

The Actor – The Generator Of Living Narrative Structures And Metaphors

Camelia CURUȚIU-ZOICAȘ*

Abstract: The actor during the process of dramatic creation constantly provokes and elaborates compositions through his own body, voice, thoughts and imagination. He becomes a body in action that expresses and incorporates different typologies/characters, imagines and plays out different situations from countless different perspectives, creates physical and mental actions, forms, represents and signifies, elaborates living narrative structures. The creative process can be diverted by blockages that can arise from multiple causes, but above all from a lack of order in the discourse, of rigour, when the work is based on intuitive and chaotic constructions, or when there is a lack of mastery of the means of scenic expression, theatrical techniques and methods, due to the lack of structure, composition and a concrete language and vocabulary. This work aims to emphasise the importance of knowing the components related to technique, of playing in front of an audience in a controlled, supervised, verified but spontaneous way, of understanding and mastering the various compositional principles, language and specific concepts that describe how actors create and organise space, movement, action, communication, etc. These notions form the vocabulary of stage creation and provide actors with clear tools for working, a system for organising and constructing their own work.

Keywords: blockage, composition, vivid narrative structures, theatrical vocabulary, rules, plasticity, vision, action analysis, points of view

The theatre performance is a universe that is built by the people-actors and it is based on acting, on the exchange of energy, intention and action, on the creation of possible worlds, on the construction of the imaginary universe that means "Theatre of the Invisible - Made Visible".¹

In the creative process, the inner organization of each artist, the mental processes involved in this activity, must be carefully discovered, monitored and directed. The actor must create favourable conditions in his creative

* PhD Lecturer, Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeș Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

¹ Peter Brook, *Empty Space*, trans. Marian Popescu, Bucharest, Unitext Publishing House, 1997, p. 24

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

environment, conducive to the theatrical phenomenon, in which attention on his own work, concentration, empathy, fantasy, imagination, memory and the specific tools of his art contribute to the triggering and to the intelligent and effective use of scenic creativity, to the creation of a revealing work in terms of aesthetic and artistic value.

The creative process can be hindered, distorted or even diverted by blackages that can arise from multiple causes, ranging from the fear of exposure, lack of proper communication with the acting partners or director, or due to a difficult or tense atmosphere, inability to understand or represent multiple internal or external perspectives, lack of assumption or transposition of situations, images or states of mind, inability to believe, imaginative involvement in a *make-believe* game², to a lack of order in discourse, of rigour, when the work is based on intuitive and chaotic constructions, or when there is a lack of mastery of the means of stage expression, theatrical techniques and methods.

When an actor feels stuck, "the symptoms are remarkably similar in any country, in any context"³. They are paralysis and isolation and can be attributed either to contextual situations, to "the external context, becoming the fault of the text, of the partner, or of the shoes"⁴ or "in the most negative phase, an overwhelming sense of loneliness, a shattering awareness that we are responsible and at the same time powerless, unworthy and at the same time filled with anger, too small, too big, too cautious, too, too, too ... ourselves"⁵. Of course, there are external and internal issues, over which the actor may or may not intervene, over which he has more or less control.

True, the artist's entire creation is followed by a dominant idea, by a leitmotif given by his creative personality itself and highlights the individual strength and talent with which he has been endowed, but this work does not

² Walton Kendall, *Fearing Fictions*, The Journal of Philosophy, vol. 75, no. 1, 1978, pp. 5-27.

³ Donnellan Declan, *The Actor and the Target*, trans. Saviana Stănescu and Ioana Ieronim, Ed. Unitext, Bucharest, 2006, p. 19

⁴ *Idem*

⁵ *Idem*

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

focus on the "self-flowing acting play"⁶ , on that "living organism"⁷ which cannot be analysed, but on stressing the role and importance of knowing the components related to structure and control, the compositional elements and the actor's vocabulary, the technique, the mastered, supervised, verified but spontaneous acting in front of the audience, the invisible world made visible, in a word not ourselves but what is outside us.

If two artists "were asked to paint the same landscape with the utmost accuracy, two different works would result"⁸ because each "will inevitably paint the individual impression the landscape has made on each"⁹ and choose to convey "the atmosphere of the landscape, the beauty of its line or form; the other will probably emphasise contrasts, the play of light and shade, or some other particular aspect of their own taste and mode of expression"¹⁰ , each will choose different compositional elements, one will play with line, contour, colour, the other with texture, perspective and spaciousness. Thus, in addition to the subjective vision of the two artists, given by their creative personality and artistic individuality which will ensure "the particular-individual note of the work, which in fact defines the unique artistic creation"¹¹ , the plastic composition will be represented by the mode of organization and the "intimate constructive system of the work of art"¹² .

If the knowledge and the deep understanding of "the logic of the composition of any plastic image and the awareness of the compositional act become and are required as a professional approach indispensable to the design and materialization of any creation"¹³ , in the art of actor, the knowledge and mastery of the various compositional principles, language and

⁶ *Idem*

⁷ *Idem*

⁸ Mikhail Chekhov, *To Actors, On the Technique of Dramatic Art*, *The UNATC Library Notebooks* -vol. 16/nr.2/2014, București

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 55

¹⁰ *Idem*

¹¹ M.Jeno Bartoș, *Composition in Painting*, Ed. Polirom, Art Collection, Iasi, 2009, p. 19

¹² *Ibid*, p. 13

¹³ *Idem*, p. 14

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

specific concepts that describe how actors create and organize space, movement, action, communication etc. are also essential, as they form the vocabulary of stage creation and provide actors with clear working tools, a system for organising and constructing their work.

Just as in the fine arts, compositional laws guide how visual elements are organised on a surface, including principles such as balance, contrast, proportion and harmony and visual elements such as colour, line and texture to convey concepts, feelings, metaphors to the viewer, each art has its own specific characteristics and tools, with compositional laws being used to create coherence, harmony and meaning.

If visual art can create depth and perspective through the use of colour and perspective technique or uses techniques to emphasise or accentuate certain aspects and produce stability, music can create depth through harmony and dynamics, can use repetition and variation to develop themes and motifs, invent rhythms, counterpoints and textures to compose images or to arouse interest, to guide the listener through the work, to provoke emotions, thoughts and ideas. In cinematography, compositional laws are used to construct powerful visual images and sequences, to provide illusion, atmosphere and movement through framing and light, contrast, the use of balance or imbalance, camera movement or montage. The same principles, rules and structures are found in dance, choreographic works, photography and architecture. The term composition also refers to the invention of the literary work, being the very process of creation, thus allowing us to associate composition with invention. This notion also refers to "the preparation of medicinal mixtures or perfumes"¹⁴ or to the correct proportions of the human body whose beauty results from "the precise arrangement of the limbs [compositio], attracts the eye and brings pleasure because all these parts contribute to each other with a certain grace, appropriateness, which shines in our life, and attracts the approval of those with whom we live, by order, consistency, measure in all our words and actions."¹⁵

¹⁴Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev: L'art De La Composition ou le Laboratoire d'Anatoli Vassiliev*, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006, p. 53 - "En latin, la compositio désigne les justes proportions du corps humain, la préparation des mixtures médicales ou des parfums" (our translation).

¹⁵*Idem*, apud. Cicéron, "*De officiis*", I, XXVII,98, translated by Emile Brehier, in *Les Stoiciens*, Gallimard, 1962, p. 529 - "Comme la beauté du corps, due à l'arrangement exact des membres [compositio], attire les regards et fait plaisir parce que toutes ces parties

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

Therefore, composition allows the awareness of a necessary order that can logically structure and arrange the parts of a painting, a musical score, a choreography or a photograph, a speech or a literary work or an architecturally ideal construction and even the limbs of the human body.

Any work of art is a code of signs through which the artist creates and signifies through metaphors, symbols, associations and forms, the artistic language being based on the artistic image, an image which is realised "through its own structure and semantics, but different in expression from one artistic form to another, from the visual arts to music, from painting to sculpture"¹⁶ and in our case in the performing arts, in the art of the actor. Now, just as "the great principles that govern the universe, life, man are subject to the same laws that determine rhythm and harmony in music, poetry, architecture"¹⁷ or in painting, that is the laws of composition, so they "apply, with more or less rigour, to any theatrical performance"¹⁸ , because any theatrical work is an "illusionistic and plastic" manifestation¹⁹ , which expresses the dimensions of imaginary worlds by means of well-established rules, by exigency and strictness.

Composition, then, is about how the individual elements of a theatrical production are organized and arranged to create a coherent and meaningful structure, which involves harmonizing all aspects such as action, characters, dialogue, set design, lighting, sound and stage movement to communicate a message and evoke emotion. In any theatrical performance the work of the director, the set designer, the actor's play are subject to precise laws that follow elaborate and fair formulas, all with the same goal: the overall vision of the

concourent entre elles avec une certaine grace, ainsi cette convenance, qui brille dans notre vie, attire l'approbation de ceux avec qui nous vivons, par l'ordre, la constance, la mesure dans toutes nos paroles et tous nos actes" (our translation).

¹⁶Mikhail Chekhov, *To Actors, On the Technique of Dramatic Art, The UNATC Library Notebooks* -vol. 16/nr.2/2014, Bucharest , p. 116

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.61

¹⁸ *Idem*

¹⁹Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev: The Art Of Composition or Anatoli Vassiliev's Laboratory*, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006, p.15 - "La notion de composition est riche d'un usage pictural et plastique" (our translation).

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

theatrical performance, the whole, the frame, the picture. If the director, knowing the laws and necessities of composition, "will naturally understand the meaning of each scene and the role it plays in the play as a whole"²⁰, the actor will be a "moving geometric element, a point"²¹ that will incorporate in a given architectural setting, the director's and the set designer's vision of the dramatic work/text.

Any performance follows a well-defined structure and respects the laws of composition, rules that bring into question, as we find in Konstantin Stanislavski²², Mikhail Chekhov²³ or Anatoli Vassiliev²⁴ notions such as the three phases, the sequences, the main climax, the secondary climax, the dramatic tension, the levels, the conflict, the dynamics of the play, the engine of the stage action, the laws of opposition and contrast, division, atmosphere and overview, supertheme, cross action, logical sequence, perspective of the play, fragments, tempo and rhythm, scenography of space, original and main events, situational and play structures, geometrical oppositions, planes and levels, analysis, perspective, line of action, editing, etc.

However, one of the most important compositional elements in a performance is the actor, who, like the point in the theories of pictorial composition, based on Euclidean geometry, becomes "the primary element of

²⁰Mikhail Chekhov, *To Actors, On the Technique of Dramatic Art, The UNATC Library Notebooks* -vol. 16/nr.2/2014, Bucharest, p. 63

²¹Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev: The Art Of Composition Ou Le Laboratoire d'Anatoli Vassiliev*, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006, p. 47 - "Jeu de l'acteur, lui-meme compare a un element geometrique" (our translation).

²²Konstantin Stanislavski, *The Actor's Work with Himself*, Vol. I and Vol. II, trans. Raluca Rădulescu, Ed. Nemira, Bucharest, 2019

²³Mikhail Chekhov, *TO ACTORS, On the Technique of Dramatic Art, The UNATC Library Notebooks* -vol. 16/nr.2/2014, Bucharest

²⁴Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev: The Art Of Composition or Anatoli Vassiliev's Laboratory*, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

the composition that gives power to the others"²⁵ element "without which theatre ceases to exist"²⁶ . Of course, dramatic composition is different from pictorial composition as Vassiliev points out, it is made up of living beings, which compose the dramatic action, a composition of play through conflicts, parallelisms, lines or planes but the aim of the director's and scenographer's composition is the actor's play, it is an instrument which "aims to support this composition of play".²⁷

The director reads the text visibly to allow the actor to guide himself through the action, organizes it in spaces, divides it into fragments, creates structures that resemble a map of known spaces, with a cartography where each island has a name. Its purpose is to show it to the actor, to make him know and feel the skeleton of the building so that he can then live inside it. The text must be organised and read like a score, analysed not stylistically or thematically but dynamically, based on action analysis (studying the unfolding of the action and its division according to perspectives, events, type of action, etc. into "parts, fragments, knots"²⁸) in order to influence the actor's stage awareness, to let the actor express himself, to free him, to let ideas, images and to find meaning in his own technical apparatus, to support the composition of the play. The analysis of the play in terms of composition aims to guide the actor towards greater freedom of improvisation, to transform the text into an itinerary, which becomes for the actor like a musical score: "With me, actors no longer play a role, but go through a composition. They see their role as part of the constitutive design of the whole and are obliged to feel all the parts of the composition, regardless of their number. (...) They have to invent their

²⁵*Ibid*, p. 120 - "L'acteur est un point de cet espace. Dans toutes les théories de la composition picturale, basée sur la géométrie euclidienne, le point est l'élément premier de la composition qui contient en puissance tous les autres". (our translation)

²⁶ *Idem* - "Le point, ici l'élément sans quoi le théâtre cesse d'exister" (our translation).

²⁷*Idem* - "La composition dramatique se distingue de la composition picturale parce qu'elle est incarnée par des êtres vivants, composition dramatique. On peut donc parler d'une Composition du jeu à travers des conflits des parallélismes, lignes ou de plans. La composition dramatique du texte par le metteur en scène se distingue de la composition du texte par l'auteur. Son principe est le jeu l'acteur. La composition, comme instrument privilégié du metteur en scène, vise à la composition du jeu" (our translation).

²⁸Stephanie Lupo, *Anatoli Vassiliev, At the heart of theatrical pedagogy. Rigueur et anarchie*, Collection Les voies de l'acteur, nr.15, Ed. L'Entretemps, France, 2006, p. 175 *Parties, fragments, nœuds* (our translation).

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

own words and their own actions, in the moment and the joy of this moment"²⁹

Therefore, all the central notions of line and perspective, the physical space of the stage, the costumes, the spatial architecture, the scenography, the atmosphere, the light, the musical and sound score, the organization and the very structure of the text, its sections, its sequences express the visible and invisible world, become the inner or outer space of the stage play. The actor's play is implicitly composed of both analysis and composition, of awareness and in-depth mastery of all the stages "in order not to be caught in the trap of psychology and to be caught in the trap of meaning"³⁰ .

The composition is the very scheme of the scenic play where the composition, organization, rearrangement, ordering, conscious construction of the elements are necessary to create a close connection between the details of the work and the idea and where the relationships between the elements that make up the structure, the balance, symmetry, asymmetry, the placement of characters, forms, the connection between foreground and background, rhythm and tension, atmosphere are established by the creator's imagination.

By entering the stage space, the actor becomes a function of space, subject to and constrained by its logic, a possible place of creating destiny, relationships, movement and action. In this fictional space the actor travels a path, he addresses events. The road is made up of different parts, pieces of the road, marked by milestones, knots, therefore "it is not a question of embodying a character, but of taking him to the end of the road. This final perspective allows the actor to remain in the action until the end of the play and to find

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 176 - "Avec moi, les acteurs ne jouent plus un rôle, ils parcourent une composition. Le rôle du personnage ils, l'envisagent comme faisant part du dessin constitutif d'ensemble le sont obligés de sentir toutes les parties de la composition, indépendamment de leur nombre. (...) Il doit composer le texte des actions, seul. Il doit inventer ses propres mots et ses propres actions, dans l'instant et dans la joie de cet instant" (our translation).

³⁰Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev: The Art Of Composition Ou Le Laboratoire D'anatoli Vassiliev*, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006, p. 121 - "L'acteur doit être maître de son jeu pour ne pas être pris au piège de la psychologie et pour se faire prendre au piège du sens" (our translation).

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

freedom in behaviour. A recurring feeling in Vassiliev's presentations is, in fact, that the actor is free and at the same time leads."³¹

The incorporation of these elements, even partially, and their representation through structure and compositional components "always gives a performance a life, a relief and a particular beauty, allowing to deepen its content, while giving it a harmonious form"³² and last but not least, making the difference between two works of art, between two talented artists, between a good actor and an actor who will succeed in communicating to his receiver "deep aesthetic feelings and attitudes"³³ .

In the performing arts, the actor's composition becomes that "technique of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a coherent work of art for the stage"³⁴ , the same technique that any "choreographer, painter, writer, composer or film director uses"³⁵ , it is "like writing while dancing, with others, in time and space, using theatrical language"³⁶ , it is a method "to be in dialogue with other art forms, as it borrows and reflects other arts"³⁷ . The notion of composition refers, as we have seen, to the image of the work, of the theatrical performance as a whole, to the image of an isolated scene, but above all, to the creation of an image by

³¹Stephanie Lupo, *Anatoli Vassiliev, At the heart of theatrical pedagogy. Rigueur et anarchie*, Collection Les voies de l'acteur, nr.15, Ed. L'Entretiens, France, 2006, p. 177 - "Il ne s'agit donc pas d'incarner un personnage mais de le mener jusqu'au bout du chemin. Cette perspective finale permet à l'acteur de se maintenir en action jusqu'à la fin de la pièce et de trouver la liberté dans le comportement. Une sensation récurrente dans les présentations de Vassiliev est en effet que l'acteur est libre et en même temps qu'il conduit" (our translation).

³²Mikhail, Chekhov, *TO ACTORS, On the Technique of Dramatic Art, The UNATC Library Notebooks* -vol. 16/nr.2, Bucharest, 2014, p. 75

³³ M.Jeno Bartoş, *Composition in Painting*, Ed. Polirom, Art Collection, Iasi, 2009 p. 116

³⁴ Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, *The viewpoints Book, A practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*, N H B, London, 2014, p. 12. - "Composition is the practice of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a cohesive work of art for stage".

³⁵*Idem* - "The same technique that any choreographer, painter, writer composer or filmmaker uses".

³⁶ *Idem* - "In theatre, it is writing on your feet, with others, in space and time, using the language of theatre."

³⁷*Ibidem*, p. 13 - "Is a method for being in dialogue with other art forms, as it borrows from and reflects the other arts".

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

the actor, of a fragment of his own score, of a monologue, of an action, of a relationship, of a gesture, of a communication.

Just as in nature and art "there are mathematical laws and principles that structure and balance form,"³⁸ for the actor this sense of composition "delineates contours and prevents ideas, dialogues, movements, colours, shapes and sounds from constituting merely a disjointed jumble of impressions and events"³⁹, introducing him and the receiver to the world of "creativity and understanding"⁴⁰. The actor becomes in this case, like the painter, a creator of images, but moving, alive. Thus, in addition to analysing the text, the actor is invested with the role of creator through the technique of free improvisation, "étude"⁴¹. This compositional technique seeks to explore the actor's freedom. Here improvisation becomes a means of putting a distance, not only between the actor and the role, but also between the actor and the literary text, the actor focusing on the idea of entering a surreal universe rather than on the idea of respecting words.

The actor is aware that he becomes a geometric shape in space, a sign. Thus, by means of the tools he works with in designing an ensemble or, and in creating movement for the stage, he creates living compositions, like a visual artist. He uses during the work on his artwork "Points of View"⁴² multiple, different principles of movement in time and space that constitute a language. Among them we list the principles of Physical and Vocal

³⁸Michael Chekhov, *The Actor's Creative Imagination (On the Technique of Acting)*, Pygmalion, France, 2021, p. 37 - "Dans la nature et e art, il existe des lois et des principes mathematiques qui structurent et equilibrent la forme" (our translation).

³⁹*Idem* - "Ce sens de la composition delimite des contours et empeche que leş ideas, leş dialogues, les mouvements, les couleurs, les formes et les sons ne constituent qu'un fatras desarticulé d'impressions et d'évenements" (our translation).

⁴⁰*Idem* - "Le sens de la composition fait penetrer l'artiste et le spectateur dans le monde de la creativite et de la comprehension" (our translation).

⁴¹Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev: The Art Of Composition Ou Le Laboratoire D'anatoli Vassiliev*, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006, p. 136

⁴²Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, *The viewpoints Book, A practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*, N H B, London, 2014.

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

Viewpoints in the construction of compositions: *Points of View of Time*⁴³ (*Tempo*- the speed at which a movement occurs; how fast or slow something happens on stage ; *Duration*- how long a movement or sequence of movement continues ; *Kinesthetic Response*- the spontaneous reaction to external movement, external events of movement or sound ; *Repetition*- the repetition of something on stage, internal repetition, of a movement in your own body asu external repetition, i.e. repetition of form, tempo, gesture etc., of something outside your own body), *Points of View of Space*⁴⁴ (Static or moving *form* - the shape your body makes in space, lines, curves, a combination of lines and curves; *Gesture* - a form with a beginning, middle and end; can be *Behavioural Gestures*, belong to the concrete, physical world of human behaviour as we observe them in our everyday reality; behavioural gestures can give information about character, time period, physical health, situation, weather, clothes, etc., is defined by a person's character or the time and place in which they live; *Expressive Gestures* - Express an inner state, emotion, desire, idea or value. They are abstract and symbolic rather than representational; *Architecture*-the physical *environment* in which one works and how it affects movement. Architecture refers to *Material Things, Texture, Light, Colour, Sound; Spatial Relationship*-the distance between things on stage; *Topography*-the shape we create in movement through space) and *Vocal Points of View*⁴⁵ (*Tempo, Duration, Repetition, Kinesthetic Response, Form, Gesture, Architecture, Tonality, Dynamics, Acceleration/Deceleration, Timbre* and Silence).

All these notions force the actor to be in a rigorous and anarchic game, with a well determined but fluid structure. He must structure, combine and reformulate. He constantly uses the technique of montage, in creating his composition, he gathers images together, includes, juxtaposes, uses contrast, rhythm and story, he seeks a guideline by assembling and superimposing different materials collected from different sources. Theatre can use this technique, replacing camera movement, editing with physical movement to create a close-up, a panorama or a montage jump that puts together disparate

⁴³Idem, p. 8

⁴⁴*Ibid*, p.9

⁴⁵*Ibid*, p. 105-106 - *Vocal Viewpoints*.

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

material into a whole. Moreover, montage creates a particular, powerful energy. Vassiliev recounts that when he took the text, cut it up and mixed its pieces together, it began to tremble, to move because, through a change of editing, "an energy, a moment devoid of superficiality, was suddenly created. It probably happens the same way in cinema, the director takes two incompatible shots, arranges them in a sequence, known only to him, and something artistic emerges. This hasn't happened to me for a long time, but the artistic emerges when the composition seems to tremble, when the narrative is made up of moments you can't connect. When there are no such moments, the spectator, in the performance, passes through them as if in a desert."⁴⁶ This energy of the composition, trembling and alive, is comparable to that which allows cinematic shots to come alive and move, and reflects in the most concrete way Anatoli Vassiliev's "artistic algorithm, fascinated by the revelation of the photographic image"⁴⁷.

The actor must take into account in his work many laws of composition. In addition to those listed above, he must know how to work with the law of the "three phases of action"⁴⁸, the beginning of the action, the transformation and the end of the action, with the laws of opposition, contrast and transformation in order to give more relief to the action and to "acquire a deeper meaning"⁴⁹, to find and build conflicts, relationships, tactics, dramatic

⁴⁶Stephane Polikov, *Anatoli Vassiliev The Art Of Composition ou le Laboratoire d'Anatoli Vassiliev, Conservatoire National Supérieur D'art Dramatique, Actes Sud-Papiers, Apprendre 24, France, 2006, p. 127* - "Cela semble être un petit rien, un changement de montage, mais, tout à coup, se créait de l'énergie, apparaissait un sens dénué de superficialité. Cela se passe sans doute ainsi au cinéma, le réalisateur prend deux plans incompatibles, les ordonne dans une succession, connue de lui seul, et quelque chose d'artistique enait. Il n'est arrivé de le remarquer depuis longtemps dans ma propre expérience, l'artistique apparaît lorsque la composition semble trembler lorsque la narration est faite d'instant que l'on ne peut lier. Lorsqu'il n'y a pas de pareils moments, le spectateur, dans le spectacle, le parcourt comme s'il était dans un désert" (our translation).

⁴⁷*Ibid*, p. 128 - "C'est ce dynamisme de la composition, ce mélange qui la fait trembler et vivre sur le plan méaphysique d'une lumière comparable à celle qui permet aux plans cinématographiques de prendre vie et mouvement qui nous semble rendre compte de l'algorithme artistique d'Anatoli Vassiliev, fasciné par la révélation de l'image photographique" (our translation).

⁴⁸Mikhail Chekhov, *To Actors, On the Technique of Dramatic Art, The UNATC Library Notebooks* -vol. 16/nr.2, Bucharest, 2014, p. 60

⁴⁹*Idem*

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

energy and tension, repetition to create rhythm, inner and outer actions, to capture, to compose atmosphere, sequences, objectives, radiation, imaginary body, imaginary centre, climax, palettes, character composition, motivations, whys, intent, feelings, etc.

Therefore, the actor has a lot of targets to reach during his stage approach. All the notions that refer to the work of composition mentioned above replace "a vague and insufficient vocabulary"⁵⁰ and will give the actor a sharper theatrical sense, because "the deeper perception of his impressions will make him immediately distinguish what is right from what is false and he will know how to improve his play and that of his partners. His criticism will become truly objective and constructive. Personal likes and dislikes will cease to be the deciding argument in the judgments that theatre people make. At last, actors will feel free to help themselves, instead of admiring their colleagues in ecstasy or criticising them with malice"⁵¹.

Thus, the compositional laws in the actor's art and in the stage approach are principles and guidelines that actors use to make the invisible visible, to communicate coherently and meaningfully with the audience. Actors study and use interdisciplinary principles, adapted for the stage, borrow principles from painting, music, cinema, create analogies, theatrical possibilities and new forms. The composition is a creation of all the participants in the scenic art, from the image of the author, the director to that of the actor, who can later become the image of the spectator. In this context, all participants should have a similar vocabulary, in order to be able to build a coherent world in front of the viewer.

The premise we started from the beginning of this work was that the actor works with internal and external compositions, with compositional elements that can be explained, analyzed and learned. They can become the vocabulary of the actor's stage language, they can become the support for the construction of the work, and last but not least they can become what

⁵⁰*Ibid*, p. 93

⁵¹*Idem*

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

Donnellan's⁵² "targets" are for the actor, sources, options, specific, active, interesting choices that inspire the freedom and peace of mind that every creator needs when creating.

The power of the actor's composition lies in the fact that it rearranges the world, feelings, thoughts and perceptions form or distort surreal, anthemic or grotesque images, mixing ideas and notions into an original product. The actor during the process of dramatic creation constantly provokes and elaborates compositions through his own body, voice, thoughts and imagination. He becomes a body in action, expressing and embodying different typologies/characters, imagining and acting out different situations from countless different perspectives, creating physical and mental actions, forms, representing and signifying, elaborating living narrative structures: generates conflict, uses and plays with the principles of opposition and contrast, planes, atmosphere, pursues goals and objectives, thinks, observes, invents and chooses, creates dialogues and monologues, builds and breaks down fragments and compositions, dramatizes and essentializes according to the director's requirements and his own artistic approach, becomes a living metaphor of the world and of the external and internal movement of the whole performance.

Bibliography:

- Bartoş, M.Jeno, *Composition in Painting*, Ed. Polirom, Art Collection, Iasi, 2009
- Bogart, Anne and Landau Tina, *The Viewpoints Book, A practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*, N H B, London, 2014.
- Brook, Peter, *Empty Space*, trans. Marian Popescu, Bucharest, Unitext Publishing House, 1997
- Chekhov, Mikhail, *TO ACTORS, On the Technique of Dramatic Art*, Caietele Bibliotecii UNATC-vol. 16/nr.2, Bucharest, 2014
- Chekhov, Michael, *The Actor's Creative Imagination (On the Technique of Acting)*, Pygmalion, France, 2021
- Declan, Donnellan, *The Actor and the Target*, trans. Saviana Stănescu and Ioana Ieronim, Ed. Unitext, Bucharest, 2006
- Kendall, Walton, *Fearing Fictions*, The Journal of Philosophy, vol. 75, no. 1, 1978

⁵²Donnellan, Declan, *The Actor and the Target*, trans. Saviana Stănescu and Ioana Ieronim, Ed. Unitext, Bucharest, 2006, p. 26

THEATRICAL COLLOQUIA

- Lupo, Stephanie, *Anatoli Vassiliev, At the heart of theatrical pedagogy. Rigueur et anarchie*, Collection Les voies de l'acteur, nr.15, Ed. L'Entretiens, France, 2006
- Polikov, Stephane, *Anatoli Vassiliev, THE ART OF COMPOSITION ou le Laboratoire d'Anatoli Vassiliev, CONSERVATOIRE NATIONAL SUPERIEUR D'ART DRAMATIQUE, ACTES SUD-PAPIERS, Apprendre 24, France, 2006*
- Stanislavski, Konstantin, *The Actor's Work with Himself*, Vol. 1 and Vol. II, trans. Raluca Rădulescu, Ed. Nemira, Bucharest, 2019
- Vassiliev, Anatoli, *Seven or Eight Theatre Lessons, Trad. Martine Neron, Ed.P.O.L, Paris, 1999*