

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH, YOUTH AND SPORT
TÂRGU-MUREȘ UNIVERSITY OF ARTS

HEAUTONTIMORUMENOS

(The Self-Tormentor)

**An ascetic work ethos of the actor, or
the self-tormenting discourse of the
actor's creative process**

Doctorate thesis

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Introduction

I have borrowed the title for my thesis from the play of the same name by Publius Terentius Afer, roman poet living in the 2nd century BC. The etymological equivalent of the Latin expression *Heautontimorumenos* is ‘self-tormentor’. The choice of title was provided by the parallels existing between the play’s topic and the creative process of the actor.

Menedemus, the strict father, with his constant rebukes drives his son, Clinia to enroll in the military. Realizing the cruelty of his deeds, he begins to live a life of self-torment, of penance, swearing to do so until he sees his son again.

As the son is body of the father’s body and blood of his blood, so is a role born out of the body, soul and voice of the actor. As the father must do penance until his son returns to him, so the self-agonizing existence of the actor continues unto the role being formed and born. Along the creative process of acting, the actor is capable of transforming their own flesh-and-blood reality in the system of symbols from within the respective play.

Taking inspiration from Gernot Böhme’s anthropological study, I hereby patent the designation of the actor’s self-tormenting discourse, the notion of the ascetic work ethos of the actor, whose starting point has its root in a certain kind of self-analysis.

The actor’s existence, as a distinctive form of the concept of existence and the experience of our age, is defined, for me, as an act continuously laden with tension. In my research, I shall explore this mechanism. Pedagogizing the self-tormenting and self-analyzing state as the basic principle of the actor’s existence provides a possible method for role analysis by the actor, for ferreting out the actions to be performed on stage.

In the phases of actual role composition, the actor must signify something else outside of them, some other thing, somebody who is independent of them. This encounter – be it successful or not – causes tension and hardship.

My hypothesis is that by “sacrificing” themselves and “giving birth to themselves anew”, the actor is able to embody a role. The basis for the self-tormenting and self-analyzing discourse of the actor’s creative process is the analysis of the act engendered by the relationship between actor and role.

Actor	self-torment	role	actor-role transfiguration
Menedemus	self-torment	Clinia	meeting between father and son

**Fig. 1. The meeting between the ascetic work ethos of the actor and
*Heautontimorumenos***

For me, it is self-evident that the father's self-tormenting corporeality functions only as a lifeless body without the return of the son. The relationship of actor and role functions similarly. The actor's body is in itself an exhibited body, but the body and the role, as the end result of the self-tormenting, self-analyzing process created by the role in question may, and do, turn into a conscious transfiguration.

The books *Games People Play* and *What Do You Say After You Say Hello* by game theorist Eric Berne provided a starting point to the symbiosis of self-torment and the actor's creative process. Each moment of our existence is a kind of role-play. Berne interprets life as a succession of games. Games are fundamentally dishonest, their outcome dramatic in character. The different "ego-states" (Berne) are saturated with conflict. The conflict is always a state laden with tension.

As a consequence, the actor, beyond their human games and role-plays, finds themselves in a consciously generated state seeped in exponentially greater tension in the course of one of their role-crafting creative processes, which subsequently increase in number and variety. This signifies an internalized spiritual ascetic travail that, in any case, can be classified as a kind of self-torment.

Thus the question arises whether the capacity for asceticism may be considered an essential trait for the actor; and if so, why?

I consider the self-tormenting, self-analyzing creative process of the actor to be, in any case, a spiritual asceticism. At least as a starting point. Yet it is virtually impossible to separate the workings of our deepest instincts on the physical and the spiritual level. The body is like a canvas onto which we project our thoughts and emotions. Thus, in my interpretation, both of these are present at the same time; whichever we may mention, the other is implied.

In my hypothesis, the self-tormenting method of the actor, the gesture of sacrificing something of themselves is a sacral act. The gesture of self-torment and analysis is the essential condition for the *purification* of the actor–human. Their self-agonizing analytic work is not deviant masochism, but a method that consciously utilizes self-provision.

My conclusion is that by utilizing the ascetic work ethos of the actor, a humane, unique lifestyle pedagogy becomes possible in the field of actor coaching. In my interpretation, all of this is an acquirable process, a training strategy that, besides the often-argued talent, might be a device supporting the actor’s creative work, applicable both in the short and the long run, and through which the actor might be absolved of the stigma of being dominated by instinct.

Of course I shall, by referencing the literature of theatre history, actor’s pedagogy and various social sciences, constantly incorporate my thoughts into their conceptual framework. The names and schools mentioned herein shall not be presented separately, in a didactic manner – since reviewing these is not my goal –, but randomly, with the intention for them to provide a framework for supporting the goal of my hypothesis and supplementing my thoughts.

I rely on the specific practical experience and experiments that make up a part of the fifteen years of my own activity as an actress and a teacher. The goal of organizing and analyzing this distinctive pedagogical method is to ascertain the consequences of my work hypothesis – the ascetic work ethos of the actor – on actor coaching, improvisation and musical acting.

It is important to note that all visual references in this thesis – both textual and pertaining to images – are conscious and intentional. Their inclusion is not a self-serving source of humor; they are interconnected elements making up the structure of the doctorate thesis. The use of musical notions as well as the “prelude” and “final chord” chapters are conscious compositional elements. This is because I use musicality as an “underground rivulet” that keeps springing to the surface in the “weave” of the thesis. Using them thus in written form serves to make this all the more expressive. The randomly co-opted musical notions prepare the last chapter, which discusses the use of sounds and music in my acting class exams. The bullet points, designed to take on the form of vertical listings appearing in the text of the thesis, from the chapter entitled *I am the notation! You are the notation! We are the score!* – in my parlance –, *break into*

song and are converted to musical notes, since they get laid down in a vertical position on the staff system of notation.

At the same time, the distinctive and personal voice, besides pragmatic expressiveness, serves to both relieve and generate tension in the text of a scientific parlance already concerned with strain theory.

To sum up, it can thus be said that the consciously composed image constructions and frameworks that create correspondence constitute the textually audio-visualized props, incorporated into the text, of the playing-gaming actor participating in the ascetic work ethos discussed henceforth. This layer of the structure of the thesis constitutes a semiological system that, with its function of correlation, brings together elements irreconcilable at first; namely, the emotional experiment in strain theory with joy, light-heartedness, flying... ..and with balance.

It is very important to emphasize that I have no intention to set this hypothesis against other, completely opposing concepts, since I believe that turning the negative connotations of my strain theory – passing through several parallel disciplines – into positive ones shall provide sufficient conflict for my demonstration.

1. Within a framework

I shall use the quotes from Terence's comedy, *The Self-Tormentor*, at the beginning and the end of the thesis – as a prelude and a final chord –, *creating a framework* for it, or framing it, as such.

All textual and audio-visual insertions into the weave of the full text of the thesis are taken as frames. The respective framework transforms the written text into an image. At the same time, the written text shall be the framework of the framework the moment the previous framework turns into an image. So the image is the frame and the frame is the image.

The textual and audio-visual frameworks of the thesis:

- the quotes from *Heautontimorumenos* form a framework at the beginning and end of the full thesis

- the virtual *Heautontimorumenos* film, by being the forerunner to the chapter entitled *The soul cinema. The psychophysical self-reflection of the ascetic work ethos of the actor*, becomes a framework
- all musical notions, both in the main text as well as the footnotes (together with the last musical chapter of the thesis) form random frameworks
- the bullet points mentioned earlier become arbitrary visual frames
- the figures in the thesis form a correlative framework
- all iconically presented quotes form a random semiological framework system

The method of creating a framework in my work as a teacher and in my acting class exams is one of the techniques quite frequently used. I connect the concept of using a framework with the term “method” because it has, over time, become my method, so to speak. The starting point was always that there is I as the actor; there are they as aspiring students of acting, we (they) inhabit a story that could happen to us, e.g. a role that is alien to start with, and where does this begin? and how? and how does it end? If it ends at all. And if so, how? And what comes next?

For me, to answer these questions, tailored to the individual, is one of the important starting points of the craft of acting, especially in the first two years of basic training. The intimate collages that grew out of stitching together improvised self-made texts or dramatized literary ones, converging around a historical period or always a specific location, came into being by exploring these aspects together with the students.

In all applications of the framework, it is crucial that we insist on utilizing the students as a starting point. The pedagogical goal is to consciously lay bare the individual subject and to embed it into the scenic and visual representation.

Creating a framework, in my interpretation, becomes a conscious method of guiding the actor in order to help them proceed from within themselves toward the role, the story and the action, and in the end, to be able to return to their starting point, e.g. to themselves. Or, if you like, the premise of the assertive ritual of ending up in a conscious creative process of acting.

In my interpretation, the method of the framework theory is fundamentally one of the tools used in the ascetic work ethos of the actor. Its starting point has its root in a

certain kind of self-analysis. In order to protect form the aggregation of strain inherent in the actor's trade, the framework of the work ethos is always – at the beginning and at the end of the stage work – self-provision.

In the context of the exam compilations referred to, the applications of frameworks I utilize can be categorized in the following manner:

- Spatial – a framework to be interpreted from the viewpoint of localization in the space of the stage.
- Textual – the verbal framework embedded into the text body.
- Musical – developing a framework with musicality, in sequences and by repetitions.
- Random – a framework incorporated along apexes applied in a seemingly rhapsodic fashion, but still composed consciously.
- Spatial, textual, musical and random at the same time.

All in all, we may say that the method of utilizing a multi-layered framework is a means for visual construction that provides the actor with a psycho-physiological security within the tensions of stage representation.

The final chord of the quote from the already-mentioned *Heautontimorumenos* ends and dissolves the self-tormenting state that Menedemus reaches at the end of his struggles. Similarly, as evidence to my thesis, to the actor practicing asceticism on themselves. The ending quote:

*“This course, while you are making a beginning,
is disagreeable, and while you are unacquainted with it.
When you have become acquainted with it,
it will become easy.”¹*

(Publius Terentius Afer)

¹Publius Terentius Afer: *Heautontimorumenos*, Act 5, scene 6, pp. 323.

2. Games

– an experiment in the theory of emotion –

2.1. The encounter between transactional analysis and theatre

In my opinion, the scripts in Berne's behavioral science, as well as the systematic analysis of different types of behavior and the knowledge of the different transactions between people hide an important area of research for the actor dissecting human nature. The terminology from Berne's concept thesaurus can be incorporated into the network of concepts used in theatre, and allow for their reinterpretation. At the intersection of the two fields – transactional analysis and theatre –, the chance for several useful cross-pollinations presents itself:

- Cleansing the civilian life of the actor as a consequence of possessing knowledge of our individual, everyday games.
- Supporting the role-crafting work of the actor, the composition of a role in the sense of conversion, e.g. applying the repository of Bernian games to the stage role.
- Developing the actor's individual tools by knowing the games played by various roles, characters, figures and types, and influencing these.
- Relieving the tendency of the actor to repeat their individual everyday games as a consequence of our game repository accrued by merging our stage games and individual everyday games.
- The theory and methodology of Bernian script analysis is one possible starting point in the methodology of the pedagogue leading an actor.

I believe that the actor, when creating a role, enters an altered ego state, a mesh of a pattern of sensations and experiences consistent in a Bernian sense, which forms a coherent system of thoughts and sensations, and which is directly connected to the corresponding consistent behavior pattern, whose spatial exteriorization is expressed in behavior patterns feeding off the actor and at the same time differing from them – distinct and unique.

As someone involved in the way of life that is theatre, I can state that the knowledge of game-play, aside from personal psychological self-analysis and capacity

for self-interpreting, may constitute a possible compass in solving issues specific to the field. I am talking specifically about the knowledge of game-play material in the Bernian sense, its applicable uses and manifold returns gained and applied in the work of the actor and the acting teacher. Beginning with creating a role, throughout the capricious and uncertain terrain of the rehearsal process, and up until the repository of improvisational games, it can open up new horizons in the very fragile feints involved in leading an actor and the self-development so necessary for creative work.

How will the actor gain and pass on to others the knowledge that comprises ascertaining the difference, so as not to get lost between the roles of stage and life?

Maybe a thespian education, an actor's self-education might be the answer, such a one that, by constantly changing our viewpoint, doesn't allow us to get stuck in our roles. This method forces the actor to put themselves at a critical distance, into a motivational viewpoint. The method of the ascetic work ethos of the actor – which, in the context of the actor's work, culminates fundamentally in the rehearsal process – was formulated with this intention in my experimental pedagogic works.

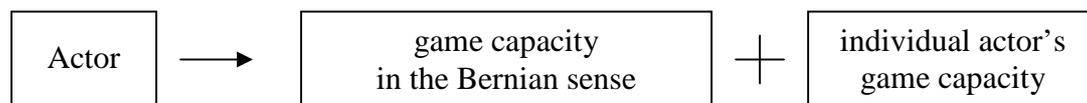


Fig. 2. The game repository of an actor

2.2. The encounter between TA and the *at*

As derived from Figure 2, the notion of the theatre role and the Bernian roles achieve congruence in the actor's performance. Relating to the stage role experienced as tension is further complicated in the context of civilian roles.

According to the Bernian role, existing in the transactions appropriate to the requirements of the life script is a tense state as well. The Parent, Adult and Child ego states of the personality – which play their roles in the Bernian interpretation – are separated from each other not only because they are very different, but also because they often find themselves at odds with one another.

Add to this the tension arising from the ego states of the partner, the partners and the director. The accumulated effect of these factors all put strain on the actor.

The opposite pole of the notion of the *artless thespian* that I've coined – a willfully utopian-sounding and corny slogan – is the state of crisis laden with tension from which the *at* is almost inevitably born out of; the aggregate of the strain found in the games on stage and in civilian life.

As a counterpoint to the TA abbreviation, which comes from the expression “transactional analysis”, we hereby patent the abbreviation *at*, which signifies the *artless thespian*.

Thus TA and the *at* meet.

The ascetic work ethos of the actor that has its roots in the encounter between TA and the *at* is a conflictual discourse that the actor has with themselves, which means a unique and arbitrary, but not self-serving exploitation of the possibilities offered by the stage.

In my reading, the minimal theatre situation is the unbalancing that constitutes the moment of dislodgement from their state of calm, which in all cases converges in an existence filled with tension and implies a continual state of readiness.

As a matter of fact, Berne's whole transactional analysis was born out of the need for people to be able to live in peace with their life scripts; and if they wanted change, that they be able to accomplish it. Along these lines, I study how the actor lives with the misshapen worlds of their roles. How do they accept into themselves, how do they transform and how do they relinquish yet another role?

Maybe it can be construed that, in any case, we are facing a sophisticated, fragile and labyrinthine issue. Games or no games, we are entitled to say that the encounter between TA and the *at* is no trivial matter. The Bernian life scripts themselves do not mechanically apply; there are a slew of circumstances and correlations that regulate their operation.

2.3. Transactions on stage

One perk of the encounter between the *at* and TA is that the actor is the doer and the responder in one. The alternations in their (the actor's) and the role's ego states carry, for me, the possibility for further combinations:

- the actor, in a certain moment – while performing their stage role – is in either the Parent, the Adult or the Child ego state;

- the actor, for the whole extent of their role, is engaged in converting the Parent, Adult or Child ego state into one of the others;
- the actor originates their roles from a single – Bernian – ego state;
- variations that may be applied to different stage genres, ex. in one genre, it is better for the actor to start from the Child ego state, in the other, the Adult ego state;
- the phases of the rehearsal process may be broken down into Parent, Adult or Child ego states;
- the actor builds on the Parent, Adult or Child ego state of their own civil role, consciously composing their role;

The interesting thing here is that, though the performances of some theatrical characters weren't composed according to the above, these variations can be identified and recognized nevertheless. Even in hindsight.

This too proves that they don't enter our work on stage for the sole reason that we use them as a method and believe in them. On the contrary, they exist on their own, since they are already intrinsically part of all social manifestations. Consequently, in the actions on stage as well. One just has to notice them and utilize them consciously.

The combinations of ego states in stage roles and civilian roles aren't, of course, phases that manifest in a purified form. Their boundaries are not obvious; they meld together, and engage in continuous alternations. The motivations of their purposes are nebulous in both cases. In the beginning. However, deciphering these begets one of the most exciting parts of our work of exploration and dissection. In everyday life, when they are present with an innate artlessness, almost unconsciously, we can save ourselves the engineer-like planning of the composition.

This is not the rule in the case of the stage. Exceptional stage transactions only come together from acts showing the most potential derived from formulas tried in advance, the actions of causality relationships composed with precision. In addition to all this, there is also the fragility of the spiritual peak involved in playing it all here and now, for the first and last time.

2.4. The player's game

What does the actor actually do? I think they play while involved in a game, or are involved in a game while playing, on stage.

What does the TA professional say about acting and games? That both are similar in that they work based on rules. The player knows about these, the gamer doesn't.

The essence of play is spontaneity, joy, creativity. The game may be unexpected, but it cannot be spontaneous or creative, since it repeats along similar dynamics within a relationship. It may be full of emotions, but it doesn't garner joy for those involved in the game, since its outcome is almost always unpleasant.

My hypothesis is that in the case of the encounter between TA and the *at*, everybody knows everything. In other words, the actor (*at*) is aware of both their games and their playing at the same time.

So let's see the list. First, the games:

- individual games in the Bernian sense
These are the games from our personal life that obviously have an impact on our profession, whatever it may be.
- Bernian games used during work, within civilian games
Our private (civilian) games from our personal lives don't abruptly end the moment we enter work, but continue to be actuated. So in this sense, the actor has a game repository for their stage work as well, which is related to the states attained within the rehearsal process.
- Bernian games of the stage self
The actor can be broken down into the civilian self and the stage self. The stage self of the actor bears the games of their civilian self (those from their private life and those from the rehearsal process) and those of the – in the beginning – fictional person described in the role, manifesting in the body and voice of the actor. Thus, in the stage self state, private games and the games of the role intermingle. It is important to note that the stage self state is not to be confused with the Bernian ego states, those that exist in everyone: the Child, the Parent and the Adult. The stage self state has actually six Bernian ego states, which are accrued from the civilian games of the actor and the personal games of the character portrayed within the role.
- The character's Bernian games

These are the personal games of the character within the role, already mentioned.

And now comes the most important aspect!

While the actor is aware of all this, or at least strives to be, they are also aware that they are playing a role. All of this is a play that corresponds to the rules of playing on stage.

- the actor plays removed from civilian existence, in the sense of stage acting
- the actor plays not entirely removed from civilian existence, in the sense of stage acting
- the actor plays with their stage self in the sense of stage acting
- the actor plays the character in the sense of stage acting

There is no question that stage play is joyful, spontaneous and creative. And, of course, full of emotions. So what happens to the actor?

On stage, the actor both plays and is inside a game, regardless of whether they know about TA or whether they are using it in their role composition.

And if they use TA consciously, then on stage, the *at* plays while inside a game, and respectively, is inside a game while playing.

Play and game melds together, and complement each other in accordance.

The properties of the play-game are the following:

- they are regulated in a way that the playing-gaming parties know about everything, the playing-gaming counterparts lay down the rules together and are precisely aware of these
- despite the apparent lightness and simplicity of the play-game notion, it hides deeper theoretical correlations – since both fields contain the rules and properties of the notions of play and game
- the play-game is joyful, creative, spontaneous, capable of renewal, doesn't just have similar dynamics, it doesn't end unpleasantly and not least of all, it is self-developing

If up until now we had ascertained that the minimum point of theatre is conflict itself – or more conflicts, but one at least is needed –, then it could be said that stage

games work according to a conflictual game principle, and carry the possibility for the manifestation of various emotions filled with tension.

Although the world of the stage is virtual, the human games therein fictitious, we nevertheless cannot ignore the fact that the players themselves are real – e.g. flesh-and-blood – actors in whom the emotions condense in all cases, since they react as sensitive beings in any stage situation.

Any given moment, and in general, most of the time, the actor exists under the tension of their games, and behaves accordingly.

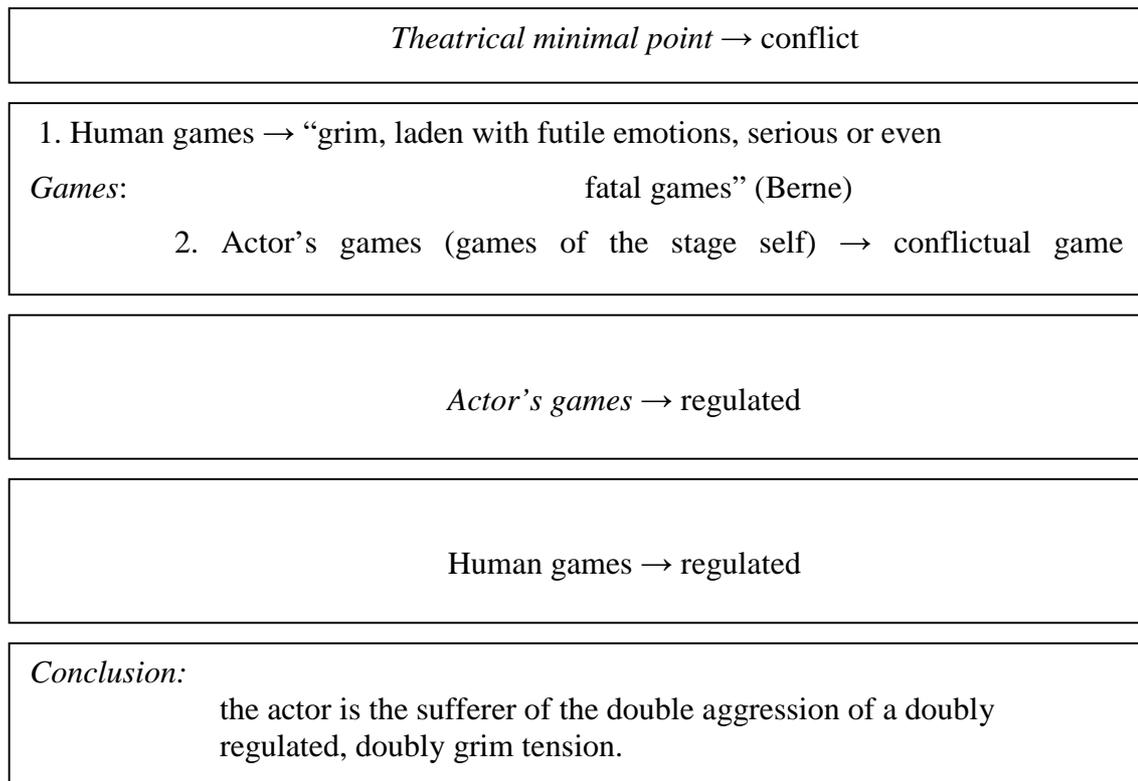


Fig. 3. To demonstrate the ascetic actorial existence

Berne dedicates a separate chapter to calling our attention to the similar characteristics in transactional analysis and acting in the sequel to *Games People Play, What Do You Say After You Say Hello?* More precisely, he talks about the analogies that come up when applying transactional script theory to dramatic scripts and plays.

To me, beyond the similarities between the scripts suggested and, consequently, the aspects that support analysis, the use for the Bernian theory is in a double strategy for game management. One must always polish and refine one’s own life script, just as it is with the life script of the role in the act of its composition.

In both cases, the goal is to create a realistic person.

The TA-based role analysis used in the individual work of the actor could be one of the possible background resources for creative work in the theatre. Obviously, applied as a method, it wouldn't seek to become exclusive. It would be one more possibility next to the ones already known.

Using it as a silent partner would be much more of a work hypothesis whose goal is to help understand how people function. Its notions can by no means be construed as absolute truths, especially if they run contrary to the director's vision. Next to its many-layered uses and beyond its particulars, it would help the actor, in a general way, to derive a model of the intricate and invisible correlations of interpersonal networks.

The ubiquitous goal is constant maintenance, e.g. the continuous aspiration to broaden the role's horizons.

2.5. Pedagogic applications for TA

The foundation of actor coaching is actually to constantly reinforce the awareness of the Bernian natural Child ego state and to set a goal to attain archeopsychic behavior. The unstable terrain of the teachability of creativity may thus solidify, since our hope is that the Child, forgotten or grown up too quickly and precociously, may be rekindled in everyone. The ascetic work ethos of the actor is a method especially suited to this process of rekindling.

I believe that in the first two years of actor coaching, there is a definite need for the joint work of a psychologist and an acting coach. Someone teaching acting and improvisation knows all too well that in many cases, they are forced into a sort of psychologist attitude. For several reasons:

- one cannot expel from actor coaching the fact that in the end, it all comes down to translating inner spiritual states
- the first point implies the logical assumption that the rookie translator must be taught to be able to show the vibrations of their own soul believably and in a natural way; so fundamentally, we begin from work that involves a sort of knowledge of oneself
- theatre work, as we know, is based on teamwork, so in the beginning, the acting coach must be concerned with team building; doubtless that

this also involves channeling the positive and negative outcomes of spiritual happenings (furthermore, this process never actually ends)

- there is no rehearsal process, be it in class or in theatre, where the team leader doesn't have to be concerned with providing some manner of resolution the psychodynamic issues of the relationship between the team and the individual

Summing up, we may say that I don't consider applying TA as a rigid blueprint to be followed. We could see that its operating principles exist regardless of whether we use them or not, whether we believe in them or not.

And just for this reason, it is left to the actor's latitude whether they use them or not; whether the actor applies them consciously for both their game skills or calls on their support only in their stage playing and stage games; and in which phase of their role composition they call upon the creative potential of the forces originating from them.

3. The notion of the ascetic work ethos of the actor

I believe that the identity of the actor is established and gains shape along the interaction that happens between roles and the individual subject. During the course of rehearsals, role formation and performances, the actor is in a permanent dialog between their interior authentic self and the exterior world of the role, and respectively the identity patterns offered by it.

As a result of this dialog, the personality of the actor is ingrained into the role, while the role becomes part of us during the performance. The I plays the s/he, the s/he plays the I. In short, this is nothing but a modified state of identity.

In this sense, the existence of the actor consists of the actor allowing various contradictory identities to enter them, repeatedly undertaking to meld into and temporarily identify with a shocking and ephemeral multitude of possible identities. This process is by no means simple; on the contrary, it is at once cumbersome, contradictory and uncertain. In the beginning, at least. Though the identity of the role is

imaginary, and the effect of its force may initially seem harmless, the path to its external, effective realization is nevertheless fraught with obstacles.

In his anthropological treatise entitled *Humanity and Resistance*, Gernot Böhme analyzes man as a being that is able to say no. He starts out from the fact that humans are able to practice a conscious self-limitation expressed in renouncement, resistance and insurrection. Böhme views this ability as synonymous with humanity. He states that we are in a historical, social and political situation where anthropologically negative forms of behavior have become decisive to the essence of humans.

Thus, if the bionegative factor is the essential trait of man's humanization, then we can say that in my conception of the actor's existence, the capacity for self-torment, so very important and indispensable, can become a unique and obligate attribute.

In the context of shaping a role, the actor's existence is a state perpetually saying no to oneself, one of renouncement and repression. It is by negation that man is able to know themselves. Sacrificing themselves, the actor is able to embody a role.

The conscious asceticism of the actor is a method for uprooting and liberating psychological energies. The actor, by repressing themselves, strives to be more – to be more people. They multiply by losing their own being, and paradoxically, they become ever closer to themselves.

For me, the playing-gaming actor is also a being modified, aflame in play, initiating, executing and at the same time subjected to asceticism, who by this aggression is embodied in the stage role. The playing-gaming actor state is one of creation; a blessed state.

It seems that the defining factors of the humanization of contemporary man do not happen along the linear dimensions of betterment, but exist under the pressures of those of necessity, tensions and dependencies. We can thus accept that the notion of asceticism today is no longer a pejorative and deviant act; it doesn't mean something alarming, but a necessary repetitive practice, an exercise, an often-repeated action.

If summoning a role has succeeded in a state of playing, then successive encounters and the construction of habit systems to be used each evening become a separate ritual. And the actor turning this way of life – in which they, as a matter of fact, will be in for their entire career – into their individual method shall become a separate ritual as well.

The initially frightening significance of self-torment sheds its skin in the ritual of the actor's asceticism to become a marvelous celebratory dance.

I will try to lift the notion of the ascetic work ethos, taken from Böhme, into the virtual repository of the eternal dictionary of theatre, and try to have it rehabilitated from its pejorative stigma of ideological performance-orientedness. According to the ascetic work ethos, all negative elements, strain, objections, the affirmation and rationally applied, conscious doses of limitations are able to be forged into a self-educating method in the life of the actor.

4. Aggression as an organic driving force dulled to a virtue

For me, the aggression useful from the viewpoints of actor coaching and the actor's existence is definitely a positive aggressive behavior, the force pertinent to the craft that is one of the internal driving forces of creative self-expression.

Playfully and as if in a game, I would call this an aggression dulled to a driving force.

In this sense, my reading suggests playing as a joyful activity where the vibrating enjoyment of spontaneous behaviors and feelings await us; where we set out to search for experiences with others in a highly structured and self-motivated ego state.

In order for the actor to find and create from themselves a new character, they must practice a highly structured motivational activity. The notion of the actor's playing builds on the most intricate of social skills by the fact that the playing individual strives to read the thoughts of an alien character, and then commits to performing this self-creature; and by the fact that they undertake to guess the intentions and strategies of the other characters surrounding them. Furthermore, they do this while trying to conform to the expectations of the director, the style and rhythm of the performance, the conditions imposed by the costumes and the theatrical space, the reception of the audience and their own predispositions on the given day.

Asceticism is no burden, but a light journey condensed into one experience, which, lifting us out of a state of protection and safety, creates from the initially frightening and uncontrollable chaos a new whole.

5. The soul cinema

The psychophysical self-reflection of the ascetic work ethos of the actor

Soul cinema begins when the actor realizes they are the recipient of a new role. In the beginning, the dim movie frames appear only as flashes, parts of photographs, just like the image being developed starts to appear on the print in the processing tray. These are accompanied by sensations, sounds, colors and melodies. And then, all of a sudden, on the silver screen invisible to others, these fragments grow into a feature film spanning full evening. The actor is their own inner projectionist. This is the soul cinema. Suddenly, the actor sees themselves on the screen; and yet, they seem to be only the audience of the film. Sitting alone in the dark, watching the scene unfold for the thousandth time, reliving it, directing it anew. From the outside and the inside, at once and at the same time. All the while hearing the director's instructions, feeling the eyes of the author watching them from someplace, and not knowing anymore whether they are projecting or being projected, when the stage manager says: "rehearsal is over, thank you all, we will continue from here at six in the evening. Enjoy your meal, everyone!"

This is the way I could describe the image that starts developing in me when first faced with the role. Yes, I'm at the *soul cinema* all the time.

Each role is a new film. I take it out, I watch it; if I don't like it, I film it again.

I have to change out of Tompa Klári. This means that I have to defeat my inner structures already in place, and then transform them; that I have to rein in the existing in order to allow myself the new. This is something like performing surgery on my own exterior and interior. Without anesthesia. This is done in a kind of way that first collapses the existing situation on a physical and spiritual level, and then builds the new from the foundations up with an immense regenerative capability. Tompa Klári meets

the possibilities inherent in her. This is a rite of destruction and rebirth, simultaneously. It begins – since transformations are not famous for being comfortable – with a state of a muscle tone filled with tension. This sensation is followed by the phase of despair, then the torment of finding one’s way. By this, consciousness expands, coming to a state of fertility and starting the soul cinema. Somehow, this is what makes the negative positive, and this is how destructive and constructive forces intertwine.

The soul cinema is therefore the internal process of the actor’s role composition. The actor accepts something in their soul, carries it around in themselves and then shapes it into a form that is visible in the outside world as well. If one would have to pick it apart, so to say, into phases, to structure it, then it would look like the following. Of course, in many cases the chronological order of the process is mere speculation, since it is known that such distribution and divvying up has almost nothing to do with what happens in real life. Concurrently with this statement, it is also true that the soul cinema, the actor’s process of trying on the role does have a logically successive, but converging structure that doesn’t rigorously observe borders.

5.1. The psychophysical dynamics of the playing-gaming actor

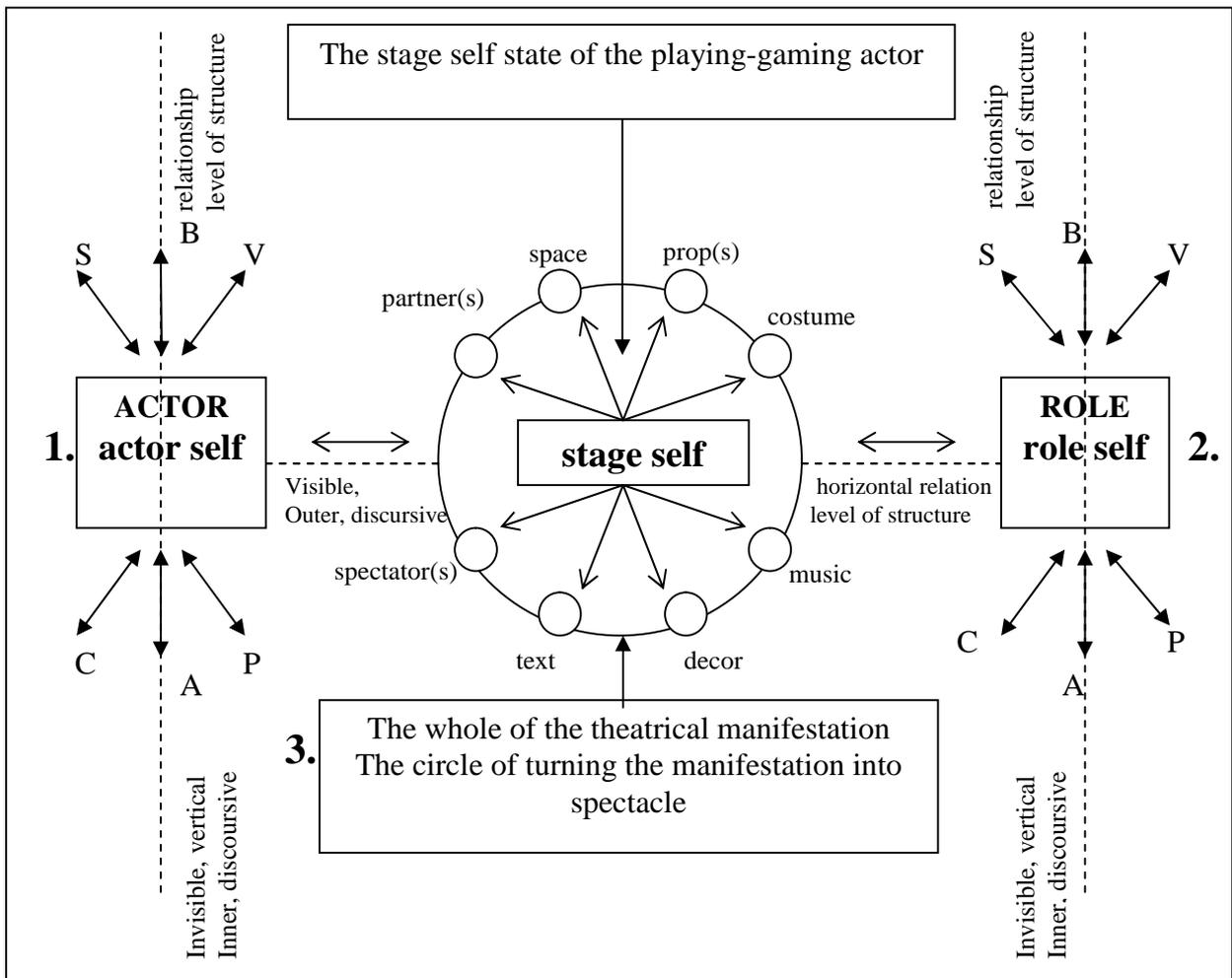


Fig. 4. a. The psychophysical dynamics of the playing-gaming actor

Legend:

- **C, A, P** = Child, Adult and Parent ego states in the Bernian sense
- **S, B, V** = the three unities of soul, body and voice
- **the circle of partner(s), space, prop(s), costume, music, decor, text and spectators** = the circle of turning the manifestation into spectacle, experienced as a whole by the actor self and actualized by stage direction
- **Invisible, vertical relationship, the level of the inner discursive structure** =
 1. The Child, Adult and Parent ego states of the ACTOR/actor self + the body, soul and voice of the ACTOR/actor self
 2. The Child, Adult and Parent ego states of the ROLE/role self + the body, soul and voice of the ACTOR/actor self
- **Visible horizontal relationship, the level of outer, discursive structure** = 1. + 2. + 3. (the whole of the theatrical manifestation, the circle of turning the manifestation into spectacle).
- **The whole of the theatrical manifestation, the circle of turning the manifestation into spectacle (3.)** = the circle of partner(s), space, prop(s), costume, music, decor, text and spectators around the actor self as an epicenter

5.1.1. The encounter between the Actor/actor self and the Role/role self

In the beginning, there is the capital ROLE and the capital ACTOR. The notions of capital ROLE and ACTOR are those that exist both before, after and independently from interpretation, and whom the lowercase playing-gaming actor who actually plays the role may break away from and be free of. Both are abstract notions, entities existing in a virtual state that is, in fact, our imagined perception of the role and the actor.

And then there are the lowercase notions of role and actor, which are actually visible (in the actor physically perceivable on stage); they possess a *self*. Thus we get to the notions of the actor self and the role self. Both are manifestations in a real and iconic state, e.g. an actual stage embodiment. The actor self as a notion and its embodiment needs no explanation. It is not so simple in the case of the role self, but we must accept such a distillation of the notions. This is the goal we set for our exploration.

If we can accept that the lowercase actor and the uppercase ACTOR both are structured according to soul, body and voice, then we may say that so are the lowercase role and the uppercase ROLE as well. Self-contained. And then the two, ROLE and ACTOR – both uppercase – meld together. Thus, at the meeting of the actor self and the role self, the notion of the stage self is born.

Obviously, we must make clear the notion of the role self. Here I think not of the playbook, not the role interpretations imagined in everybody's mind or those in scientific analyses – since that is the domain of the uppercase ROLE –, but that intangible Something that the actor rehearsing on stage indeed does have to deal with. At the same time, the role self is more than a map describing the structures of stage actions.

Without a doubt the uppercase ROLE is fused directly to the role self, so it is possible that the latter (the role self), besides its nature as an intangible phenomenon of energy, contains all the information about the role as a literary product and all its embodiments so far on stage, on film or in any other artistic medium ever visible and audible in the ubiquitous cognitive and physical world.

So in this way, that Something becomes a notion synthesizing the role self; it is none other than a “distilled”² energy and a projection of the uppercase, round whole

² This is a reference to the Nietzschean expression, *distilled comparative*, which also appears in the play entitled *Chickenhead* by Spiró György.

ROLE. One is to imagine it in the following way: the Something, carrying the information mentioned above, towers over the playing-gaming actor, and infuses it, just as it would a psychic, with the soul, voice and body of the uppercase ROLE, since by it – e.g. the actual flesh and blood actor – does it manifest, taking the shape of the stage self.

5.1.2. The soul, the body and the voice of the Actor/Role and the actor self/role self

The entity of the three unities – body, soul and voice – of the ROLE/role self is intangible in the beginning, it exists on the level of the interior narrative structure, which creates an invisible vertical relationship. Then it takes the tangible shape of the actor self, the stage self, and steps onto the level of the outer discursive structure, which creates a visible horizontal relationship. The relationships and the structures shift to their opposites. Vertical becomes horizontal.

It is obvious that the fragmentation into the three unities of the ROLE/role self merely serves the purpose of scientific investigation.

It is important to emphasize that, and not because of the repeated insistence on the immense difference between science and practice. In support of this, if we were to verify the segmentation presented here, we would be disappointed. Because if we were to ask the actor, while working, where the soul, voice or body of the role was, they would look at us like the donkey in Balaam's Biblical tale. The example wasn't presented for comic relief, but for the reason that it underlines the discrepancy of the theorem to be demonstrated with the most appropriate simile. The donkey, e.g. the actor is viscerally aware of the soul, body and voice of the ROLE/role self; to them, there is no question about whether they exist or not. Or maybe, more precisely, they hadn't really thought about it. They are not concerned with this like we are now. But they are not supposed to be. The unity of the soul-body-voice of the ROLE/role self is like the Angel of the Lord appearing in the Biblical tale mentioned.

Nevertheless, how could we discuss the soul, body and voice of the ROLE/ACTOR separately?

5.1.3. The soul of the Actor/Role and the actor self/role self

There is no question that the soul of the uppercase ROLE is merely fiction at the level of the physical world. It is no different from our own soul, since from a scientific standpoint, that is a fictional entity as well. However, whether we believe in it or not, we do have to deal with it, since acting is primarily about the soul, about emotions. In this sense, the soul of the ROLE/role self becomes directly connected to the soul of the ACTOR/actor self. The inner spiritual zone of each ROLE/role self sets itself up temporarily in the spiritual zone of the ACTOR/actor self. Right until it springs up in the next flesh and blood actor.

The soul of the ROLE/role self, similarly to the body of the ROLE/role self, has actions, inner monologues, rhythm and energy. The logical, causal relationships of “what?”, “how?”, “from where to where?” are expressed, through the manifestation of the stage self that feeds off the soul of the ROLE/role self and communicates in unison with the voice and the body of the ROLE/role self, in the stage act.

5.1.4. The body of the Actor/Role and the actor self/role self

The details pertaining to the body of the ROLE/role self are the same that apply to the soul of the ROLE/role self. Compared to the “matters of the soul”, we have the advantage of dealing with a tangible mediator – this being the personal body of the current flesh and blood actor; the abstract, almost fictional ROLE-body, fusing with the role self, steps forward into the body of the stage self of the ACTOR/actor self. On this level and in this relationship, it now has a visible and measurable physicality.

The rehearsal state of the ROLE/role self is dependent on the conditions that the body of the ACTOR/actor self is in. The body of the ACTOR/actor self is significantly different than the civilian body sense of the actor. The range of the stage self is known to be expandable; moreover, it is expandable in a different way than the development of the civilian body.

Composing the body music, the gesture repertoire of the ROLE/role self detaches itself outright from the everyday physicality of the ACTOR/actor self. The idiosyncratic tools of the language used by the body of the stage self bring the everyday body to discover new energy centers. Accepting and welcoming the new body in this manner is a process that carries aggressive and self-aggressive aspects. The healthy

tensions of cramps, dissolution and binding are natural companions to working with the body.

5.1.5. The voice of the Actor/Role and the actor self/role self

The details pertaining to the voice of the ROLE/role self – next to their specificity – are the same that apply to both the soul and the body of the ROLE/role self. In the case of the voice, and similarly to the soul of the ROLE/role self, we are faced with a special situation, since we are talking about an immortal, fictional voice.

The best example for proving the voice of the ROLE/role self is when we speak our lines falsely in rehearsal. If the believably spoken voice of the ROLE/role self is missing, then there the ROLE/role self must have a voice. The voice of the ROLE/role self that has been found, spoken believably with the voice of the ACTOR/actor self, is associated with the “aha!” experience.

The voice of the ROLE/role self is actually the aural calling card of the role. A silent role has one as well. The sound of shoes clacking, of wardrobe and costumes, the noises made with props, the silences, pauses, rhythm alternations, the musicality of their speech and the sounds of the written role agendas and journals actuated by the stage self of the ACTOR/actor self are all part of the aural calling card held by the voice of the ROLE/role self.

5.2. The phases of the psychophysical structure of the ascetic work ethos of the actor

The phases of the psychophysical structure of the ascetic work ethos of the actor are binary and antagonistic traits that, at the juncture of conflicting properties, transform the ACTOR/actor self in its meeting with the ROLE/role self into a playing-gaming actor who is embodied in the state of the stage self. In this sense, the elements of the binary and antagonistic phases cannot be separated, and furthermore, neither can they be interpreted outside the system made up of all the other phases, and respectively, lacking their own counterpart.

In practical work, this, of course, means process, transformation and an unready state.



Fig. 4. b. The psychophysical globe of the ascetic work ethos of the actor

5.2.1. Analysis – Self-analysis

The analysis–self-analysis phase is, in fact, the level of unique discourses between the actor and the role, which results in individual, mimetic discourses.

- **Analysis**

The analysis phase is actually the creation of a database. Encountering the text and all possible translations; encountering the author, the director, and the instructions and intentions of both; the reading associated with the play and the visual material of all possible versions of films and shows already directed; the age of the play and the show, and respectively, all cultural and social aspects that were somehow utilized with conscious implications in the original text, or are used in the new version being created; the story and its possible interpretations; the role, the character; the other roles and characters; the language of the play and the language of the translators; the language of the role; the scenic space; the props of the show; the costume; the music of the show. These are all information that can be collected during the reading and table rehearsal with the staff of the show; data gathering activities mostly involving intellectual work.

Parallel to these, the rationally unexplainable inner images start to appear as well. One must pay just as much attention to this irrational role data as to their rational counterparts. Therefore, we will need methods with which, on the one hand, we can ingrain the increasing amount of information, and on the other, ensure the constant flow of subsequent data gathering.

In the interest of ingraining, it's worth to write down any and all – initially, even seemingly stupid – ideas, intuitions, primary impressions, images that come to mind regarding the role. This kind of creative, fertile game – meaning that a 3D image appears in my head that I then put to paper using words – can accompany us throughout our work, from the first reading to the premiere and subsequent performances, to revivals after long breaks and new shows, as well as all shows we have ever taken part in.

It is important that we always write things – real or imagined information – down. Either insisting on them lengthily, or just in headlines. This depends on the personal inclinations of the one taking notes. Writing is obviously not there to eliminate forgetfulness – although it serves that purpose well, too. Rereading notes will recall details that are also very important. For instance, the feeling of how a kooky idea hit me, the way, the intensity, the body language with which the director delivered this or that instruction. It is not the information that matters – I already have that written down –, but *how* it was delivered, all minute details and vibrations. Often, these provide a more important crutch to start ambling along the path of developing a role than any other so-called intellectually graspable information.

There are several possible forms of writing:

- the rational and irrational notes taken during readings
- writing up a role notebook
- notes taken during and after actual rehearsals
- writing a journal

Writing up a role notebook consists of categorizing, on separate pages and according to specific aspects, the information about the character gleaned from the text alone. I'm thinking about something like these:

- on a separate page, putting down only personal details (name, date of birth, age, education, profession, family status etc., data that the author

makes known or alludes to only intertextually, or what the director's conception adds to these)

- on a separate page, mapping out what the relationship system with the other characters is (what are the visible and invisible relationships between them that can be construed from the text and the director's intentions? what are the relationships at the beginning of the story, and where do they develop – if they do at all – in the course of the play or the show? what are the motivations behind these relationships?)
- on a separate sheet, writing down the “what does the character say about themselves?” types of sentences, and also evaluating whether what they say is true or not
- recording on a separate sheet what the other characters say about my character and whether these things are true or not
- putting on a separate sheet all the idiosyncratic linguistic manifestations they have, etc.

The categories mentioned can be supplemented with further aspects, taking into account each person's own personal, creative points of view.

The notes taken during actual rehearsals as opposed to table rehearsals and readings contain the descriptions of the action map created in the first rehearsal, the director's notes related to these, the actor's notes – what the motivation, logic, rhythm, energy, quality, style etc. for each stage action is –, as well as the alterations to the new action map created in each rehearsal, their new nuances. Rereading these – besides making it easier for posterity to disentangle the stage work related to a show – is a direct stimulant of the final entirety of the role, as well as its map and physical, spiritual whole.

Specifically, this means that although for the audience, the action permanently visible – for instance, during the delivery of a monologue – is sitting in a chair, several versions had been tried out previous to it, involving other actions, then the actor unwillingly carries within themselves the experience impressed by all possible solutions. In light of these, the final solution is much more intricate. If we had tried this topography from the beginning, and immediately decided to go with it, it would have been less than the above, permanent action of sitting in a chair, since it wouldn't have contained the proceeds from the memory of the other versions tried. The fact that the

steps of this path are recorded in writing offer the possibility to viscerally remind us of the details we had found in different phases. This is how writing as the direct stimulant of the role is to be understood.

The three types of note-taking contain a rational database as well as ideas, images, small soul cinema fragments that go into the category of first impressions and intuitions. These show us yet another facet of the globe-like structure of the role. Their origins are in the realm of the indefinable. They are instinctive ideas, solutions, concrete actions associated with the “aha” experience. This is when we get the feeling that we’ve found the one good solution, and we don’t have to search further. The remainder of the work is refining and developing nuances. We can thus see that the actor’s role construction work is an amalgamation of rational and irrational elements, and follows the line of their alternations. This is a series of processes that cannot even be really discussed. One must perform this; in writing it down, something essential gets lost...

To ensure the subsequent flow of data, we can resort to various playful solutions. There is no single sure-fire recipe to what playing method works for whom, there are scores of these, and fortunately, their repository keeps being renewed. We ourselves can make up new ones, or combine those already in existence.

Playing “what if this role were, for instance, a flower? a food? a color? etc.” can shed light on very useful and exciting things. It becomes completely different if we play it right on the day of the first reading, or on the morning of the premiere as a relaxation exercise. Would the answers be the same as those on the first day? The actor may play it alone, but it is good to know the answers of the other actors, and vice-versa; and, of course, those of the director as well. It is good fun, and provides essential information about the character.

Compared to the note-taking in the role notebook, the act of writing a journal is a second level of indexing. This phase requires independent note-taking of a personal character as well, but paired with a different sort of engrossment, that of a diary; a soul cinema where I no longer watch the film from the outside, but write in the first person singular in the “parlance of the role”.

Of course, this is not a text with literary aspirations; nor does it wish to be. It is writing woven to be partly an extension of the phrases written by the author, and builds on all the information acquired so far, yet at the same time is a creative game of how the

actor – in the first person singular – writes as if they were already the character. The other extension thus comes from the actor. To this we usually say – with due respect, humility and love, of course, and not with a fear of plagiarism – that we learned how to write Molnár Ferenc, or Chekhov. Maybe this form is the first real step toward the role; except, of course, stage rehearsals.

The different and, respectively, collective types of note-taking actually induce a sort of Pavlov's reflex in the actor. Each time I read it, I evoke the creative, fertile moment when the note was born and I have a recollection of what made it spring to mind in the first place. And if I remembered that much, it's only a short hop until I'm at the cinema again. In this way, reading notes becomes a ritualistic method.

Writing a journal is the last in line among the accessories of analysis. Not by chance, since as it was mentioned, the borders of the different phases meld together. Writing a journal is already halfway into the category of self-analysis, since it is an imprint of the personal inner monologues of the actor.

- **Self-analysis**

The phase of self-analysis is much more of a personal and intimate zone as compared to the phase of analysis. It is, in fact, the question that always crops up: “why me, in this role?”, and the answer given to it, as well as the group of other questions and answers along these lines that revolve around the personal self of the actor. The actor, after all, does like to consider themselves more than a replaceable executor or a numbered prop of the creative work performed on stage. That they have significance, they are not colorless and odorless. Unique and unrepeatable. They will be able play the role – it doesn't even matter if they do so well or poorly – like no one else could.

Personally, I believe that it is not happenstance when and what acting task I encounter. I believe that directors, too, consider – for a role – one actor or the other mostly with good reason. And since I perceive both statements as true in the absolute, I ask myself and the director as well: why me, of all people, and why now? And whatever answer I get, it is the one I need to – and the one worth to – begin with. It is the one that must be amplified. What is the similarity between the character and me, what could be the common set? What is the difference? I find this question important also because in a way, it reflects something that I possibly didn't even know about until then.

The actor's personal answer to the "why now?" question is probably the most intimately linked key in the mystical marriage of role and actor. Those who know what this is about understand, and those who do not are asked to be considerate and not pry for further details. This is similar to when one realizes why they had to meet this or that lover in their lives. So, if this correlation is also puzzled out, then the actor can imbue their stage self with an invisible, inner boon.

In fact, the entire phase of self-analysis happens under the aegis of becoming acquainted with the role. The actual stage rehearsals begin after table rehearsals. The actor tries to attune themselves to the story, the partners, the director. They are in constant vigilance over themselves, observing what feelings, thoughts and ideas tinkering with all these produces in them. And slowly, something happens; we start to shift in a direction that, in the beginning, is uncomfortable and weird. We transform for instants. Then we try to increase the duration. Sometimes it works; sometimes we don't find it at all. At these times, we have to go back to the hearth. But we realize that the hearth, too, is gone. We despair. All this, of course, is likely to go unnoticed by colleagues and the director. Or it may even be possible that they think everything is on the right track. So the search – based on real and imagined information – continues. More note-taking, and rereading those already in place. In the meantime, evaluating what the actor personally would do in the respective situation, how they would react, how they would think, etc. This is always assessed by the director and the partners. There are endless conciliations with ourselves and the others. A straitjacket situation. It is like the grammar making up these statements: sometimes in the royal we, sometimes the lonely I.

5.2.2. Aggression – Self-aggression

- **Aggression**

By now we have been thrust out of the familiar, customary, well-oiled, so-called civilian groove. There are more and more unfamiliar, new things that we have to get used to. And it is then that everything starts to bother us. We hardly know our lines; the choreography is still in its infancy; the director doesn't lead, doesn't say anything; or asks things of us that we don't agree with; and we can't even say this, or if we do, then we have to tone it down; the partner bothers us; each instance of indiscipline, falseness, unprofessional behavior; we think that the rehearsal time left is insufficient; we get

feelings of “I can’t do this role”, “I’m repeating myself”, and the fear of “I can’t come up with anything new”, etc. There is a revolt going on inside of us, a resistance. The big question is what can be done with this torrent of feelings? Or respectively, should they be voiced, or not? And if so, how? To whom? We must tame the resistance within us. If we are at odds with the role, we must find the human motivations: why would he or she be forced to do this or that mischief, and respectively, we must find in it that which we can love; we must allow ourselves to relax, or more precisely, allow ourselves the bad, the ugly, the negative, the aggression. To do this, we must come up with strategies so that we can get through this fragile phase of giving birth to the role seamlessly.

- **Self-aggression**

The phase of self-aggression contains all that we have already described in the phase of aggression – we have only set them apart for the reasons of investigation. Based on those mentioned earlier, we can see that it is about the defeat of the self both from a civilian and an actor’s standpoint. Defeating oneself is primarily necessary so that I can shape the new role. The other kind of self-defeating comes from conquering the torrent of resistance from within me so that, despite aggressive effects, conflict-free, civilized creation becomes possible. At the same time, we can also say that on one side, we have self-defeat, on the other, we have the exact opposite. These negative, uncomfortable contingents are very necessary towards rousing us from the so-called grayness, the tepidity of everyday normality. This is something like the relationship between the circus lion called into the ring and its handler and trainer, taken as a whole. There is no show when the lion just sits on its haunches like a china kitty-cat with a toothless yawn, as do most of its relatives made of stone. But it equally doesn’t constitute a show if, because of the unfit trainer’s shortcomings, the overpopulation of our planet gets one step closer to being solved each evening. So the actor is at times lion, at times lion tamer. No mean feat.

The actor must learn the tightrope dance of dissolving and binding cramps and doubts occurring naturally. At the same time, they must accept their occurrence as a normal reaction, since these are the very things keeping them fresh, free, and at the same time, bound and gagged.

The aspect of self-aggression can also be surprised if we invoke the states we exist in during vacation and work, and respectively, the difference between these states. I’m talking about the difference between the sensation of “finally, I don’t have to keep

reacting anymore” experienced by the actor on vacation and the sensation of feverish, tense rehearsals, when the actor can be observed in full “transformation mode”. Not the usual. “Are they more beautiful?”, or “god, how ugly they are!”; regardless, one is certain: they are Different to the extent that they are unrecognizable.

Even preparing for rehearsals – be it the repeated reading of notes; mumbling lines in our sleep at night, sitting on the toilet, walking on the street, or making someone give us our cues; technical, e.g. body and voice warm-up; continuous brainstorming and soul cinema – in this sense, it does become a self-aggressive act. This is a training process that treads the new path for the new role in the actor.

5.2.3. Reason – Instincts

- **Reason**

The phase of reason contains all the rational data banks listed so far, logic, and the inevitable consistency of the realistic dealing with situations.

Instincts

In this interpretation, instincts are the visceral and rationally unexplainable, practical levels of ideas, solutions, interpretations and reactions that can be observed in a theatrical performance.

Obviously, there is no question that the ideal situation would be that the tension from the increments of reason and instincts work harmonically and unbiased towards either side.

5.2.4. Criticism – Self-criticism

- **Criticism**

This phase is about accepting, digesting and creatively using actual critiques we may receive from the director, the partners, the critic and the audience. Without a doubt, each actor remembers the experience of the first positive or negative critique. We would be lying if we said that this first impression doesn’t leave a defining mark on the continued development of our creative careers. Then come the others. Or they don’t. And this is not pleasant. Maybe there should be a separate chapter dedicated to the constructive or destructive effects of criticism. Who can say what that inner compass is

by which we could navigate that oh-so-very subjective jungle of the actor's trade? Clichéd questions, true; but ones that require self-treatment.

- **Self-criticism**

One may sense that the phase of criticism, as understood in the interpretation of the ascetic work ethos of the actor, implies the phase of self-criticism. I believe that self-criticism is the fundamental phase of self-provision in the context of professionalism. Consciously saying no to commonness, self-repetition and histrionics belongs here. It is something of an inner uplifting force, pushing the artist towards new creative possibilities. All that is hard to bear in the phase of criticism can be reconciled with a healthy attitude of self-criticism. There is indeed a need to practice constant and conscious self-criticism. The task of the acting coach is reminding the student of this to a magnified extent.

5.2.5. Routine – Transgression

- **Routine**

Routineness as a collective notion contains, under the disappearance of freshness, the rehearsal routine, the performance routine, the routine of role composition; e.g. the positive and negative aspects of the actor's routine in a general sense.

- **Transgression**

In my interpretation, transgression is the paradox of the controlled loss of consciousness, as well as the Muse's kiss of the instruction "forget everything I said so far". It is a free and conscious outflow of the creative state of fertility that can be learned and "summoned" again and again in the process of creative activity.

5.2.6. I beget a role – I beget myself

- **I beget a role**

At a certain point in the rehearsal process, the actor finds that they are experiencing the state of "the role has reared its head". Eureka! This is followed by the "it's gone, I can't find it" syndrome. The alternation of these fickle states entails the "throes of summoning again". The struggle with these can be surprised in the phases of

both rehearsals and performances. The role summoning rites and rituals mentioned before serve to soothe the period of “I beget a role”, and they help us in experiencing the capacity for the phenomenon of “It doesn’t work today, but I can get to that certain point”.

- **I beget myself**

In light of the above, it becomes clear that we are talking about an act of self-begetting.

5.2.7. Identification – Self-identification

- **Identification**

The identification phase of actor and role is, in fact, the moment of catharsis.

- **Self-identification**

The moment and state of self-identification carries within itself the knowledge that I “meet myself” in light of the new possibility.

5.3. Self-provision

In order to protect from the aggregation of strain inherent in the actor’s trade, the framework of the work ethos is always – at the beginning and at the end of the stage work – self-provision.



Fig. 4. c. The psychophysical structure of the ascetic work ethos of the actor

I will not define the conditions and accessories of the work ethos separately. Presenting them this way would be dry and tedious. Wedged into and spread throughout the text, they spice up the oeuvre of self-torment all the more. The following checklist serves only to provide more transparency:

- sacrifice
- humility
- discipline
- attention
- spontaneity
- creativity
- ability to improvise
- sense of rhythm
- musicality
- physical fitness
- capacity for observation
- memory
- sensitivity
- empathy
- presence
- consciousness
- self-control
- temperance
- openness
- “play-being” (Măniuțiu)
- curiosity
- desire to experiment
- joyfulness
- relaxation
- freedom
- the power of “non-action” (Mnouchkine)
- silence
- capacity for emptiness

- naturalness
- authenticity
- expressivity
- exhibitionism
- consistency
- tenacity
- persistence
- fanaticism
- energy
- humor
- eroticism
- healthy perversion
- courage
- impudence
- capacity to lose consciousness
- capacity to become more beautiful or uglier
- modesty
- stamina
- thoroughness
- doubt
- knowing to ask questions
- sense of style
- taste
- safety
- speech technique
- etc.

The last accessory in line for the *soul cinema* signals that the list above cannot claim to be exhaustive. This is because the application of the ascetic work ethos of the actor offers the possibility for its playing-gaming, individual perception.

I, Tompa Klára, renounce self-torment.

I long for the happiness of flying

.....

.....

....., but the popular adage from Terence's *Heautontimorumenos* springs to mind:

"I am a man, and nothing that concerns a man do I deem a matter of indifference to me³".

³ Op. cit. 1, act 1, scene 1, pp. 223.

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