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Methodology of Modern Theatrical Art in the Formation of an Actor's Emotional Nature and Peculiarities of His or Her Stage Perception

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ABSTRACT

In the majority of Russian cities a theater, a cultural space, which has taken the close attention of the wide audience in recent years, is located not far from the central square or directly on it. Theater can be attractive for people's leisure activities, take central or peripheral position in the cultural life of a city, give successful and not quite successful performances, but it will definitely remain the place whose life is rather little known about. In this article the author tries to scientifically analyze and critically conceptualize the problematics of the methodology of modern theatrical art in the formation of an actor's emotional nature and peculiarities of his or her stage perception. The aim of this research is to reveal and analyze the essence of an actor's emotional nature conjugated into the modern epoch with the performative practices influencing the condition of traditional theater and personal status of an actor. The methodology of the research includes a systematic approach and a method of comparative analysis applied to the actor's nature of the artist, which developed by the XX century, which has now covered other professional spheres of a person, thus changing the value orientations of the actor's stage performance.

KEYWORDS: Modern theater, theatrical art, actor's emotional nature, stage perception.

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Metodología del arte teatral moderno en la formación de la naturaleza emocional del actor y las peculiaridades de su percepción escénica

RESUMEN

En la mayoría de las ciudades rusas, no lejos de la plaza central o directamente sobre ella, hay un teatro, un espacio cultural que en los últimos años ha atraído la atención de un gran público. El teatro puede ser atractivo para el ocio de la gente, ocupar una posición central o periférica en la vida cultural de una ciudad, ofrecer representaciones exitosas y no tan exitosas, pero seguramente seguirá siendo un lugar cuya vida se conoce poco. En este artículo el autor intenta analizar científicamente y conceptualizar críticamente la problemática de la metodología del arte teatral moderno en la formación de la naturaleza emocional del actor y las peculiaridades de su percepción escénica. El objetivo de esta investigación es revelar y analizar la esencia de la naturaleza emocional del actor conjugada en la época moderna con las prácticas performativas que influyen en la condición del teatro tradicional y el estatus personal del actor. La metodología de la investigación incluye un enfoque sistemático y un método de análisis comparativo aplicado a la naturaleza del actor-artista, que se desarrolló en el siglo XX, y que ahora ha abarcado otras esferas profesionales del hombre, cambiando así las orientaciones valorativas del actor.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Teatro moderno, arte teatral, naturaleza emocional del actor, percepción escénica.

Introduction

Theater originated from ritual games and god worshipping cult, having formed the initial link underlying performance – acting and event. The performance independence arose in the cultural phenomenon of ancient Roman theater already. The superfluous acting vitality and transforming character of the event conditioned the actors' liminal position among medieval communities and their spatial mobility. The actor's figure manifested the covert cultural conflict between the humorous (overt) and rational (covert) principles of the medieval culture, between folk and elite culture and immanently contained it in itself. In the modern period the actor's emotional culture occupied the position "subject without a place" in the social-political and social-economic coordinate system already.

The erasing of boundaries between the theater-goer's private world and actors' community, at first sight, did not leave the unknown and invisible territories like theater.

Actors willingly demonstrated their professional and private life. In this context, the anthology of theatrical subculture was more urgent and important for understanding the modern culture, the actors' community itself, understanding of "visibility modes" in totally visible modern culture, in "performance society".

The following periodicals were a valuable information source: "Actor", "Almanac of Imperial Theaters", "Theater and Art", "Theatrical City", "Petersburg Theatrical Magazine", "Theater". The consideration of the actors' community as a cultural phenomenon, rather stable and independent, historically long-term, allows using these periodicals as references, referring to them through the lens of anthropological methodology. We should point out that this approach is congenial for us.

If under acting we understand not only a free activity, like some form, which comprises the content, but acting as an independent phenomenon, it has own meaning different from the meaning to serve for filling with some content. The aesthetics fills acting just enough as long as it has been existing beyond the functionality, as long as it has been serving itself and nothing else. Let us assume that theater most brightly embodies the aesthetic side of acting.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the essence of the emotional nature of the artist, coupled in the modern era with performance practices that affect the state of the traditional theater and the personal position of the artist.

1. Literature overview

The issues of defining the theatrical art and theater history are considered in the researches (Badiou, 2011; Gurevich, 2012) and others.

The book "Rhapsody for theater" by a distinguished French philosopher Alain Badiou is based on his article for the journal "L'Art du theater" published at Chaillot National Theater by a famous theatrical director Antoine Vitez in 1985-1989. Badiou brings up the issues of the relations between theater, as the type of art, and the state, politics, philosophy, psychoanalysis and cinematograph, gives philosophical interpretation of theatrical art mastery and its ethics, as well as the peculiarities of dramaturgical texts differentiating them from other literary works.

The book by a known Russian literary and theatrical critic, translator and publicist L.Ya. Gurevich "History of Russian theatrical daily routine: From mid-XVII to early XIX

century” narrates about the history of theatrical art in Russia in the middle of XVII – beginning of XIX centuries – an important period of the Russian theater establishment and formation of its daily routine. The author sets himself the task of demonstrating different sides of theatrical life of that period and their connection with the course of history, with its particular events. The work investigates social, political and cultural conditions, in which the theater was developing, artistic demands of the society, different organizational forms of the theater in different social layers and in different periods of time.

Sociological aspects of cultural values of the human society are demonstrated in the articles (Belousova, Melnik, Rimskaya, 2009; Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus*, 2017; Zhuravleva, Nestik, 2011; Massumi, 2019).

The article by M.M. Belousova, Yu.M. Melnik, V.P. Rimskaya “Methodology of the investigation of subcultures in social and humanitarian sciences (on the example of youth subculture)” considers the methodological aspects of investigating subcultures in the space of social and humanitarian knowledge. It is pointed out that the correct methodological use of the concept “subculture” assumes that any system of culture suggests the subsystem stratification, availability of substructures and subcultures. The dominating culture itself can be presented as the system of subcultures.

The research by A.L. Zhuravleva, T.A. Nestik “Group reflexivity: Main approaches and perspectives of investigations” contains the results of theoretical analysis, in which the main approaches to studying the group reflexivity in modern social and organizational psychology are revealed. The social and psychological factors defining the group ability to reflexivity and attitude to it are singled out and grouped. Personal, interpersonal, group, intergroup and organizational ones are given among those.

Performative practices were the subject of attention in the articles (Goldberg, 2015; Lipovetsky, Beumers, 2012; Krivtsova, 2009; Nikolaenko, 2014).

M. N. Lipovetsky, B. Beumers consider the violation performances: literary and theatrical experiments of “new drama”. Based on great many theatrical, literary and cinematographic works belonging to the authors of a so-called “new drama”, the authors come to the conclusion that violence became some sort of language in the modern Russian society. It contributes to a human’s self-identity formation: everyday violence stopped

arousing horror and started to be perceived as an everyday element of modern reality representation.

From spiritual point, the problem of value orientation of theatrical actors was considered (Kelle, 2018; Baranichenko, 2018; Petrov, 1997).

“Intellectual and spiritual in culture” is the last work of V. Zh. Kelle, a Soviet and Russian philosopher, sociologist and historian of science whose works composed the whole epoch in the domestic social science. Investigating the structural heterogeneity of cultures, the author sees the availability of intellectual and spiritual principles in the culture of Western European type. The book describes the intellectual principle (branch) of culture based on subjective-objective relation, and the spiritual principle reproducing the subjective-objective relations in culture.

N.V. Baranichenko sets the goal in her dissertation to conduct the cultural-anthropological and philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of actors' subculture in the space of Western European civilization development.

The significance of the research direction chosen by us, as well as the examination of the experience in the actor's emotional nature development under the modern conditions of the society development is proved by a number of contraindications revealed by us as a result of theoretical analysis and studying of performative practices, similar to a theatrical performance, which are fixed between:

- acceptance of the need to expand and develop the emotional component of an actor's game, not only on the stage, but also in other forms of theatrical performances, and, on the other hand, the dissolution of professional theater in them;
- lack of understanding of the essence of this problem from the part of leaders of performance groups and institutions of culture, and the lack of specialized technologies;
- possibilities of axiological approach in developing the emotional culture and insufficient development of scientific and theoretical aspects in solving the problem.

The aim of this research is to reveal and analyze the essence of an actor's emotional nature conjugated into the modern epoch with the performative practices influencing the condition of traditional theater and personal status of an actor.

The research methodology comprises the system approach to an actor's emotional nature formed by XX century covering other professional spheres of a human, thus, having changed the values of an actor's stage performance. The methods of interdisciplinary

analysis and comparative studying of scientific art history, culturological, philosophical and psychological literature on the research problems appeared to be demanded to define the performance specifics and its influence on the modern theater, actor's emotional nature and his/her stage perception.

2. Results and discussion

The peculiarity of the actor's domestic emotional nature is connected with its borrowed character. The initial conflict of acting performative practices by skomorokhs (wandering actors and minstrels) and Christianity contained the diversified conflict between chaos and order, freedom and control, acting superfluity and ritual limitation, low and high culture, paganism and Christianity (Badiou, 2011).

Starting from XVII century a rather long "foreign influence" emerged, which lasted until XIX century. This allows speaking of the introduction of theatrical actors' subculture, in which the religiously marked contraindications were partly removed, and other, social-economic ones, were actualized. "Homo performative" of that period settled down the conflict between the freedom of acting and need to capitalize the performance. The October Revolution of 1917 claimed to settle down this contraindication. The actor's main task was to enlighten the people's masses, his/her performative practice was appropriated by the revolution, ideology and politics.

Thus, the peculiarity of the actor's domestic emotional nature is connected with its borrowed character. Between XVII and XIX centuries the actor's emotional nature was formed from rather eccentric passion of the elite copying and adopting western values and practices, including leisure ones, into an independent cultural phenomenon, in which religiously marked contradictions were partly removed and other, social-economic ones, were actualized (Gurevich, 2012).

In domestic theatrical performative practices we already find traditional conflicts of acting performative practices between skomorokhs and Christianity. A rather diversified conflict between chaos and order, freedom and control, acting superfluity and ritual limitation, low and high culture, paganism and Christianity was removed. "Homo performative" of that period settled down the conflict between the freedom of acting and need to capitalize the performance, hence, the reflexivity of the attitude to actors in the media and memoirs, critical conceptualization of own social and financial status. The actor

took the liminal position again but in another coordinate system already, more social-political and social-economic. To some extent, on the cusp of XIX-XX centuries he/she forestalled by his/her position what we call “precariat” today. Mobile, nomadic, rather socially and financially vulnerable, artistic – an actor already embodied the capitalism anthropological logic more completely than anyone else. The Soviet state found “the place” for an actor and defined the task for him/her – enlightenment of people and propaganda of the state ideology.

The Russian actor’s emotional nature has undergone qualitative changes for the recent decades. Some of them were connected with the performance transformation in general that was reflected in the key trends of postmodern period: acting character of the culture, erasing of boundaries, including those between culture and subculture, penetration of performative practices into different professional media and daily life (Belousova, Melnik, Rinskaya and Rimsky, 2009).

Despite the significance of the changes, the actor’s domestic emotional nature preserved its integrity, rather traditional in its practices and mythologems, to which we refer the mythologem of “damned play”, “ghost” of the theater, “great actor” and “great director”, the mythologem of “simplicity of the great”, the mythologem of “theater-goer”, “role”, “actor’s talent”, “legendary performance”, “theater patron”, “live stage”, the mythologem of “loyalty” to the theater (Deleuze, 2017).

Its main inhabitants – actors who formed a rather closed community dealing with a specific activity, speaking a special language, preserving own long-standing mythology – were still more unknown. Such closed nature and separateness of actors’ communities were especially surprising on the background of the cinematography explosive growth and mass media phenomenon.

The expression of feelings is the performance basis. A skillfully made performance is an opportunity to maintain the status and competitiveness, and artistic skills are valued high in many situations and spheres of activity, for example, in politics, teaching and trade.

Let us also address a rather speculative thesis, which we found when analyzing the performance as the combination of acting and event. Perceived as the combination of two principles, the performance is presented not only as an ontological or aesthetic phenomenon but more as an anthropological one. Acting characterized by us (in our rendering we draw upon B. Massumi’s concept) (Massumi, 2019).

As a source of viability itself the thing, that can be referred to the understanding of “naked life” in G. Agamben’s work, collides with the event in A. Badiou’s rendering, manifesting the truth and “suspending” or “cancelling” the existing being (Badiou, 2011).

Here is the source of performative subject liminality, boundedness. Being on the boundary made it closer to the priest’s figure in antiquity, in Middle Ages it was pushed out to the low culture of fun-fair and street space of a free city. In modern period, an actor could be considered as most proletarian, since what he or she produced could not be appropriated due to its nature. The event reproduction, possible here and now in chronotope of performance, cannot be appropriated in principle. Nowadays, the spreading of performative practices outside the theater threatens the actor, and theater and actor’s emotional nature become the place of his/her preservation.

A cultural code or sociocode, as understood by M.K. Petrov, developed during long time and not changing sufficiently, can serve as the feature of the subculture formed. These are cultural-historical practices and their symbolic expression, not just uniting people into a community, but also reproducing them as the members of this community. We also find such code in the actor’s emotional nature. Since the performance production is their determining activity, one side of which is the audience’s vivid emotional response, the actor is responsible for attracting attention, including the appearance different from representatives of other professions. This also refers to behavioral norms called upon surprising and inducing emotions, that is definitely spread not only onto the performance time and place but also the rest of the actor’s life (Petrov, 1997).

Transformation is another side of performance. In the terms of Jungian concept we can speak of trickster archetype, which can fill some anthropological forms or, in M.K. Petrov’s terms, we can speak of the actor’s sociocode, which is specific by its marginality and boundedness, not only by periphery (not always by typology), but by peculiar resistibility, penetrability for other codes, their imitation.

We can assume that the actors’ cultural code was formed with the emergence of major European theaters, rather stable communities, which allowed not only producing performance and its symbolic contribution but also conveying it from generation to generation, depriving it of episodicity. It made it significantly different from wandering groups whose activities were often episodic, the cast – nonpermanent. The skomorokh’s

semiotic code in Ancient Rus can be taken as an example. The groups of skomorokhs were also distinguished by specific clothes, masks, musical instruments, etc. However, although having such bright image, the episodicity of performance production by these groups problematized the issue of skomorokhs' community as a professional one. They are more likely traced back to pagan myth-ritual practices, for which the performance was rather a form than content (Zhuravlev, Nestik, 2011).

Actors' communities can be also typologized, singling out the professional one consisting of actors with professional education. It can be spatially represented by actors of provincial or metropolitan theaters; the subprofessional community, which comprised amateur actors without professional education and related to professional community episodically and partially. The members of that community were rather often localized by the stage in houses of culture, unspecialized premises (basements, attics, art cafes), street spaces; near-theater community consisting of people close to artistic environment and involved into different artistic projects from time to time, though not losing the contact with the artistic environment.

The presented typologies of the actor's emotional nature are grouped around the performance specific "energy center" (and here the analogies with energy understanding in S. Freud's psychoanalysis, B. Massumi's vital energy and A. Badiou's transforming effect of Event are appropriate). Performance, in its realization, sets specific spatial-time boundaries-discontinuities, which deliberately take the subject out of the sphere of trivial and secular, and "suspend" habitual practices (B. Massumi) in the excess of acting, life principle that is realized "here and now", at the moment, during the performance. The Event, as the power or energy of sense, as well as Acting, last outside it. Here, we take the liberty to designate it with the capital letter, since it produces performance as a profession and sets it as a goal in itself, creating both a separate person (and transforming it) and the whole community, which we call the artistic subculture and define it as the community of people with the main and single goal to produce performance (Lipovetsky, Beumers, 2012).

Professional mythologems do not only mark the actors' community but also preserve it, mark its boundaries. Moreover, the latter are necessary to preserve the community. The phenomenon of "personal" mythologems – superstitions and beliefs – speaks of the appropriation of the whole actors' mythology by a certain subject, subjectivization of collective performances, thus verifying their "live" character. If the assertion that the myth

was acted, i.e. the myth is primary and acting is secondary, is the common point of view, the latter is only the form of the myth existence, then in respect of the actors' environment this scheme can be turned over – not “the myth is acted” but “acted is the myth”. This is not only the transposition of words but the reflection of the primary acting, which supports the myth and creates a new one, even on the level of a separate subject. But the myth also acts as a symbolic boundary protecting performance itself. It is arranged around acting, its space (stage and theater itself), time (mythologems marking specific time of theater and performance) and an actor himself/herself.

We only indicated the problem, in our opinion, characterizing the modernity and consisting of the change in the relations between acting and event, their approaching or discontinuity, purification from somebody else's appropriation.

Despite the conditional struggle between “the old” and “the new”, at present, the Russian artistic subculture is distinguished by sufficient cohesion under the condition of big difference in material provision, and the subculture continues the struggle for own values and interests in mass media. Besides, the means of mass media themselves are the reflection of culture-universal trend to narrowing the private sphere, increasing “the visibility” of a person's private life, greater representation and self-representation motivated by the desire of popularity growth and, as a result, capitalization of a person as a product (Nikolaenko, 2014).

And in this trend the actor's Russian emotional nature follows the worldwide tendencies, which, in our opinion, can threaten the artistic subculture itself and actor's identity. The question is whether the actor and his/her profession are preserved when a lot of other people are dealing with self-representation. The competition for attention is expanded in the virtual space of mobile applications and space of screens (Kelle, 2018).

The accessibility of a camera and ways to show oneself makes representation extremely affordable. And if we perceive anyone who wants to transform, impress, induce emotions as an actor, we can speak of the end of the subculture, which became the culture. And it is the actor's theatrical emotional nature (mostly domestic) that strives for preserving itself via the reproduction of tradition, support of mythologems, values of actors' education.

Conclusion

Thus, the essence of the actor's emotional nature is the production of performance, which, as we assumed, comprises acting and event. Performance arises from the combination of acting, vital, spontaneous, energy principle and event discovering the truth, disrupting the continuous being. The performative practices and anthropological senses, which we emphasize and track in the history of European civilization, are arranged and localized around it as "the energy core".

The redundancy of acting and its viability in combination with the event revolutionary character conditioned the liminal position of actors among medieval communities. Thereby, the actor's figure itself attracted the whole range of contraindications of the medieval culture, between the humorous (overt) and rational (covert), folk and elite culture. In the modern period, an actor preserved the position of "a subject without a place" in social-political and social-economic coordinate system already.

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