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**Doctoral Thesis in the field of Theatre and Performing Arts**

**SUMMARY**

**EMOTION IN THE WORLD OF PERFORMING ARTS**

Thesis Coordinator:  
Prof. Univ. Dr. Habil. Daniela LEMNARU

Doctoral Candidate:  
Adriana - Ioana ISPAS

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## Argument

As object of the doctoral research, we justify and argue the subject of this thesis, by studying what a human being is as an artist in his/her intellectual-emotional complexity. Although the scientific advances of the century in which we live are succeeding in making more and more connections between humans and artificial intelligence, we can nevertheless affirm that human being still remains a being radically different from these associations and concepts. The structure of a human being and that which transcends the body, including what is called soul, spirit or ineffable soul, intellect or feelings, has a complex composition that allows us, from a scientific point of view, a two-way approach, both from the inside out and vice versa: "The *ex nihilo* creation (out of nothing) is the limiting concept of cosmology. [...] Man is a microcosm - the summary and summit of the sensible world."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the world of performance, to which we relate the work, is a representation of the sensitivity, and the emotion of the actor assimilates the whole sensible "world". The *nothingness* in the religious sense or the *nothingness* of a scientific order, out of which the human being becomes (in the sense of formation) aims to become a sensible and emotional reality. This makes us extremely different and extremely complex in relation to everything that exists.

"The Lord made man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."<sup>2</sup> This biblical notation shows the manner of our existence in the two primary components in which we exist: physical and spiritual. We can say that the sensible world and this breath of life is the cradle of emotion.

At the same time, in this paper we want to explore the immense and complex potential of what stage emotion is and how the performer understands, realizes and manages this emotion. We set out to dissect this aspect of emotion in the world of performance, taking into account the fact that art is a form of knowledge and "seeing" of the soul. Access to this newly created reality is given to us by the actor in each role he takes on. This program of "penetration into the depths of the kingdom of interiority", identified by Hegel with the process of the constitution of the classical form of art, cannot be understood if we overlook the fact that for the man of the past, *to know* was *to see*. "The soul does not produce essences, but sees them"<sup>3</sup>. It is a phenomenology of being that we identify with emotional manifestation, with emotion.

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<sup>1</sup>Vasile Răducă, *Antropologia Sfântului Grigore de Nyssa*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București 1996 pp. 81-84

<sup>2</sup>*Biblia*, Cartea Genezei, cap. 2,7

<sup>3</sup>Constantin Alsam, *Curs de Estetică-Paradigme ale artei frumosului*, București, 2006, pp32-27

By analyzing some Greek terms, Professor Constantin Alsam makes some analogies that force us to deeply research the issue of emotion. He states that in the Greek culture "sight" has a privileged status; sight is so important that it occupies a special position in the economy of human capacities. In a certain sense, by his very nature, man is *sight*. To see and to know can be counted synonymous: "idein (ιδεῖν to see) and eidenai (εἶδεναι to know) are two forms of the same verb - eido (εἶδω). So eidos (εἶδος - appearance), the visible aspect, what we see, can also mean specific character, understanding, intelligible form, knowledge. In this case, knowledge is explained and interpreted by/through seeing. Seeing and understanding can be a synergy of assimilative capacity, an emotion through which we appropriate different realities or experience and express them. Because when we see we have an extra comprehension, and implicitly an extra experience. We live and experience within ourselves, emotionally, a reality that is superior to physical perception, and we offer this experience further.

In this paper we will consider the complexity of stage performing art and the importance of emotion within it. It is about the complex movement of artistic realities but also about the creators of these realities towards the ultimate act: the performance.

The theme of the work has also been chosen from a direct, professional and pedagogical perspective, taking into account the environment in which I work, in which the contact with emotion, the stage and human universe is permanent and in a constant dynamic and transformation. In order to unravel the meanings of emotion in the world of stage performing and to be able to explain them, to pass them on to my students, I first had to go through a process of identifying emotions, of understanding and penetrating their most intimate and subtle layers.

"Art does not begin until there is something else"<sup>4</sup>, emotion being an essential component in its sphere, especially in the performing arts. "All three forms of knowledge - theoretical, practical and productive - are forms of wisdom, for the term wisdom (sofia), signifies excellence in an art, art thus being a means of attaining and accomplishing individual and community well being. It is a means to awaken the humanity within us, to awaken the hidden mystery of the Self"<sup>5</sup>. Art combines the emotional with the rational, the truth with the virtual, in the sense of potentiality, suggestion and symbol, the telluric and the celestial.

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<sup>4</sup>Crișan Sorin, *Teatru și comunicare*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, 12-15

<sup>5</sup>Constantin Alsam, *op.cit.*, p. 50

Performing art must be seen as that art that has human being at its center; human as a being, human being as a reality made up of: body - psychic - spirit. It must be seen and understood as a reality that is based on the affective and psychological structures of the human being, using artistic instruments that make up the performance and after the falling of the curtain, through emotional memory, it (performing art, theater) acquires eternity.

In conclusion, the arguments underlying the choice of the research topic are multiple and relate to the complexity of this notion of emotion, present in the human being and transferred to the artist's being, to be later found in various and surprising hypostases in the creative process and finally in the work of art. Emotion in the world of the stage is concrete but also hard to define, it is visible or totally hidden, it is present in many unsuspected dimensions of creation: beyond the emotion of the performer, in all his range of expression, we can talk about the emotion of the dramatic text, the music, the image, the gesture, etc.

Talking about emotion has therefore proved to be a difficult path, sometimes clear, sometimes very tangled, sometimes easy to explain, often hidden and difficult to capture in words.

**Abstract:**

This thesis, EMOTION IN THE WORLD OF PERFORMING ARTS, is the subject of a complementary research to the classical approach<sup>6</sup>, suggesting and arguing, at the same time, the importance of *emotion* in the arts and its importance as a scientific research. It is the very emotion within ourselves as researchers, as well as capturing the emotion of the actor and the audience, that makes this type of study different. Theories of emotion and their evaluation are both the method and the source of this type of study.

Starting from *emotion in the artistic performance to emotion - a vital element in the world of performing arts*, in the present research we will try to emphasize the synergy of the elements that make up the role and its complexity. The playwright cannot exist without the created character, the role does not exist without the actor, the actor does not exist without emotion, emotion does not exist without the being and the stage, the stage does not exist without the audience and all of this does not exist without the emotion of imagination and artistic desire.

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<sup>6</sup> Different from the classical approach, where the focus is mainly on how the actor correctly interprets a role, in this work we try to emphasize the inner and subjective side necessary for the actor on stage.

Emotion as a vital element in the world of theatre can be and has been, in fact, the subject of contradictions or, why not, of different perspectives on how to appropriate a role, how we identify with it and how emotion should be accepted or not in the creation of the role.

Because of this, we will have a chapter in which we will deal with some *contradictory notes* on this subject, in which we will also question this problematic, this different way of seeing and approaching emotion.

The value of this type of study will be proven by the methodology adopted, the approach and the complexity of the argument. Finally, with this thesis we want to bring a complex approach on emotion to the world of theater, from an angle that we feel necessary, or at least still a relevant research in this field.

**Key words:** emotion, emotionality, emotional identity, soul, affect, emotional intelligence, emotional dissimulation, art, artist, performance, stage, spectacular empathy, spectacular emotion.



## **Structure and Methodology:**

The thesis is structured in four sections that summarize an argument, four chapters, conclusions and the bibliography. With a proper and unitary approach, we will pursue the concept of emotion in the stage, theater and, in general, in the artistic manifestation. The approach will be of such a nature that we will also reach the problematics of the origins of human being and the origin of humans as beings.

Beginning with the experience in the field so far, we will draw on an interdisciplinary bibliography in order to have a balanced and holistic approach to art from an emotional perspective: the psychological perspective on emotion, the philosophical perspective on emotion, the spiritual-religious perspective and some references to the neurological perspective.

*First chapter:* The first chapter, **Emotion in the artistic performance**, starts from definitions regarding the concept of emotion and we propose a brief analysis from psychological, philosophical and artistic perspectives.

Defining emotion from a linguistic, artistic, symbolic, etc. point of view with which both art and psychology operate, it will be considered as a method of communication that is born in the interiority of the human being and is exposed to the exterior. The human psychic, which is always in search of meaning, cannot be restricted or limited, but becomes a factor of evolution in art, from the artistic inner self to the artistic outer manifestation.

We will try to show that the actor cannot perform inexpressively, rigidly and alone, because all human actions are based on relationships. Even a monologic performance is based on the actor's relationship with himself and with the universe projected in his artistic manifestation. The value is given by the artistic act presented to the spectator (the receiver), based on the emotion conveyed.

According to many authors, the seven sins of modern psychological research include ignoring the close relationship between emotion and cognition. In this context, Darwin's studies show us the ways of expressing emotions that come as lessons in the artistic sphere. Traveling in the universe of emotion, we will ask ourselves questions on which, through this work, we can discover the concrete but also the ineffable of the actor's emotion.

*The second chapter:* **Emotion - a vital element in the world of theatre**, is a research in which we will be predominantly concerned with the attitudes, regarding art and creativity, emotion, of some personalities in this interdisciplinary artistic field, such as: Aristotle, K. S. Stanislavski, A. Artaud, G. Graig, B. Brecht, P. Brook. Here we will develop research on emotion from the perspective of the actor and the creative process. We will also be interested in emotion in

relation to the inner and outer state of the actor in the scenic process and its manifestation in the role. We will try to follow this artistic phenomenon in the following progression: the formation and interpretation of the role, the artistic expression of the role and the spectator's perception on what is happening on stage.

From Robert Plutchik's "circle of emotions" or "wheel of emotions" - one of the most important experiences in emotional intelligence, we can visualize the instrument the actor works with. In order to develop the subject as balanced and complex as possible, we will deal with the interpretation of emotion, the psychology of emotion, the disguised emotion, the relationship between this and stage fright and, finally, the tension between transfiguration and control in the moment of emotion.

If emotion will turn out to be a choice of the role creator, then the answer can be found in this chapter by seeing how the performance hall, the spectator's space becomes the mirror of the stage.

When we talk about emotion in a stage performance context, we mean the emotion of the text, the emotion of the spoken word, the emotion of movement, the emotion of space, the emotion of the audience, the emotion of music, the emotion of the everyday, etc. and all these lead to one identity - the creator, the artist. So we see it as a vital element in the theatrical space and as a reality that creates the universalized stage.

*In the third chapter, "**Dance/Ballet as a generator of emotion in the art of performance**", we aim to focus our attention in particular on what choreography entails from the perspective of the emotional dimension. In this chapter the focus is on how movement, choreographic parable and bodily expressivity express artistic and emotional beauty.*

Consisting of three sub-chapters, in this part of the thesis, we begin with a general analysis of art from the perspective of artistic beauty and emotion. In other words, art itself is the sum of every aesthetic and emotional dimension. Next, in sub-chapters two and three we aim to study how dance/ballet is an aesthetic emotion and spectacular empathy. Choreography cannot only be seen as an achievement of physical performance, but going beyond the idea of sport, it will always contain and generate aesthetic emotion and empathy on a spectacular level.

*The fourth chapter, "**Contradictory Notes**", aims to trace a dialectic, an antagonism or a complementarity born from different ways of approaching the role of the stage artist or different questions that arise about emotion or pseudo-emotion. Is the annulment of emotion natural or not? Is the virtual stage a sphere for false emotions or not? Can there be genuine emotions in the performance produced in virtual space? Can a reflection on the consequences of devaluing emotion in favor of displaying a body wrapped in an aesthetic package, but which blocks the*

admirer towards an artistic act and lures him towards superficiality and pseudo arousal, be art or not? Can the robotic execution that seems imposed in everyday life without the idea of life and emotion in the role still be considered an artistic act? If so, does the future of the performing arts and beyond, consist in the annulment of emotion?

These and other questions will determine the methodology and discourse of our research in the fourth chapter. The answers given or proposed answers will be a mode of research towards the scientific development of the concept of emotion and emotivity.

**The research methodology** in this thesis includes documentation, data collection, data processing, data interpretation and exploitation. To all these, the experience from the practical field of our work is added, as well as the added knowledge assimilated in the course of intellectual development and scientific maturity. As a practical part of the present thesis, at the end of the last chapter we will have a questionnaire with questions and answers related to emotion, obtained from different categories of professionals. The completed questionnaires are not intended to be a statistic, but to open a dialog in order to note some conclusions through the perspective of understanding of students in training or professionals in this interdisciplinary field.

The methodology of our research is interdisciplinary, covering theater history, aesthetics, psychology, methods of validating emotional intelligence, etc.

The thesis is a scientifically documented analysis, in which the light is directed towards the emotional artistic manifestation, its importance, the importance of preserving the emotional being at the expense of the robotic being and the way in which by these we do not block the modernization of the artistic act but we offer a justification. We assume that the plea for the emotional and affective dimension of an artistic act is not part of a robotic conservatism but, on the contrary, it offers freedom towards modernity by taking up and valorizing the beauty of the authentic and quality classicism necessary for the development of art.

## **Conclusions:**

While making this research we became aware that the initial paradigm of this work found its meaning and flow not through the initial decision and conception, but through the research that gave rise to other research and the understandings that generated other understandings. Concerned with the problematic of the emotional state, we started from the paradigm that every artistic performance also has an emotional dimension, an artistic subjectivism that derives from the spontaneous or desired emotions of each actor. Chapter One, *Emotion in the Artistic Performance*, provides us with definitions of emotion, meanings of emotion, and the relationship of emotion to other determinants of a performance. In the end, we conclude that the dilemmas that emotion combines within mystery and scientific research add value to theatrical manifestation.

Our research in Chapter One did not rigidly pointed out final theses and definitions. We would like to think that in addition to the scientific contribution that we hope having made, we have brought an added curiosity to these subjects, a curiosity that leaves the way open for those who wish to continue this study on the fascination of emotion and the fascinating emotions that only stage performance can offer. Acting can easily be in itself an emotion, a problematic passion. The art of acting involves a variety and conglomerate of emotional states; summarized, we can speak of the emotion that demands attachment and the emotion that demands work. Emotion is therefore the encounter between an inner feeling and its comprehension in stage behavior. The inner state of the human being is conjugated as feeling, sensation and overwhelm. The moment we place it in the zone of comprehension, in the zone of conscious awareness, we rationally identify it as the emotional reality that belongs to us natively. With this awareness, the actor's stage life transcends the play and becomes the character in the role. This reality adds value and artistry to each actor.

If, from the point of view of discourse, emotion can be of many kinds, in terms of living, every emotion has the same background: the inner metaphysical, the subjective and bodily twin reality. In our research we have brought out what we call aesthetics, the ineffable and the rationality of emotion (or rational emotion), but we have not gone beyond through discourse what we cannot understand through intelligence and feeling. In the act of artistic creation there is always a composition made up of lucidity and emotion, a kind of undefined existence in which we see the clear and full being of the actor, and which within this composition, this unity, is transfigured into the identity that belongs to him through role, cast and acting. In the same way, acting charisma has proved to be dependent on emotion. Acting charisma remains situated between mystery and argument, behavior and stage success being thus a reality that is

born of both mystery and reason, successful artistic production being thus the effect of learning but also of the incomprehensibility that characterizes the ineffable in the actor's art.

We concluded the first chapter by emphasizing the fact that each actor's stage play is not a mechanical thing, but it contains the emotional dimension which helps the actor bring the role to perfection and, at the same time, captures the attention and interest of the spectator.

Our research continued with the questioning of emotion as an indispensable element in the theatrical performance. A play without emotion and a troupe of actors without emotion produce a "clockwork mechanism" but will never produce a performance. The performance is sublimated emotion.

The second chapter entitled *Emotion - a vital element in the world of theatre*, begins with general principles about performance. The performance has a culture of its own that is not borrowed, which revolves around the elements that compose it, and the core is defined by the emotional factors that are identified in the actors, in the content of the play's acts and in the audience's assimilation of the play. There is a culture of performance in general and one of each performance in particular. The culture of each performance will always be tributary to the specific emotional factor and the way in which the participants in the performance are charged with emotion. The culture of performance in general is bound up with the history of theater, the history of playwrights, and is emphasized by the impact over time of great theater actors. The unity of each performance derives from the culture of the performance. More precisely formulated, from the culture of the performance defined in emotion comes its emotional unity. Each theatrical performance, each theater play is unitary both in the flow of the theatrical message and in the emotion it conveys and imposes. The emotional unity of a performance is a matter of feeling, not of information or reason. Actors and spectators feel the same and then understand the same. Emotion sets the tone for the unity of a performance, and casting and dramatization respond intellectually and emotionally to the unity of the performance.

Each performance must be seen from both a group and an individual perspective. Artistic collectivity and artistic individuality are complementary and antithetical, but always unitary. The emotion of the artistic collectivity is one of homogenization and success of a play, while the emotion of the individual is an emotion of underlining, of nuancing the artistic performance and of explicitly proclaiming artistic success. In this way every play will have its moments of substance and its moments of aesthetic *violence*. The moments of substance revolve around the collective emotional and the moments of aesthetic *violence* will be marked by the emotion of

some actors and never by the individual emotion of all the actors participating in the performance.

We have developed the substantial part of the second chapter through the perspective of most of the elements through which the actor becomes a professional, is defined as an actor and lives on stage as an actor. In the present research we placed the emotional element within the relationship between actors and their art and within the relationship between the actor and the stage context. Thus, we followed the actor who (identifies) himself (in) the emotion of the text, the emotion of the spoken word, the emotion of the performer, the emotion of contemplation, the emotion of movement and last but not least in the emotion of the gesture in the silent movie. The actor performs his role from an intelligible point of view in these realities that are born of emotion, are produced in emotion and produce emotion. The actor and the stage setting (or settings) are not distanced as a unity from the *actor and his art*. Clothing, role, acting behavior, and the time evoked in the play will always impose an aesthetic and emotional unity. Because of this, we have talked in our research about the emotion of the space, the emotion of the audience, the emotion of the music, the emotion of the color, etc. These realities that create and provide the space for the unfolding of a play are emotionally charged and emotionally determining realities. In this way we emphasize how important it is that *the actor and his or her art* are combined with *the actor and the space* against a background of emotional dimensions. The success of the performance lies in the success of this combination, bearing in mind that it is an accumulation of emotions.

In the **third chapter** we bring into discussion, from an emotional-affective perspective, the practical side of ballet and choreographic art. We brought to the attention of the research idea the physical and choreographic movement passed through the concept of emotional beauty and emotional empathy.

The metaphor of choreographic movement, without verbal dialog, should be considered sometimes superior in emotion and emotionality to a theatrical performance. The elegance of movement, in which the gesture in combination with the beauty of the body imposes the translation of a text and calls for a silent dialog, must be counted as a great emotional and dialogic expression. Choreography is not reduced to what we might call a gymnastic exercise: choreography is a danced metaphor, in which almost all the figures of poetic art are expressed. This becomes evident when we examine the universal dramas in a synoptic way (theater, ballet and film). The theater, ballet and film - "Romeo and Juliet" - have been subjected to our observation precisely in order to observe how in the ballet performance, which consists only

of dance, grace, choreographic expressions and nuances of bodily aesthetics, we can emotionally and rationally perceive the message of the play or film of the same name.

The exploitation of the figures of style within the choreographic movements in complementarity with the music that synergistically embellishes the ballet leads us to the conclusion that at this level the emotional and empathic offer other dimensions of the spectacular reality and have another type of impact on the spectators' affections and, why not, on the ineffable of the dancers.

Our research concludes with the fourth chapter, a complementary chapter, in which we bring into our study the problematic of contradictions with regard to some essential themes and questions: what is performance, the actor, emotion and other realities pertaining to the theatre space.

With the title "*Contradictory Notes*", in the fourth chapter we have put up for discussion and research the contradictions regarding talent, the presence and necessity of emotion, the contradictions and controversies regarding emotion in the virtual environment and the dilemma of the resistance/continuity or not of theater in postmodern society.

The relationship between talent and work is also a point of interest for us: although in any field of art, work can play a decisive role, the necessity and obviousness of talent in theater art cannot be replaced. Vocation to the art always brings an added plus whereby the actor can behave on stage naturally, free from a mechanized or sandblasting manner. This reality is always surprised and appreciated by the audience. Every actor is also talented, and his inclination towards this art cannot be a consequence of desire alone, but must also be a consequence of vocation, of the fact that in some way he was born with the blood of theater in his soul.

Through the contradictory notes we bring into our study the very main theme of the thesis, which is the emotion. The observations on emotion in this chapter are also made in terms of pseudo-emotion or the total lack of it, theoretically and practically, following to what extent the replacement of sincere and spontaneous emotion with intentionally generated emotion brings a plus or a minus to the artistic stage act. We have observed that native emotion is vocation friendly and in this way the actor is a *living actor*. For this reason, I have stated the importance of the native emotional factor in relation to pseudo emotion. The native emotion gives life not only to the actor, but gives life to the play, animates the spectators and personalizes the performance; where there is emotion there is a *living theatre*.

In terms of scientific discourse, our thesis ends at the gates of non-theatricality or non-theater. The virtual environment and theater between *being* or *not being* are the important topics raised in the specialized area of acting: what is left in the area of the art of theater if everything is taken over by the virtual environment and to what extent can we still speak of the pure existence of theater nowadays? Without claiming to bring a final solution to this problematic of contemporary theater, in our research we have deepened the tension in the virtual environment with regard to emotion. The fundamental difference is presence. In the virtual environment no one is present in relation to our concrete presence as spectators. As a consequence, all the emotional elements are one-sided and in the loneliness of the viewer. In a performance hall the emotional elements are mutual. The actor is present, the audience is present, and in this metaphysical transfer of presence, the emotion has a real and communal value and perception. Theater cannot be replaced by the virtual environment and ultimately we believe that it cannot be competed with.

The theater hall, the central landmark in most cities, remains and confirms in the present time, the past and the artistic future of the social, the imaginary and the prosaic of the human being. Finally, through a form filled in by people from the field of art, we showed the existence of the common denominator of theater in history, namely emotion. *Emotion in the world of performing arts* is in fact the scientific discourse through which we learn that emotion is in the foreground of any act of creation, therefore also of the world of performing arts, emotion without which the stage performance and the work of art is not fulfilled or even justified, emotion that ensures the perennial dimension by the very presence of human features.



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