting jokes and jests, or improvise dialogues and scenes without preparing ahead. Littlewood introduced a principle of deliberation, openness, and relaxation into the rehearsal process. The aim was to enrich her productions' social programme and to foster the message of her theatre. Littlewood never started a rehearsal with prepared études; she did not tell the actors how to play at any given moment and never forced them to repeat gestures, movements, or intonations that she would prescribe them beforehand. Her idea was to make the actors come up with them on their own. Clive Barker found this approach reminiscent of a voluntary jazz band, in which all the members improvise to create a composition. This is in clear contrast to a symphonic orchestra that always rehearses according to the conductor's lead and cannot deviate at all from the set course. The rehearsals started from a single point in the plot, and more points were then attached to the first one, extending the plot and adding more action until all was covered. Littlewood did not proceed from one point to another or from one scene to another. Her work consisted of "constantly challenging, changing, and developing A."[225] This activity also continued after the premiere, which meant that the performances of the Theatre Workshop were never completed. On the contrary, they could be complemented and improved at any time; usually there were political and social updates.

The actors did not learn their lines before the rehearsals. They remembered them and memorized them only during the movement rehearsals. In order to separate the text from the actors, Littlewood sometimes tried to do rehearsals using an old German technique known by the French term *siffleuse*. This requires all actors to have assistants who walk next to them and say all their lines ahead of

them like a prompter. This means that actors do not have to fumble in their memory looking for lines but can rather fully focus on the improvisation of actions and situations. In the Theatre Workshop, the literary text was not a binding regulation used to create a play; it became part of the production only gradually and naturally.[226]

There were times when the rehearsal process looked like a game played by big children. Littlewood wanted her actors to avoid being tempted by movement patterns and sought to prevent them from becoming slaves to the presented text or their own clichés. However, just as a game ceases to be an innocent distraction, Littlewood would often inject the rehearsals with elements of rivalry and even cruelty. She used drastic means to break the external barriers of individualities, often at the expense of humiliating the actors to achieve their greater flexibility. On other occasions, she would make the company search *ad nauseum* for new and different intonations, melodies, and accents to be used in a single line. Sometimes she demanded that they repeat one movement in various ways over and over again. Only when the actors reached the bottom of their imagination and had no more energy to continue would she let them go onstage, where they did whatever she asked of them.

The actors were expected to show extraordinary enthusiasm and trust in her capabilities, because they rarely knew where the rehearsal process was heading. Littlewood would typically arrange the production in the way she saw fit only shortly before the premiere. While doing this arrangement, she based her decisions on what the actors were capable of doing during rehearsals. This demonstrated her persevering fight against routine and her effort to eliminate all that was not creative and that had been known for a long time as well as anything that could bear traces of repetition. Rumour had it that she appreciated young enthusiasts who had been with the company only a short time more than actors who had been trained in well-known theatre schools. She publicly declared her distaste for tradition; flagship British theatres (such as the Old Vic) became a constant target of her critical reproach, even though she allegedly never visited such places.

Despite her anti-tradition temperament, Littlewood's dramaturgy was based largely on the classical English drama of the Elizabethan

period, particularly Shakespeare and Jonson. In 1955 she produced Brecht's *Mother Courage*. Her most successful staged work included the productions of two plays by the Irish playwright Brendan Behan which were set among the lowest social strata: *The Quare Fellow* (1956) and *The Hostage* (1958). Littlewood also produced the ironic and satirical anti-imperialist musical *Oh, What a Lovely War!* (1963). Even though her productions were mostly mature literary works written by well-known authors, she did not want her actors to fuse with the characters. She liked to ask the actors: "We know what they are saying, but do we also know what they are doing?" Her priority was action and the actors' expression on stage rather than any service to literature.

Littlewood's stimuli for twentieth-century acting comprised a set of distinctive and pragmatic approaches. Combining Brecht's epic theatre with English music- and entertainment-based theatre and fostering acting improvisation, they allowed for a staging practice which provided audiences with an attractive version of a style whose traditionalist form might have seemed overly stodgy and preachy. When Brecht yearned to educate a proletarian audience, it was not always certain that such an audience would actually come to his theatre. Littlewood, however, could be sure of it; she found her audience with a smile and acting ease, and they stayed faithful to her for decades.

THE ANTHROPO-LOGICAL ACTOR

Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty

One of the most outstanding personalities who contributed to new concepts of theatre and acting in the twentieth century was Antonin Artaud [4 September 1896, Marseille–4 March 1948, Ivry-sur-Seine]. He became a theatremaker who – despite formulating a vision of how theatre should be restored and trying to make it a reality on the stage throughout his life – had very few opportunities to make theatre, ultimately resulting in only sporadic attempts to accomplish his vision. The results satisfied neither himself nor his audience and were considered an artistic debacle. In addition, his stage realizations and his written account of what new theatre should be were misunderstood and defined Artaud as a prophet who nobody took seriously. His ideas received adequate attention only towards the end of his life when he was hiding in the Ivry psychiatric clinic and after he passed away.

In part, Artaud was responsible for his failures himself. The mental disorder he had suffered from since a young age was not a good prerequisite for practical life. He suffered from emotional instability, impulsive behaviour, inadaptability, suspicious attitudes, and frequent depression. He tried to alleviate his condition by using drugs, and he had to be supervised by psychiatrists. Throughout his life, he repeatedly tried to free himself from their supervision before he would surrender to them again. Artaud dreamed of accomplishing

Antonin Artaud.

great things; he established a theatre twice and travelled to Mexico but was disorganized and could not bear any other authority than himself. This was why his projects were short-lived.

Nonetheless, he had an undeniable talent and was a very charismatic person. In the early years of his career, he was an actor in the Atelier when it was led by Charles Dullin. He also acted for Pitoëff, Jouvet, and Komissarzhevsky. Artaud also worked as a film actor: his most successful roles included Marat (*Napoleon*, directed by Abel Gance, 1926–1928) and the monk Massieu (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*, directed by Carl Dreyer, 1928). He wrote a number of film scripts as well, but only a few have been preserved. Artaud was the director of the Bureau of Surrealist Research before he was expelled from it in 1927 after a row with André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Paul Eluard. This took place during a period when Artaud founded the Théâtre Alfred Jarry (1926–1928) alongside Robert Aron and Roger Vitrac. The three artists did not have their own theatre hall and were visitors who performed infrequently, usually in the morning. Their acting ensemble was poor to mediocre. Its few important members included Génica Athanasiou and Raymond Rouleau. In two seasons, the ensemble rehearsed four productions. The first one premiered in 1927 and featured a composition consisting of three parts. In it, Artaud presented a "musical sketch" entitled *Burnt Belly or the Mad Mother*, Aron presented his one-act play *Gigogne*, and Vitrac presented the play *The Mysteries of Love*. All three pieces were directed by Artaud. The second premiere of the theatre took place only some months later due to financial difficulties. Firstly, they screened Vsevolod Pudovkin's film *The Mother*, which was banned by the French censors, and in the second half they performed one act of Paul Claudel's *The Break of Noon* (but without having asked for the author's permission). At the end of the premiere night, Artaud made the scandal complete when he expressed the opinion of the surrealist Left and publicly called Claudel a "contemptible traitor" (referring to Claudel's service for the French bourgeois republic as the ambassador to the United States). The third premiere of Artaud's theatre in 1928 was similarly scandalous. The ensemble performed Strindberg's *A Dream Play*, and the surrealists, now Artaud's enemies, started a series of fights and brawls with the

police, who had been called in. At the fourth premiere, also in 1928, the audience saw Vitrac's play *Victor, or Power to the Children,* which aimed to ironically ridicule "the bourgeois family" as well as "immodest literature, hatred, surrealist poetry, nationalism, madness, shame and death".[227] At that time, Artaud was influenced by the surrealist movement, and, even though he got into a personal conflict with its members, he used similar creative principles. "Psychoanalysis, which lies at the heart of the surrealist approach, found its theatrical use," said Henri Béhar, who was a surrealist historian.[228]

It seems that Artaud's directorial interpretation inflicted the last premiere in the Théâtre Alfred Jarry with features of his schizophrenic personality, and the theatre suffered because of it. There were only a few repeat performances, and all activities were put on hold because artistic circles had started to completely ignore Artaud. However, some witnesses claim that even the four abovementioned modest productions documented Artaud's ideas, which he could otherwise only develop in theoretical programme-based published presentations. The most important idea was the requirement to thoroughly rid theatre of literature. Texts were only a general basis upon which the dominating directorial element was built. Artaud was clearly inclined towards a synthetic concept of theatre. He made use of visual symbols, the stylized movement of actors on stage, and peculiar and often artificial voice expressivity. He did not want his actors to apply psychology, because theatre was not supposed to be a realistic reflection of reality. False canvas decorations, pretence, and the copying of life on stage were all rejected and ridiculed. According to Artaud, theatre should remain what it was and not become a mirror or stand against life; rather it should be a part of life and one of its natural aspects. He kept returning to these ideas over and over, making them more precise until – as will be shown later – he made them one of the cornerstones of his own concept of theatre and performance art.

The Theatre of Cruelty

After the failure with the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, Artaud did not give up. He started studying literature, went to foreign theatre pro-

☛ *A Balinese theatre dancer.*

ductions and other spectacular events, and became enthusiastic about non-European theatre. In Artaud's view, there was way too much psychologization and domination of literature, while "in the Oriental theater of metaphysical tendencies [...] forms assume and extend their sense and their significations on all possible levels; or, if you will, they set up vibrations not on a single level, but on every level of the mind at once."[229]

Artaud was galvanized by Balinese dance theatre, which he saw performed at the Paris Colonial Exposition in 1931. It was like a revelation for him, because the performance confirmed almost everything he anticipated, wrote about, and desired as a director. He reached harmony between his inner world and the action on stage. His description of the Balinese dance performances was one of the clearest and most precise texts he ever published. He took in the work of the Balinese actors-dancers, their complex creations of movement, and their ritualistic behaviour in space:

> In fact, everything in this theater is calculated with an enchanting mathematical meticulousness. Nothing is left to chance or to personal initiative. It is a kind of superior dance, in which the dancers were actors first of all. Repeatedly they seem to accomplish a kind of recovery with measured steps. Just when they appear to be lost in the middle of an inextricable labyrinth of measures or about to overturn in the confusion, they have their own way of recovering equilibrium, a particular buttressing of the body, of the twisted legs, which gives the impression of a sopping rag being wrung out in tempo; and on three final steps, which lead them ineluctably to the middle of the stage, the suspended rhythm is completed, the measure made clear.[230]

Artaud's presentation about the performances of Balinese theatre and others, and especially his thoughts about the cleansing power of the

plague and theatre, the similarities between alchemy and theatre, and metaphysics in the production process were not actual reviews or scientific essays. He was always primarily interested in his own creative ideas and the themes he was contemplating. Artaud was determined to try again and establish a theatre for this purpose, and so he published two manifestos of the Theatre of Cruelty (1932 and 1933).

The Theatre of Cruelty (*théâtre de la cruauté*) became one of the most important terms describing Artaud's artistic vision as well as one of his most controversial and misconstrued ones. The idea unleashed a heavy criticism against Artaud's wish to stage violence and sadistic perversions and show murder and pools of blood. Artaud had to defend himself against such views. When his first manifesto was not properly understood, he wrote a second one which was more concise and refuted all falsehoods and distortions. Even that was not enough, however, and so Artaud set out to write explanatory letters to figures in contemporary French society. For him, cruelty was "rigor, implacable intention and decision, irreversible and absolute determination", and he added the following:

☛ *A Balinese theatre actor performing the Demon.*

> I employ the word "cruelty" in the sense of an appetite for life, a cosmic rigor and implacable necessity, in the gnostic sense of a living whirlwind that devours the darkness, in the sense of that pain apart from whose ineluctable necessity life could not continue; good is desired, it is the consequence of an act; evil is permanent. [T]he desire characteristic of Eros is cruelty since it feeds upon contingencies; death is cruelty, resurrection is cruelty, transfiguration is cruelty.[231]

Artaud incorporated into his Theatre of Cruelty all of his pain caused by misunderstandings as well as all his apocalyptic foreboding and visions. In his essay *The Theatre and the Plague*, he compares art and disease:

> In the theater as in the plague there is something both victorious and vengeful. [...] The plague takes images that are dormant, a latent disorder, and suddenly extends them into the most extreme gestures; the theater also takes gestures and pushes them as far as they will go. [...] It recovers the notion of symbols and archetypes which act like silent blows, rests, leaps of the heart, summons of the lymph, inflammatory images thrust into our abruptly wakened heads.[232]

In the late 1930s, when his mental disorder was reaching its peak and when all of Europe seemed to be suffering from an absence of rational thinking, Artaud wrote: "Never before, when it is life itself that is in question, has there been so much talk of civilization and culture. And there is a curious parallel between this generalized collapse of life at the root of our present demoralization and our concern for a culture [...]."[233] Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty was the reflection of man's helplessness in the face of forces he cannot control: the cosmos, the universal world, totalitarianism, power, the uncontrollability of the masses, and the mental tribulations which accompany people throughout their lives.

Artaud wished to use theatre to express the world. He sought a suitable form to fit his content, and, as mentioned above, he could not find it in the realist meticulousness of Western psychological theatre. Instead, he found it in primeval Oriental theatre, Indonesian

rituals, the native initiation rituals he went to examine in Mexico, and the ancient Celtic civilization that had ruled Europe long before Christianity. There was no room in such total theatre for the dominant position of a single individual, a human being, which was why actors did not play a significant role in it. Artaud wanted to strip the dramatic text of its priority and looked for theatre using a unique language that would be "half-way between gesture and thought":

> Here too intervenes (besides the auditory language of sounds) the visual language of objects, movements, attitudes, and gestures, [...] their combinations be carried to the point of becoming signs, making a kind of alphabet out of these signs. Once aware of this language in space, language of sounds, cries, lights, onomatopoeia, the theater must organize it into veritable hieroglyphs, with the help of characters and objects, and make use of their symbolism."[234]

☛ The Cenci, *1935. Antonin Artaud (right) in the role of count Cenci.*

For Artaud, theatre hieroglyphs meant something different than speech sounds, syllables, or solitary words; they were like synthetic signs of the Chinese alphabet using a complicated design to express entire terms, sets of thoughts and emotions, and multi-level artistic metaphors. This was why he imagined the Theatre of Cruelty as an art form that abandoned

> [o]ccidental usages of speech [that] turns words into incantations. It extends the voice. It utilizes the vibrations and qualities of the voice. It wildly tramples rhythms underfoot. It pile-drives sounds. [...] It ultimately breaks away from the intellectual subjugation of the language, by conveying the sense of a new and deeper intellectuality which hides itself beneath the gestures and signs raised to the dignity of particular exorcisms.[235]

It was through this concept that Artaud wished to overcome the old (and incorrect) separation of the mind and body. In his actor, they were not divided; on the contrary, they merged.

The Theatre of Cruelty was supposed to have a stunning effect on the audience. It was total theatre and an audio-visual synthesis of great artistic power. The actor's performance was complemented by musical instruments: not notoriously known ones but rather old, forgotten, or conversely novel instruments created solely for theatrical use which, because they were made by "special combinations or new alloys of metal, can attain a new range and compass, producing sounds or noises that are unbearably piercing". Light on stage was also meant to be composed of a "luminous vibration [that] must be investigated, along with new ways of spreading the light in waves, in sheets, in fusillades of fiery arrows". In his era, Artaud predicted the future of laser lights as well as electronic lighting and musical systems. Artaud rejected decorations in the old sense of the word, just as he had a distaste for standard costumes. Instead, he sought inspiration in the millennia of ritualistic functions of clothing. In addition to the actors, Artaud wished to place dummies, large masks, and objects of unusual size on stage. The entire stage space on which the Theatre of Cruelty was performed was to be made to communicate: "The problem is to make space speak, to feed and furnish it; like mines laid in

a wall of rock which all of a sudden turns into geysers and bouquets of stone."[236]

The fireworks of Artaud's imagination, however, remained only in his mind. When he finally opened his Theatre of Cruelty – in 1935 in the Wagram Hall in Paris – he only produced one piece, *The Cenci*. Seventeen repeat performances later, it was finished and the entire theatre finished with it. As it later turned out, this ended Artaud's theatre activities for good. He no longer directed plays or worked with actors on stage, and he never made a theatrical experiment.

Artaud wrote and directed the script about the Cenci family of Roman aristocrats, in which perverted relationships were the norm of the day, the blood of many innocent people was shed, and the stories became the subject of legends and works of literature. He based his text mostly on the tragedy about the Cenci written by Percy Bysshe Shelley and on the documents published on the matter by Stendhal. Artaud himself played the main role of Count Cenci. Apart from him, there were many well-known faces among the actors, including Roger Blin, who would later become a recognized director.

Artaud believed that an artwork prepared for the public so well in advance, theoretically justified in two manifestos as well as several newspaper articles, and a revolutionary staging procedure along with a provocative idea would stir up a social and political storm. He kept reminding himself about the famous premiere of Victor Hugo's *Hernani* in 1830, which heralded the revolutionary movement in France. However, nothing like that happened. At the premiere, the audience was entertained by the imperfection of Artaud's direction. Although the critics admitted that the company had tried to achieve something novel and fresh, they also clearly stated that this attempt had failed. The ungrateful public did not want to accept Artaud's concept; superficiality outweighed the potential of understanding the depth of his unkempt ideas and the forms he was offering.

The mentally unstable Artaud was in no state to get over this defeat, and what followed was a period of chaotic action. He left for several months to visit Mexico, where he lived almost without any means. However, he still managed to reach the native Tarahumara tribe and participated in its peyote initiation rituals. When he came back to

Europe, he set out on a clandestine journey to search for Celtic roots in Ireland. Upon his return, however, he was in a state that required institutional treatment. He then lived under medical supervision for ten years until his death. Even in his difficult medical state, however, he still managed to publish a collection of his most important studies which would become one of the fundamental sources of theatrical thought in the second half of the twentieth century. He entitled it *Theatre and Its Double* (Le Théâtre et son double).

The Double

Along with the Theatre of Cruelty, the "double" was a key concept for the understanding of Artaud's legacy. It originated from the conviction that the opposition between real life and art should be eliminated. In his view, theatre was not supposed to be artificial or something that only mirrored reality using special means. On the contrary, it was supposed to go hand in hand with life: not identify and merge with it, or stand against it, but rather join life and become one of its parts. In short, it was supposed to be its double. Artaud believed that this should apply to theatre and art as well as the entire culture. He protested against "the senseless constraint imposed upon the idea of culture by reducing it to a sort of inconceivable Pantheon, producing an idolatry no different from the image worship of those religions which relegate their gods to Pantheons", opposing "the idea of culture as distinct from life as if there were culture on one side and life on the other".[237] Culture and theatre should not close themselves off using their specific language, literary texts, and petrified forms. "[I]f for example a contemporary public does not understand *Oedipus Rex,* I shall make bold to say that it is the fault of *Oedipus Rex* and not of the public," Artaud claimed, adding: "Then we might even come to see that it is our veneration for what has already been created, however beautiful and valid it may be, that petrifies us, deadens our responses, and prevents us from making contact with that underlying power, call it thought-energy, the life force, the determinism of change, lunar menses, or anything you like."[238]

To remove the barriers between theatre and life, Artaud proposed that the theatre space be rearranged:

> We abolish the stage and the auditorium and replace them by a single site, without partition or barrier of any kind. [...] A direct communication will be re-established between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator, from the fact that the spectator, placed in the middle of the action, is engulfed and physically affected by it. [...] In effect, the absence of a stage in the usual sense of the word will provide for the deployment of the action in the four corners of the room. Particular positions will be reserved for actors and action at the four cardinal points of the room.[239]

Despite the fact that Artaud's actors were only one of the components of the whole ritualistic mystery of the Theatre of Cruelty (and, being an equal unit, fitted into the overall acoustic racket, visual flashes, and bright and colourful explosions), they never surrendered their original humanity. Because theatre is life's double, the actor remains the double of the live human. "To make use of his emotions as a wrestler makes use of his muscles, he has to see the human being as a Double, like the Ka of the Egyptian mummies, like a perpetual specter from which the affective powers radiate," Artaud claimed.[240] The actor was "an emotional athlete". In real life, the best trained people produce excellent physical and athletic performances, and in theatre exquisite actors give emotional performances. According to Artaud: "The actor is an athlete of the heart." What the athlete is required to do physically is what Artaud's actor is required to do as well. However, "the actor's course is altogether interior. All the tricks of wrestling, boxing, the hundred yard dash, high-jumping, etc., find analogous organic bases in the movement of the passions; they have the same physical points of support. With however this additional correction, that the movement is reversed: in breathing, for example, the actor's body is supported by his breath whereas the physical athlete's breath is supported by his body."[241]

Artaud considered breathing to be the most important component of the acting technique: "I have had the idea of employing this knowledge of the kinds of breathing not only in the actor's work but in the actor's preparation for his craft."[242] Artaud may have never had his own acting school or his apprentice actors, and indeed he had very few opportu-

nities to direct actors, but in his ideas he advanced much further than he could in real life. He examined how breathing was related to one's psychological state. In the process, he learned that a specific type of breathing is attached to each emotion. A modest play is characteristic for wide and deep breaths, while short and rippled breaths are typical in explosive moments. Artaud thought that assigning a type of breathing to specific emotions could help the actor evoke the emotion in question and help create the given character. Independently from Meyerhold, but in line with his concept, Artaud assumed that physical and breathing exercises could help the actor enter a state that is necessary to perform his role. "And an actor can arrive by means of breath at a feeling which he does not have," Artaud asserted.[243]

Under the influence of secret Cabala teaching, Artaud categorized the human breath into three groups: male, female, and androgynous. Each allowed for a combination of two principles:

Androgynous	Male	Female
Balanced	Expanding	Attracting
Neutral	Positive	Negative

Using his findings, Artaud described some of the basic points in the body in which emotions were concentrated and from which they surfaced. In the lower back, the physical power of the body and deep female emotions and sobbing were concentrated. The upper torso contained points of fury, attack, and biting. In the middle of the chest was the point of heroism, nobleness, and guilt.

> A high-pitched, self-mutilating anger begins with a clacking neuter and is localized in the plexus by a rapid feminine emptying; then, obstructed by the two shoulder-blades, turns like a boomerang and erupts in male sparks, which consume themselves without going further. In order to lose their aggressive quality they preserve the correlation of male breath: they expire fiercely.[244]

Artaud would insert inner movements into various parts of the body, let impulses run through them, and let them vibrate and connect with

the breathing rhythm until they exploded outwardly as the actor's expressions of emotions. Unfortunately, he could not continue with the next part of the categorization because, among other things, there was no one to experiment on. He remained at the stage of recommendations, relying on other artists to finish his work: "Others, if they have time, will prepare the complete anatomy of the system."[245] After Artaud, the quest for and the activation of new impulses and the elaboration of the technique of using physical resonators and vibrators was taken up by Jerzy Grotowski, who acknowledged Artaud's legacy. Jean-Louis Barrault remembers the most valuable lesson he learned from Artaud's visions about acting:

> Artaud turned my attention to the fact that our breath is pressed out by the vibrations of the diaphragm; however, it is controlled by a special centre of life activity. Roughly said, we have four centres of vitality: the visceral (inner) centre, the sensory and sexual centre, the centre of intellect, and nervous processes. Impulses from these centres vibrate the diaphragm so that the breath in the visceral centre strikes against the lower lip, in the sexual centre against the bottom parts of the throat, in the centre of intellect against the palate, and in the nervous centre against the upper lip. Thus, there is not just one vowel "a", but there are four "a"s: one made by the lower lip, another by the throat, another by the palate, and the fourth by the upper lip. Therefore, we don't have just five vowels, but in the reality of spoken language there are twenty.[246]

☛ *Antonin Artaud as count Cenci.*

In order for Artaud to achieve a total effect on the audience, he had to rehearse everything thoroughly. In others he admired the mathematical perfection of their direction and acting. He explicitly rejected improvisation and

fostered a vision that did not wish to focus on liberating actors and developing their independence:

> My plays have nothing to do with Copeau's improvisations. However thoroughly they are immersed in the concrete and external, however rooted in free nature and not in the narrow chambers of the brain, they are not, for all that, left to the caprice of the wild and thoughtless inspiration of the actor, especially the modern actor who, once cut off from the text, plunges in without any idea of what he is doing. I would not care to leave the fate of my plays and of the theater to that kind of chance. No.[247]

For Artaud, the actor was not the same instrument as a ray of light or the vibration of sound. Nonetheless, the actor was the main part of his hieroglyph, the essence of the overall architecture of a production. He wanted the same thing he admired in the Balinese:

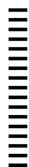
> These mechanically rolling eyes, pouting lips, and muscular spasms, all producing methodically calculated effects which forbid any recourse to spontaneous improvisation, these horizontally moving heads that seem to glide from one shoulder to the other as if on rollers, everything that might correspond to immediate psychological necessities, corresponds as well to a sort of spiritual architecture, created out of gesture and mime but also out of the evocative power of a system, the musical quality of a physical movement, the parallel and admirably fused harmony of a tone.[248]

Artaud did not leave behind an acting school or a group of authentic students. His contribution was of a general nature, intended primarily for the entire world and only after that for the theatre or one of its elements. However, it has provided much inspiration for acting. In the first half of the twentieth century, Artaud was among the most resolute and vociferous proponents of ridding theatre of its dependence on literature. He accentuated the non-verbal expression of emotions and thoughts and the symbolic depictions of reality by actors. And, perhaps more than others, he found inspiration in ancient rituals. Synthetic theatre in his understanding did not mean the blending of several art forms but rather the presentation of a new quality that

melted individual arts into a burgeoning and multi-faceted theatrical form. In this form, the original features would disappear, allowing for a synthesis in a new precious material. The actor was fused into this form just like the other arts, and the resulting theatrical matter would then enthuse the spectator.

Artaud's doubles – life and theatre, man and actor – remained mostly in his visions. His inspiring ideas were not accepted by theatres until the second half of the twentieth century. Artaud's conception of cruelty, as explained in his manifestos, has much in common with the philosophy of the theatre of the absurd. This prophet, who was so often ridiculed during his lifetime, was acknowledged when his ideas were taken up by such famous actors and directors as Peter Brook, Charles Marowitz, Jean-Louis Barrault, Jerzy Grotowski, Carmelo Bene, Julian Beck, Judith Malina, Roger Blin, Jerôme Savary, and the creators of happenings. They, as well as many others, came to elaborate each in their own way what Artaud had long predicted in his semi-crazed visions. After his ground-breaking initiative, any attempt at total theatre using hypnosis and trance could not happen without the symbolic metaphor of his Theatre of Cruelty and without addressing Artaud's propositions for acting and the visual and musical expression of this metaphor. No such theatre could avoid his call for the theatre as an equal and fully-fledged double of life.

Jerzy Grotowski's Poor Theatre



In the twentieth century, Polish theatre could boast a whole list of exquisite artists whose importance went beyond Polish borders and who became part of European theatre history. Leaving out playwrights, actors, and stage designers, the list of the most eminent Polish directors on its own is extensive and includes Juliusz Osterwa, Leon Schiller, Wilam Horzyca, Stefan Jaracz, Tadeusz Kantor, Kazimierz Dejmek, Konrad Swinarski, Adam Hanuszkiewicz, Jerzy Jarocki, Józef Szajna, Henryk Tomaszewski, Andrzej Wajda, and Krystian Lupa. The list could go on with names from younger generations. These directors staged dozens of unforgettable productions and have left behind many followers and students. If we were to select one Polish theatremaker whose impact on acting was the strongest and who was an excellent director, producer, and creator of distinctive poetics as well as a piercingly sharp expert on acting art and a reformer of modern acting, the name that must be mentioned above all others is Jerzy Grotowski [11 August 1933, Rzeszów–14 January 1999, Pontedera]. Grotowski created productions which have ranked among the best in Polish theatre, and he set up one of the most original acting schools of the twentieth century. Of course, it is difficult to compare these achievements, as there could be no productions without actors, who in turn could not improve and advance without the possibility to act in them. This is what Grotowski's contribution is mostly about. In terms of how his work influenced European theatre from the 1960s, it can be stated that over the years Grotowski's contribution to the art of acting has grown and become more important in its long-term relevance and significance. In fact, it has transcended successive historical periods and instructed the development of theatrical style.

Grotowski was primarily an eminent director; however, historically his contribution to the art, technique, and teaching of acting has been much more important.

He started in Krakow's Theatre of Poetry by staging a production of Ionesco's *The Chairs* (1957, co-directed by Aleksandra Mianowska). The Theatre of Poetry later became known under the name Teatr Kameralny as the second stage of the Krakow Old Theatre (Teatr Stary). After nearly two decades of theatre work in Opole and Wroclaw, where he had shaped and expanded his programme, in the 1970s Grotowski made the decision to give up any activity in traditional institutions, and he shifted his focus onto a different theatrical approach. He called this approach "paratheatrical". Grotowski left the theatre, which seemed too narrow for him, and started working with actors and other interesting parties on theatre work rooted in ancient rituals and the unity of man and nature, which he considered to have deeper meaning.

In terms of the development of Polish and European acting, the

☛ *Kazuo Ohno, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Eugenio Barba, and Jerzy Grotowski during a meeting in Holstebro in 1994.*

first two decades of Grotowski's work were the most productive and beneficial. During those years, his effort was concentrated within the theatre and was able to intensively penetrate an actor's psyche, physical apparatus, and action while developing the acting technique. Later, when he left the theatre in his quest for new philosophical questions, he did not altogether abandon the issues of acting art. However, by then he considered acting to be only a part of a whole extra-theatrical reality that was losing its artistic features and was acquiring universally human ones related to ritual and anthropology. In this sense, one cannot omit his later contribution, which started after 1970 and was confirmed after 1975 when he announced his project entitled *The Mountain of Flame*. However, from the perspective of improving acting art in the strictest sense, he did not produce such important impulses as before.

Besides other things, Grotowski had one quality: he could always give his intentions apt names, concisely formulating the essence of what he was trying to achieve and distinguishing one stage of development from another. This is why his lifetime's work can be divided into several stages with names given to them by Grotowski himself: the Poor Theatre, Holiday, the Mountain Project, Objective Drama, and the Ritual Games. As far as acting was concerned, the Poor Theatre was the most important stage of Grotowski's work.

The Poor Theatre

When Eugenio Barba, Grotowski's apprentice and later fellow theatremaker, was compiling the first selection of books containing the ideas and lectures of his former teacher, he could not omit his 1965 study entitled *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Barba put the study on the first pages of the book and used it to give the whole book its title. This made sense, of course, because in the essay Grotowski had sketched the basic philosophy of his concept of theatre and acting at the time. It was a typical introductory contemplation, which is essential to understanding his theatrical opinion.

In the text, Grotowski rejected the old idea of theatre synthesis known from Richard Wagner under the term *Gesamtkunstwerk*. For Gro-

towski, theatre was neither a fusion of arts nor "a synthesis of disparate creative disciplines".[249] The synthesis of literature, visual art, architecture, lighting effects, and acting created under the leadership of the director confirms the existence of "the contemporary theatre which we readily call the 'Rich Theatre' – rich in flaws."[250] The Rich Theatre feeds on the progressive creative approaches of other art disciplines and thus destroys its peculiar and distinctive character. This is partly due to artistic eclecticism, which can go so far that it tries to make theatre equal to film or television, attempting to compensate for its own natural limitations by aspiring to make "total theatre" in such a form as had already been successfully attempted by Max Reinhardt. This was theatre whose staged form would be perfected by means of amalgamating various arts with the technical equipment on stage. While Grotowski was formulating his future programme, Polish theatre was still under the influence of the concept of "monumental theatre", which had been created by the director Leon Schiller. Grotowski postulated an entirely different path. Rich theatre did not satisfy him. "This is all nonsense," Grotowski said.[251] This was a path that would not lead to success. He proposed a different direction:

Zygmunt Molik in Shakuntala. *Opole, 1960. Directed by Jerzy Grotowski.*

one towards a "poor theatre". It would mean getting rid of decorations, freeing the stage, eliminating the division into the stage and auditorium, abandoning the use of lighting effects as well as the attachment and drawing of wrinkles on actors' faces, and simplifying costumes as much as possible to allow the actors to only use their muscles and inner impulses. Grotowski also gave up on music, which he considered to be an external element; after all, the theatre allowed sounds to be created using a composition of human voices or thuds and claps made directly on the stage. The text can only be a part of theatre if it is aurally, intonationally, or musically made by the actor. The essence of theatre is in what comes out of the actor and in the actor's relationship with the spectator.

In this stage of his work, Grotowski simultaneously formulated his theory and practically executed productions to make his ideas a reality. He also used his experience as a director as well as his creative artefacts to write theoretical generalizations which then contributed to the transformation and development of modern theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. This favourable interconnection of theatre as an artistic laboratory – in which

Zbigniew Cynkutis as Kordian. Opole, 1962. Directed by Jerzy Grotowski.

productions were created, ideas were formulated, and acting preparation was conducted – only amplified the effect of Grotowski's work. Not all theatre reformers were lucky enough to have had the opportunity to work so comprehensively. As has already been mentioned, Adolphe Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, and Antonin Artaud fulfilled their visions only partially, whereas Konstantin Stanislavsky and Grotowski fully succeeded in fusing theory, practice, and education. This might have been successful also for Vsevolod Meyerhold had he not been politically persecuted in the 1930s.

After Grotowski left Krakow, where he no longer saw opportunities for further advancement, he settled in the small Polish town of Opole. It was there that he was given an underground space in 1959. It was named for its small dimensions as Teatr 13 Rzędów (Theatre of 13 Rows). Grotowski took charge of the theatre together with the dramaturg Ludwik Flaszen, who also worked as a literary and theatre critic. After a short time, the two artists put together an ensemble consisting of actors who were dissatisfied with their former theatres and school graduates who were willing to leave such an important cultural centre as Krakow and move to a small town devastated by the war and hurriedly abandoned by its original German inhabitants. From the very outset, the Theatre of 13 Rows was created to be something unique because it aimed to gather artists from all kinds of disciplines. Among other things, the theatre building was planned to be used for visual art exhibitions and holding meetings of the Circle of Friends of the Theatre of 13 Rows, which was intended to overcome the lack of interest among local audiences in going to performances. Early on, the company was joined by such actors as Zygmunt Molik, Antoni Jahołkowski, Rena Mirecka, and Tadeusz Bartkowiak. Then in 1961 this list was extended by others, including Zbigniew Cynkutis, Ryszard Cieślak, and Maja Komorowska. All of them were mouldable and artistically ambitious young people; they were the first actors of the Poor Theatre and would later achieve international recognition alongside their teacher.

The Theatre of 13 Rows changed its name several times. Each change was an expression of the leadership's intent: from 1962 it was the Theatre Laboratory of 13 Rows; after 1965, when the company mo-

ved to Wroclaw, it was called the Theatre Laboratory of 13 Rows–the Institute of Acting Methods Research; from 1966 it was known as the Institute of Acting Methods Research–Theatre Laboratory; from 1970 it was known as the Actor's Institute–Theatre Laboratory; and from

Akropolis *based on the text by Stanisław Wyspiański. Opole, 1962. Directed by Jerzy Grotowski.*

1975 it was called the Institute Laboratory.[252] The names also emphasized the research role of the theatre, because Grotowski wanted to make productions as much as he wanted to develop acting methods and improve the acting technique of his company's members.

Grotowski started by thoroughly studying Stanislavsky's system. This was possible because in 1955 and 1956 he had attended a course for directors held at the GITIS theatre school in Moscow. As an actor he was then "possessed by Stanislavsky", only to state later that the Russian director's aesthetics made him "feel distant".[253] However, he highly appreciated that Stanislavsky "formulated the necessity of laboratory work and rehearsals as creative processes without spectators. And also the obligation for the actor to train."[254]

Zbigniew Cynkutis (Faust) and Tune Bull (Beautiful Helen) in The Tragical History of The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, *based on Christopher Marlowe. Opole, 1963. Directed by Jerzy Grotowski.*

Grotowski also learned how to work with actors at Jean Vilar's seminars in 1957 and from Emil František Burian in 1958. This preparation and Grotowski's mature ideas about theatre, alongside his extraordinary collaborators in Opole and later in Wroclaw and a partially more favourable political climate in Poland in the 1960s, aided Grotowski in staging productions that were original in their directorial style from the very beginning. This was not typical in Polish theatre at that time. In addition, Grotowski displayed a purposeful unity and inner continuity in his artistic programme.

When preparing his productions, Grotowski would always start with working on the script. He did not merely produce plays; he became a literary editor who rewrote the texts according to his needs. He was the director of the plays as well as their co-author. That was why the name of the original author of a text would always include the words "based on" or "after". When Grotowski moved to Opole, he staged a production based on Jean Cocteau's play *Orpheus* in 1959. In 1960 he staged *Cain* after George Gordon Byron, *Faust* after Johann Wolf-

gang Goethe (in Poznan), *Mystery-Bouffe* after Vladimir Mayakovsky, and *Shakuntala* after Kālidāsa. In 1961 he staged *Dziady* (Forefather's Eve), which was an adaptation of a poem by Adam Mickiewicz. Such a difficult and mostly romantic or romanticizing repertory allowed Grotowski to escape the contemporary realist dogma, and from early on he set his course towards a metaphorical expressivity that was inspired by the medieval tradition of mystery and miracle plays as well as by Asian mythology. He could also imbibe the first productions with traces of irony, and he kept a distance from the original texts. Grotowski recalled:

> We prepared Kālidāsa's *Shakuntala*, where we explored the possibilities of creating signs in European theatre. Our intention was not devoid of mischievousness: we wanted to create a performance which would give an image of oriental theatre, not authentic, but as Europeans imagine it to be. Thus, it was an ironic image of ideas about the East as something mysterious and puzzling. But under the surface of those ironic explorations, which were directed against the audience, there was a hidden intention – a desire to discover a system of signs applicable in theatre, in our civilization.[255]

☛ The Constant Prince, *based on the text by Pedro Calderón and Juliusz Słowacki. Wroclaw, 1965. Directed by Jerzy Grotowski.*

The greatest productions directed by Grotowski were created in the second part of his Opole-Wroclaw period, when he staged *Kordiana* based on Juliusz Słowacki and *Akropolis* based on a text by Stanisłav Wyspiański (this production had five variants) in 1962, *The Tragical History of The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* based on Christopher Marlowe in 1963, and the critically unsuccessful *Hamlet Study* based on texts by William Shakespeare and Stanisłav Wyspiański in 1964. Then Grotowski staged his two pinnacle works: *The Con-*

stant Prince based on the text by Pedro Calderón and Juliusz Słowacki in 1965 (the premiere took place in Grotowski's new place of operation in Wroclaw and the production had three versions) and *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* in 1968 (two variants) using quotations from the Bible and texts by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Thomas Stearns Eliot, and Simone Weil.

In an earlier production named *Akropolis*, Grotowski's ensemble compared the ancient Hellenic culture – the period of humanity's great hope – with the worst human experience of modern times. The plot did not take place at the Acropolis in Athens or at Wawel Castle in Krakow, where the literary author located it, but in a Nazi concentration camp. It was a collective production in the true sense of the word; the actors presented expressive excerpts of the horrors and pains the camp had inflicted on its inhabitants. Chimney pipes were used to gradually build a monstrous iron construction that filled the interconnected space of the stage and auditorium. On this stage, the human face, body, and psyche would gradually disappear (the stage was designed by Józef Szajna). "Each character has an imprinted grimace on their face from start to finish," said Ludwik Flaszen.[256] Their speech had various forms from babbling and murmuring all the way to melodic and artistic recitation. The costumes were stylized prison clothes full of holes, and the bodies moved in cramps and deformed motions. The entire scene was reminiscent of a horrid version of Babylon full of people who were strangers to each other yet who had a common fate of being sentenced to death. Because *Akropolis* was a production which still manifested the initial stages of the development of the technique of acting and directing, the company members frequently used external means to play their roles. The resulting effect came as a reflection of a common ritual of extinction and destruction in which both the actors and spectators participated, being present in a single undivided space yet still separated by what seemed like a glass wall.

In Grotowski's next staged production, based on Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus,* the actor Zbigniew Cynkutis achieved maximal internalization in his role as Faustus. The production became one of the first great examples of the company's acting art. It demonstrated a revolutionary execution of the idea of unifying the space of the stage

and auditorium: an idea that had emerged earlier and originated in Grotowski's effort to give the performances the form of a common theatre ritual. The stage designer Jerzy Gurawski arranged the auditorium differently for each production; in this case he placed seats for the spectators around two large platforms reminiscent of long sacrificial tables. The spectators could watch the confessional performance recapitulating Faustus's life from a minimal distance, almost touching the actors. Grotowski modelled the story on medieval patterns: baptism, fighting temptation, miracles, martyrdom, and the departure of the human soul. In his version, Mephistopheles had a twofold form – female (Rena Mirecka) and male (Antoni Jahołkowski) – and he not only fought God but also meted out punishment on his behalf.[257] The director and his actors brought this production close to black magic. Zbigniew Cynkutis lived the experience of his role of Faustus with so much intensity that he often became ecstatic. He remembers the experience: "The work on Faustus was a new method that Grot used on me – he prompted me with my most intimate associations, both of us worked for hours on end, I encountered resistances and overcoming them wasn't easy and required time."[258] The technique he used allowed the actors to submit to their inner impulses and use them to divulge their deepest emotional corners.

Ryszard Cieślak as the Constant Prince.

After the *Hamlet Study*, the following two productions confirmed the trend of actors internalizing their roles. In *The Constant Prince* this was unforgettably expressed by Ryszard Cieślak in the leading role and in *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* by the whole ensemble (Antoni Jahołkowski, Zygmunt Molik, Zbigniew Cynkutis, Rena Mirecka, Elizabeth Albahaca, Stanisław Ścierski, and Ryszard Cieślak).

The Constant Prince is a tragic character confronted with brute force, yet one who is

internally independent and seemingly indestructible. The director placed the story in a space confined within tall wooden walls surrounded by spectators on the top and highlighted by a simple platform at the bottom: the place where the tortured prince finds his refuge. It is a sacrificial place visited by a man of virtue and unyielding strength. Józef Kelera described his impression of Cieślak's performance:

> A sort of psychic illumination emanates from the actor. I cannot find any other definition. In the culminating moments of the role, everything that is technique is as though illuminated from within … At any moment the actor will levitate … He is in a state of grace. And all around him, this "cruel theatre" with its blasphemies and excesses is transformed into a theatre in the state of grace.[259]

Zbigniew Osiński claimed that "Cieślak's creation was an example of 'a total act', consummated in creative action, just as Grotowski understood it."[260] The result of this performance became a demonstration of Grotowski's idea of "a total act". This was not the actor using his body and mind, nor his acting technique or the character he portrayed, but rather the intangible vibrations he evoked and the molecules of energy he transmitted; all this was the result of years of exhausting exercises and practice. On this occasion, with the flawlessly aesthetic expressivity in which flexed muscles and guttural speech broke away from physicality and shallowness, Polish critics were reminded of Juliusz Osterwa's Reduta Theatre in the 1920s and 1930s. Both theatremakers successfully idealized beauty and hegemonized the soul over matter. Grotowski, however, did not deem this to be the ultimate goal; as it turned out, it was only another phase because he was not interested in excessive spirituality but rather in a ritual of shared experience. He was after the mystical meaning of theatre and life, an experience that would spiritually rouse the participants and stimulate them to act and achieve full self-liberation.

Even though Grotowski's contemplations contain no sociological analyses about the human essence and he openly rejected political theatre, his productions – especially those staged in the late 1960s – must be viewed in their social context. In many countries of Europe and America, the 1960s were a period of revolt and increased effort

at reforming the declining authoritarian regimes. The ethos of *The Constant Prince*, though not ostentatiously so, also had the same scope of influence; it galvanized both domestic and international audiences in spite of its philosophy of not standing up against violence. If the ethical message of this production was still not obvious to all, the next production, *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*, must have made it absolutely clear. It was staged in 1968 at a time when the political events of the 1960s were reaching a climax (with or without success) as people around the world were calling for more freedom.

Unfortunately, even this was not enough and Grotowski sometimes met with misunderstanding both in Poland and abroad. Raymonde Temkine, author of a French book on Grotowski, had to defend the director when he first visited France. After several performances in the United States, there were other reactions as well; for example, Walter Kerr stated that: "If it was supposed to be mime, then it was insufficient in facial gestures; if it should have been a dance, it did not impress anyone; if it was a performance by actors, it was not worth presenting onstage." Lee Strasberg agreed.[261] Grotowski also found many opponents and mistrust at home. One of his classmates, Andrzej Brzeziński, reminisced after many years: "I will never forget how once he told me in a café about his first plans. And suddenly, he started laughing out loud. I was perplexed and he said: 'You know what? They fell for it!' What he meant was his theatremaking."[262]

Ryszard Cieślak (The Constant Prince) and Rena Mirecka (Feniksana).

Nevertheless, when rehearsing *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*, Grotowski was able to rely on the work of his people to such a degree that he managed to extensively involve the actors in the creative and authorial process. It was an expression of a democratization process within the company and the result of the long-term coordination of all its members. But even before that, as has been suggested above, Grotowski did not take a literary text and apply

Laboratory Theatre in Wroclaw before the production of Apocalyptis Cum Figuris.

it to his productions accurately or without any changes. He would usually adopt the basic theme, plot, and characters of the staged play, but never all of the details, action, and lines from the literary text. In *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*, the original literary text was just an initial stimulus. The acting company put the ready script aside and set out on a journey of collective improvisation. Actor Stanisłav Ścierski remembered the rehearsals:

> [T]here was a kind of initial outline – a rough draft of the text – that Grotowski prepared, based on *Samuel Zborowski*. It also included suggestions about the casting of the roles, and there was even a sort of discussion about this draft. [...] However, when we began to work on our individual and collective études – without using the text from this draft, not even as a "support", just keeping it as if on the fringes of our memory – it emerged that the seed, the essence of these études was leading us away from *Samuel Zborowski* and towards the Gospels. Not in terms of the Gospels' literary or religious dimensions, but in terms of what was alive in them that was present within us – just as time is alive in us, in a human way. And this was the direction we took.[263]

Such an improvisational approach in the production rehearsal process would later be applied in other Polish theatres as well as in theatres elsewhere in the world. In 1968 such an approach was unusual and innovative, if not outright revolutionary. The spectators of *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* were assigned the role of witnesses. They were seated on wooden benches surrounding the stage (in the later version, the seats

☛ Apocalyptis Cum Figuris. *Wroclaw, 1968. Directed by Jerzy Grotowski. Ryszard Cieślak (the Simpleton). The spectators are seated on the floor, next to the walls.*

had gone and the spectators would sit on the ground or stand around leaning against the walls) and thus became part of a silent decoration. The Biblical stories were acted out in front of the audience (but not for the audience). Apart from people, the auditorium featured only elementary items – not props – symbolizing life and death: a loaf of bread, a bucket with water, a knife, some candles, and a couple of spotlights pointing upwards.

The plot is hard to recapitulate. A group of people from the present begins to think – for sheer sport, it seems – that a random passer-by is Christ (the Simpleton – performed by Ryszard Cieślak). The people themselves think they are personages from the Gospels. One behaves as if he were Simon Peter (Antoni Jahołkowski), another is John (Stanisław Ścierski), and then there is Judas (Zygmunt Molik), Lazarus (Zbigniew Cynkutis), and Mary Magdalene (Elizabeth Albahaca or Rena Mirecka). Their initial idea then turns into an interplay of mutual reproach, aggression, and refusal. The boisterous entertainment that ensues produces the posing of some essential questions and the realization that people do not need Christ and keep ridiculing him, chasing him away. All the changes, the shifts

of emphasis from the present to Biblical action, and the multiple metaphors were staged as a ritual with obscured meaning. Words and sentences were unfinished, and the movements of bodies were ethereal, having mixed voices and sounds. The audience perceived this mostly subliminally; their perception was based more on feelings than knowledge or understanding. The total act, as desired by Grotowski, was not related solely to the individual characters of the production but to the whole room of the Laboratory Theatre. Both the actors and spectators were part of the total act.

Konstanty Puzyna published an account of the production. It contains detailed descriptions and analyses of the directorial and dramaturgical concept and the role of the actors in the production's creation and execution. It also discusses the metaphorical imagery and associations, interprets the layers thereof, and presents the production's technical aspects and acting creations. Puzyna recognized that such an approach made the production similar to James Joyce's ingenious novel *Ulysses*:

> To encompass the whole history of mankind in a small contemporary event; to transpose the history of Christ on to a drunken foolishness and timelessness and spacelessness on to the concrete of everyday life; to interweave with allusions to various cultures and epochs; to bind with analogies everything with everything; to change the river of time into simultaneity; to create an associational field almost infinite but not arbitrary, to the contrary – rigorously organized by the matter of the work – it is precisely in this that the relationship and similar aims lie.[264]

In February 1970, soon after the premiere of *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*, Grotowski made an appearance in Wroclaw and said the following: "We live in a 'post-theatre' age. What is coming is not a new wave of theatre but something that will take the place occupied by it."[265] After that, Grotowski's company did not rehearse any new productions and only did repeat performances of older pieces. *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* ended the Poor Theatre phase and remained the pinnacle of Grotowski's theatrical production.

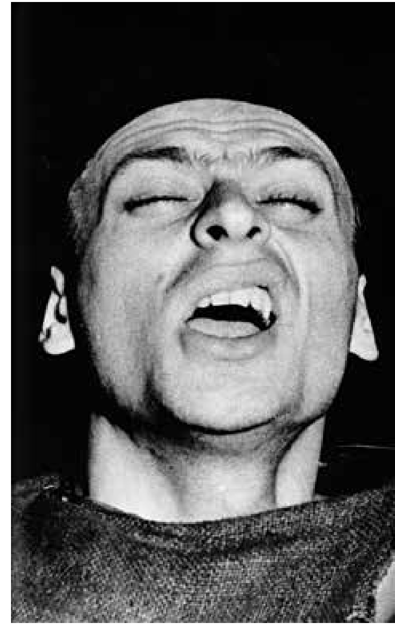
The Laboratory

Actors cannot progress towards Grotowski's Poor Theatre gradually and painlessly. They have to go for it vigorously, tear off the mask of superficiality, overcome limitations, and remove barriers. Collectively they break stereotypes by means of transgression that "provides the shock which rips off the mask, enabling us to give ourselves nakedly to something which is impossible to define but which contains Eros and Caritas".[266] The Poor Theatre makes roles form into signs, and actors bare human reactions all the way to the bone – to the fundamental structure. Therefore, the Poor Theatre is primarily actor-based theatre; it feeds on an actor's dominant exclusivity, absolute presence, and irreplaceable role in communicating with the audience. Actors in the Poor Theatre are saints who sacrifice themselves. They express such reflexes as if they were just being born. Grotowski's director is only "a spiritual instructor" with a limitless desire to make the actors (and not the director) express the height of their abilities.

Osiński breaks up the Poor Theatre phase into two smaller stages: while the first is just the Poor Theatre (1959–1964), the second is "the religion of mankind" (1965–1970).[267] This gradation expressed in two metaphors is justified because the Poor Theatre was strongly focused on actors and their fundamental and most natural psychological and physical reactions, which was why these actors became a true centre of the universe and were worshipped as the highest idol. For Grotowski, the human actor was increasingly in the centre of attention. His initial directorial focus in Opole was on production, but it steadily shifted towards the actors. At first, Grotowski concentrated his attention on the craft and creativity of the actors, and then progressively more on all aspects of their personalities (i.e., not just as actors, but as whole human beings:[268] *Faustus*, *The Constant Prince*, and *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*).

The foundation of the distinctive poetics of Grotowski's production style was his own acting school. Grotowski was not fond of schools where actors were forced to have classes in such things as diction, voice training, acrobatics, gymnastics, classical and modern dance, and mime. He believed that what actors needed was not mechanical

exercises but rather training in diverse skills; therefore, they should be trained in gymnastics, acrobatics, dance, and even gesture. "In actor training, in exercises, one can, however, find a false satisfaction that allows one to avoid the act of personal sincerity."[269]



☛ *Zbigniew Cynkutis – the mask made by facial muscles for* Akropolis.

Grotowski did not want to always impose new techniques on actors or teach them new tricks and skilful ways to capture their characters. He worked in the opposite direction: he led the actors towards getting rid of what was superfluous, forgetting their rehearsed movements, and relaxing enough to let their innermost essence get to the surface. Taking control of one's body did not mean mastering gymnastic exercises, dance variations, different manners of speech, expressions of historical styles, or ways of behaviour. "Gymnastics does not relax. Gymnastics restricts the body within a specific number of improved movements and reactions. [...] The body is not relaxed. The body is trained. That is an immense difference."[270] This is how the body only develops blocks, which is not right. The body should be allowed to live. Instead of asking "How can this be done?" the actor should ask: "What must I not do?"[271] During group exercises, while actors were being trained and educated and during the preparation of the production, the first thing to do was to define the elements that were obstructing the actors' natural reactions and then eliminate these obstacles. Grotowski took a negative approach, known as *via negativa*, whereby actors were not supposed to develop their abilities but rather remove any obstacles. Actors had to be asked: "What are the obstacles blocking your way towards the total act which must engage all your psycho-physical resources, from the most instinctive to the most rational? We must find out what it is that hinders him in the way of respiration, movement and – most important of all – human contact."[272] All actors had to explore inside themselves for the places of inner resistance.

☛ Akropolis. *Opole, 1962. Ewa Lubowiecka, Antoni Jahołkowski, Maja Komorowska, Zygmunt Molik.*

Actors could make use of "plastic exercises" (at times also referred to as "physical exercises"). Even the smallest and slightest movement of the body originates in "impulses". Actors should try to find, learn, and feel elementary stimuli that are the primary impulses for any action. Grotowski described impulses as inner tension, pressure preceding physical action, and kinds of primal thought or emotion expressed by subtle movement or sound. They are the sources of life. According to Grotowski, impulses were the morphemes of action. Actors were expected to discover such details inside themselves, thoroughly record them, and then persistently repeat them. Such details are like moulds into which impulses are poured; new impulses can then change the details. If actors could meticulously manage to elaborate a certain number of details, they could subsequently arrange them, find a common rhythm, and start creating a larger composition. If, however, some of the details were not practised well enough, the body would immediately decline into a "protoplasmic" stage and spill into an undefined and shapeless form that was not capable of expressing inner impulses. Discipline and precision were thus bound to a spontaneity of impulses and had to exist in a mutual relationship.

Grotowski's actors were supposed to give an expression solely on their own behalf. Actors did not need to embody another person in order to be able to cover as many details as possible of their physical and vocal reactions and use them in an unhindered, uninhibited, and

rapid manner when responding to various profound impulses. It was not the actors' task to step into someone else's shoes and become a fictitious literary hero; they should express themselves and grow out of their physical and spiritual essence. Actors were supposed to de-materialize on stage and become an idea and ethereal cluster of what the characters in question carried within themselves. After all, theatre should be an electric charge and not a material and realist copy of the world.

Many years later, when Grotowski shifted his emphasis to non-theatrical activities, he kept working on advancing actors' skills. Thomas Richards, one of Grotowski's students and followers, and a former collaborator, analysed the differences between his approach and the Stanislavsky system. He pointed out that the difference between Stanislavsky's and Grotowski's work concerned "the character".[273] In Stanislavsky's theatre, the character was an entirely new being that originated as a fusion of the features of characters described by the author and the features created by actors. The character was tangible and "lived" on stage. In Grotowski's productions, however, the character was projected onto a screen that was made available to the wider public, and in turn this screen protected actors against immediate contact with the audience. Actors did not identify with the character and were not "tangible" during the performance even though they were within reach of the spectators.

The essential difference between the two acting techniques was in the way Grotowski kept developing his perception of impulses. At the end of his life, Stanislavsky allegedly understood the significance of impulses and wished to research them further; unfortunately, his death prevented him from doing so. That was why he only elaborated the superficial concept that the development of impulses is bound to the expressions of the eyes and face, or, as Richards put it, with the peripheries of the body.[274] For Grotowski, impulses were connected with the essence of physical action and immanent expressions of actors' bodies. Stanislavsky, as we know, believed that what mattered most during the process of actors' preparation and production staging was the connection between the actors' psychology and the characters' physical expression. Conversely, what Grotowski considered most

important was the actors' intimacy and the impulses leading from it to physical and voice expression. For him, working with physical action was an opportunity to hit a live source of impulses. It was not a reconstruction of everyday life. [275]

Such a transformation of physical actors into performative and almost unreal images facilitated the process of eliminating inhibitions. The actors knew that they were fully baring themselves but were also aware that they were transmuting into something that was no longer part of their own physical conventions and had none of their personal history, personal shapes, or matter. It was just their body's memory that was no longer separated into the actors' "self" and the notion of "my body." "We can only break the barriers when we accept ourselves,"[276] Grotowski claimed. His training and exercises did not provide self-improvement but started the process of actors' self-disclosure and the transformation from a material essence to an ethereal, intangible, and spiritual one. The exercises were not aimed at learning a general acting technique of sorts; they construed the technique of acting as something that was internal and which rose from authenticity and the depth of actors' personalities.

Actors frequently suffer from blocks when they attempt to make full use of the voice and sound capacity of their body. For this, Grotowski had a basic recommendation as well: "One should trust in one's own nature."[277] All bad habits should be eliminated. Actors' vocal chords had to be able to "produce sound reflexes so quickly that thought – which would remove all spontaneity – has no time to intervene."[278] Cieślak remembered how his teacher helped him get rid of his cramped voice:

> After studying acting for four years, it turned out I had no voice. That is, a theatre voice, a stage voice. Every time I started to say something, my throat would constrict, I'd get a fright, and my voice would be blocked. The first thing Grotowski said (because he noticed it immediately) was that I had been taught to use excessively regular breathing. What does that mean? It means that my own organic breathing was different than the one I had learned. In other words, I had acquired this breathing in school. [...] Back then, as far as I remember

> (at the very beginning of my work), Grotowski told me: "Lie down on the floor in a foetal position and forget who you are. Breathe normally and try to fall asleep in this position."[279]

Actors have long been prejudiced about what type of breathing was "more correct" and what type was allegedly "unprofessional". However, this is all nonsense because all types of breathing – through the belly, diaphragm, or chest – are justified and can be used for different purposes. Actors often block their larynxes, because they believe a constricted breath allows them to use longer breathing intervals. But the opposite is true. Nothing should obstruct the free flow of sound; the body needs enough air, and actors should be able to make all resonators in their bodies fully audible. Grotowski said that in order to use one's voice, one should use deep, open, and natural breathing. The body has several "resonators", i.e., places that amplify sound and give it shape, and "vibrators", i.e., organs which vibrate to produce sound. Grotowski would make his actors explore every single part of their body to locate a great number of resonators. These could be put to various kinds of use and evoke diverse associations. One resonator, for example, was "in the mask": i.e., in the upper part of the head (the forehead, temples, and cheekbones). Using this resonator was considered to be noble, and it was a known practice among English actors. Opera singers use the chest resonator most frequently, particularly singers with lower voice ranges, whereas tenors tend to use "the mask". Even though a resonator of high tones is also located in the nape of the neck, East Slavic languages like to use the belly for resonation. Germans, on the other hand, resonate the sounds of their language with their teeth and jaw bones. One can also "speak" using the upper, middle, and lower parts of the spine.

The number of natural resonators, which a good actor should know how to use, can be further extended by being aware of which vibrator is producing sounds at any given moment. Grotowski claimed that he had found up to twenty-four vibrators in his body. Even though each vibrator always makes the whole body vibrate, the centre of the oscillation is always different. Vibrators can be in the larynx, the head, the belly, the chest, or elsewhere. Grotowski taught his students to imagine that their mouth was moving all over their body and to try

to always move their centre of vibration towards a different part of the body. Grotowski also noticed that actors' vocal reactions tended to be premature and occur way before physical impulses. It should be the other way around: at first there is a physical movement that is immediately followed by a vocal expression. It is just like in real life: one first bangs the fist on the table and only then yells "Enough!"

Grotowski's directorial method also included a procedure involving the text spoken by the actors during a performance changing into a set of more or less unintelligible sounds. The primary function of these sounds was not to mediate the spoken lines but to evoke emotions and ideas that were part of a mysterious picture and the metaphorical language of the production as a whole. Cieślak said: "In *The Constant Prince*, for example, the text flowed so fast that it was not possible for a human to control its diction. We struggled with it all the time, but that did not guarantee ideal results. Then [...] in *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*, some parts were almost totally unintelligible."[280]

Just like the development of flexible action, voice exercises were intended to teach actors to use their voices, resonators, vibrators, and entire bodies naturally and without being aware of it. The technique was necessary for the actors to understand that their options were open for realizing who they were and where their discipline and precision came from.

From early on, Grotowski's company produced well-defined individuals who, along the lines of the director's intentions, would lead the relaxation exercises themselves for their fellow actors. According to Zygmunt Molik:

> Ryshko [Cieślak] would do "gymnastic" training using acrobatic elements, Zbyshek Cynkutis did exercises in "rhythmics", and Rena Mirecka was in charge of flexibility, physical expression, and partly also dance. We struggled with voices, which was why I – having had some experience in this field – worked on this aspect and led the voice and breathing exercises.[281]

Usually only a single element was highlighted and the rest was left untouched. For example, they would only focus on training one muscle to make a certain movement (e.g., using the hand or moving the face) without the

aid of other muscles. They also practised body balance, concentrating on finding one foothold that was sufficient to balance everything out and then a resonator which the actor would move around his body. This all took place in a state of total concentration and in strict conditions of absolute dedication to art, the theatre group, and its director.

From his actors, Grotowski required an almost monastic behaviour. He forced them to give up a part of their privacy and submit themselves fully to their vocation. And this is something he did himself. Grotowski would often organize training camps on the closed premises of Wroclaw's town hall, or he would take them out of town into the simple environment of the country residence in Brzezinka. He managed to improve the actors' technique and enable its internalization mainly because he could touch their most sensitive mental layers. During exhausting training sessions, he forced the actors to completely eliminate their inhibitions and set out on a journey from mediocre reality to exalted ecstasy. He did this for long periods of time with admirable urgency and precision. "We sacrificed a great deal, but some of us sacrificed everything. That's how it was. It was our whole life. What remained only made an addition to this life of ours," Molik remembers, adding: "I admit we must have been a little out of our minds. I don't think anyone was completely normal. Each of us had planted in them the seed of insanity."[282]

The group Grotowski concentrated around him had the characteristics of a cult, but it did not reiterate a dogma. Instead, it aspired to focus on the artistic mission to eliminate all which was outdated and could inhibit creativity. The group members wished to liberate themselves from the sediments of the theatre and social tradition and aimed straight at the essence of things. A lot of people thought that the exercises were based on yoga-like collective meditations. Some critics found the practice of the theatre to be reminiscent of Freudian psychoanalysis. For Gabriela and Czesław Czapów, Grotowski's theatre was an example of collective psychodrama[283] which could be participated in by all members of the company, but primarily the actors. Such psychodrama was to run permanently in rehearsals as well as during performances before the spectators. Each of these assumptions had a grain of truth in them.

Grotowski himself, however, was not enthusiastic about such clear-cut categorizations. He did not work for partial goals but for absolute ones. He did not want to limit himself, which was why he preferred laboratory work that allowed him to be progressive almost infinitely. In laboratory theatre, nothing was definitive and the aim was not to reach an end goal. On the contrary, it allowed new processes to be constantly opening. Grotowski battled his way to a truth he anticipated. He claimed that the world had to be a place of truth: "We enter the world to pass through it. We pass the test of the world and the world is the place of truth. At any rate – the world should be the place of truth. It is obvious in a way that it is the duty of all of us that it be such a place – so far as it concerns the world of people."[284]

Acting exercises

Over time, the methods for improving acting techniques underwent some changes that mirrored Grotowski's personal development as well as the changes in his opinion about the essence of acting art. In the early 1960s, he initially focused on training aimed at advancing actors' movements and representational capabilities for character development. This early stage, however, only lasted for two to three years during Grotowski's stint in Opole. Later on, a transformation took place when the laboratory shifted the focus to liberating actors of their inner inhibitions and previous bad habits. Once his own original opinions crystallized after 1962, Grotowski fully devoted himself to his new approach, which he kept developing in his theatre enterprises as well as in his paratheatrical events. The content of Grotowski's training classes was recorded by several participants of his workshops and courses. In 1966 a very detailed account of Grotowski's instructional work was drawn up by Franz Marijnen in Brussels. Because his notes provided an adequately faithful account of the instructional exercises, Barba included them in the book *Towards a Poor Theatre*, which otherwise only consisted of Grotowski's account of his own work.[285]

When the exercises started, the course participants could freely choose any text and then present it in any way they wished. It did not matter what text it was; it was not even important to be very aware of

its content. The actors could recite the text, sing it, or scream it out at the top of their lungs. At this stage, Grotowski tested their ability to use individual resonators in their bodies and helped them find them. The actors were not supposed to interpret the meaning of what they were saying; they only needed to make sounds and echoes in the rehearsal room. The rhythm of these exercises was very fast; the participants were asked to move the resonators in their bodies, make the internal impulses external, and lose all inhibitions. Grotowski himself took part in the exercises at this point together with Cieślak, who was the most faithful student from the get-go and who usually helped his teacher in the instruction process.

Grotowski would then tell the participants that he had taken on the role of a tiger and they were its prey. The tiger was set to rip them into pieces so they should scream a lot. Then he would suddenly stop them to make them used to swift changes of tension. The following exercise was the “king-king”, which was based on saying the word “king” over and over again at a quick pace and in the most di-

☛ *Zygmunt Molik performs an acting exercise during the* Voice and Body *internship in Toronto, 1985.*

verse variations of tone from the lowest to the highest. After approximately five minutes, the participants were surprised to realize the variety of sounds they could make. The following exercise, the "la-la", was focused on spatial voice orientation. However, the point was not to discover the range of voice but rather its direction, be it towards the room, the walls, or the floor. The actors conducted a "dialogue" with their surroundings. While doing so, the stimulation of the resonators in their bodies would fully unfold. The idea was that they imagined their mouths moving around their bodies, starting in the head and then going through the trunk and the belly to the back. In order to make the sounds specific, the participants were prompted to start meowing like cats and then roar like tigers, while once again practising the various ranges of their voice and different intonations. The physical vibrators started working at their full capacity so they could even make the flame of a lit match quiver. The tasks changed quickly, and the tempo of the exercises was breath-taking. Participants worked on themselves and for themselves. Talking was strictly prohibited. Everybody had to keep quiet, even those who were not practising but were in the room.

In the next phase, Grotowski added flexibility exercises to the voice exercises. The participants said their lines or sang in various and physically challenging positions taken from yoga. They would lie down, sit, or try to keep their balance. There were moments when they changed their static position and suddenly sprang into rapid motion before they stopped again. These yoga practitioners would transmute into all kinds of animals; Grotowski would suggest, for example, that they were bulls and he was the toreador. The apparently hectic atmosphere and swift and seemingly meaningless transitions all had a specific purpose. The point was to remove automatized ways of breathing and to teach people to adjust their breathing to the activity they were doing and not subject it to acting rules. The idea was primarily focused on opening the larynx. All parts of the body were meant to resonate, and the vocal action was to always immediately follow the physical action.

After the first voice and voice-flexibility exercises, there were more demanding flexibility exercises. The participants were asked to

take various difficult physical positions. This was crucial to maintaining maximum concentration and endurance (Cieślak was exemplary in this). While the first stage had been rather dynamic, this one was more meditative. Physical acrobatics, even when done carefully, could result in falls, which was why the participants also learned how to fall painlessly. A lot of positions were aimed at stretching the spine and making it as flexible as possible. This was achieved by a series of exercises referred to as "the cat". The physical positions included the following: facing down with one's head rested on one's shoulders and crossed arms, a headstand resting on one's elbows, rocking backwards from a squat until one's arms reach the ground, and exercises with fingers and palms. The participants practised smooth transitions between these positions. Most of them quickly realized that the exercises were very difficult and that they had to focus much more on their physical preparedness. Grotowski wanted to achieve a competent ability to harmoniously react to any impulse. In addition, the participants were expected to realize how critically one was bound to the earth. Even when they jumped, the ground would always pull them back down. Grotowski wanted all of his actors to eschew stereotypes and to make everything come from within and not from the universal axioms of external behaviour. He also wanted to avoid any kind of symmetry, as he considered symmetry to be an element of gymnastics and not a part of genuine theatre. For him, it was not an organic part of life either.

In the next stage, the individual exercises were replaced by group exercises. These were aimed at unifying the previous exercises into a compact line, searching for a continuity between voice and movement, and trying to keep a physical balance. Much attention had to be paid to the relaxation of hands and fingers to make the actors' movements soft and smooth. Grotowski did not leave a single group member unattended. He kept observing all participants and would always select someone to practise with individually. He taught them fast transitions, during which mask improvisations were performed; these were kinds of complex pictures synthesizing facial expressions with physical movement and voice. The actors were asked to imagine themselves and then an animal, and then they had to execute quick

and difficult movements without any specific content. Grotowski wanted to train the actors to express how a tree felt – how it talked and how it sang – and he wanted them to hear the wind in its branches, a storm, and singing birds. According to Grotowski, the philosophy aspect would come once the expression technique had been mastered flawlessly to liberate the actors from any potential burdens. The body had to think, Grotowski would say. In brief intermissions, while resting, he would answer the participants' questions and justify the exercises. In the end, he divulged the overall intention; he wanted his classes to make the participants able to enter a state in which they could reach their peak. He did not teach anything about the peak itself and only released the pathways leading towards it.

From theatre to ritual

A truly organic part in Grotowski's life journey was his gradual abandonment of artistic work and his more extensive focus on ritual. Grotowski had always toyed with the idea that theatre and ritual had much in common and blended into each other. As time went by, however, this idea became more strongly present in his life. The cohesiveness and continuity of Grotowski's ideas, activities, artistic work, and compromise-free life were remarkable. The main assertions of a 1961 lecture he gave in the club of his theatre in Opole have been preserved:

> Theatre is the only art form with the privilege of being "ritualistic". In purely lay terms, it is a collective act in which the spectator can participate – a performance is a group ceremony, a system of signs. [...] In a ritual, there are no actors or spectators. There are the main participants (e.g., a shaman) and secondary participants (e.g., a gathering of people observing the shaman's magical work and reacting to it by means of the magic of gestures, songs, dance, and so on.). The principle of participation, a group ceremony, and a system of signs helps create a detailed and mass mental aura, concentration, and group suggestion. This unites the imagination and subordinates unease to discipline. One of the main aims of our work would be a theatrical reconstruction of the individual remains of ritualistic play, which is returning the original life essence to theatre.[286]

☛ *Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba with the participants in the Theatre of Nations' University of Research, Brzezinka, 1975.*

Grotowski studied shamanism and was very interested in initiation procedures. He sought defining ideas in the philosophy of the Middle and Far East and gradually turned his back on Western rationalism. In 1968 he wrote:

> Brecht said once, very aptly, that while it is true that theatre started from ritual, it became theatre because it ceased to be a ritual. In a way, our situation is analogous: we have abandoned the idea of ritualistic theatre in order to (as it turned out) restore ritual – a theatrical ritual which is not religious but human – by means of an act.[287]

Grotowski found inspiration in the work of Georgy Ivanovich Gurdjieff, who, under the influence of Oriental philosophy, elaborated a teaching aimed at improving the human capacity to receive and transmit energy, eliminate external armour, and express one's deepest and truly authentic inner emotions.

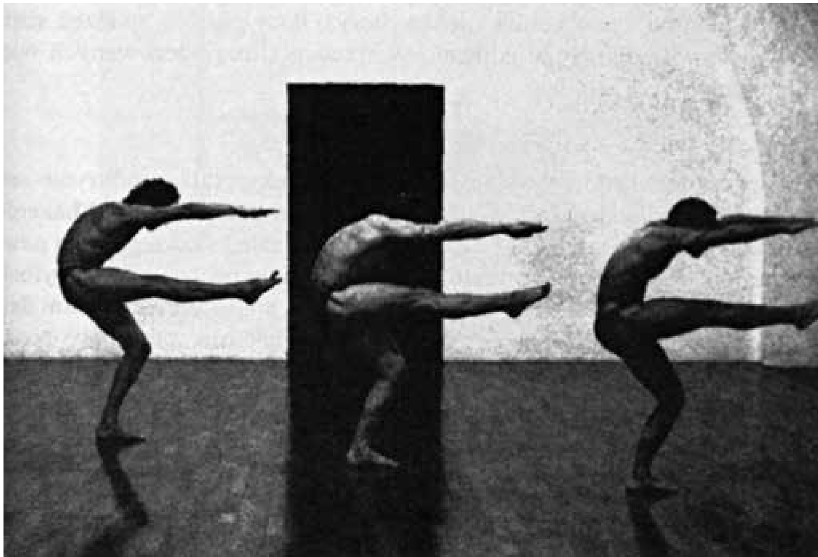
Grotowski did not want to remain enclosed solely in theatre, and he yearned for broader communication. This was why the projects he started after 1970 saw the replacement of his small and withdrawn group of actors with changeable and larger ensembles of apprentices, participants, and enthusiasts with whom he mediated a shared expe-

rience. Grotowski knew that chaos was taking hold of the world and the souls of his contemporaries. For him, each person was a separate Tower of Babylon because a unified system of values was lost. He wanted to give the world a new unity. Grotowski did not consider rituals to be disorganized actions in crowds of people offering each individual free expression and allowing people enough space to just let off steam. Mixing actors and spectators in a theatre, just like mixing priests with the common participants in a ritual did not mean that the hierarchies were broken or that opinions were confused. It was the immediate contact between the participants that should allow them to realize their place and their role: "If we want to give a chance to the audience, or even force them to feel the distance from the actors, they need to be mixed with the actors."[288]

In a collective experience, chaos could be transformed to a new and enriching life quality. In his quest for ways to organize transience and manage man's empty space, Grotowski first examined the actors' potential. Once actors got rid of their inhibitions and clichés, they could start creating new sign systems using facial expressions, physical stances, movement in space, and instruments of voice and sound. The exercises were aimed at learning to express extreme emotions, radically opposing relationships, and surprising and ground-breaking ideas. However, the exalted expressivity of the actors and ritual participants had no origin in Baroque theatre. Grotowski rejected this tradition of Polish theatre; his *gestus* was related to existentialist philosophy and drew on the knowledge of the absurdity of the world and the grotesque roles of humans in it.

Nonetheless, Grotowski the teacher did not want to fall into the pit of meditativeness or a feeling of hopelessness and nothingness. His persistent advance towards rituals bears witness to the fact that he aspired to achieve a shared catharsis, purification, new life, and liberation from the burdens of the past. This was also where his idea of the total act originated, a moment in which "the division between thought and feeling, body and soul, consciousness and the unconscious, seeing and instinct, sex and brain, then disappears."[289] That was when a person could be set free from chaos and find a new unity.

In a project entitled *Holiday*, Grotowski was looking to meet new people (i.e., strangers) who were supposed to be similar in many ways. They were not related because of a play or production but because of a story and their meeting. "Holiday" is a word that evokes the idea of a free day or vacation as well as that of a holy and sacred day. As a part of this paratheatrical project, events such as a common rehearsal of the Laboratory Theatre's actors and around seventy other participants were organized. Initially, they improvised various études and exercises in the auditorium in Wroclaw, and then the whole group left for the forest camp at Brzezinky to work there together for three weeks. For many hours, they would push their way through the thick forest and walk low down as well as upright to get through the luxuriant vegetation. The movement in the forest was supposed to regenerate their power and renew their life rhythm. Back then, Grotowski started speaking more frequently about overcoming individual inhibitions as well as transcending intercultural barriers. His work became more international. This became evident, for example, when he accepted Barba into his ensemble as an intern and later on when he started close



☛ The Motions *exercise.*

collaboration with the Odin Teatret. Grotowski became a teacher and model who inspired such artists as Barba, Richard Schechner from the Performance Group, André Gregory from the Manhattan Project, Judith Malina and Beck of the Living Theatre, and Tadashi Suzuki (who was on the same wavelength as Grotowski because he advanced traditional Japanese theatre based on physical expressivity). Brook was also enthusiastic about experiments on actors – he even tried it himself in his new working place in the Bouffes-du-Nord Theatre in Paris as well as during a tour by the ensemble of Central Africa. In Poland one of the most eminent followers of Grotowski's ideas was Włodzimierz Staniewski and his Gardzienice company.

The Mountain of Flame project, presented to the public by Grotowski in 1975, demonstrated his effort to make paratheatrical activities more diverse and colourful and to open himself to all kinds of new impulses. The event was presented at a time when the Theatre of Nations international showcase was taking place in Warsaw and Wroclaw with hundreds of spectators and participants in attendance, including the most eminent personalities of contemporary theatre. The Wroclaw meeting was named "the University of Research". Andrej Maťašík, who took part in the project, described it as follows:

> In addition to publicly accessible meetings, the event's programme also included improvisation exercises in smaller groups similar to the kind that are mostly done in the Laboratory at present. The exercises were led by such artists as Ryszard Cieślak, Zbigniew Cynkutis, Peter Brook, Joseph Chaikin, Stanisław Ścierski, André Gregory, and Zygmunt Molik, among others. They differed in their working methods; however, they had a common goal: to rid the participants of conventional interpersonal relationships, reach an inner liberation, and acquire the capacity to strike up a unique and authentic contact with a partner. Apart from this, all the invited participants would meet at Hives (happening-like events). These mostly used non-verbal means that allowed communication without the need to speak a language. What mattered was not words, but sounds, movements, and generally valid gestures. There was also a variant of the Hives: common trips to the countryside to places untouched by civilization.[290]

During *The Mountain of Flame* project and in following years, Grotowski organized similar meetings, such as the *Special Project*, which he used to fulfil his intentions concentrating on the idea of "a theatre of participation and active culture". Grotowski said that he was not so interested in the product (i.e., the final theatre production or an accomplished paratheatrical work) but rather in the work as process, where each participant was an active and acting person.

The Laboratory included the Laboratory in Wroclaw and all other places where Grotowski worked later on, such as the residence he built for the *Objective Drama* project when he went to the United States. The idea was to allow the participants to have a place to fully focus on practising the fragments of their expressive physical movements. The project did not constitute "Grotowski's return to theatre but rather a resumption of his work on professional precision and discipline – the antitheses of which are dilettantism, incompetence, and amateurish execution."[291]

His lifelong tendency found its best expression in Grotowski's last residence in Pontedera near Florence, Italy, which was a kind of camp on the edge of civilization. It consisted of residential and industrial buildings and looked like an actors' farm, perhaps even a concealed location where experiments were performed on people who wilfully arrived there in large numbers to spend short or long periods. Grotowski himself resided in meagre rooms furnished with only the most necessary things and a small library. He liked to perform his rituals and exercises in the open air. In Pontedera he fully advanced several projects which were given the common title *The Ritual Plays*. Osiński described his own experience: "The group is composed of about 20 people. [...] The work takes place in three groups."[292] The groups would begin work at noon and finish at ten in the evening, and the activities were not led by Grotowski himself but by Thomas Richards, whose ancestors were from Jamaica, and by Maud Robart, who came from Haiti. Osiński elaborates:

> Work always begins punctually, to the minute. The participants wear white clothes. Their shoes are removed at the entrance to the room. [...] Sometimes work begins with a very special walk-dance execu-

> ted with the spine and knees slightly bent, while the hips remain motionless. The students walk one behind the other for a very long time. Often this walk-dance is also accompanied by a song, and the manner of singing releases the vibratory qualities of the voice which in turn assists the movement of the body. Accuracy and precision are crucial. The steps must be exact, the body is "flowing" the entire time, and, as in Stanislavski training, the precise structure of tempo and rhythm is observed. I call this step the "serpentine". I learn from Grotowski that it is an ancient form of dance movement. [...] The physical training constitutes the permanent part of the program. Each of the participants always performs nine exercises assigned to him or her. Each has a different set of exercises, aimed at helping the participant to overcome a particular physical block or limitation and to develop the proficiencies that he or she is lacking. [...] So far, the door of the room has been left open. Now the windows are covered, the lights are put out, the door is closed, everything necessary for the Action is prepared. Every day the ritual is evoked anew. [...] The connection with old initiation practices is very subtle, and the basic duty of each executant is to do everything well. [...] The door opens. The windows are uncovered. The lights are turned on. After a longer break, the sustained, arduous work on specific details continues. [...] One works through to the end. We leave the room for a nearby hill from which the surrounding area, the sculpturing and architectonics of the terrain, can be seen perfectly. Out in the open, in complete silence and concentration, an intricate sequence of positions and body stretches called the "Motions" are executed. These positions and movements are always aimed in the six directions: east, west, north, south, zenith, and nadir. [...] For example, certain balancing positions – one leg stretched and completely straightened at the knee, raised parallel to the earth, while the other is bent at the knee – are held for long periods of time. [...] The work – and this is important – takes place in almost complete silence.[293]

An information brochure published in Pontedera says that the aim of Grotowski's Work Centre was "to provide some members of the younger generation with the practical, technical, methodological, and creative experience related to Grotowski's work of the last thirty years. In spite of this, it is not a school. It is rather a creative institute for the permanent education of mature and responsible artists. Dramatic art

is a means of individual development; training is essentially creative work as construed by Grotowski."[294]

In Pontedera, Grotowski took a long path to returning to his starting point and roots in theatre, which he then incorporated into a ritualistic system. His students and interns wished to achieve what they could not rightly achieve in full: each of them wanted to become a performer. Grotowski envisioned the role of a performer as follows: "He is a doer, a priest, a warrior; he is outside aesthetic genres."[295] A performer is a state of being, a witness, a link, and a bridge. A performer expresses the essence of life and the body of this essence. A performer's task is not to develop an organism as matter (muscle or athletic body) but an organism of tracks through which energy can run.

As Brook said: "The vehicle which is the strongest in all the forms of theatre existing in the world always was man."[296] Grotowski's reply was: "Both ends of the connection (art as presentation and art as a vehicle) have to exist: one is visible and public, while the other is nearly invisible."[297] The theatre and actors provide the world with their imagery and help the world find its essence lost in universal anonymity. Only very few of the innovative directors in the twentieth century succeeded in what Grotowski did: giving acting technique so much detail and precision while also elevating it to an all-inclusive spirituality of the primal ritual.

EUGENIO BARBA'S THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY

Eugenio Barba [29 October 1936, Brindisi–] was born only three years later than Grotowski, but he is considered to be his student. Barba was born in Italy, but he left for Norway in 1954 and then took a scholarship in Poland from 1961 to 1964. After the first year of his study in Warsaw, Barba left the capital city and accepted Grotowski's invitation to take part in his attempt to restore theatre and the art of acting in the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole. Indeed, from 1962 Barba was able to witness one of the most intriguing experiments in twentieth-century European theatre. The work of the three leading personalities of the Opole theatre – Jerzy Grotowski, Ludwik Flaszen, Jerzy Gurawski, and their young team of actors – captured his attention so much that he became their faithful colleague and their passionate promoter in the West. Eventually, Barba became the follower and developer of their artistic programme as well. Barba's ties to Polish theatre would have been even tighter had the regime not made him a *persona non grata*: in 1964, following one of his numerous international trips, he was not allowed into Poland again. Barba then returned to Norway, where he applied his inspiration from Opole and established his own small company, Odin Teatret, together with a handful of young actors, some of whom were not even twenty. After two years, his company moved from Oslo to the Danish town of Holstebro, where they found good conditions for work and a long-term perspective for existence.

While in Opole, Barba assisted in the rehearsals and production of *Akropolis* and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, and he wrote his first book about the theatre, which was entitled *In Search of a Lost Theatre*.[298] In Holstebro he was the first to publish Grotowski's book *Towards a Poor Theatre*, which would become well-known. Barba knew

his teacher's acting exercises and admired his discoveries of how to use actors' bodies and voices as well as the unconventional form of his theatre productions. This is what he wrote about what he learned from Grotowski: "[T]he specific characteristic of theatre consists in the live and immediate contact between actor and spectator; for each production a new way of organising space has to be found, creating a unity and a physical osmosis."[299] For Grotowski, and later also for Barba, both actors and spectators were deliberately shaped to achieve a group subconscious and express archetypes in their behaviour that were consequently confronted with the content of the performed work. In this early stage, Barba identified with the opinion that it was necessary to seek archetypes – the fundamental patterns of human behaviour – for any acting expression. Barba was aware of Grotowski's refusal to present literary texts directly and uncritically, and he saw how he adjusted the texts early on, seeking a double-sided and essentially contradictory approach. This approach relied on a dialectical relationship between apotheosis and detachment or even derision.

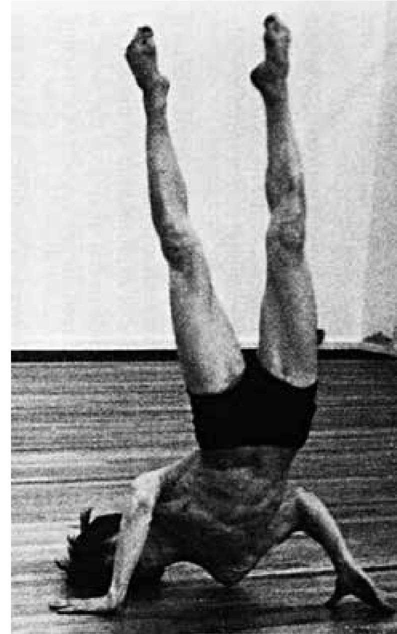
After he left Opole and during the first years of independent work in Norway and Denmark, it became clear that the training Barba had received in Poland was very important; indeed, it became an essential guidance for him. Observing the action in Opole taught him more than he would have gained by just attending a theatre college in Warsaw. Barba remembers how, during rehearsals in Holstebro, he felt Grotowski's presence in the corner of the room holding a persistent and fictitious dialogue with him. The material learned in Poland was summarized by Barba into a series of basic rules that were widely applicable also elsewhere:

> I asked myself how Grotowski would have acted in each specific case, or else I simply copied what I had seen him do during rehearsals, as for instance:
> — how to let the actor compose each action;
> — how to interpret the character by means of vocal and physical effects, maintaining a continuous and coherent relationship with the text;

> — how to use every word as a vocal action: not only as an intellectual tool but also as musicality capable of arousing associations in the spectator;
> — how every sequence, however short, must have its own composition and logic;
> — how the actors must be able to decide on which formal element the attention of the spectator is to be concentrated, whether on a physical or vocal effect, on one or other particular part of the body, on themselves or on some distant point;
> — how to create a "polemic" by subverting the value of a physical or vocal action through the simultaneous introduction of expressive elements which contradict the action;
> — how to get the actor to carry out a multiple composition passing rapidly from one character to another;
> — how to induce the actor to become a multiform Proteus, a shaman who can change from a living person into an object, slipping instantaneously from one reality to another, vanishing or flying before the very eyes of the spectators;
> — how to treat the costumes and the props in such a way that they have a life and character of their own and constantly create an opposition between the actors and their actions.[300]

Just like Grotowski, Barba viewed theatre art from the inside as well as the outside. Grotowski decided to leave the theatre scene quite early. Barba, though he did not do the same, also felt a desire for work that would be strongly embedded in society and thus cross the boundaries of a narrowly delineated theatre. His thoughts were aimed at formulating the programme of "a third theatre". In this theatre, minute details of acting technique were not as important as the way in which theatre could become part of social life. Barba imagined that large groups would be established consisting of actors and other people who rejected a consumerist lifestyle. The creation of their performances would be based on seeking new interpersonal and social bonds. He wanted to create islands of a new culture that would find its expression and representation through theatre. As opposed to Grotowski, Barba did not bring groups of people together outside of the theatre; he wanted to revive society by letting it have a theatrical experience. For the third theatre, "a third audience" was also expected

to form, being made of people for whom theatre would be a place of aesthetic experience and social interaction. Barba advanced his ideas mostly in the late 1970s and the 1980s. In order to have them come to fruition, he toured small towns and villages in Europe and South America and looked for the kind of audience he wanted. He wanted to share the fruits of his work with them. Offering the productions of the Odin Teatret, he expected that the locals would in turn present him with folk art expressions such as dance, song, and old legends. In the 1960s and 1970s, something similar was attempted in Latin America by the Brazilian Augusto Boal. However, he drew on the Brechtian type of theatre as a platform used to educate the masses and help them in their struggle for inalienable rights. Boal, even more than Barba, spent a lot of time visiting forsaken places in South America, and he initiated vivid cooperation with the local audience on the creation of performances and the process of exchanging values. His activity was explicitly revolutionary, which was why he was frequently pursued by local authoritarian regimes. Much more than Boal, Barba tried to mediate the idea of the common essence of all people on the planet and the necessity to overcome cultural and national boundaries. In the end, connecting theatre art and life did not become the main programme of Barba's ensemble. His principal interest was to use theatre anthropology in order to get into the fundamental layers of cultures and their people. Consequently, he could make a system that would transcend borders and be applicable in acting schools of the Eastern and Western types.



Exercises at the Odin Teatret in the 1960s. Torgeir Hethal.

In his youth, Barba worked as a sailor. In the 1960s, he and his friends went on a long journey through Iran and Pakistan to India. Barba was one of the people who were convinced that the boundaries between European

and Asian theatre – however distinct they appeared to be – could be crossed. He found a way to erase the boundaries in a purposeful search for an intersection of cultures. Barba started using the term "Eurasian theatre", which was a concept with an inner unity whose two poles complemented each other:

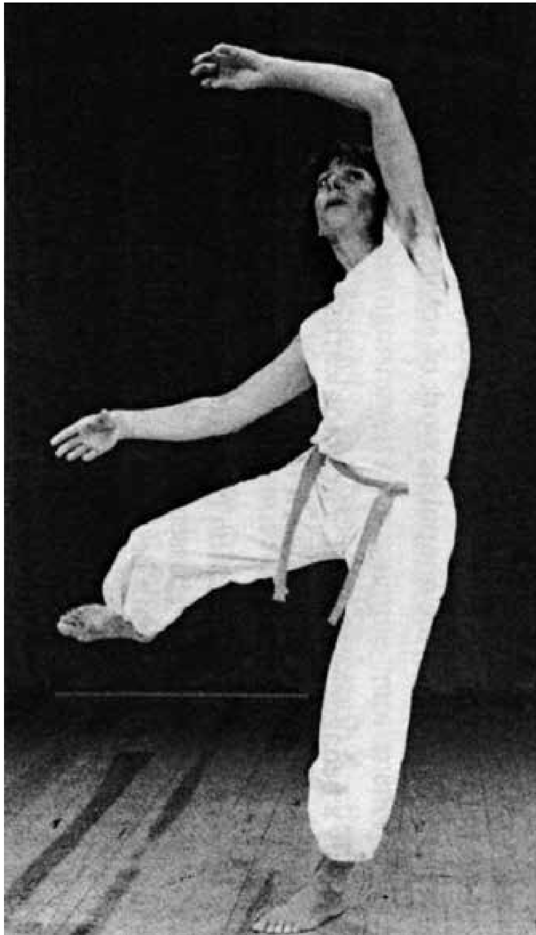
> I compared our theatre with theirs. Today the very word "comparison" seems inadequate to me since it separates the two faces of the same reality. I can say that I "compare" Indian or Balinese, Chinese or Japanese traditions if I compare their epidermises, their diverse conventions, their many different performance styles. But if I consider that which lies beneath those luminous and seductive epidermises and discern the organs which keep them alive, then the poles of the comparison blend into a single profile: that of a Eurasian theatre.[301]

The exchanges between Western and Eastern theatre are reciprocal. While Europeans envy how acting technique and tradition in Asian theatre is passed on from generation to generation (e.g., from father to son) they in turn admire how we can come up with new interpretations of old dramatic stories written as literary texts, given that the context of a given historical period requires it. The essence of Asian theatre is in the living nature of man and the constantly renewed mental and physical personality. It is a theatre that Barba called *bios*. European theatre, on the other hand, has used the constantly renewed action of a theatre based on *logos*.

The Eurasian approach became the foundation for the future work of Barba and his colleagues. They would attempt to set up laboratory conditions in order to bring together and foster a fusion between the European and the Asian theatre traditions. In 1979 they established the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) and set very ambitious goals for themselves. First of all, they introduced the study of a new discipline: theatre anthropology. As opposed to cultural anthropology, philosophical anthropology, and other related fields, theatre anthropology is "a new field of study applied to the human being in an organised performance situation."[302] It studies the behaviour of people (actors) who find themselves in the theatre in extraordinary, unique, and uncommon situations. This behaviour

has its peculiarities and rules which go back to the deepest roots of mankind. That is why it can be observed equally in Asian as well as European theatre. Based on his transcultural observations, Barba found that the work of actors anywhere in the world combined three aspects which reflected three different layers of performance structure:

> (1) the performers' personalities, their sensibilities, their artistic intelligence, their social *personae*: those characteristics that make them unique and one of a kind; (2) the particularities of the traditions and socio-historical contexts through which the unique personality of a performer is manifest; (3) the use of physiology according to extra-daily body techniques. These recurrent and transcultural principles on which these techniques are based are defined by theatre anthropology as the field of pre-expressivity. The first aspect is individual. The second is common to all those who belong to the same performance genre. Only the third concerns all performers from every era and culture: it can be



☛ *Exercises at the Odin Teatret in the 1970s. Iben Nagel Rasmussen.*

> called the performance's "biological" level. [...] The third is the *idem* that does not vary; it underlines the various individual, artistic and cultural variants.[303]

In his texts, Barba refers to the pre-original layer, which is still present, as the "pre-expressivity" stage. This refers to that certain something all actors have in themselves even before they start acting work and before they even find their own expression. Using acting expressions, actors then activate their bodies and voices and stand before the audience to express their emotions, visions, thoughts, and actions all by using various acting techniques. The pre-expressivity layer is always part and parcel of these techniques, because it is contained in the basics of all kinds of acting techniques and exists independently from traditional cultures.

Based on the findings about the existence of a common core of every single acting performance, which is the same in European and Asian theatre, Barba came to another realization: there was no difference between actors and dancers. In other words, the elementary line of every theatre performance (drama, dance, and various types of musical and dramatic-musical performance) is always the same everywhere. One of Barba's collaborators, Franco Ruffini, put it categorically: "In the East, there is no opposition between theatre and dance."[304] Theatre anthropology examines this very basic core or layer of the art form, and that is why it is inconsequential whether it is referring to a European or Asian actor, or whether the artist in question is an actor or a dancer. It uses the common term "performer" (actor and dancer in one):

> In order to be more effective in his context, in order to make his historico-biographical identity emerge, the performer uses forms, manners, behaviour, procedures, guile, distortions, appearances... what we call "technique". [...] Making an analysis that goes beyond cultures (Western, Eastern, Northern, Southern), beyond genres (classical ballet, modern dance, opera, operetta, musical, text theatre, body theatre, classical theatre, contemporary theatre, etc.), going beyond all this, we arrive back at the first day, when the student begins to learn how to become effective relative to the spectator. And we find two points of departure, two paths.[305]

The two paths are the techniques of "inculturation" and "acculturation". The first term means that actors should use their own life experience, relying on what they have acquired in his cultural environment: what actions they have seen and experienced and the way they have absorbed everyday behaviour from their national and social environment. The inculturation technique was most thoroughly elaborated by Stanislavsky, whose magic "if" had taught actors to empathize with cultural and personal behaviour, expressions, and feelings. Brecht's actors also rely on inculturation because, using the alienation effect and social gesture, they model their "natural and daily behaviour into extra-daily scenic behaviour with a built-in social fabric or subtexts."[306]

The other path – acculturation – is based on special optical-acoustic acting expressions which are very remote from what we are used to in everyday life:

> Modern and classical ballet dancers, mimes and performers from traditional Asian theatres have denied their "naturalness" and have adopted another means of scenic behaviour. They have undergone a process of "acculturation" imposed from the outside, with ways of standing, walking, stopping, looking and sitting that are different from the daily ones. The technique of acculturation artificialises (or stylises, as is often said) the performer's behaviour. But it also results in another quality of energy. [...] Acculturation technique is the distortion of usual (natural) appearance in order to recreate it sensorially in a fresh and astonishing way. The "acculturated" performer manifests a quality and an energetic radiation that is presence ready to be transformed into dance or theatre according to convention or tradition.[307]

It should be added that the acculturation technique was far more interesting for Barba. He studied the Indian Katakali dance theatre, the Japanese Noh and Kabuki theatres, and Balinese dance theatre in much detail during his stays in Asia. Masters of Oriental art forms, including I Made Pasek Tempo from Bali, Katsuko Azuma and Kosuke Nomura from Japan, Pei Yan Ling (a performer at the Peking Opera), and Kelucharan Mahāpātra and Sanjukta Panigrahi from India, took part in his artistic projects. In addition to Asian artists, there were

Peter Seeberg: Ferai. *Odin Teatret, 1969. Directed by Eugenio Barba.*

also actors from the Odin Teatret (Iben Nagel Rasmussen and Roberta Carrezi) as well as many other Western artists, including actors trained by Grotowski himself.

The ISTA had performances in Denmark, where their knowledge base grew, and elsewhere. Barba and his colleagues gathered rich practical experience and knowledge and made discoveries which he kept on distributing. Barba's findings were used in the book *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology,* which was co-authored by Nicola Savarese, Fabrizio Cruciani, Rosemary Jeanes Antze, Franco Ruffini, Richard Schechner, Ferdinando Taviani, Marcel Mauss, and Jerzy Grotowski. The dictionary was gradually published in several languages and in more comprehensive editions. Towards the end of the 1990s, the book presented a complete system of acting training which drew on the

experiences with Oriental theatre. It also presented often surprising observations and discoveries from the perspective of Western acting art. Barba reached his goal of synthesizing the essence of Eurasian theatre; the elementary components of acting art as such are present and documented in pictures in numerous alternative forms, regardless of whether they originated in Asia or Europe.

For Barba's system, several significant categories emerge in every acting process. The most important ones address the origin and effect of energy necessary for artistic creation. Then there are analyses of the principles of balance, opposition, equivalence, and pre-expressivity. In terms of how individual parts of the bodies could be used, Barba's dictionary focused separately on the hands, face, eyes, and feet as well as the technique of the stances and movements of the whole body.

Energy, which is an immaterial and incommunicable force, aids actors in using their own means to maintain an inner dynamic continuity of the character and plot. It also enables actors to exteriorize the play and keep the spectators' attention. "Energy is commonly reduced to imperious and violent behaviour models, but it is actually a personal temperature-intensity which the performer can determine, awaken, [and] mould [...]."[308] According to Barba, energy is a muscular and nervous force that exists in each living organism; however, in theatre it has to be produced using a distinct approach: "To acquire this power, this life, which is an intangible, indescribable and unmeasurable quality, the various codified theatrical forms use very particular procedures. These procedures are designed to destroy the inert positions of the performer's body, in order to alter normal balance and to eliminate daily movement dynamics."[309] Barba believed that a strong impulse in time was enough to produce energy. He referred to this impulse using the Scandinavian word *sats*. Grotowski explained the term on Barba's behalf: "[*Sats*] is very concrete, it exists. It can occur at different levels, as a kind of silence before a movement, a silence filled with potential, or it can occur as the suspension of an action at a given moment."[310]

It is a paradox that something as ungraspable as an actor's energy could be achieved through particular acting exercises. Many Eastern and Western schools developed methodologies for the awakening of inner energy. For Barba, this initially meant using exercises fostering

a firm stance focusing on a small point in the feet and concentrated in the big toes or the tips of the toes like in ballet. Furthermore, the training involved concentration of the energy into the pelvis and hips. Actors were expected to be able to fix their hips and pelvis so as to separate upper-body movements from lower-body movements. Actors were also expected to create inner muscular and nervous tension which the whole body posture would adapt to.

Every type of energy consists of two components, comparable to a sea tide (*animus – anima*). There is the strong and firm high tide, and there is the soft and flowing low tide. In many Eastern and Western cultures, this twofold nature of energy is a well-known phenomenon that has been duly termed, and actors are supposed to learn to find the energy in themselves and evoke it. It is not, however, an alternative of the male and female principle. There are no differences between the sexes when it comes to the way they perceive and induce energy. The high and low tide is recognizable to both men and women; this is also proven by the fact that men can perform female roles and vice versa.

Exercises focused on physical tension concentrated in the feet and hips have to be combined with breathing exercises. Actors' bodies go through rhythmical inhalation and exhalation, which should harmonize with the physical tensions. Once this harmony is achieved (sometimes it can be expressed by opposition), the unobservable vibrations originate in the body, and, in addition to the muscles, nerves are involved. Actors must know how to induce such vibrations and how to hold them in and use them later at appropriate moments. Energy has a spatial and temporal dimension. Barba points out that Noh theatre has a rule "that three-tenths of any action should happen in space and seven-tenths in time".[311] This means that energy will manifest itself in the actors' movements and in moments of stopping and suspenseful expectation, which, however, is not static at all. Rhythm is an integral part of such acting energy. If an actor's dance stops for a brief moment in one position, the dramatically charged "dance" can continue on the inside and the audience will have an equally strong experience and perhaps even a stronger one than if they had been only watching the actor.

Such actions where actors concentrate energy within themselves before releasing it onto the spectators are very physically demanding. The physical movements require actors to keep their balance, which is the sum total of various opposing tensions. In theatre, however, this is a special action-like type of balance which is based on uncommon action. It is a fragile stance incorporating apparently superfluous movements that require extreme concentration. This is a "luxury" because actors do not want their creation to be well-balanced, calm, or dull as this makes the performance uninteresting for the audience. So the actor always seeks new unbalanced and changing positions that aim to reach tensions and stylizations that are typical for theatrical expressivity. We are aware of such changes in stance and position in dance theatre, mime, and traditional Asian art.

The complexity of the luxurious – and seemingly overly intricate and fragile – balance surfaces when the opposition principle is applied. It is the same principle as Meyerhold's counter-movement. "According to the opposition principle, if one wants to go to the left, one begins by going to the right, then suddenly stops and turns left," Barba asserted in recounting the experience of Asian actors.[312] However, oppositions do not only appear in spatial movement; they are also part of pre-defined stances. Consider the example of the well-known S-shaped figures in ancient sculpture. When looking at them frontally, we see that the head is turned in one direction and the torso in the other, while the legs are positioned towards the central axis to achieve an overall balance. The Asian and European dance art traditions recognize the same stances, which are further highlighted by upper extremities stretched in serpentine fashion to both sides.

Theatrical stances and movements are equivalent to the everyday status. In reality, the applied principle follows a pragmatic body posture that guarantees as little energy being spent as possible as well as the stability necessary to perform common functions. Conversely, acting models equivalent expressions, meaning that it does not copy them but rather creates an artistic version of reality which both internally and externally is much more substantial and dynamic. Its role is not to imitate everyday life but to create an original. Here, the earlier efforts by Meyerhold, such as his bow shooting exercise, ought

to be noted. It is quite likely that Meyerhold learned this particular étude from traditional Japanese theatre, as it is similarly used there. Loading the bow, tensing the bowstring, and shooting the arrow are actions that do not take place in straightforward gestures, but which use ritualized procedures that stylize the common action and extend it with a richer meaning and more energy. "In each tradition we find scenes or exercises in which the actor shoots with a bow. The bow is the embodiment of a play of oppositions. The aim is not only to illustrate the release of the arrow, but to recreate in the body the dynamics that characterise the tensions of the bow," says Barba.[313]

The inspirations from traditional Asian theatre helped Barba gradually elaborate a detailed technique focused on the movement of the hands and legs and body stance. This technique acquired the features of a kind of international theatre language and a new grammar of gestures and movements. Odin Teatret, as well as the events organized as part of the ISTA, did not establish a specific acting style or school in the tradition of the personal styles of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Brecht, or Grotowski. It was not the mime language which Decroux had worked on. It has to be said that this European initiative of Barba's

☛ *Peter Seeberg:* Ferai*. Odin Teatret, 1969.*

was not reflected in traditional Asian acting schools. The knowledge that there was something commonly primal to all theatre and acting cultures in the world could not adequately reveal a multicultural intersection between Noh theatre and the sign system of traditional Peking opera, or between Katakali and the pure mime of Étienne Decroux. Barba's idealistic Eurasian mixtures were not fulfilled because they could not come into being. Little of his directorial work achieved an exceptional artistic level, and his practice was perceived more as an instructional sample of international inspiration. Barba's initiative fitted well into the cosmopolitism of the twentieth century which became apparent in art as well as in international relations, and even though it did not bear any extraordinary fruit in theatre direction, it did introduce inspiring ideas. Similar parallels were used by Peter Brook, a theatremaker who, in contrast to Barba, left behind a contribution to modern stage direction that was indisputably great.

PETER BROOK'S SHIFTING POINT

"I think today the theatre must get away from creating another world, beyond the fourth wall into which the spectator can escape. [...] [A] performance must become a meeting, a dynamic relationship between one group that has received special preparation and another group, the audience, that has not been prepared," Brook wrote.[314] When these words were written, however, the statement was only repeating well-known facts because twentieth-century theatre had long before rejected naturalism; André Antoine was only an item in textbooks of theatre history. However, many theatre companies kept exploring the possibilities of new relationships between the stage and auditorium, calling for a return to the shared experience derived from ancient rituals. Still, Brook was entitled to have made this seemingly banal statement. Even though he was not the first to express such ideas, he had been calling the shots for many years and setting the tone for creative theatre work until he ultimately became an authority who confirmed these ideas as valid and promising for the further development of late twentieth-century theatre.

Peter Brook [21 March 1925, London–2 July 2022, Paris] had all it took to become a recognized English director. He could produce plays in the most eminent British theatres with the best actors and directors (Michel Saint-Denis, John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Paul Scofield, Irene Worth, Glenda Jackson, and others), shoot movies (e.g., *Moderato Cantabile*, 1960, with Jeanne Moreau and Jean-Paul Belmondo; *Marat/Sade*, 1967; and *King Lear*, 1971), and even do commercial theatre. However, Brook refused to take the path of easy success. He persistently changed locations, cities, and even the countries where he worked; established centres of theatre research; and started challenging international projects.

He also searched for his predecessors. He paid a visit to Craig when Craig was already eighty-four years old. Craig was the same man as in his younger years – a man with great love for the theatre, his mother Ellen Terry, and the actor Henry Irving – but he was also a man who wanted to get rid of the actor and replace him with a super-puppet. Brook held discussions with Brecht as well, and while he admired his productions he did not identify with him: "There is so much of Brecht's work I admire, so much of his work with which I disagree totally. I am convinced that almost all that Brecht was saying about the nature of illusion can be applied to the cinema – and only with many reservations to the theatre."[315] Brook held Grotowski in high esteem and was bound to him by longstanding collaboration (which was not always successful: note the problematic production about the Vietnam War entitled *US*, 1966). The two artists underwent a similar development as they increasingly highlighted experimental laboratory work with actors.

Brook studied the work of many other eminent personalities of European theatre. He was familiar with Stanislavsky's legacy and knew Strasberg's school, but he was most strongly inspired by Artaud. Yet among all of these inspirations, including Oriental influences, Brook did not become an exclusive student of any single figure. He took a more eclectic approach: "For Artaud, theatre is fire; for Brecht, theatre is clear vision; for Stanislavsky, theatre is humanity. Why must we choose among them?"[316]

Being an English stage director, he mostly produced Shakespearian plays. His 1962 production of *King Lear* and his 1970 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both done with the Royal Shakespeare Company, won Brook international acclaim. Other playwrights staged by Brook included Peter Weiss and his 1965 work *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of Marquis de Sade*, better known under its shortened title *Marat/Sade*.

For Brook, the theatre is an empty space to be filled by the actor. In his early years, actors were as important for Brook as the visual aspects of the stage solution. He was often inspired by specific paintings of famous visual artists (Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel, Antoine

Watteau, and Salvador Dalí). Later, while working with the stage designer Sally Jacobs, Brook's stages transformed into functional spaces providing actors with the maximum opportunity to move dynamically (such as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Such stage solutions truly became the desired empty space and displayed only a few realistic details, such as a chair, a bonfire, or the model of a ship. The actors wore bright and colourful costumes and rarely used a firm mask. What mattered most was their natural face, gesture, and human appearance related to their original ethnicity or race. This was not a handicap but rather a comparative advantage the actors could use to contribute to the staging process.

In 1964, in the first stage of his work, Brook established the experimental London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and presented a series of performances with Charles Marowitz called *Theatre of Cruelty*. This was a direct reference to Artaud's ideas and a kind of provocation at that time, as a part of the British public denounced the fact that such drastic scenes could be staged under the roof of such an eminent institution as the Royal Theatre. Brook, however, argued that the portrayed violence is not an end but only a means in the open struggle against real cruelty in the world. The performances consisted of scenes, sketches, monologues, and excerpts from various modern authors, Shakespeare, and newspaper clippings. During his short stint in LAMDA, Brook started to systematically develop a non-verbal acting language, finding new means of expression in interpersonal communication, which he considered to be as flexible and penetrating as the language of the Elizabethan authors.[317]

Peter Brook (right) and Jerzy Grotowski.

In 1970 Brook went to Paris, where he came across the old and decrepit Bouffes-du-Nord theatre. Brook reinstated the theatre's operation, at least to some degree, and made it his

home scene. In the building itself, he limited renovation works to a minimum and left the auditorium displaying signs of devastation, which made all the spectators in the makeshift auditorium feel equal to each other. On the stage, which featured negligible visual elements, he left a virtually empty space to be filled by the "shifting points" of the actors' creations in individual productions. While in France, Brook staged such works as *Timon of Athens* in 1974, *The Conference of the Birds* from 1972 to 1979, *The Tragedy of Carmen* and *The Cherry Orchard* in 1981, *The Mahábhárata* in 1985, and *The Tempest* in 1991.

Brook initially went to Paris at the invitation of Jean-Louis Barrault and established the International Centre for Theatre Research (Centre international de recherches théâtrales – CIRT). The centre was made up of a group of actors from different countries (the most famous being Yoshi Oida), and Brook collaborated with them in doing laboratory research as well as in staging productions. In Brook's experimental programme, two principal research approaches gradually took shape. The first one drew on his interest from his time spent

William Shakespeare: King Lear. *London, 1962. Directed by Peter Brook.*

in London, which was a more narrowly defined approach aimed at reaching specific goals of physical improvement in the actor. It also attempted to elaborate the sound segment of acting and theatrical expressivity. The second approach had a broader social mission and was focused on the development of multicultural acting.

Although Brook started applying the first approach at LAMDA in London, when preparing the *Theatre of Cruelty* series, he elaborated it in greater detail later at the CIRT in Paris. Brook used various exercises aimed at developing the voice- and sound-based communication among company members. One of the exercises went as follows:

> An actor sits at one end of the room, facing the wall. At the other end another actor, looking at the first one's back, not allowed to move. The second actor must make the first one obey him. As the first one has his back turned, the second has no way of communicating his wishes except through sounds, for he is allowed no words. This seems impossible, but it can be done. It is like crossing an abyss on a tightrope: necessity suddenly produces strange powers. [...] [After] a long silence, great concentration, one actor running experimentally through a range of hisses or gurgles until suddenly the other actor stood and quite confidently executed the movement the first one had in mind. Similarly, these actors experimented in communication through tapping with a finger-nail.[318]

Brook would use a different exercise to teach the actors to realize their irreplaceable role in the ensemble and to practise cooperative performance with others. He split the famous line from Hamlet's monologue ("To be or not to be, that is the question") into individual words and divided it among ten actors. It was their job to say their part during their scene and put together the sentence using appropriate intonation and tempo. It took a long time before they could all synchronize their performance into one sound-meaning unit.

Brook also developed other exercises. He explored the possibilities of silence; its value and necessary length needed to express a given meaning. He was interested in the ritual as an ancient pattern which could transmit concentrated content much more efficiently than a logically structured language or realist acting gestures. The principal

question for him was whether “the invisible [could] be made visible through the performer’s presence.”[319]

Soon after his move to Paris, Brook’s research was completed in the 1971 production of *Orghast*. More precisely, the completion did not take place in Paris but ultimately in the historic site of Persepolis in Iran. A rehearsal of the CIRT group with Iranian actors gave rise to a performance drawing on ancient mythology. *Orghast* was the term used by Brook’s collaborator Ted Hughes to denote a phonetic language consisting of clusters of mysteriously sounding words and sounds. Hughes created it using several authentic languages (ancient Greek and Persian Avesta) which “came into being some two thousand years ago uniquely as a ceremonial language”. Brook used this mythical language in which “there is never any distance between sound and content”[320] to be spoken by a choir located in the vicinity of ancient royal sepulchres and sanctuaries in the Iranian countryside. Besides the sounds, the monumental nature also played its part by displaying the sunset, and there was also the sculptural acting of the multinational ensemble. “We found that the sound fabric of a language is a code, an emotional code that bears witness to the passions that forged it. […] With Avesta, the two-thousand-year-old language of Zoroaster, we encountered

☛ ***William Shakespeare:*** A Midsummer Night’s Dream. *London, 1970. Directed by Peter Brook.*

☛ *Brook in Africa. European actors improvise a play with sticks in front of a native audience.*

sound patterns that are hieroglyphs of spiritual experience," Brook said.[321]

Brook assumed that in Iran, the primal language of ancient rituals could be used to address the untrained audience, as if it could find in its historical memory some recollection of the long gone times of their civilization. However, he only had "such audiences at the first, trial showcases in Iranian villages; the finished production was seen primarily by the European intellectual elite."[322] Therefore, Brook looked for other opportunities to encounter untarnished audiences. With a company of thirty people, Brook set out on a three-month tour of Africa in 1972 and 1973.

The objective of this journey was more than just experimenting with voice and sound in theatrical communication. Brook wished to achieve his second long-term goal set at the CIRT, where he gathered members of various nationalities, including white actors, Black actors, and Japanese actors. His motivation to go on this African journey was that "a group of people, from different parts of the world, had set out to discover if a human contact could be made through a particular form called theatre, without a shared language."[323] What Brook meant was not a mysterious non-verbal language which should be understood by everybody but rather a language of human appearance and action of the body that could be used to bridge the differences between civilizations. His group travelled from Algeria to Niger and Nigeria,

and then through several countries all the way to Mali and back to Algeria. They deliberately avoided big cities, where the inhabitants had already become familiar with the Western lifestyle and drove their jeeps across the Sahara to small forsaken villages. They performed at marketplaces and in the countryside. They would spread a carpet on the ground and improvise their performances right on it. When it got dark, they illuminated the area using battery-powered lights they had brought with them. The études they performed would start, for example, with an image of a pair of shoes placed in the centre of the performance area. The task given to each actor was to somehow take possession of the object. "They played with the transformations that the boots made on different people wearing them in different ways – something that everyone could immediately feel and recognize. [...] [E]verything developed from the fact that one person got up and walked. Or somebody started singing."[324] The language of the body and the voice the performers used was simplified and reduced to basic and almost childish signs. The reduction might have flattened the advanced acting technique of the Paris ensemble, but it incited

☛ Ubu aux Bouffes *based on Alfred Jarry. Paris, 1975. Direction and costumes by Peter Brook.*

a realization of the essence of each movement, gesture, and facial expression.

This African experience taught Brook and his company that "improvisation is an exceptionally difficult and precise technique and very different from the generalized idea of a spontaneous 'happening.' Improvisation requires great skill on the part of the actors in all aspects of theatre. It requires specific training and also great generosity and a capacity for humour."[325] Brook noticed, as very few had before, that what suited improvisation was lightness and laughter much more so than serious or tragic themes. Improvising actors, constantly baring their souls for all to see, must know how to stay on top of things and not take themselves or the world too seriously. This is best done in improvised theatre, which goes to its audience – to the place where the spectators live – and shows them that one group (actors) wishes to make contact with another (the visited people) and display their affection and interest.

> As the actor finds common ground and he develops it, he takes into account all the little signs which indicate the audience's response. The audience feels this at once, understands that it is a partner in unfolding the action and feels surprised and happy to discover that it is taking part in the event. [...] But the additional energies released by singing, dancing and playing out conflicts, and by excitement and laughter, are so great that in a single hour amazing things can happen.[326]

Brook's theatre experiments were linked to anthropological research on the behaviour of peoples on various continents. What he had tried to individually instil in actors in the standard conditions of his theatre in London and later in Paris, he then transferred to the lives of primitive peoples in an attempt to establish a mutual dialogue. While doing so, he must have realized that what Europeans deemed to be underdeveloped and primal stages of civilization were in fact incredibly rich in pure emotions and in social relationships:

> Primitivism is a completely false notion to apply to Africa, where the traditional civilizations are not only extremely rich and extremely complete, but in relation to the theatre they prepare the audience in

> a unique way. The African who has been brought up in the traditions of the African way of life has a very highly developed understanding of the double nature of reality. The visible and invisible, and the free passage between the two, are for him, in a very concrete way, two modes of the same thing. Something which is the basis of the theatre experience – what we call make-believe – is simply a passing from the visible to the invisible and back again. In Africa, this is understood not as fantasy but as two aspects of the same reality.[327]

In Africa, Brook found a confirmation of the assumption upon which he established the CIRT. In this context, he even reserved some understanding for Brecht despite the fact that he disagreed with him. Brecht's claim was that the alienation effect ought to divert the actor from creating a psychologically luxuriant portrayal of his character full of detailed emotional nuances and lead him towards simplicity and generalization. Actors depicting characters should not burden their performances with a disproportionate amount of information about inner tremors or all the transformations the characters are undergoing. A real person, after all, is always much more complex that the character that is portrayed on stage. A close reading of Shakespeare, for example, would reveal that a character's reality is usually much more condensed than what the text can express using verbal means. Simultaneously, appearance, voice, and thoughts are at play and in such a variability that even the best psychological and realistic portrayals could not do sufficient justice to it all. Brook therefore surmises:

> Consequently, simplification is your strongest tool. If you can then look at your characterization, which is what Brecht throws open – if say, you're an old man, do you need to quaver your voice as well as shudder and jiggle? – if you can get that physical side down to a simple outline, not for any virtue in itself but because in doing so you can also put more emphasis on something else which is part of your reality, then you have more means at your disposal. I think it is in that area that the visual revolution of Craig relates to an acting revolution through Brecht.[328]

Brook came close to a new synthesis of global theatre cultures through simple acting, natural rituals, mythical languages, and the search

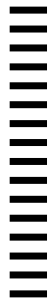
for communication with Oriental civilizations. The late twentieth century looked with favour on such processes, and Brook was not alone in his effort. (Several similar trends, such as the work of Barba and Mnouchkine, have already been mentioned.) However, Brook, an Englishman living in Paris who spoke several Western and Eastern European languages, took his own path. He was not interested in assigning or exchanging acting techniques:

> We are seeking for what gives a form of culture its life – not studying the culture itself but what is behind it. For this, the actor must try to step back from his own culture and, above all, from its stereotypes. [...] Our first task was to try to put an end to the stereotypes, but certainly not to reduce everyone to a neutral anonymity. Stripped of his ethnic mannerisms a Japanese becomes more Japanese, an African more African. [...] This is not unlike what happens in a piece of orchestral music, where each sound keeps its identity while merging into a new event.[329]

The CIRT, which was an international centre, did not aim to suppress national particularities. This approach was confirmed for Brook with his experience with La MaMa – the New York centre of avant-garde theatre – as well as with the Mexican Teatro Campesino led by Louis Valdez. In the latter establishment, Brook and Valdez tried to draw attention to the poor social strata in the United States. At joint events, actors of diverse origins were expected to find a common language. This only worked once the formal and external layer of communication had been thrown away and the participants had gone back to intuition and a kind of artistic telepathy. Brook demanded that the ensemble concentrate as much as possible. For him, creative exertion was important to make the fragile impulses jump from one artist to another. When the impulses matured and grew stronger, Brook would not hesitate to transfer them directly into the productions performed in front of an audience. Brook wanted his international group to reach a point of near perfection when it came to making contact with the spectators. And since audiences are very diverse, he put the CIRT together by hiring different and sometimes even contrasting actors. Brook wanted the centre to be a mirror of the whole world; therefore,

☛ *Can Themba:* The Suit*, 1999. Directed by Peter Brook.*

he never suppressed anyone's cultural roots. On the contrary, he took advantage of the diversity "to discover in a new way the strong and healthy differences between people."[330] Georges Banu has pointed out that in *Les Iks*, a 1975 production about the Ik (an African tribe facing extinction) which was staged at the Bouffes-du-Nord theatre, Brook "rejected for the first time the principle of racial differences when casting the roles. Roles were not denied to anyone beforehand, and anyone could get any role. So it happened that the story, which takes place in an African village, was being told by an Englishman, Japanese, Black man, Lebanese, Greek, and Swiss. The division of roles did not apply racial criteria at all."[331] Brook came to the conviction that theatre all over the world constitutes one big whole, and that each actor and each national culture is only a small part of it. The same applies to humans; each person is only one part of a whole and ideal person: "The complete human truth is global, and the theatre is the place in which the jigsaw can be pieced together."[332]



Any time limitation on a constant event is unnatural. Acting was not born in 1900, and it did not die in 2000. As has been shown in this book, acting had its predecessors in history and now it has its successors. There is only one reason this book must end now: we do not yet know what the future development of acting will bring. Although this conclusion might seem sudden to some, like cutting off a limb of a living organism, acting art is still very much alive in the early twenty-first century. It is not dying and is not fading. It comes in many shapes and is rich in its forms and ideas. It is poised towards the future with much energy and the capability of further progress. The fact that this book is at an end does not mean that the life of the theatre and acting ends. The ending only creates a distance to allow us to be observers who will watch theatre emerge from the past and sweep past us before it eventually disappears over the horizon of the future. The events of the following decades will only tell us and future generations how to grasp this subject once again.

Let us, therefore, let the future unfold as it may and say that a degree of quiet respect to those who came before us is also respect to those who will come after us. Each piece of the work that we wish to create contains some pieces of what has already been created by others. In other words: if we can learn from those who took this path in the past, the journey to ourselves and those coming after us will be easier.

NOTES

FORERUNNERS

1 DIDEROT, Denis. *Diderot o divadle*. Prague: Umění lidu, 1950, p. 234.
2 DIDEROT, Denis. *The Paradox of Acting*. London: Chatto&Windus, 1883, p. 38.
3 Ibid., p. 64.
4 *theatre direction*
5 This is mentioned by STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin Sergeievich. *My Life in Art*. Bloomsbury Revelations, London, 2016.
6 Qtd. from SARRAZAC, Jean-Pierre. Reconstruire le réel ou suggérer L'indicible. In JOMARON, Jacqueline de (ed.). *Le théâtre en France*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1992, p. 717.
7 SCHUMACHER, Claude (ed.). *Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre 1850–1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 159.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTOR AND THE PHYSICAL ACTOR

8 STANISLAVSKI, Constantin Sergeievich. *My Life in Art*. op. cit., pp. 156–159.
9 ANTOINE, André. Causerie sur la mise en scène. In *Revue de Paris*, 1 Avril 1903, p. 610. Qtd. from BABLET, Denis. *Współczesna reżyseria 1887/1914*. Warsaw: PIW, 1973, p. 15.
10 MITTELMANN-DEDINSKÝ, Móric. *Veľkí divadelní režiséri*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1989, p. 33.
11 STANISLAVSKIJ, Konstantin Sergejevič. *Hercova práca na role. / Dotvorenie herca*. Bratislava: SVKL, 1955, pp. 302–303.
12 STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin. *An Actor's Work. A Student Diary*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 52.
13 BABLET, Denis. op. cit., p. 13.
14 STANISLAVSKIJ, Konstantin Sergejevič. *Hercova práca na role. / Dotvorenie herca*. op. cit., pp. 304 – 305.
15 STANISLAVSKI, Constantin Sergeievich. *My Life in Art*. op. cit., pp. 160–161.
16 STANISLAVSKIJ, Konstantin Sergejevič. *Hercova práca na role. / Dotvorenie herca*. op. cit., pp. 309–310.
17 STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin. *An Actor's Work. A Student Diary*. op. cit., p. 61.
18 Ibid., p. 83.
19 Ibid., pp. 52–53.
20 Ibid., p. 153.
21 Ibid., pp. 306–307.
22 Ibid., p. 329.
23 Ibid., p. 352.
24 Ibid., p. 527.
25 Ibid., p. 372.
26 STANISLAVSKI, Constantin Sergeievich. *My Life in Art*. op. cit., p. 100.
27 STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin. *An Actor's Work. A Student Diary*. op. cit., p. 425.
28 Ibid., p. 463.
29 Ibid., p. 489.
30 Ibid., p. 486.

31 Ibid., p. 409.
32 VALDE, Pierre, according to ASLAN, Odette. *L'Acteur au XXe siècle*. Paris: Seghers, 1974, p. 83.
33 STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin. *An Actor's Work. A Student Diary*. op. cit., pp. 365–372.
34 Ibid., pp. 364–365.
35 Qtd. from BRAUN, Edward. *Meyerhold on Theatre*. London, New York: Bloomsbury Methenuen Drama, 2016, p. 221.
36 STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin. *An Actor's Work. A Student Diary*. op. cit., p. 28.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., p. 26.
39 STANISLAVSKIJ, Konstantin Sergejevič. *Hercova práca na role. / Dotvorenie herca*. op. cit., p. 235–236.
40 STANISLAVSKI, Constantin Sergeievich. *My Life in Art*. op. cit., p. 308.
41 MARTÍNEK, Karel. *Dejiny sovietskeho divadla*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1980, p. 346.
42 CHEKHOV, Michael. *To the Actor. On the Technique of Acting.* Mansfield CT: Martino Publishing, 2014, p. 2.
43 Ibid., p. 28.
44 CHAMBERLAIN, Franc. Michaił Czechow. Don Kichot a rzeczywistość. In *Dialog*, Vol. 47, 2002, No. 5/6, p. 165.
45 CHEKHOV, Michael. To the Actor. *On the Technique of Acting.* op. cit., p. 76.
46 Ibid., p. 81.
47 Ibid., p. 83.
48 CHAMBERLAIN, Franc. Michaił Czechow. Don Kichot a rzeczywistość. op. cit., p. 172.
49 The opinion of critic Sergei Margolin is discussed by LINDOVSKÁ, Nadežda. Michail Čechov (1891–1955). Herec, pedagóg, teoretik, mystik. In *Slovenské divadlo*, Vol. 46, 1998, No. 2/3, pp. 121–141.
50 Ibid., p. 105.
51 STRASBERG, Lee. *L'Actors Studio et la méthode*. Paris: InterEditions, 1989, p. 88.
52 Ibid., p. 89.
53 KRASNER, David. Strasberg, Adler and Meisner. In *Dialog*, Vol. 47, 2002, No. 11, pp. 125–126.
54 KRASNER, David, Ibid., p. 137.
55 KRASNER, David, Ibid., p. 151.
56 KRASNER, David, Ibid., p. 66.
57 KRASNER, David, Ibid., pp. 93–94.
58 KRASNER, David, Ibid., p. 19.
59 MEJERCHOĽD, Vsevolod Emilievič. *Rekonštrukcia divadla*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1978, (Herec budúcnosti a biomechanika.) p. 244.
60 MARTÍNEK, Karel. *Mejerchold*. Prague: Orbis, 1963, p. 48.
61 MEJERCHOĽD, Vselovod Emilievič. *Lekcii 1918–1919* (ed. O. M. Feľdman). Moscow: O.G.I., 2000, p. 220.
62 First Theatre of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.
63 ROSTOCKIJ, Boleslav. *Mejerchoľd*. Bratislava: SVKL, 1964, p. 39.
64 MEJERCHOĽD, Vselovod Emilievič. *Rekonštrukcia divadla*. op. cit., (Stanislavského osamotenie.) p. 147–155.

65 MEYERHOLD, Vsevolod Emilievich. *Staťji, pisma, reči, besedy. II. 1917–1939*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1968, ("Meyerhold Against Meyerholdovshchina.") pp. 330–347. "Meyerholdovshchina" was an attribute given to Meyerhold's overly metaphorical approach to theatremaking, which was considered to be too bourgeois and not sufficiently focused on the working class.
66 For example, letters from 27 June 1924, 26 September 1926, and 18 January 1938. Ibid., pp. 63, 103, 436.
67 HAMON-SIRÉJOLS, Christine. Biomechanika. In *Slovenské divadlo*, Vol. 40, 1992, No. 2–3, p. 200.
68 William James' best-known works include *The Feeling of Effort* (1880), *Principles of Psychology* (1890 and 1901), and *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909).
69 Craig's 1907 study is entitled *The Artists of the Theatre of the Future*.
70 BRAUN, Edward. op. cit., pp. 245–246.
71 Ibid., p. 244.
72 HAMON-SIRÉJOLS, Christine. op. cit., p. 204.
73 GORDON, Mel. "Meyerhold's Biomechanics". In *TDR*, Vol. 18, 1974, No. 3, p. 76.
74 BRAUN, Edward. op. cit., p. 246. Qtd. from ['The Actor of the Future and Biomechanics', a report of Meyerhold's lecture in the Little Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, 12 June 1922. In *Ermitazh*, Moscow, 1922, No. 6, pp. 10–11.].
75 MEJERCHOĽD, Vselovod Emilievič. *Rekonštrukcia divadla*. op. cit., (Z prejavu na diskusii o tvorivej metodológii Mejerchoľdovho divadla.) p. 243.
76 HAMON-SIRÉJOLS, Christine. op. cit., 207–208.
77 PICON-VALLIN, Béatrice. L'entrainement de l'acteur chez Meyerhold. In *Bouffonneries*, 1989, No. 18/19, p. 213–214.
78 MARTÍNEK, Karel. *Mejerchold*. op. cit., p. 146.
79 GORDON, Mel. "Meyerhold's Biomechanics". In *TDR*, Vol. 18, 1974, No. 3, p. 73.
80 Ibid., p. 79.
81 Ibid., pp. 81–82.
82 According to some of Meyerhold's own notes, during this exercise the partner should be pressing his arms against a piece of furniture (e.g. a table) behind his back to have enough strength to do the following parts of the etude.
83 GORDON, Mel. "Meyerhold's Biomechanics." op. cit., p. 85.
84 MEJERCHOĽD, Vselovod Emilievič. *Rekonštrukcia divadla*. op. cit. (Herec budúcnosti a biomechanika.) p. 247.
85 PICON-VALLIN, Béatrice. Meyerhold. The Magnanimous Cuckold. Editions Subjectile: Valenciennes, 2017, p. 7. In *L'entrainement de l'acteur chez Meyerhold*. op. cit., p. 214.
86 WARPACHOWSKI, Leonid. Zapiski z dawnych lat. In *Spotkania z Meyerholdem*. Warsaw: PIW, 1981, p. 240.
87 HAMON-SIRÉJOLS, Christine. op. cit., p. 208–209.
88 According to PICON-VALLIN, Béatrice. *L'entrainement de l'acteur chez Meyerhold*. op. cit., pp. 215–219.
89 MEYERHOLD, Vsevolod Emilievich. "*Staťji, pisma, reči, besedy.*" II. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1968, (Kak byl postavlen „Velikodušnyj rogonosec".) p. 47.

90 COLLECTIVE OF AUTHORS. *Istorija sovetskogo dramatičeskogo teatra*. Tom 2. (1921–1925) Moscow: Nauka, 1966, p. 17.
91 Qtd. from LAW, Alma H. Le Cocu magnifique de Crommelynck. In BABLET, Denis. (ed.) *Les voies de la création théâtrale*, VII. Paris: CNRS, 1979, p. 40.
92 LUNAČARSKIJ, Anatolij Vasilievič. *O teatre i dramaturgii*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1958, p. 801.
93 LAW, Alma H. op. cit., p. 15.
94 FEVRAĽSKIJ, Alexander. Na początku lat dwudziestych i później. In COLLECTIVE OF AUTHORS. *Spotkania z Meyerholdem*. op. cit., p. 54–55.
95 MARTÍNEK, Karel. *Mejerchold*. op. cit., p. 238.
96 JAMNICKÝ, Ján. *Spoveď režiséra (Dokumenty)*. Bratislava: NDC, 1998, (Desať dní, ktoré zostali v pamäti.) p. 27.
97 MEYERHOLD, Vsevolod Emilievich. *"Staťji, pisma, reči, besedy"*. op. cit., ("Meyerhold Against Meyerholdovshchina.") p. 343.
98 PICON-VALLIN, Béatrice. Le Revizor de Gogol – Meyerhold. In BABLET, Denis (ed.). *Les voies de la création théâtrale*, VII. op. cit., p. 121.
99 Qtd. from BRAUN, Kazimierz. Wielka reforma teatru w Europie. Wrocław: Ossoliński, 1984, p. 222.
100 Ibid.

ACTOR OF A PERFECT FORM

101 CRAIG, Edward Gordon. "The Actor and the Über-marionette." In *On the Art of the Theatre*, London: Routledge, 2009, p. 38.
102 Qtd. from BOOR, Ján. "Edward Gordon Craig, reformátor divadla". In *Slovenské divadlo*, Vol. 37, 1989, No. 1, p. 127.
103 CRAIG, Edward Gordon. "The Actor and the Über-marionette." In *On the Art of the Theatre*. op. cit., p. 28.
104 Ibid., p. 39.
105 Ibid., p. 34.
106 BANU, Georges. *Divadlo alebo Naplnený okamih*. Bratislava: Tália- press, 1998, p. 24.
107 CRAIG, Edward Gordon. "The Actor and the Über-marionette". In *On the Art of the Theatre*. op. cit., pp. 36–39.
108 Ibid., p. 42.
109 CRAIG, Edward Gordon. "The Artists of the Theatre of the Future". In *On the Art of the Theatre*. op. cit., p. 6.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., p. 18.
112 Ibid., p. 25.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid., p. 7.
115 Ibid., p. 9.
116 Stanislavsky mentions the disagreement in evaluating the result: "Some people were enthusiastic, others criticized…" (*My Life in Art*. op. cit. p. 523). In SCHERHAUFER, Peter. *Čítanka*

z dejín divadelnej réžie. II. *Od Goetheho a Schillera po Reinhardta*. Bratislava: NDC, 1998, p. 204: "Craig left Moscow happy and satisfed with success. Stanislavsky stayed with discord in his soul."
117 Qtd. from SCHERHAUFER, Peter. *Čítanka z dejín divadelnej réžie* II. op. cit., p. 199.
118 Ibid., p. 200.
119 STANISLAVSKI, Konstantin Sergeievich. *My Life in Art*. op. cit.
120 Qtd. from INNES, Christopher. *Edward Gordon Craig. A Vision of Theatre*. New York: Routledge, 1998. pp. 158–159.
121 STANISLAVSKI, Konstantin Sergeyevich. *My Life in Art*. op. cit., pp. 522–523.
122 BANU, Georges. *Divadlo alebo Naplnený okamih*. op. cit., pp. 24–25.
123 CRAIG, Edward Gordon. The Artists of the Theatre of the Future. In *On the Art of the Theatre*. op. cit., p. 1.
124 CRAIG, Edward Gordon. *Towards a New Theatre*. London: J M Dent & Sons, 1913.
125 Qtd. from BABLET, Denis. *Scénické revoluce 20. století*. Prague: Scénografie, 1976, No. 2, p. 28.
126 JURKOWSKI, Henryk. *Szkice z teorii teatru lalek*. Łódż: POLUNIMA, 1993, p. 23.
127 APPIA, Adolphe. *Dzieło sztuki żywej*. Warsaw: WAiF, 1974, p. 160.
128 APPIA, Adolphe. *The Work of Living Art. A Theory of the Theatre*. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1960, pp. 68, 70.
129 Ibid., pp. 21, 23.
130 Qtd. from VENNET-TALLON, Mary. Adolphe Appia et l'oeuvre d'art totale. In BABLET, Denis. KONIGSON, Élie (ed.). *L'oeuvre d'art totale*. Paris: CNRS, 1995, p. 105.
131 Appia, Adolphe. *The Work of Living Art*. op. cit., p. 31.
132 BABLET, Denis. *Scénické revoluce dvacátého století*. op. cit., pp. 25–26.
133 Ibid., p. 27.
134 APPIA, Adolphe. *The Work of Living Art*. op. cit., pp. 53–54.
135 Ibid., p. 54.
136 Ibid., p. 60.
137 APPIA, Adolphe. *Dzieło sztuki żywej*. op. cit., (Żywa sztuka? Czy martwa natura?) p. 181.
138 BRAUN, Kazimierz. *Wielka reforma teatru w Europie*. p. 69.
139 JAQUES-DALCROZE, Émile. *Rhythm, Music and Education*. Redditch: Read Books Ltd., 2014, p. 111.
140 Ibid., p. 254.
141 Ibid., p. 256.
142 Ibid., pp. 96-97.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid., p. 177.
145 Ibid., pp. 258–259.
146 Qtd. from MARTINET, Susanne. *La musique du corps. Expression par le mouvement*. Lausanne, Paris: Au signal, Chiron, 1991, pp. 327–328.
147 JAQUES-DALCROZE, Émile. *Rhythm, Music and Education*. Redditch: Read Books Ltd., 2014, p. 278.
148 Ibid., p. 280.
149 Ibid., p. 281.
150 Ibid., p. 228.

151 Qtd. from PÖRTNER, Paul. *Experimentální divadlo*. Prague: Orbis, 1965, p. 25.
152 MARINETTI, Filippo Tommaso. Manifest. In PÖRTNER, Paul. op. cit. p. 91.
153 Ibid.
154 PRAMPOLINI, Enrico. L'atmosfera Scenica Futurista. In SCHERHAUFER, Peter. *Čítanka z dejín divadelnej réžie* III. *Od futuristov po Ejzenštejna*. Bratislava: Divadelný ústav, 1999, p. 20.
155 MARINETTI, Filippo Tommaso. Distruzione della sintasi. Immaginazione sensa fili. Parole in libertà. Qtd. SCHERHAUFER, Peter. *Čítanka z dejín divadelnej réžie* III. op. cit., p. 38.
156 PÖRTNER, Paul. *Experimentální divadlo*. op. cit., p. 53.
157 SCHLEMMER, Oskar in PÖRTNER, Paul. *Experimentální divadlo*. op. cit., p. 108.
158 BÉHAR, Henri. *Dada i surrealizm w teatrze*. Warsaw: WAiF, 1975, p. 9.
159 This is pointed out by SCHERHAUFER, Peter in *Čítanka z dejín divadelnej réžie* III. Od futuristov po Ejzenštejna, p. 97.
160 Louis Aragon called Wilson "the future that we predicted." See LECOQ, Jacques. *Theatre of Movement and Gesture*. London, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 140.
161 GAJDOŠ, Július. *Postmoderní podoby divadla*. Brno: Nakladatelství Větrné mlýny, 2001, p. 26.

THE DRAMATIC AND LUDIC ACTOR

162 The French word *cabotin* is a pejorative term for an actor, meaning an itinerant comic who wants to be liked by the audience at any cost.
163 COPEAU, Jacques. Un essai de rénovation dramatique. In COPEAU, Jacques. *Registres I, Appels*. Paris: Gallimard, 1974, p. 27.
164 COPEAU, Jacques. Reflexions d'un comédien sur le Paradoxe de Diderot. In COPEAU, *Jacques. Registres VII, Les années Copiaus*. Paris: Gallimard, 2017, p. 357.
165 Ibid., p. 358.
166 This is what Copeau's group, touring the country in 1924–1929 was dubbed by the Burgundians. It translates as Copiaus (Copeau's actors, or Copeau's children).
167 COPEAU, Jacques. *Souvenirs du Vieux-Colombier.* Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1931.
168 JOMARON, Jacqueline de. Jacques Copeau, le tréteau nu. In JOMARON, Jacqueline de (ed.). op. cit., p. 741.
169 BABLET, Denis. *Współczesna reżyseria* 1887/1914. op. cit., p. 67.
170 ROOSE-EVANS, James. *Experimental Theatre from Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*. New York: Universe Books, 1984, p. 60.
171 COPEAU, Jacques. Le métier au théâtre. In COPEAU, Jacques. *Registres I, Appels*. Paris: Gallimard, 1974, p. 102.
172 RAKLEWSKA, Zofia. PUZYNA, Konstanty. Copeau i słowa „trzeba stąd iść." In COPEAU, Jacques. *Naga scena*. Warszawa: WAiF, 1972, p. 32.
173 Qtd. from ROOSE-EVANS, James. op. cit., p. 61.
174 JOMARON, Jacqueline de. Ils étaient quatre... In JOMARON, Jacqueline de (ed.). op. cit., p. 774.
175 Ibid., p. 743.
176 KRAUS, Karel. Doslov. In JOUVET, Louis. *Nepřevtělený herec*. Praha: Orbis, 1967, p. 159.
177 JOUVET, Louis. op. cit., p. 130.

178 Ibid., p. 156.
179 Ibid., p. 124.
180 Ibid., p. 150.
181 DULLIN, Charles. *Souvenirs et notes de travail d'un acteur.* Paris: Librairie théâtrale, 1991, p. 111.
182 DEÁK, František. Antonin Artaud and Charles Dullin. Artaud's Apprenticeship in Theatre. *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 29, Oct. 1977, No. 3, pp. 347–348.
183 DULLIN, Charles. *Souvenirs et notes de travail d'un acteur.* op. cit. p. 89.
184 Ibid., p. 98.
185 Ibid., p. 100.
186 Ibid., p. 49.
187 COPEAU, Jacques. Návštevy u Gordona Craiga, Jaques-Dalcroza a Adolpha Appiu. In MISTRÍK, Miloš. *Jacques Copeau a jeho Starý holubník*. Bratislava: Slovenská teatrologická spoločosť a VEDA, 2006, s. 378–379.
188 DECROUX, Étienne. *Paroles sur le mime*. Paris: Librairie théâtrale, 1963, p. 44.
189 Ibid., p. 60.
190 Ibid., p. 89.
191 VEINSTEIN, André. Préface. In DECROUX, Étienne. op. cit., p. 9.
192 DECROUX, Étienne. op. cit., p. 17.
193 HYVNAR, Jan. *Herec v moderním divadle*. Praha, 2000, pp. 129–130.
194 DECROUX, Étienne. op. cit., p. 128.
195 POESIO, Paolo Emilio. *Jean Louis Barrault*. Praha: Orbis, 1969, p. 16.
196 Qtd. from POESIO, Paolo Emilio. op. cit. p. 26.
197 BARRAULT, Jean-Louis. *Som divadelník*. Bratislava: SVKL, 1961, pp. 180–181.
198 BARRAULT, Jean-Louis. Pokračovanie úvah. In *Slovenské divadlo*, Vol. 11, 1963, No. 2, p. 192.

THE ACTOR OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

199 BRECHT, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. 3rd edition. (eds. SILBERMAN, Mark. GILES, Steve. KUHN, Tom.) London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015, p. 234.
200 Ibid., p. 235.
201 Ibid., p. 111.
202 Ibid., p. 110.
203 Ibid., p. 143.
204 *Alienation effect* – The German term is *Verfremdungeffekt*. Brecht also used the short form *V-effekt*. In translating the term, international languages have struggled to come up with a good equivalent. In addition to keeping the meaning of alienation, estrangement, and distance, the translations sometimes incorrectly emphasize peculiarity, that is something unusual, unique, uncommon.
205 BRECHT, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. op. cit., p. 185.
206 Ibid.
207 Qtd. from THOMSON, Peter. Brecht and Actor Training. On Whose Behalf Do We Act? In HODGE, Alison (ed.). *Actor Training*, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 2010, p. 124.

208 BRECHT, Bertolt. Journals 1934–1955. London, 1993. Qtd. from PARKER, Stephen. *Bertolt Brecht. A Literary Life*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 520.
209 BRECHT, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. op. cit. p. 155.
210 Ibid., p. 152.
211 Ibid. p. 134.
212 Ibid., p. 194.
213 Ibid., p. 182.
214 Ibid., p. 66.
215 BRAUN, Kazimierz. op. cit., p. 204.
216 BRAULICH, Heinrich. *Max Reinhardt*. Prague: Orbis, 1969, p. 196.
217 REINHARDT, Max. Magické kúzlo hry. In SCHERHAUFER, Peter. *Čítanka z dejín divadelnej réžie* II. op. cit., p. 280.
218 BRECHT, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre*. op. cit. p. 63.
219 Ibid., p. 78.
220 IVERNEL, Philippe. Brecht contra Wagner. In BABLET, Denis, KONIGSON, Élie (ed.). op. cit., p. 228.
221 REICH, Bernhard. *Bertolt Brecht*. Prague: Orbis, 1964, p. 219.
222 Ibid., p. 229.
223 WILSON, Robert. In *Tracing Pina's Footsteps*. S. Gregorio di Catania, 2002, p. 219.
224 TYNAN, Kenneth. *Na scene i v kino*. Moscow: Progress, 1969, p. 98.
225 BARKER, Clive. Joan Littlewood. In HODGE, Alison (ed.). op. cit., p. 137.
226 Ibid., p. 138.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ACTOR

227 ARTAUD, Antonin. Le théâtre Alfred Jarry et l'hostilité publique. Qtd. from KOPECKÝ, Jan. *Antonin Artaud, poslední z prokletých*. Prague: Herrmann a synové, 1994, p. 42.
228 BÉHAR, Henri. *Dada i surrealizm w teatrze*. op. cit., p. 178.
229 ARTAUD, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double*. New York: Grove Press, 1958, p. 72.
230 Ibid., pp. 57–58.
231 Ibid., pp. 101–103.
232 Ibid., p. 27.
233 Ibid., p. 9.
234 Ibid., pp. 89–90.
235 Ibid., p. 91.
236 Ibid., pp. 95, 98.
237 Ibid., pp. 9–10.
238 Ibid., pp. 74, 78.
239 Ibid., p. 96.
240 Ibid., p. 134.
241 Ibid., p. 133.
242 Ibid., p. 136.
243 Ibid., p. 137.

244 Ibid., pp. 139–140.
245 Ibid., p. 140.
246 BARRAULT, Jean-Louis in KOPECKÝ, Jan. *Antonin Artaud, poslední z prokletých*. op. cit. p. 150.
247 ARTAUD, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double*. op. cit. pp. 109–110.
248 Ibid., p. 55.
249 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 19.
250 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
252 The names were summarized by Zbigniew Osiński in BURZYŃSKI, Tadeusz. OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. *Grotowski's Laboratory*. Warsaw: Interpress, 1979, p. 10.
253 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. SALATA, Kris. "Reply to Stanislavsky". *TDR* (1988-), Vol. 52, 2008, No. 2, pp. 31–32.
254 Ibid., p. 34.
255 BURZYŃSKI, Tadeusz. OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. *Grotowski's Laboratory*. op. cit., p. 19.
256 FLASZEN, Ludwik. *Teatr skazany na magię*. Cracow and Wroclaw: Wydawnictvo literackie, 1983, p. 334.
257 OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. *Grotowski and His Laboratory*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1986. p. 71.
258 ALLAIN. Paul, ZIÓŁKOWSKI, Grzegorz (eds.). Voices from Within. Grotowski's Polish Collaborators. Wroclaw: Polish Theatre Perspectives, 2015, p. 76.
259 KELERA, Józef. "Teatr w stanie laski". In Odra, 1965, No. 11, p. 74. Qtd. from FISCHER-LICHTE, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 83.
260 OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. *Grotowski and His Laboratory*. op. cit., p. 85.
261 STRASBERG, Lee. Metoda i style nierealistyczne. Artaud, Grotowski i Brecht. In *Notatnik teatralny,* 1994, No. 4 (Winter), p. 163.
262 BRZEZIŃSKI, Andrzej. PAWŁOWSKI, Roman. "Zakładnik własnego programu". In *Notatnik teatralny*, 2000, No. 20–21, p. 58.
263 ALLAIN, Paul. ZIÓŁKOWSKI, Grzegorz (eds.). op. cit., p. 91.
264 PUZYNA, Konstanty. "A Myth Vivisected. Grotowski's Apolocalypsis". In SCHECHNER, Richard. WOLFORD, Lisa (eds.). *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. London & New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 100–102.
265 BURZYŃSKI, Tadeusz. OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. op. cit., p. 101.
266 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. op. cit., p. 22.
267 OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. *Grotowski and His Laboratory*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1986. p. 83.
268 BURZYŃSKI, Tadeusz. OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. op. cit., p. 23.
269 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. SALATA, Kris. "Reply to Stanislavsky". *TDR* (1988-), Vol. 52, 2008, No. 2, p. 34.
270 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Divadlo a rituál*. Bratislava: Kalligram, 1999, p. 80.
271 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. op. cit., p. 207.
272 Ibid., p. 209.
273 RICHARDS, Thomas. *At Work With Grotowski on Physical Actions*. New York, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 98.

274 Ibid., p. 94.
275 Ibid., p. 99.
276 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Divadlo a rituál*. op. cit., (Cvičenia.) p. 87.
277 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Divadlo a rituál*. op. cit., (Hlas.) p. 95.
278 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. op. cit., p. 35.
279 CIEŚLAK, Ryszard. KIETLIŃSKI, Andrzej. "Tyle metod ilu ludzi". In *Notatnik teatralny*, Vol. 4 (Winter), 1992, pp. 72–73.
280 MOLIK, Zygmunt. WILNIEWCZYC, Teresa. "Całe moje życie". In *Notatnik teatralny*, 2001, No. 22–23, p. 119.
281 Ibid., p. 112.
282 Ibid., pp. 116, 120.
283 CZAPÓW, Gabriela. CZAPÓW, Czesław. *Psychodrama*. Warsaw: PWN, 1969.
284 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. "The World – the Place of Truth". In *Le Théâtre en Pologne. The Theatre in Poland*, Vol. 22, 1980, No. 1–6, p. 35.
285 MARIJNEN, Franz. "Actor's Training (1966)". In GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*. op. cit., pp. 175–204.
286 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. Farsa – Misterium. In *Pamiętnik teatralny*, Vol. 49, 2000, No. 1–4, pp. 247–248.
287 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Divadlo a rituál*. op. cit., (Divadlo a rituál.) p. 71.
288 Ibid., p. 57.
289 KUMIEGA, Jennifer. *The Theatre of Grotowski*, London: Methuen Drama, 1985, pp. 128–129.
290 MAŤAŠÍK, Andrej. Sezóna Divadla národov – Varšava 1975. In *Slovenské divadlo*, Vol. 24, 1976, No. 1, p. 85.
291 OSIŃSKI, Zbigniew. "Grotowski Blazes the Trails. From Objective Drama to Art as Vehicle." In *TDR* (1988-), Vol. 35, (Spring, 1991), No. 1, p. 97.
292 Ibid., pp. 100–101.
293 Ibid., pp. 101–103.
294 COLLECTIVE OF AUTHORS. *Centro di lavoro di Jerzy Grotowski*. Pontedera, (undated, end of the 1980's ?), pp. 5, 25, 43.
295 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. "Performer". In SCHECHNER, Richard, WOLFORD, Lisa (eds.). op. cit., p. 374.
296 BROOK, Peter. "Grotowski, Art as a Vehicle". In *TDR* (1988-), Vol. 35, (Spring, 1991) No. 1, p. 93.
297 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. Od zespołu teatralnego do sztuki jako wehikułu. In *Notatnik teatralny*, 1992, No. 4 (Winter), p. 43.
298 BARBA, Eugenio. *Alla ricerca del teatro perduto*. Padua: Marsilio Editori, 1965.
299 BARBA, Eugenio. GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. *Land of Ashes and Diamonds. My Apprenticeship in Poland*. Asheville: Black Mountain Press, 1999, p. 27.
300 Ibid., pp. 67–68.
301 BARBA, Eugenio. FOWLER, Richard. "Eurasian Theatre". In *TDR* (1988-), Vol. 32, (Autumn, 1988), No. 3, p. 126.
302 BARBA, Eugenio. SAVARESE, Nicola. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology. The Secret Art of the Performer.* London & New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 5.

303 Ibid.
304 RUFFINI, Franco. Villages eurasiens et théâtre qui danse. In *Bouffonneries*, op. cit., p. 7.
305 BARBA, Eugenio. SAVARESE, Nicola. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*. op. cit., p. 189.
306 Ibid.
307 Ibid., p. 190.
308 Ibid., p. 81.
309 Ibid., p. 74.
310 GROTOWSKI, Jerzy. Pragmatic Laws. In BARBA, Eugenio. SAVARESE, Nicola. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, op. cit., p. 236.
311 BARBA, Eugenio. SAVARESE, Nicola. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology.* op. cit., p. 88.
312 Ibid., p. 176.
313 Ibid., p. 103.
314 BROOK, Peter. *The Shifting Point. Forty Years of Theatrical Exploration, 1946–1987*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019, p. 201.
315 Ibid., p. 22.
316 Ibid., p. 37.
317 Ibid., p. 50.
318 BROOK, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Touchstone (Simon and Schuster), 1996, pp. 59–60.
319 Ibid., p. 62.
320 BROOK, Peter. *The Shifting Point*. op. cit., p. 96.
321 Ibid., p. 112.
322 HÜBNER, Zygmunt. Peter Brook – mistrz, który nie chce być klasykiem. In BROOK, Peter. *Pusta przestrzeń*. Warsaw: WAiF, 1981, p. 16.
323 BROOK, Peter. *The Shifting Point*. op. cit. p. 103.
324 Ibid., pp. 99, 101.
325 Ibid., p. 97.
326 Ibid.
327 Ibid., p. 110.
328 Ibid., p. 36.
329 Ibid., p. 92.
330 Ibid., p. 94.
331 BANU, Georges. *Divadlo alebo Naplnený okamih*. op. cit., pp. 120–121.
332 BROOK, Peter. *The Shifting Point*. op. cit., p. 111.

NAME INDEX

Acker, Kathy • 165
Adler, Stella • 73
Aeschylus • 14
Albahaca, Elizabeth • 270, 274
Allain, Paul • 332
Anderson, Laurie • 165
Andreyev, Leonid Nikolaievich • 50, 77, 145, 194
Antoine, André • 20 – 23, 32, 35, 111, 145, 186, 189, 222, 310, 324
Antze, Rosemary Jeanes • 304
Appia, Adolphe • 6, 16, 44, 67, 113, 115, 126, 130 – 147, 155 – 157, 173, 174, 226, 265, 328, 330
Aragon, Louis • 163, 246, 329
Aristotle • 212, 213, 234
Aron, Robert • 246
Artaud, Antonin • 6, 16, 163, 180, 183, 190, 196, 202, 206, 245 – 259, 265, 311, 312, 330, 332
Aslan, Odette • 325
Athanasiou, Génica • 246
Autant-Lara • 163
Azuma, Katsuko • 303

Babanova, Maria Ivanovna • 92, 99
Bablet, Denis • 178, 324, 327 – 329, 331
Bach, Johann Sebastian • 95, 103, 129, 156
Bacqué, André • 179
Ball, Hugo • 163
Banu, Georges • 118, 127, 128, 321, 327, 329, 331
Barba, Eugenio • 6, 261, 262, 284, 289, 291, 292, 296, 297, 298 – 308, 320, 333, 334
Barbieri, Gina • 179
Barker, Clive • 236, 238, 331
Barnay, Ludwig • 23
Barrault, Jean-Louis • 145, 182, 189, 199, 200, 202 – 207, 257, 259, 313, 330, 332
Bartkowiak, Tadeusz • 265
Bassermann, Albert • 227
Baty, Gaston • 16, 145, 184, 193, 194, 196
Baudelaire, Charles-Pierre • 192
Bausch, Pina • 234
Beaumarchais, Pierre • 176
Bebutov, Valery Mikhailovich • 87
Beck, Julian • 205, 259, 292
Bednárik, Jozef • 16
Beethoven, Ludwig van • 103
Béhar, Henri • 247, 329, 331
Bekhterev, Vladimir Mikhailovich • 84, 89
Belmondo, Jean-Paul • 310
Bene, Carmelo • 259
Bernhardt, Sarah • 15, 17
Besson, Benno • 233
Bing, Suzanne • 177, 178, 181, 196
Blin, Roger • 253, 259
Blok, Alexander Alexandrovich • 77, 194
Boal, Augusto • 299
Bogoliubov, Nikolai • 99
Boleslavski, Richard • 68, 126
Boor, Ján • 327
Bosch, Hieronymus • 311
Brahm, Otto • 22, 23, 32, 111, 113, 145, 222, 225
Brando, Marlon • 68
Braulich, Heinrich • 331
Braun, Edward • 325, 326
Braun, Kazimierz • 144, 225, 327, 328, 331
Brecht, Bertolt • 6, 16, 29, 55, 116, 163, 164, 183, 211 – 236, 240, 289, 303, 308, 311, 319
Breton, André • 163, 246
Brieux, Eugène • 20
Brook, Peter • 6, 259, 292, 295, 309, 310 – 321, 329, 333, 334
Bruegel, Pieter • 311
Brzeziński, Andrzej • 272, 332
Bull, Tune • 267
Burian, Emil František • 16, 267
Burzyński, Tadeusz • 332
Busch, Ernst • 230, 232
Byron, George Gordon • 267

Cage, John • 16, 165
Calderón, Pedro • 268, 269
Carné, Marcel • 207
Carrezi, Roberta • 304

Chagall, Marc • 145
Chaikin, Joseph • 292
Chamberlain, Franc • 325
Chancerel, Léon • 181
Chaplin, Charlie • 205
Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich • 6, 23, 31, 36, 43, 44, 46, 50, 77, 80, 194, 325
Chekhov, Mikhail • 30, 43, 52, 58 – 62, 64 – 67, 325
Chopin, Fryderik • 95
Chronegk, Ludwig • 16, 19, 23, 31
Cieślak, Ryszard • 265, 270 – 272, 274, 280, 282, 285, 287, 292, 333
Claudel, Paul • 145, 157, 204, 205, 207, 246
Clurman, Harold • 68
Cocteau, Jean • 267
Copeau, Jacques • 6, 130, 145, 169 – 183, 186 – 190, 193 – 196, 202, 207, 258, 329, 330
Copeau, Marie-Hélène, (Dasté) • 181
Copeland, F. • 165
Coquelin, Benoit Constant • 92
Corbet, Harry • 236
Craig, Edward Gordon • 6, 44, 49, 74, 82, 111 – 131, 138, 144 – 146, 148, 149, 156, 161, 162, 170, 197, 222, 226, 265, 311, 319, 326 – 328, 330
Crawford, Cheryl • 68, 327
Crommelynck, Fernand • 96, 98, 99
Croué, Jean • 169, 193
Cruciani, Fabrizio • 304
Cunningham, Merce • 165
Cynkutis, Zbigniew • 264, 265, 267, 269, 270, 274, 277, 282, 292
Czapów, Czesław • 283, 333
Czapów, Gabriela • 283, 333

Dalí, Salvador • 312
Dasté, Jean • 181, 182, 207
De Vos • 113
Deák, František • 330
Dean, James • 68
Deburau, Jean-Gaspard • 207
Decroux, Étienne • 181 – 202, 206, 207, 308, 309, 330
Decroux, Maximilien • 198, 201
Dejmek, Kazimierz • 260
Deutsch, Ernst • 227
Diaghilev, Sergei Pavlovich • 139, 144
Dickens, Charles • 31
Diderot, Denis • 11, 12, 31, 324, 329
Dostoevsky, Fyodor Mikhailovich • 31, 54, 169, 193, 269
Dreyer, Carl Theodor • 246
Dullin, Charles • 145, 157, 169, 181, 183 – 186, 188 – 193, 195, 196, 202, 206, 146, 330
Dumas, Alexander jr. • 15
Duncan, Isadora • 139, 144
Duse, Eleonora • 92, 112, 115

Edison, Thomas Alva • 133
Efremov, Oleg • 57
Eisenstein, Sergei Mikhailovich • 87, 329
Eliot, Thomas Stearns • 269
Eluard, Paul • 246
Engel, Erich • 231
Epstein, Alvin • 201
Erdman, Nikolai Robertovich • 80

Faulkner, William Harrison • 202
Feldman, O. M. • 325
Fevralski, Alexander Viliamovich • 100, 327
Finley, Karen • 165
Fischer-Lichte, Erika • 332
Flaszen, Ludwik • 265, 269, 296, 332
Fokin, Mikhail Mikhailovich • 76
Foreman, Richard • 164, 165
Förster, August • 23
Fort, Paul • 24, 111, 145
Fowler, Richard • 333
Franz, Ellen • 19
Fratellini, Albert • 178
Fratellini, François • 178
Fratellini, Paul • 178
Freud, Sigmund • 41
Fuchs, Georg • 24, 111, 113, 145
Fuller, Loie • 144

Gajdoš, Július • 165, 329
Gance, Abel • 246
Garin, Erast Pavlovich • 87, 104
Garrick, David • 12
Gémier, Firmin • 22, 143, 145, 157, 184, 189
Georg II • 16, 18 – 20, 31
Geschonnek, Erwin • 228
Gide, André • 176, 180
Gielgud, John • 310
Giles, Steve • 330
Giraudoux, Jean • 189
Gladkov, Alexander Konstantinovich • 87
Glass, Phil • 165
Gluck, Christoph Willibald • 144, 147, 157
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang • 13, 268, 327
Gogol, Nikolai • 50, 102 – 106, 327
Goldoni, Carlo • 176
Goncourt, brothers • 20
Goorney, Howard • 236
Gordon, Mel • 90, 91, 165, 326
Gorky, Maxim • 39, 50, 77
Gozzi, Carlo • 55, 57, 176
Grant, Duncan • 174
Granville-Barker, Harley • 157
Grasso, Giovanni di • 92
Green, Paul • 71
Gregory, André • 292
Grein, Jacob Thomas • 23, 111, 145
Griboyedov, Alexandr Sergeyevich • 102, 106
Grieg, Edward Hagerup • 95
Gripich, Alexey Lvovich • 87
Grotowski, Jerzy • 6, 16, 29, 116, 178, 180, 257, 259 – 298, 304, 311, 312, 332 – 334
Gurawski, Jerzy • 270, 296
Gurdjieff, Georgy Ivanovich • 289
Guyon, Eliane • 199, 201
Gvozdev, Alexey Alexandrovich • 99

Haase, Friedrich • 22
Hamon-Siréjols, Christine • 87, 90, 326
Hamsun, Knut • 47, 50
Hanuszkiewicz, Adam • 260
Harris, Richard • 236
Hauptmann, Gerhart • 23, 77, 145
Hébertot, Jacques • 184
Hethal, Torgeir • 299
Hevesi, Sándor • 113
Hodge, Alison • 330, 331
Hoffman, Dustin • 68
Honzl, Jindřich • 16
Horzyca, Wilam • 260
Housman, Laurence • 119
Hübner, Zygmunt • 334
Hugo, Victor • 253
Hyvnar, Jan • 199, 330

Ibsen, Henrik • 20, 23, 31, 35, 77, 80, 145, 194
Ilyinski, Igor Vladimirovich • 87, 92, 99
Innes, Christopher • 328
Ionesco, Eugène • 261
Irwing, Henry • 113, 115, 311
Ivernel, Philippe • 229, 331

Jackson, Glenda • 310
Jacobs, Sally • 312
Jahołkowski, Antoni • 265, 270, 274, 278
James, William • 81, 82, 326
Jamnický, Ján • 103, 327
Jamois, Marguerite • 189, 194
Jannings, Emil • 227
Jaques-Dalcroze, Émile • 44, 115, 130, 134, 135, 137, 140, 141, 143 – 149, 151, 153 – 157, 162, 173, 328, 330
Jaracz, Stefan • 260
Jarocki, Jerzy • 260
Jarry, Alfred • 22, 24, 317
Jessner, Leopold • 222
Jomaron, Jacqueline de • 324, 329
Jonson, Ben • 193, 240
Jouvet, Louis • 145, 172, 173, 178, 181, 183 – 190, 193, 195, 196, 206, 246, 329
Joyce, James • 275
Jurkowski, Henryk • 328

Kachalov, Vasily Ivanovich • 39, 52, 113, 125, 126

Kainz, Joseph • 23
Kalidasa • 268
Kantor, Tadeusz • 164, 260
Kaprow, Allan • 16
Kazan, Elia • 68
Keaton, Buster • 105
Kelera, Józef • 271, 332
Kerr, Walter • 272
Kerzhentsev (Lebedev), Platon Mikhailovich • 107
Khokhlov, Konstantin Pavlovitch • 124
Kietliński, Andrzej • 333
Knipper-Chekhova, Olga Leonardovna • 30, 39, 52, 125
Komissarzhevskaya, Vera Fyodorovna • 194
Komissarzhevsky, Fyodor Fyodorovich • 246
Komorowska, Maja • 265, 278
Konigson, Élie • 328, 331
Koonen, Alisa • 126
Kopecký, Jan • 331, 332
Korenev, Mikhail • 96
Krasner, David • 69, 325
Kraus, Karel • 186, 329
Kuhn, Tom • 330
Kumiega, Jennifer • 333

LabLaban, Rudolf von • 155, 236, 237
Langhoff, Matthias • 233
l'Arronge, Adolphe • 22
Law, Alma H. • 100, 327
Lecoq, Jacques • 207, 329
Léger, Fernand • 145
Lermontov, Mikhail Yuryevich • 107
Lewis, Robert • 68
Lilina, Maria Petrovna • 47
Limanowski, Mieczysław • 145
Lindovská, Nadežda • 325
Liszt, Franz • 95
Littlewood, Joan • 235 – 240, 331
Lubowiecka, Ewa • 278
Lugné-Poe, Aurélien • 24, 111, 145
Lunacharsky, Anatoly Vasilyevich • 79, 100, 102, 327
Lund, Tamara • 213
Lupa, Krystian • 260
Luzhsky, Vasily Vasilievich • 75
Lyubimov, Yuri • 104

Maeterlinck, Maurice • 49, 50, 77
Mahapatra, Kelucharan • 303
Malina, Judith • 105, 259, 292
Marais, Jean • 189
Marceau, Marcel • 189, 201, 287
Margolin, Sergej • 325
Marijnen, Franz • 284, 333
Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso • 159, 160, 162, 329
Marivaux, Pierre • 176
Marjanov, Konstantin Alexandrovich (Kote Marjanishvili) • 124
Marlowe, Christopher • 267 – 269
Marowitz, Charles • 259, 312
Martin du Gard, Roger • 176
Martin, Marcel • 102
Martínek, Karel • 81, 325 – 327
Martinet Susanne • 328
Marx, Karl • 84
Maťašík, Andrej • 292, 333
Mauss, Marcel • 304
Mayakovsky, Vladimir • 80, 100, 104, 106, 268
McColl, Ewan • 235
Mei Lanfang • 220, 221
Meisner, Sanford • 325
Meyerhold, Vsevolod Emilyevich • 6, 16 29, 49, 50, 57, 58, 66, 74 – 90, 92 – 96, 98, 100 – 107, 113, 145, 151, 156, 161, 163, 194, 222, 223, 256, 265, 307, 308, 325 – 327
Mianowska, Aleksandra • 261
Mickiewicz, Adam • 268
Mirecka, Rena • 265, 270, 272, 274, 282
Mistrík, Miloš • 330
Mittelmann-Dedinský, Móric • 324
Mnouchkine, Ariane • 105, 174, 320
Moholy-Nagy, László • 102,
Moissi, Alexander • 227

Molière • 80, 175, 176, 178, 180, 188, 193, 203
Molik, Zygmunt • 263, 265, 270, 274, 278, 282, 283, 285, 292, 333
Monroe, Marilyn • 68, 69
Moreau, Jeanne • 310
Moskvin, Ivan Mikhajlovich • 30, 52, 113
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus • 103
Müller, Gerda • 219
Müller, Heiner • 165, 233
Murphy, Brian • 236
Musset, Alfred de • 176

Nemirovich-Danchenko, Vladimir Ivanovich • 23, 30 – 32, 36, 39, 43, 49, 53
Newman, Paul • 68
Nietzsche, Friedrich • 113, 127
Nijinski, Vaslav Fomich • 139
Nomura, Kosuke • 303

Ohno, Kazuo • 261
Oida, Yoshi • 313
Okhlopkov Nikolai Pavlovich • 16, 104, 223
Olivier, Laurence • 310
Osiński, Zbigniew • 271, 276, 293, 332, 333
Osterwa, Juliusz • 145, 260, 271
Ostrovsky, Alexander Nikolayevich • 77, 80, 101, 102
Ouspenskaya, Maria Alekseyevna • 68

Pacino, Al • 68
Palay, Elliot • 213
Palitzsch, Peter • 233
Pallenberg, Max • 227
Parker, Stephen • 330
Paulsen, Harald • 224
Pavlov, Ivan Petrovich • 84
Pawłowski, Roman • 332
Pei Yan Ling • 303
Picabia, Francis • 163
Picasso, Pablo • 145
Picon-Vallin, Béatrice • 94, 106, 326, 327
Pirandello, Luigi • 194
Piscator, Erwin • 221, 222, 226, 235
Pitoëff, Georges • 145, 157, 184, 186, 193, 194, 246
Pitoëff, Ludmila • 194
Planchon, Roger • 233
Poel, William • 24
Poesio, Paolo Emilio • 330
Popova, Ljubov Sergeyevna • 99
Pörtner, Paul • 328, 329
Prampolini, Enrico • 159, 160, 329
Proust, Marcel • 160
Przybyszewski, Stanisław • 77
Pudovkin, Vsevolod • 246
Pushkin, Alexander • 34
Puzyna, Konstanty • 275, 329, 332

Racine, Jean • 192
Rasmussen, Iben Nagel • 301, 304
Reich, Bernhard • 331
Reich, Zinaida Nikolayevna • 92, 99
Reinhardt, Max • 16, 58, 113, 145, 157, 222, 223, 225 – 227, 233, 263, 327, 331
Renaud, Madeleine • 203
Ribemont-Dessaignes, Georges • 163
Richards, Thomas • 279, 293, 332
Robart, Maud • 293
Robert, Emmerich • 23
Robinson, Madeleine • 189
Rocher, René • 184
Rodin, Auguste • 144
Roksanova, Maria Ljudomirovna • 75
Romains, Jules • 178
Roose-Evans, James • 178, 329
Rostand, Edmond • 176
Rostocki, Boleslav Iosifovich • 325
Rouché, Jacques • 113, 145, 169
Rouleau, Raymond • 189, 246
Ruffini, Franco • 302, 304, 334

Saint-Denis, Michel • 181, 182, 310
Salata, Kris • 332
Salzmann, Alexander von • 157
Sanin, Alexander Akimovich • 30
Sanjukta, Panigrahi • 261, 303

Sarrazac, Jean-Pierre • 324
Sartre, Jean-Paul • 188
Savarese, Nicola • 304, 333, 334
Savary, Jerôme • 259
Schall, Ekkehard • 219, 232
Schanzer von Bülow, Marie • 23
Schechner, Richard • 292, 304, 332, 333
Scherhaufer, Peter • 327 – 329, 331
Schiller, Friedrich • 18, 19, 224, 327
Schiller, Leon • 16, 145, 260, 263
Schlemmer, Oskar • 161, 162
Schlosser • 95
Schnitzler, Arthur • 77
Schreyer, Lothar • 162
Schubert, Franz • 103
Schumacher, Claude • 324
Schumann, Peter • 128, 131
Ścierski, Stanisław • 270, 273, 274, 292
Scofield, Paul • 310
Seeberg, Peter • 394, 308
Shakespeare, William • 19, 49, 55, 115, 116, 121, 124, 125, 172, 174, 176, 180, 181, 193, 240, 268, 311 – 313, 315, 319
Shalapin, Fjodor • 92
Shaw, George Bernard • 23, 80, 145, 194
Shelley, Percy Bysshe • 253
Silberman, Mark • 330
Słowacki, Juliusz • 268, 269
Smirnov, Alexander Vasilyevich • 87
Sologub, Fyodor Kuzmich • 81
Soloviev, Vladimir Nikolayevich • 9
Sorma, Agnes • 23
Soupault, Philippe • 163
Stalin, Josif Vissarionovich • 80
Staniewski, Włodzimierz • 292
Stanislavsky, Konstantin Sergeyevich • 6, 23, 29 – 39, 41 – 62, 65, 66, 68 – 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 87, 95, 111, 113, 116, 121, 124, 125, 127, 144, 145, 163, 175, 186, 194, 222, 236, 265, 267, 279, 294, 303, 308, 311, 324, 325, 327 – 329, 332
Starke, Ottomar • 113
Steiner, Rudolf • 60, 61
Stendhal • 253
Strasberg, Lee • 30, 58, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 272, 311, 325, 332
Strehler, Giorgio • 207, 233
Strindberg, August • 24, 77, 246
Sukchovo-Kobylin, Alexander Vasilievich • 102, 106
Sulerzhitsky, Leopold Antonovich • 51, 113, 121, 124, 145
Suzuki, Tadashi • 292
Swinarski, Konrad • 233, 260
Szajna, Józef • 16, 260, 269
Szyfman, Arnold • 145

Taviani, Ferdinando • 304
Taylor, Frederick Winslow • 84, 85, 86
Temkine, Raymonde • 272
Tempo, I Made Pasek • 303
Terry, Ellen • 311
Themba, Can • 321
Thimig, Hermann • 227
Thomson, Peter • 330
Tolstoy, Aleksey Nikolayevich • 30
Tolstoy, Leo Nikolayevich • 20, 31, 34
Tomaszewski, Henryk • 260
Toscanini, Arturo • 144
Tovstonogov, Georgy Aleksandrovich • 105
Tretyakov, Sergei Mikhailovich • 102
Turgenev, Ivan Sergeyevich • 46
Tynan, Kenneth • 237, 321
Tzara, Tristan • 163

Vakhtangov, Yevgeny Bagrationovich • 55 – 58, 67 – 69, 106, 222
Valde, Pierre • 46
Valdez, Louis • 320
Verhaeren, Emile • 79
Verlaine, Paul • 192
Vilar, Jean • 145, 182, 267
Villard, Jean • 182
Vishnevsky, Aleksander Leonidovich • 30, 39
Vitrac, Roger • 163, 246, 247
Vollmöller, Karl Gustav • 223

Wagner, Richard • 13 – 15, 113, 132 – 135, 137, 142, 144, 225 – 227, 229, 262
Wajda, Andrzej • 260
Walker, Margaret • 236
Warhol, Andy • 165
Warpachiwski, Leonid • 326
Watteau, Antoine • 312
Weigel, Helene • 228, 230 – 233
Weil, Simone • 269
Weill, Kurt • 71, 225
Weiss, Peter • 311
Wekwerth, Manfred • 233
Wilson, Robert • 164, 165, 234
Worth, Irene • 310
Wysocka, Stanisława • 145
Wyspiański, Stanisłav • 266, 268

Yevreinov, Nikolai Nikolayevich • 24, 194

Zakharov, Mark Anatolyevich • 105
Zaychikov, Vasily Fyodorovich • 92, 99
Zimmermann, Berndt Alois • 16
Ziółkowski, Grzegorz • 332
Zola, Émile • 20, 21, 22, 31

ACTING TECHNIQUES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Miloš Mistrík

© Translation from Slovak into English by Ivan Lacko
© Cover, graphic design and technical editing by Martin Mistrík

Third edition, first edition in English, 344 pages, 143 pictures
The book was published with the support of the projects
APVV-15-0764 and APVV-19-0522

Printed by VEDA, the publishing house of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Centre of Operations of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Dúbravská cesta 5820/9, 841 04 Bratislava, Slovakia.

VEDA, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, Bratislava, 2024

Miloš Mistrík, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, and Academy of Arts, Banská Bystrica. His research in theatre is focused on the history of acting in the twentieth century and European theatre personalities (Konstantin Stanislavsky, Jacques Copeau, Max Reinhardt, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, Adolphe Appia, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Bertolt Brecht, Jerzy Grotowski). He is particularly interested in the francophone area and has written about the history of modern Slovak drama and theatre. The book ***Acting Techniques in the 20th Century*** has been published twice in Slovakia – this is the book's third edition, amended and published for the first time in English. In the book, Mistrík summarizes the knowledge of various acting techniques and theories that were used in twentieth-century theatre. In clearly arranged chapters, owing to an engaging text, which is enriched by a large selection of historical photographs, readers can get behind the scenes of the theatre and extend their understanding of the aesthetic and social contexts of theatre art. This is not an acting textbook, nor does it aspire to present a systematic history of acting – it is mainly focused on the most important personalities and theatres, leaving it at the readers' discretion whether they want to look for inspiration for their artistic growth and theatrical work. It's a book of inspirations for twenty-first century acting.