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Macbeth, *directed by Ariane Mnouchkine. Press photo*

Abstract

In this article, I will recognise the acceptable form and methods of staging memories within theatre, relying on qualitative features and spatial and temporal characteristics of memories. Memory is an essential part of building one's identity. Being so, actively reviewing the importance of past personal and collective experience is necessary for establishing a constructive relationship towards the future. Considering the qualitative features of memories and the means and reasons for creating memories, I will use the-atricality as a potential theatrical approach and a method that I will call subjective. I will also try to define *the synthetic image* as a possible content of *theatricality* whose function is to express memories in the form of complex sensory material towards which we have both emotional and rational relationships. I will define *the subjective method* as being primarily inspired by the experience of Ariane Mnouchkine, Jerzy Grotowski and Pina Bausch, who placed intimate experience within a theatrical framework, whereby the emphasis is on the process of expressing the original human condition at the service of the play, without any reference to documentary theatre.

Keywords: *theatricality, subjective method, poetic image, staging memories, the creative process in the theatre*

Introduction

In this article, I will recognise the acceptable form and methods of staging memories within theatre, relying on qualitative features and spatial and temporal characteristics of memories (Maljković, 2019). The personal need to establish a constructive relationship towards the future inspired me to research this topic, taking into consideration the complex historical frameworks and the specific context of my region. Memory is an essential part of building one's identity. Being so, actively reviewing the importance of past personal and collective experience is necessary for establishing a constructive relationship towards the future. I want to imply that collective memory is integrated within the individual. It is important to emphasise that the process of memory is the construction of a new reality made up of visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory representations. In addition, space and time in memories are not linear but are determined by the key moments from the past so that one moment in memory contains all the time and space of the event we reconstruct. Even more, this moment could be altered by the characteristics of some other events or even the present moment we connect it with.

Considering the qualitative features of memories and the very means and reasons for creating memories, I will use *theatricality* as a potential theatrical approach and a method that I will call *subjective*. In the following text, I will try to explain what I imply when I say theatricality as an approach. I will also highlight and try to define *the synthetic image* as a possible content of theatricality whose function is to express memories in the form of complex sensory material towards which we have both emotional and rational relationships. I will define *the subjective method* as being primarily inspired by the experience of Ariane Mnouchkine, Jerzy Grotowski and Pina Bausch, who placed intimate experience within a theatrical framework. With this, I would like to underline the process of expressing the original human condition at the service of the play, without referring to documentary theatre.

Theatricality and synthetic image

To define theatricality, I will primarily rely on the article "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified", in which Josette Féral defines theatricality as "a narrative, representational structure that inscribes the subject in the symbolic by means of 'theatrical codes'" (Féral, 1982, as cited in Carlson, 2003, p. 5), and suggests that "theatricality ... arises from a play between the two realities, the specific symbolic structures of the theatrical and the realities of the imaginary that make up performance"

Grotowski's poor theatre

(p. 6). According to Féral (2002), theatricality is the establishment of theatrical reality, that is, the reality towards which theatricality is established through the eyes of observers, within the cracks of everyday space. This can result from the actors taking up everyday life and transforming it into theatre, or it is the result of the observer's view of reality that turns it into theatre.

Marvin Carlson states that "the function of theatre has never been to provide an exact duplication of everyday life (as realism suggested) nor a pale, secondary, derived imitation of life (as Plato charged), but rather a heightened, intensified variation on life, not so much a mirror as an exploration and celebration of possibility" (Carlson, 2003, p. 7). In addition, he refers to Gerald Else who "characterized this shift from Plato as a transition from art as copying to art as creating" (Else, 1957, as cited in Carlson, 2003, p. 8).

Meyerhold dedicated his professional career to researching theatrical ways of achieving an authentic author's view of a dramatic work. He explains that theatre has to be subordinate to *the laws of art*, not life. Even if it has to show the elements of real life, it still stages just "fragments". He also emphasises that the audience comes to theatre to watch art, expecting imagination, play and skill, while what they get is either life or its slavish imitation (Meyerhold, 1976). He states the same while describing the differences between two types of puppet theatre: the one in which the puppet is similar to a man with all his typical characteristics and traits and the other in which "the puppet does not want to be a man's replica because the world it creates is a wonderful world of imagination, while the man it represents is an imaginary man" (p. 116). Dušan Szabo, being inspired by the works of Meyerhold and Nikolai Evreinov, says that "theatricality means not creating stage illusion similar to life while hiding theatrical means" (Szabo, 2009, p. 31).

Therefore, theatricality is the creation of a new, imagined and displaced reality that neither imitates nor copies real life but functions according to its laws

Video still from Bausch's Orpheus and Eurydice,
Ballet de l'Opéra National de Paris

– the "laws of art". It is created through theatrical means, diverse in their variety, where the author's goal is to present the truth most uniquely.

If we consider the topic of theatricality with more depth, giving more thought to "autobiographical" theatricality and to establishing "personal theatrical reality" with the help of memory, it is possible to form the connection with Gaston Bachelard's "poetic image". The poetic image has a specific reality that is not experienced as a thing, a thought or something similar but as a totality in a temporal and spatial context that reflects the soul and "contains all the paradoxicality of the phenomenon of imagination" (Bachelard, 1969, p. 9). Bachelard connects the poetic image with the daydreaming consciousness that he represents as an active state between a dream and memory and in a close relationship with the author's intimacy.

Speaking about the grotesque as a standard theatrical model, Meyerhold (1976) mentions its synthetic method: "Grotesque without any compromise neglects the details and creates ('within conditioned improbability') life to its fullest" (p. 122). He emphasises the same principle when talking about stylisation, by which he does not imply the precise reproduction of a particular phenomenon or epoch. Still, he connects it with conditionality, generalisation and symbols: "Stylising an epoch or a phenomenon indicates expressing the internal synthesis of the respective epoch or phenomenon by all the expressive means possible and discovering its hidden character traits" (p. 60).

Describing the work of Pina Bausch, Royd Climenhaga (2013) states that her images represent not just visual information but also patterns of experience and ways of existence. They are unique because they contain more extensive topics and their historical context. They function on the metaphorical principle that summarises our experience by creating a concise version of what we feel in certain moments.

In all cases, we deal with the synthesis method, which encompasses the fullness of a specific phenomenon, considering that the term "poetic image" refers to literature. That is why, instead of this term, I would introduce the new term *synthetic image*. I would define synthetic image as a theatrical way of staging a phenomenon described by the temporal and spatial framework encompassing its fullness. The fullness represents the atmosphere, temporal and spatial specifications as well as the essence of the phenomenon that is the subject of staging, reflected on its dramatic potential.

The concept of being dramatic is best defined in the theory of theatre through comparison with the narrative. "In dramatic art, there is no telling: something is always and exclusively happening" (Szabo, 2009, p. 35). The narrator, who mediates between the event and the listener, is set aside. When the mediator is removed, the rules change. "There are straightforward characters in front of us whose actions should help us understand the 'story'" (p. 36). Each character has to act and speak for themselves. They have to confront each other so that we learn something about a particular "story" from that confrontation. Also, the result of the conflict (stage event) should lead to "a wider cataclysmic context" (p. 38), which "makes dramatic thinking a separate, complete, and unique type of art" (p. 44). It follows that "dramatic action for a director is a conflict whose twists lead to unexpected final resolution, giving the whole event a certain cataclysmic meaning" (p. 44). The result achieved by the audience's reaction is an expected or unexpected surprise. The synthetic image is not any scene; it is the scene of conflict, a dramatic event regarded as cataclysmic.

A concrete case of staging someone's memory would imply a clear expression of the internal synthesis of understanding and experience of the author of the memory, opening up more prominent topics and provoking the observer to experience an expected and unexpected surprise. The synthetic image regarded as such becomes a means for staging a memory, with theatricality as an adequate theatrical approach.

The subjective method as a method of memory staging

We were looking at things that we had forgotten and thanks to which sometimes we can better understand the world that surrounds us. (Climenhaga, 2013, p. 126)

Video still from Bausch's Orpheus and Eurydice *, Ballet de l'Opéra National de Paris*

This method aims to find the logic that emerges from intellect and intuition to express the human condition in a given moment. In this case, in the moment of memory. Qualitative features of memories and the relationship between personal memory and the context and collective memory make this process complex. The aim is not just to "catch" memories but also to form a specific relationship with them. Thus, an active and thoughtful view of the moment should be necessary for our future. This process is rational and requires the author and actors to place themselves into a specific state that could be described as a state of play when they emerge into the requested context/state. This would imply the annihilation of the ego and partial cancelation of the rational approach. Different approaches could be used in this process.

In their works, Jerzy Grotowski, Ariane Mnouchkine and Pina Bausch try to achieve this state. Although their approaches and aesthetics are different, it is possible to determine something they all have in common. All three authors look for the crack in everyday life, which is the basis of theatricality. Theatrical reality is, in this context, a poetic and complex experience, both emotional and rational; it arises from the creator's experience, including their memories.

Pina Bausch enters that world through the inner world of a performer. She steps into the field of universality by catching, modifying and emphasising expressions, ideas and feelings we can all recognise, turning them, in this way, into a poetic expression. They stop being expressions of everyday life but start reflecting on the intimate world we can connect with since we have experienced it.

On the other hand, Ariane Mnouchkine enters the crack through a child's game based on joined creation. She only uses the means that belong to the world of imagination, while dealing with serious social topics and problems. In this way, she highlights different complex and challenging issues, making them feel "closer" and more approachable. This method also helps spectators to step into a distant world and understand it better.

Grotowski (2006) searches for the essence of theatre, stating:

> When, one day, we discover that the essence of theatre does not lie in being exposed to the event, nor in discussing certain assumptions with the audience. It does not imply presenting life as it looks from the outside; not even in vision – theatre is an act performed here and now in the beings of actors in front of other people; when we discover that the theatrical reality is momentary, that it is not an illustration of life but something connected to life only through analogy. (p. 98)

All three authors have in common that they first consider the actor's bodily experience because of the limitations set by reason (both to actors and spectators). According to these authors' experience, the body is a more reliable witness. The following mutual step is essential for establishing a physical relationship with the elements in "the world of theatricality". These elements may come from the world experienced by the creator, who then works on his memory. This is the case with the examples mentioned above concerning Grotowski and Bausch. Or else, the creator might discover a personal relationship with the elements from the outside, from a

piece of writing or an idea, as with Mnouchkine. It is essential to point out the potential of establishing a relationship between creators and performers who create a new theatrical reality and discover the truth together. The truth, thus, is not only personal anymore but becomes universal (destined) – which is the aim of creating a synthetic image that communicates with the audience.

The interviews and writings of the aforementioned authors, as well as the experience of their collaborators and the theorists who analysed their work, have given us an insight into the methods they used (methods that could be applied to staging memories). All of these methods can mutually be called the *subjective method*. In this procedure, the author's team develops the creative process aiming to improve the abilities of performers and/or the creation of theatrical expression. With this in mind, Grotowski (2009) states:

> The key question is: What is your process like? Do you trust it, or do you fight against it? The process is similar to the destiny of each of us, one's destiny that develops within time (develops or happens – that is all). (p. 17)

I want to emphasise three standard methods used by these three theatre creators since they are crucial in the process of creating the synthetic image:

1. Being able to take risks;
2. "Being in";
3. Creating the synthetic image.

Enabling a readiness for risk

Unfettered communication and creative and free mutual work are paramount for the subjective method. Therefore, being able to take a risk is the first step that enables participants of the process to leave everyday life behind and establish this kind of relationship between themselves.

Ariane Mnouchkine calls this first phase of her work "boarding", since she compares it with a journey – getting closer to theatre without a specific destination. There is always a danger of getting lost, falling off a cliff, losing the ability to navigate, not finding anything on your way, etc. Being able to take a risk is the precondition for embarking on this adventure. Grotowski points out the importance of the interaction of the whole being with the "here and now", which implies the refusal of numbness and security in favour of risk and immediacy. Bausch underlines the importance of listening (observing) and being open to something new.

Methods that enable conditions for a readiness for risk involve activities related to preparing work conditions, selecting a team, as well as psychophysical preparation.
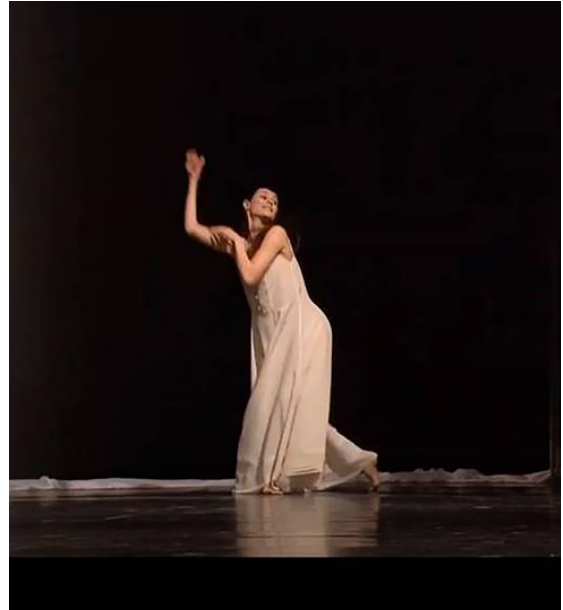
Video still from Bausch's Orpheus and Eurydice, *Ballet de l'Opéra National de Paris*

Mnouchkine highlights the creation of a beautiful empty space that will enable imagination (Miller, 2007) as one of the fundamental preparatory aspects. The space should resemble a "bare hand offering up the actors" (Féral, 1998, as cited in Miller, 2007, p. 112), evoking a feeling that everything is possible and that theatricality can emerge without being constrained by everyday concerns. **Grotowski** approaches the space slightly differently. For him, it is important to create conditions that enable the actors to accomplish "four essential actions: to see, to listen, to reveal and to meet. ... in order to transform the chosen space into something special, a so-called sacred space" (Slowiak & Cuesta, p. 91). The characteristic of this space is purity. The key difference between the approaches of Mnouchkine and Grotowski lies in the fact that Mnouchkine starts with the actor's imagination, which includes the physical, while Grotowski begins with the physical relationship to ultimately reach imagination.

In the subjective method, it is important that individuals within the team can communicate freely and establish creative relationships that will yield results. Depending on the work methods, priorities may differ, but the common thread is that dedication to work is assumed, and the creative process must be everyone's focus.

Mnouchkine emphasises the importance of a team dedicated to collaboration and community, ready for "collective creation", a characteristic of her approach. She believes it is important that everyone has chosen to be there, accepting clear rules, developing a relationship with the community, and understanding and respecting the tasks of other participants. Unlike Mnouchkine, **Grotowski** does

not believe in the "romantic" idea of a group. He leans more towards the term "team", where everyone knows their role and can perform it flawlessly. However, he emphasises that his approach is not about teaching but about "completely opening up to the other person, in which the phenomenon of 'shared or double birth' is possible", which fundamentally affects both the actor and himself. He says this is "a complete acceptance of one human being by another" (Grotowski, 2006, p. 17). **Pina Bausch** focuses on creating a work environment that is gentle and full of respect, where creators (dancers, actors, musicians, etc.) feel capable of being open. This requires great attentiveness on her part and trust within the team. She chooses collaborators based on their character as individuals, rather than their skills or techniques, precisely because an environment where this trust can be built is necessary.

Psychophysical exercises within the subjective method aim to establish a group, which is essential for unhindered communication within the creative team and the collective creative process. Additionally, they establish a psychophysical state within participants so they can enter the realm of theatricality. Each author has a specific approach depending on their goals.

Mnouchkine's primary goal with psychophysical exercises is to establish a group, which is the foundation of her work. The exercises resemble children's games and create a cheerful atmosphere, fostering spontaneous communication within the group. **Grotowski** develops a series of preparatory exercises to put the actors in a position where they can respond to stimuli. The idea is to eliminate resistance in the body. Every real reaction starts from the body is Grotowski's viewpoint. He believes the body has a vast memory (not only personal experiences) containing numerous initial impulses. The proposed exercises raise *awareness of the body* and *bodily presence*. He also discusses the concept of *wildness*, meaning a state where in addition to the body's ability to respond to stimulation, a response can arise from one's inner being – the internal world. **Pine Bausch**'s aim with preparatory exercises is to establish a presence in space and time and to connect people. The purpose is to provide the opportunity for the state of "being in", which is the next topic addressed by all three authors.

"Being In"

The goal of the work is to create a synthetic image that represents a rift in reality. The first step toward achieving this involves creating conditions that facilitate a shift from the everyday into a state that allows for the construction of rules, elements and relationships

Ariane Mnouchkine, Le Théâtre du Soleil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 12 April 2019. Daniel Ramalho/AFP

within this new reality. While these three authors approach this goal in different ways, they all share a common element – they rely on body memory.

Know what you are doing, and do it. (Richards, 2007, p. 71)

Memory is a parallel reality that **Grotowski** explores with his students. In describing his year-long work with Grotowski on "Objective Drama", Thomas Richards recounts his insights during one exercise. While enacting a dream, he fell into a trap of not reconstructing physical actions exactly as they occurred in the dream. In other words, he marked actions without actually performing them. "I made up a mental form in which I intended to present something that the body had truly experienced ... Simply put, I didn't understand that the body can only remember itself" (Richards, 2007, p. 70). This observation forms the basis for achieving the state of "being in". An actor should be in the situation, not represent it. The body retains sensory experiences better than the mind, and therein lies the potential for shifting. "Memories are always bodily reactions. Our skin hasn't forgotten; our eyes haven't forgotten" (Grotowski, 2006, p. 188).

Grotowski develops numerous techniques to assist the actor, further developed by his followers. These techniques revolve around the idea that the essence lies in reacting to stimuli, requiring the removal of physical and psychological barriers in the process and fostering a process of self-discovery leading to individuality. It starts with exercises that are not "social" – for instance, there are no small conversations, subtle gestures, etc. Instead, they are based on establishing bodily positions for individuals/groups. Once the group is established, attention exercises follow, both within the group and

individually. "Horizontal" attention centres on connecting activity and awareness as fundamental elements of spatial experience, with diffuse or peripheral awareness activated. This state can be called a state of wakefulness. "Contact doesn't mean staring; it means seeing" (Grotowski, 2006, p.188). Seeing is the hallmark of wakefulness. The next step is working on a state of wildness. This phase is approached when the being is open to stimuli, both bodily and from the inner world. The goal is to give the body the "possibility to live and to be radiant, to be personal" (Slowiak & Cuesta, 2007, p. 99) Wildness is a foundational state according to Grotowski, which can be achieved in two ways. The first way is through training, much like the art of a samurai: first, one must consciously master the skill, then practically apply it with a conditional reflex until mastery is reached. Once the individual becomes a true warrior, everything must be forgotten. The second way is through untraining. Grotowski states that from birth, we learn how to do things – drink water, see, hear, etc. –, what we are allowed to do, what we are not allowed to do, what is possible, what is not. He believes that to achieve individuality, we should not learn new things but rather free ourselves from past habits. The question arises: What resistances are within the actor and how can they be removed? These resistances are both psychological and physical and are unique to each individual. "I want to steal everything that obstructs the actor; the creative aspect will remain within them. That's liberation" (Grotowski, 2006, p. 182).

> Children love that act of playing. The presence of the masks keeps us from forgetting to play. (Miller, 2007, p. 129)

On the other hand, **Ariane Mnouchkine** approaches "being in" from a different angle – being in a group, together in a different, theatrical reality. She suggests multiple methods. She heavily relies on music, suggesting that live music with a dramatic atmosphere, such as Wagner's style, is ideal. She proposes improvisations where actors perform non-verbal scenes. The aim of these improvisations is not to dance but to find actions that correspond to the music and for the music to support their emotional state. Thus, music dictates the course of improvisation.

Mnouchkine calls the costume a second skin – a character's only skin – and believes an actor must become the character. "Getting costumed is re-finding one's childhood: joy, disguise, processionals, and metamorphoses" (Miller, 2007, p. 116). The goal is to discover the character's exact corpo-reality, which must not be vague. Once the corpo-reality is established, actors are given actions, and their task is to find the character through these ac-

tivities. Mnouchkine uses pre-existing artistic elements that actors interact with, such as costumes, music, masks, etc., to transport them into a different reality. The actors need to surrender and, through bodily sensations, inner logic and harmony, find their way of functioning in this new world they are entering.

> I would like to see, to learn, to meet, and then see what happens. (Climenhaga, 2013, p. 114)

Pina Bausch's goal is to create the immediate presence of performers who directly communicate with the audience and do not reinterpret the idea. She begins by establishing a connection with the space in the present moment. For example, she suggests the exercise "Relationship", where two actors face each other, focusing on looking at each other and feeling the space between them. They react to the space between them and each other through movement and expression. The purpose of this exercise is to establish attention arising from the relationship. This process is undertaken to create the conditions for a complete shared entry into the rift of reality, thereby severing connections with the everyday.

Creating a synthetic image

The creative processes of these authors, which can result in a synthetic image, differ in aesthetic and thematic frameworks, but they all share personal approaches and a reliance on bodily experience.

Pina Bausch draws from people's real experiences when creating an event. Synthetic, theatrical images are formed in collaboration with the participants, emerging from the realms of theatre, dance, physical theatre and visual arts. In her search for these images, she engages the actors by asking questions and receiving responses expressed through words, images, movements, etc. Each response stems from the individual collaborator and is closely tied to their identity. Once individual ideas are presented, further questions and tasks are given to deepen the sense and structure. The next step involves discovering *the motivating event* – the crucial element that later communicates as something universal to the audience. To develop from the idea to the scene, Bausch recommends communication, including discussions and demonstrations of images, music, and/or stories, which were inspirational to participants and external observers like the dramaturg, musician or scenographer. Sometimes this material becomes the structure around the proposed idea. Subsequently, the material obtained during the process is developed and assembled – a complex process. Images first evolve into longer pieces, and then they are shaped and combined based on different criteria.

Movements become a library of material that Bausch uses as a source for creating clear actions, forming the foundation of her performances. A fundamental element of these actions is the *gesture*, serving both as an expression of behaviour (such as everyday gestures) and as an emotional expression (more abstract gestures representing emotional essence).

One method that Pina Bausch employs in working with gestures is called "Basic States". In this method, various ways of executing gestures are explored by experimenting with tempo, intensity, changing distances and repetition, and by combining different versions of gestures' phrases to understand their meaning and experience. This approach allows for manipulating formal frameworks and working on variations beyond the expected. Another method she uses for structuring pieces is called "Composition", involving a list of elements that could be part of the piece, based on their alignment with the main idea or feeling. Elements can be diverse: objects, images, texts, music, etc. Then, testing begins to see how they function together, starting with simple tests of music and images, but becoming more complex. This method often involves connecting two seemingly unrelated elements, creating an interesting tension. Another step she employs is the "Open Rehearsal", where performers use all the created elements to improvise a performance by combining the elements according to their feelings. Careful observation and openness are crucial during these processes. These methods strengthen the team and refresh the relationship with specific elements.

The selection and organisation of elements on stage for Bausch are primarily driven by her intuition. Her performances are combinations of actions creating dense, interconnected images around a central idea or feeling. They are not linear but have an unpredictable structure that explores and maintains tension. These are structures of emotion that reflect the meaning of the idea without verbalising it.

Ariane Mnouchkine believes that working with actors should involve seeking theatricality – a metaphorical and poetic expression of experience. To enter this world, the process leader presents images that stimulate imagination or sets scenes poetically, narrating situations as if telling a story: "Once upon a time, there was a village high up in the mountains. The caravan stopped for the last time before the snow fell…" In this method, actors initially sit in a circle and, following the story, begin supporting it through actions. It is essential to precisely describe the atmosphere and setting: space, time, the appearance of characters, gestures and actions, to provide clear information about the world they are collectively creating on stage.

A significant element in Mnouchkine's creative process is the mask. She believes that masks do not hide actors but reveal them, acting like magnifying glasses for the soul. Masks allow actors to forget themselves and enter the "other" without psychoanalysing the character. Masks do not teach actors about characters' subconscious desires, subtext and so on, but rather about their position and relationship to the world. All mistakes are evident with masks, forcing actors to focus on details. "The mask represents the magic of our confrontation with the archetypes that reside in the collective unconscious" (Miller, 2007, p. 127).

For improvisation to be successful, actors need to know their characters, locations and desires. Alongside music, they perform a situation through action, after which there is a critical discussion of what was done. Mnouchkine believes that theatre is emotion expressed through action. Actors need to find their characters' inner music, characterised by rhythm and leitmotif, rejecting stereotypes and conventional approaches. "Look within the small precise moments to find the great moments", Mnouchkine suggests (Miller, 2007, p. 124). After the performance, questions are raised about how the character views the world and responds to it, whether the movements are in line with the character, how they find their function in the action, etc.

For more complex improvisations, the group agrees on a rough scenario, defines characters and

explores potential storylines. The clearer the characters and scenarios are, the easier improvisation becomes for actors. In this process, it is crucial for actors not to forget to "play like children". The story must also work metaphorically, conveying a deeper meaning. Mnouchkine emphasises the importance of observing and perceiving the world, which does not function according to realistic rules, and suggests reading poetry. She also insists on working on imagination, simplifying and creating space for oneself.

To understand the methods that **Jerzy Grotowski** employs, let us again refer to the experience of his student, Thomas Richards. In creating "individual structures", actors rely primarily on their experience, namely memory, to create scenes that can acquire entirely new meanings within a different context. It is important to note that our understanding of this process comes from Richards' training with Grotowski, not from actual collaboration on a theatrical production.

During a year of work on "Objective Drama" in Italy, the task was to create two songs and two "individual structures" based on sections from an ancient text. Richards turned to his memory and dreams as the starting point for his individual structures.

The work proceeded individually, assisted by a mentor who was Grotowski's assistant. Once prepared, the individual structure was presented to Grotowski for further development based on his comments. The main goal of this task was to understand and master a way of creating that is simple, genuinely physical behaviour. "I need to understand what physical actions mean: performing, simply performing without adding anything" (Richards, 2007, p. 71) There were two main pitfalls that Richards encountered. The first was focusing on feelings. Grotowski adopted his attitude towards feelings from Stanislavski, who asserted that we cannot remember feelings and fix them; we can only remember physical actions. Specifically, he claimed that feelings are not under our control, but our actions are. The second pitfall was the use of symbols. It is important that actions are genuinely performed, not symbolised. The body's consciousness must come to the surface. The actor should question what exactly they did in those circumstances, considering the context: space, materials, scents, other people, touches, etc., and relive it.

The next step is selecting the theme of truth, or what serves as the guiding point that the actor must clearly choose and align their work with. "The guiding point needs to be absolutely clear, the result of one's natural convictions, prior observations and life experiences" (Grotowski, 2006, p. 217). To prevent the work from being seen as a "nugget of truth"

(a term borrowed from Stanislavski), the chosen theme should not be a mere "simple" truth; rather, it should relate more deeply to the actor. This theme is tied to the fateful aspect of drama.

Once the individual structure is determined, once the first functional proposal emerges, the actor should continue working on it, deepening it by "eliminating what isn't necessary and reconstructing the draft more concisely" (Richards, 2007, p. 54). This sometimes involves the tedious process of revisiting "lifeless parts", solving technical issues, removing unnecessary actions, and so on. This is based on cutting and reassembling fragments. The process resembles film editing.

Grotowski expects the actors to approach this task in a directorial manner, aware of all the elements they are expressing, themselves and their relationship to them.

> You look at the song and ask yourself: Where is this initial chant? In which words? Maybe those words have already disappeared? ... But, if you're able to go with that song back to its origins, it's no longer your grandmother singing; it's someone from your lineage, from your land, from your village, the very singing records the space. You come from somewhere. As a French saying goes: 'Tu es le fils de quelqu'un' [You are someone's child]. You're not a wanderer; you come from somewhere, from some land, someplace, some region. (Richards, 2007, p. 56)

In other words, you are aware of your own identity.

Conclusion

After presenting possible ways for staging memories, I want to emphasise the vitality of this process in the context we create today.

> Our quest for meaning is at the same time prompted and frustrated by our inability to originate meaning.
>
>   —Hanna Arendt, Understanding and Politics

Staging and publicly expressing memories implies making a decision and taking responsibility, primarily towards the society that becomes a witness to those memories. It can and should be a crucial part of development and healing, especially when it comes to past traumas, both on a societal and individual level. It can also catalyse dialogue, where not only opinions are shared but also deeply rooted experiences, contributing to the re-evaluation and evolution of our identity.

That is why artistic projects dealing with memory are important, especially in regions marked by collective traumas, such as Serbia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia, characterised by history revision, conflicts, system changes and

disappointments. Consequently, people cannot comprehend the past and therefore, look toward the future with hope. Such artistic projects can play a significant role in the process of understanding, which, like memory itself, cannot be "final" and can lead us to an active state of self-examination of identity, enabling the possibility to be open to others (and different perspectives) and the future.

Understanding the work methods of the theatre creators discussed in this paper can be an important inspirational lesson for authors. It can empower and encourage them, as well as assist in developing their subjective methods of working with memory.

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