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PhD Paper
WORD-MOVE-SILENCE
SUMMARY

PhD Supervisor:
Prof.Univ.Dr. Sorin-Ion CRIȘAN

PhDPursuer:
Luminița PRAJA

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ARGUMENT

The paper WORD-MOVE-SILENCE was born as a result of the wish to gather these three elements, specific for the dramatic art, these three elements, parts of an artistic system, elements that are followed through their evolution in the existant theatrical methods.

It is a paper written for both the actor who plays, or even the student and the professor who teaches art. Even if the idea to write about the three elements word-move-silence appeared during the scene movement classes, of course that the information found here can be useful for acting classes, too.

We look for, we look for forms, methods, models, ways to express, in a world in which we forgot to communicate. The value of the word is forgotten, we forgot to keep silence, but we mumble in a continuous chaos. The uttered words turn against us, and, even if they sometimes hurt us, we walk by almost immune, without care, as if there weren't ours. We have almost lost the measure of things in almost all we say.

The paper has four chapters, with the same amount of information in each. Each chapter wants to develop, one by one, the meaning of the word, the move as it is felt/interpreted, and the understanding of the silence, in the long process that implies the development of an actor.

The process of writing, the presentation of opinions, and especially the actions of certain personalities recognized in the area, practitioners, or theoreticians, was a road with many paths, small and narrow. But I studied carefully each part that was done during the time for the improvement of the word meaning, its importance in communication, or I rediscovered, always amazed, the importance of keeping silence, its power to communicate, or I looked facinated at the movement.

The paper starts with the definiton of the "word" element, both from a practical point of view, and a metaphoric one. If we start from the word as a way of connecting the man to the divinity, through prayers and incantations, this is history. It has changed along the history, being nowadays defined by pictures. Therefore, I started talking about the embodiment of the word, the embodiment which is nowadays, not enough for communication. This function of the word was taken by signs. This is the reason why I brought in the second chapter information about gestures.

I used a quotation for each subchapter of the first chapter. This came as a wish to create an image with a powerful impact of my research, in order to find other opinions to sustain my ideas.

I also defined the word, both practically and metaphorically in the first chapter. Starting with the idea that it was a connector between the man and the divinity, through prayers and incantations, this represents history. Along the history, this was transformed, coming to be defined nowadays through images. As Jaques Lecoq said: "...we look after the body of the words."¹ That's why it is necessary a more profound study of the word. In the embodiment of the word, the most *common*, is communication. More and more often, it doesn't mean communication, its function was taken by the signs.

It is said that this work is a practitioner's point of view- an actor who looks beyond his world, a world of magic, a world in which he should find himself. On the other hand, this work wants also to present the analysis of the same world, this time seen through the eyes of the professor. The moment I chose the road, of course, a road which had already been chosen by great personalities of the art teaching, I understood that, although *nothing is new under the sun*, still, each of us has the right to see the things differently, filtering everything through his personality.

I was preoccupied by the meaning of the word, by understanding silence and how to live the movement. The interest for this theme was raised by the work with my students-actors themselves. Working together with them I tried to see through the multitude of methods and methodologies of word development, silence and stage movement, the light beyond the theory. This led to the creation of new exercises, new ways to explain the artistic phenomenon, new styles to adapt the information that already is present in the history of art teaching, to the new generation of students. Practically, we looked for new ways to deal with the theatrical phenomenon, and in the middle of it is, obviously, the actor.

If for the painter colour is the way of communication (a sign of it), in the theatre the word can be understood through gestures, too. *The signs*, named letters, musical notes, colours or pictures, are a mixture of elements which transmit emotion. This symbiosis, meant to transmit the emotion, is the image of the word. Letters and syllables fly in the endless world of thoughts, hit the others, and new words appear, which again, transmit

¹ Jaques Lecoq, *The Poetry's Body*, Oradea, ArtSpect Publishing House, 2009, pg.61;

thoughts. New words are born. The words are our luggage, they come with us all around the world, and are ways to know our thoughts. Right from his birth and until the first uttered words, the child flies in a world of letters and sounds that gravitates around him. His first word has a precious meaning. The word, together with the gesture, leads to the creation of a ritual, as a cosmic dimension.

Silence is an intimate thing, which needs to be done in silently. When talking about the artistic creation, there is the creative silence. Silence is element that keeps the balance between the word and the move. Silence is that *settle* before leavings which can be found in Chekov's plays. Silence offers unknown values from another world, be it word or move." Silence is the learning of the self control, and a clear sign of it. The contributes to the man's power to dominate his nature. It prevents thoughts from being chaotic. It helps the interior meditation."²

From the group word, move, silence, the word is the one which motivates the human being to change, according to the way it is transmitted and perceived. For this, breathing and utterance are of vital importance for the young actors.

The uttered word, the emotion it implies, the sign of its passing through all which means knowledge, its simple form, but not without power, the way in which everything must be transmitted to the other speaker, is the result of its simplicity (not simplism), and harmony. The powerful creation is the result of all these.

Maybe from the need to get perfect, the dance, the music and the word separated, became independent, but today, more than ever, they look for new ways to meet and end up to intermingle.

The well controlled breathing gives the chance to possess all the necessary ways of theatrical expression, from the artistic move, voice and utterance, up to the presentation of the most subtle feelings.

The knowledge of the precise valuable words represents the actor's power. This determination offers precision and clarity to present the verbal image, in uttering the written text. The destiny of a text is tightly connected to the actor's knowledge *to put order to the meaning*. Beyond the game of words, the truth is that the life or death of a text is strictly connected to the force of the uttered word.

² Alain Courbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine, Georges Vigarello (coord.), *The History of the Body*, 2nd vol, Bucharest, Art Publishing House, 2008, page 77;

The meaning of the theatre is to put a mirror in front of the people, society, of the whole world. "All the world's a stage/And all the men and women merely players:"³

In the last part of the first chapter I analysed the relationship between the word and the move, as it is seen by Lucky, the character from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

The communication through body's gestures appeared from the movement free of any conventional tightness. The second chapter brings a necessary information about the beginnings of the modern dancing, for each actor. There are presented the lives and activities of personalities as Marie Louise Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Ruth Saint Denis, Martha Graham, Pearl Eileen Primus, Rudolf von Laban, Mary Wigman, Pina Bausch and Miriam Raducanu.

The human body and especially the body of the contemporary actor is under changes because of the rhythm. Throughout the history, the body language and the word went hand in hand. The beginning of theatre-dance has brought a new balance on the scene, the move was used as the basis for the word. Redefining the artistic identity, going from the meaning to the form, the word, the move and the silence are redefined. Starting with the human body covered by the well defined principles, the stage body needs to be redefined, free from any kind of constraints.

Chapter two may seem to go aside from the direction in chapter one. This chapter, mainly theoretic, is still a need for the contemporary actor, for the total actor of our days. The two papers at the beginning of this chapter have a different way to debate the problem. Some might say they could not be included in a work like this. But the information it brings is very interesting, and my option was for a novelistic style, rather than a scientific style. The sensitivity it brings is also the personal touch of the writer.

If in the first part the gesture was linked by the word, in the second the gesture has a new structure, which brings the move to what is essential. As Shakespeare said: "...let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature:"⁴

³ The Complete works of William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, act II, scene VII, Wordsworth Edition, 1996, page 622;

⁴ The Complete works of William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act III, scene II, Wordsworth Edition, 1996, page 689;

Conscient or not, interested or not, passionate or untalented, people were curious to analyse both the actors' playing and the dancing styles. Some are just interested, but others made from theatre and dancing a profession of faith.

The phenomenon theatre-dance is characteristic for a moment in the development of dancing. The way it is seen by both the dancers and the actors brings to it an aura of uniqueness."The phenomenon theatre-dance is, as a genre, outside the arts of a show, the specific difference can be identified, especially with the idea that certain dancing style sustains the idea of a theatre-dance show."⁵

For dancing, the body is the engine that generates the presentation of the feelings. The body replaces the word, using the dynamic ways to communicate. The body communication facilitates the creation of a form for a content, of feeling and living in movement. In theatre-dance phenomenon there is a dynamic energy change.

The succession of moves that create a dance present on the scene emotions, special moments, feelings, sometimes more expressive than words can be. The actor is the one who, willing to unfold the misteries of the word, changed his attention to the dance. His wish not to be considered a simple *vehicle for the word*, from the need to be more than the presenter of the written text, the actor wanted to be the message itself.

Louie Fuller- a visionary artist, who created both from instinct, and conscient, too, created a new form of art. Her shows were always between reality and dream.

Isadora Duncan- a personality who opened a road to the freedom of movement as the basis for the contemporary art.

"Dancing is move- said *Ruth St Denis*- and that means life, beauty, love, force. To dance means to live your life at its highest and most intimate moments, in harmony, purity and self control. To dance means to feel yourself a part of the cosmos, with the roots in the interior reality of the spiritual embodiment."⁶

Martha Graham was also called *Picasso* for the dancing, because, as the great pictor did, she made a revolution among the classical techniques. The famous coreographer put the basis for the modern dancing style.

⁵ Gina Serbanescu, *The Contemporary Dance-The Body's Senses*, "Camil Petrescu" Cultural Foundation, "Theatre Today" Magazine, Bucharest, 2007, pf 62;

⁶ Isabelle Ginot, Marcello Michel, *The 20th Century Dancing*, Bucharest, Art Publishing House, 2011, pg 98, a fragment from an article signed Ruth Saint Denis, published in Denishaw magazine (1924-1925);

Pearl Primus-Afro-American dance's grannie, as she was also called, was remarkable for speed, rhythm and intensity, elements of her gracious jumps, with which she remained in the history of the dance.

Rudolf von Laban places the artist in the middle of the spatial points of the extremities of the human body. This point of view created a new concept called "kinesphere". "Comparing the move with a live architecture, Laban proposes the kinesphere as the point of reference; starting from it, it can easily be explained the complex move of the human body. The kinesphere is an imaginary sphere having the dancer in the middle, and has as margins all the points in the space which can be touched by the parts of his body, without moving."⁷

The creator and professor *Mary Wigman* praises the mechanism of creation. For her, to be an artist means to be a messenger of the spirituality. The artist lives the *moment* of spiritual communication through the artistic moment. "For him, a dancer is a medium, and the dance gets closer to the trance, getting the cathartic function it had in the archaic societies."⁸

Pina Bausch brings life on the scene, she transmits the vital signs, making them understandable through a coded language, **tanztheater**.

Gigi Căciuleanu compares *Miriam Răducanu* with the Romanian language; "the modern Romanian language, with the vowels linked easily in groups of diphthongs and triphthongs, can lead you only to the strange fluency of the very contemporary dance of Miriam Răducanu!"⁹

The art, itself, is the way of communication universally understood. Just the point of view is different. The artist reveals himself, but the way he does it, is a part of each, personal art. The man is creative, he makes art from everything he touches, not matter a worker in a factory or an artist on the stage.

The artistic creation is present in the human gene, all depends on the fact that one assumes, accepts and puts into practice his native talent. The meeting of the actor with the creator is a special one: I'm interested into the actor because he is a human being. This implies two main points of view; first, my meeting with another person, the contact, the mutual feeling of understanding, and the feeling that we have when we open ourselves to

⁷ . Isabelle Ginot, Marcello Michel, *The 20th Century Dancing*, Bucharest, Art Publishing House, 2011, pg 90, a fragment from an article signed Ruth Saint Denis, published in Denishaw magazine (1924-1925);

⁸ Ibidem, pg 90;

⁹ Căciuleanu Gigi, *Wind, Volume, Vectors*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2008., pg 37;

another person, that we try to understand; in brief, we go beyond our loneliness. Secondly, his attempt to understand himself through the attitude of another man, to find himself in this.”¹⁰

We can call mask the character that is played every evening by an actor, but that is totally another artistic dimension the one which the actor has to go through. Finally, it is a game. Or, properly saying, through game new, unrevealed artistic dimensions can be brought to life. “Commeddia dell’arte is childish art. It quickly moves from one situation to another, from one state to another. Arlecchino can cry Pantalone’s death, and get happy quickly after that because the soup is ready! In this respect, commedia is a very cruel territory, but especially a fabulous place to play.”¹¹

The gesture is the essence of the action. The body is the divine prolongation in which the thoughts, gestures and words are covered with the inspiration-expiration move. The geometric shapes are bodies, too. The moving body writes words read by the spectator. The forms make the words, they get materialized as a work of art, a sculpture that gets new dimensions and changes in a succession of moving images.

We have to look for the harmony of the forms, sounds, images, because the nature itself is harmony. The harmony and equilibrium, these elements that keep the balance came as a result of the study of two visions on movement in Meyerhold’s *Biomechanics* and *The Calusari*. In both cases, beyond harmony and equilibrium, we can find the ritual. This ceremony of rules is developed in the evolution of the coreographic drawing, while making the moves. Even if the spacial dimension makes the difference between *Biomechanics* and *The Calusari*, one of them is performed only in a specific part of the year, and the other can be performed all the time, as an individual study. Though they do not know each other, they have the same target, to make an interior equilibrium of the person who performs it.

The communication with the help of the human body came from the liberty of the movement, freed from the conventional rules.

The third chapter discusses the improvisation and the artistic secret. The rigorism and the tenacy of the No theatre actor is in balance with the actor who has the training based on the famous games of Viola Spolin. If in No the basic elements are the gesture and the sound, in improvisation games we can find spontaneity. Any of these methods used by

¹⁰ Jerzy Grotowsky, *To a Poor Theatre*, Bucharest Unitext Publishing House, 1998, pg 61;

¹¹ Jaques Lecoq, *The Poetry’s Body*, Oradea, ArtSpect Publishing House, 2009, pg.123;

an actor working with himself, the result is the same, each of them contributing to the artistic development.

Sarugacu has become a method, a way to develop for the actors who play No theatre, and it needs to give up all the human elements, for the artistic credo.” First of all: according to my dead parents’ advice, you have to give up the temptations of the body, gambling and drinking: you have to do your best while repeating, and not to try to impose your ideas upon others.”¹²

The difference between a Western and an Eastern theatre is the perceptible harmony. The limit among move, gesture, word, silence can be noticed in No theatre. The hard work upon the actor to-be is the main element of his future evolution. A young man who is raised with the artistic spirit, will definitely answer positively to the exterior impulses. The actor’s work is not finished once the play was presented, or a period of learning ended, on the contrary, the real effort starts then. Sometimes it is not important the target, the end, it is the path that matters. The real value is discovered *on the way*.

I have chosed to study the flower method and improvisation, mainly because of the apparent difference that is between them. The rigour of the work makes them competitive. The traditional one gives to the other the possibility to define itself. Apparently it is easy to improvise, but this thing can be done only when you have self liberty.

The game and playing keep the body and spirit alive. In order to keep the spirit and body moving, there were born the exercises presented at the end of the chapter there. The need to play again, to find ourselves through movement, with word and gesture, developed and will always develop magical things. I am sure that these studies of image composition will not stop here.

The research on the theory and practice has as material videos, films and the internet. The results can be found at the end of the fourth chapter. Here are described some of the exercises born to keep the body and the spirit alive. There are exercises done at the scene move courses, the 2nd year, actors.

These studies to compound the images lead the students-actors close to what they look for at the acting courses, the road to miracle.

One of the elements debated in the paper and which must not be discussed vaguely is The Silence. This is the second of equilibrium between word and move. My opinion is that, in order to be able to sustain the silence on the stage you need to have the precision of

¹² Zeami, *Seven Secret NO Theatre Treaties*, Bucharest, Nemira Publishing House, pg 20;

the watch maker, who repairs very sensitive mechanisms. As one can find at the end of the first chapter, I also discussed the theme of the breathing on the stage, tightly connected to both the word, and the silence. The actor's and the teacher's research on the silence, had as example, *the listening* of some works of art of the forerunners, Brâncuși, Michelangelo and Shakespeare.

In the end, the last chapter presents a number of plays from Sibiu. I had this choice because I found challenging the percentage of word, move and silence in the directors' visions, for the plays I saw here. The last chapter takes into discussion the theme of the work itself, the link among the word, move and silence, from the director's point of view. Here I tried to discover to which extent the directors return to the values of the word. How much freedom is given to the actor and the director by the dramatist, so that he can express himself, beyond the paper. My comments upon the plays do not mean to criticise, but to follow how the percentage of the word-silence-move can be noticed. The balance among the word, move and silence is, in many cases, altered. There are moments when the word could be replaced by the move or, why not, by the silence.

The analysis of these plays was done without claiming to be a critical one. I watched the plays as a spectator. I also watched them as an actor.

At the end of the work I presented a scenario I created, inspired by the play *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Becket, and it is the idea of a possible show in which the word, silence and the movement can find the ballance, energy and harmony.

And, for a complete and harmonious end of my presentation, I returned to the Word again. It has different values, from different points of view.

It is vital to give the correct importance to the word, silence and the expression of the body in acting a play. The meaning of the word depends on the dramatist, as he is the first who can create connections. The director, and then the actor take further this value and offer it to the public. The balance among the word, movement and silence is in many cases altered. There are moments in which the word could be replaced by the move, or why not, by the silence.

The scene is one of the places which needs a person to be creative. The scene is a severe judge.

This paper is the result of the professor-actor's research, who, in the end, presented the scenario of a possible play, in which The Word, The Silence and The Movement complete.

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