

UNIVERSITY OF ARTS
TÂRGU MUREȘ

**THEATRE AND MEMORY.
MEMORIZING THE DRAMATIC TEXT
DOCTORAL THESIS
SUMMARY**

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Memorizing the dramatic text is the way to become the character in a truthful way. The simple approach / reading of the text or its learning "by heart" does not lead the actor to the precise method of the authentic feeling of the words spoken on the stage. Beyond the first reading, the dramatic text requires a deep analysis of the feelings and situations proposed by the author, then completed with the director's vision and last but not least with our own artistic projection. The complex process of memorizing the dramatic text becomes complete only when the actor learns the text inwardly, "as if" it belongs to him.

Here are the questions our paper should answer to:

1. Is memory a vehicle of the impressions?
2. What is the mechanism that connects the flower / the presence of the root / the memory, taking into account what Stanislavski himself said: „ Don't worry about the flower, just water its roots.“?
3. Does the report have a time limit, in the sense that Lee Strasberg suggests to his students a term of 7 years as a source?
4. Can memory become "false" and under what conditions does this situation occur, taking into account the idea that says that memory can excite the flashback to the point of giving the latter a touch of mythology.
5. What are the ways of organizing memory?
6. If we admit that memory proposes to the actor the form of role construction taking into account the degree of stimulation, internal or external, then is forgetting also a formula of memory?
7. What are the types of memorizing and how can they be adapted to the text proposed for the role, concerning that the text for the stage has many different faces today?
8. If the art of the actor is considered a "an art of the word previously known", what would be the mnemonics specific to the actor's work and, if they exist, how can they be combined to simplify the act of memorizing?
9. Is there a training of the memory? How can this training, through combined exercises of concentration and stimulation of the senses, lead to "total memory"? (We call total memory, storing information with all senses.)
10. Is memorizing an ability that sustains the "talent of the actor", or does it have nothing to do with his weightless category? Does memorizing have to do with organizing and planning the individual work of the actor, which should contain techniques of

intellectual work, starting from the optimization of the memorizing times by increasing the mnemonic capacity and to the “ordered memorizing”?

11. Tiredness, boredom or forgetfulness?

Our approach to discovering a mnemonic matrix started from a personal necessity when we faced dozens of roles during the 27 years of theatre practice. The need to discover a high-performance method of memorizing that includes mnemonic techniques adapted to each stage task, determined us in our research to extend the area of theatrical study to cross-disciplinary fields such as neuroscience and psychology. We were guided in our attempt by the following words:

„In theatre, beyond words, there are infinitely more languages, through which communication with the audience is established and maintained. It is about body language, sound language, rhythm language, colour language, costume language, setting language, light language - and they all add to those 25,000 words available. Every element of life is like a word in a universal vocabulary.”¹

We must formulate at this moment a first clarification: in the theatrical language, of the actors in particular, the expression “I learn the text” appears very often, an action which is followed, as practice often demonstrates, by the reading of the dramatic material and learning the lines by heart. We believe that most of the time the actors do not perform a conscious-methodical act in the process of learning the text that they have to reproduce later in the show. The natural step to be followed, after learning, is the act of memorizing the text for the show.

We continue with a second clarification: we will not be concerned with memory as a sports performance. Our actions will be aimed to developing a method specific for the space of the dramatic show. Many times people who have nothing in common with theatre have asked the actors how they can memorize so many texts or where they are stored. The answers were limited to the word memory: "I have a good memory."

In the first part of the paper *The actor - athlete of the mind. Memorizing with all the senses*, we have dealt in the chapter *Some Generalities on Memory. Psychological aspects of memory*, with some general hypostases related to memory and its mechanism of functioning. We considered it necessary, first of all, to better understand how memory governs the actor's

¹ Peter Brook, 2012, „Peștișorul de aur”, *Fără secrete. Gânduri despre actorie și teatru*. Nemira, Bucharest, p. 108.

intellect, to answer the question *what memory is* and how this psychic process takes place through which the *fixation, archiving, identification, and recollection of a previous experience* takes place. From the multitude of definitions given over time in studies and textbooks of psychology, we believe that one of the most explicit, in a Romanian specialized paper, is the one offered by Alin-Stelian Ciobîcă: „memory is the ability of the nervous system to fix, preserve, recognize and evoke a previous experience.”² If at the beginning of our research the notions about this psychic process were very vague or almost non-existent, on this occasion we discovered that there are several classifications of memory and ways in which these types work together.

In the chapter *Memory: classifications*, we found answers that paved the way for understanding the mechanism of human memory by studying the *modal model* or the *multiple memory model*, discovered by Atkinson and Shiffrin, theory that made us understand how sensations are perceived in the human brain through the five senses and what are the impressions conveyed and archived in the brain. We considered that the modal model Atkinson-Shiffrin was the start in discovering a *mnemonic matrix specific to the professional actor* who wants to reach artistic performance.

We would like to note the importance of knowing the *primary memory (short-term memory)* which stores external information in it, between two and seven items, so that later they are transferred to the *secondary memory (long-term memory)*. The way tertiary memory works has helped us to understand why some notions, daily actions, our own name, home address and even some lines, poems, songs we can never be forgotten. *Working memory* is the type of psychological process that works with these types of memory and functions as a real informational repository from which the embedded information is transferred to *long-term memory*. Revealing to us was to find out that long-term memory has an *unlimited capacity*, which allows the actor to realize that the act of memorizing is a continuous, infinite act and we are convinced that it can be activated through practical training. *Forgetting occurs only because of the deadlock of locating the material and not because of its disappearance*. Thus, we can understand that information that is permanently stored in long-term memory can be accessed at any time. In this way, a flow of information is made between the two warehouses, a flow that allows to improve the storage capacity. I noticed the wider representation, regarding the memory, submitted by the academician Constantin Bălăceanu-Stolnici: „every living cell

² Alin-Stelian Ciobîcă, *Aspecte neurofiziologice ale proceselor de învățare și memorare*, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Publishing House, Iași, 2007, p. 11.

contains in its nucleus and in its mitochondria a real archive of data encoded in DNA chains. This archive is *photocopied* on the occasion of each cell division and is thus transmitted from generation to generation. It is the most impressive memory device in our solar system.”³

Our attempt to find answers to the act of memorizing and memory in theatre continued in the chapter *Theatre and Memory*, by looking at how the great pedagogues of theatrical art approached this theme and how this process was defined in the acception of the theatre makers of the world. We found that *no one talks about memorizing the text*, in all theoretical works only *memory* is addressed.

The subchapter *Disciples* shows Jean Lous Barrault`s observations in his book „Memories for Tomorrow”, about the existence of the previous memory, reference to a memory that includes the memories before we were born, indispensable memories to our adult imagination. Paul Claudel comes to complete this first intuition about the actor's memory and talks about the existence of *a memory before being*, which is nothing but a genetic inheritance, the innate memory. Stepping into the vigorous space of the Polish theater, I identified in the valuable theoretical works of Tadeus Kantor an original vision, strongly imprinted by the presence of death, well preserved in the *child's memory*. A memory that works for the visionary director like a museum diorama in which childhood memories are attributed to a dead past, populated by dead characters. At the opposite pole, director Jerzy Grotowski is preoccupied with the actor's memory, starting from the techniques of activating spiritual powers to achieve translumination, the result of a process that combines overcoming the limits imposed by the actor's body and his inner transpositions materialized in the *technique of exploring the darkness of memories by unlocking the senses*.

„The actor must develop his ability to speak in registers that are not natural to him - higher or lower than the natural register. This does not mean at all to raise or lower their voice all the time, methodically, in unusual registers, but only to operate in certain cases, artificially in unnatural registers without hiding their artificial character. Another way to artificially reach other registers is to parody the voices of women, children, the elderly etc. But the actor must never systematically force himself to use a register lower than his own, in order to

³ *Op. cit.* p. 11 *apud* Ciobîcă.

have, for example, a manly voice. This tendency is very bad and can cause inflammation of the throat and even nervous disorders”.⁴

Peter Brook is captivated by Grotowski's training and he also uses during the training of the professional actor the technique of introspection by activating all the specters of his being in the art of interpretation through the *hand, eye, ear and heart*.

In the Romanian theatrical space, the director and pedagogue Radu Penciulescu reformed the actor's training by excluding the talent from the training techniques of the artist who wants to obtain the performance. The *actor's feeling* must not become an *uncontrollable emotion*, the one who must be dominated by emotion is only the spectator. His disciple, Andrei Șerban, remarks the importance of the sensory in activating memory, confessing the importance of senses are for the actor. The director Aureliu Manea, partisan of Penciulescu's theories, redefines the appearance of the actor on stage in the presence of emotion, which is not a substance of acting technique but a *mystery of man*. Manea says that feelings give life to the game and just a body training is not enough.

„To be in the presence of an actor during rehearsals means to follow the disturbing path of Emotion and of the control over it, of gradation and release. It is very difficult for us to objectify this birth of feeling, but in certain situations it becomes a consequence of pure technique. Every time *we must resurrect the forms of action so that not for a second the emotion is a substance of the technique, but a mystery of man.*”⁵

Our itinerary in finding the mnemonic matrix inevitably addresses the principles of the great pedagogue and director Konstantin Sergheevici Stanislavski in the subchapter *The Master*. Through his theories strongly influenced by the Meiningen School, he empowers the actor, whom he considers the only one able to bring novelty in the interpretation of the texts. The actor's play must not be left to the talent and inspiration of the moment, *the feeling* is not the foundation of the role, but only a stage of the creative process in the construction of the character.

„And in this art you live your role, once or twice, at home or during rehearsals. The presence of the essential process of feeling allows this current to be considered an authentic art ... but the process of feeling is not the main moment

⁴Jerzy Grotowski, „Tehnica vocii”. *Spre un teatru sărac*, Unitext Publishing House- Magister, Bucharest, 1998, p. 81.

⁵Aureliu Manea, *Energiile spectacolului*. Dacia Publishing House, Cluj Napoca, 1983, p. 20.

of creation but only one of the preparatory stages for creative work. This work consists in the search for the external artistic form of the stage creation, which reveals its inner content.”⁶

Concerned about the presence of feeling in the performance, the Russian director believes that the actor must know *feelings* similar to the character through an *identification*. Therefore, Stanislavski is the one who brings us closest to the subject of our research, being concerned with recognizing emotion, finding a feeling through *biographical involvement* and assuming an *organic interpretation*, so that later the actor reaches a *credible interpretation* through *knowledge*. The artist always uses the resources of his own body, his memories and an *emotional memory*.

Affective memory, the term that Stanislavski borrowed from the writings of the psychologist Théodule Ribot, is the memory that stores in it memories, which will inevitably be the source of inspiration in elaborating the role that the actor will play on stage. This *memory of lived emotions* is the source that determines the creative act, and then everything is transposed into artistic representation. The emotional memory proposed by Stanislavski completed our puzzle in finding a method, towards *memorizing with all the senses*. The word becomes easier to fix on the map outlined by the *sum of our memories*, if they can be inserted in the artistic act. The role / character data activate the *appropriate memory* in the general body of memories by unlocking the mechanism of chronological reversal from the *present to the past*. A complete interpretation requires a memory of the whole role, the choice of memories will be dictated by the needs that the role requires at the right time. We did not intend that memorizing the dramatic text to become an exercise in an artistic memorizing championship. The process that we perceived is an approach that proposes that before storing the word in memory, to bring new parameters in the mnemonic process: *emotion, stage situation, stage action, gesture and word*.

An infallible privilege in the search for the mnemonic matrix was the meeting with the professor and director David Esrig, a moment that was evoked in the chapter *Towards an Existential Theatre*. A remarkable personality of the Romanian theatre school and currently of the German one, he comes to confirm the significance of our research related to the act of memorizing the dramatic text. Representative for the theatrical generation of the 60s and 70s in the last century, he brings, through his artistic and theoretical creation, a major contribution to the movement of the European theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. Ever since

⁶ K.S. Stanislavski, *Munca actorului cu sine însuși*, ESPLA, Bucharest, 1951. p. 35.

he studied and practised in Romania, he has been concerned with *existentialist theatre* and with finding a unique way to train the actor. Like his generation colleagues who were forced to leave the Romanian space during the communist period, David Esrig reveals a unique artistic destiny, which has proved itself fruitful over the past decades. His record includes two major awards that confirm the intellectual, cultural and artistic quality of director David Esrig: *Special Award BITEF*, Belgrad 1967, award also given to two other great personalities of the European theater, Otomar Krejča and Jerzy Grotowski, and *Theatre des Nations award* awarded in 1965 on an equal footing with director Franco Zeffirelli. After some successful shows: „Rameau`s Nephew”, „Waiting for Godot”, „The Shadow”, „Scapin the Schemer”, the ban of the show „The Tempest” by W.Shakespeare puts to an end the possibility of working in the country. He has a remarkable career in theatres in Europe and Israel. He founded the Athanor Theatre and Film Academy in 1995 in Burghausen, Bavaria. Since 2014 and until now, Athanor Academy has been operating in the city Passau.

The first meeting with the director David Esrig was in 2006, as an actor of the Northern Theatre Satu Mare, on which occasion I discovered his qualities as a director and especially as a pedagogue in the art of acting. It was an extremely fruitful collaboration that took place for about a month. One year later, on the occasion of the workshop "Searching the Existential Theatre", a project that was part of the program "Sibiu European Capital of Culture 2007", supported by the Romanian Theatre Union-UNITER took place our second meeting with David Esrig. Our participation in the workshop gave us the chance to share with 38 professional actors from all over the country the experience of a number of four intense trainings that far exceeded the area of our previous practical knowledge: „ Body language and expression in modern theatre” (Etiene Decroux Method) lead by Ives Marc from Paris, „Meyerhold's Biomechanics” (Alexei Lewinski Method) lead by Rainer Doberning from Vienna, „ Clownery and modern theatre” (Jaques Leccoq Method) lead by Walter Anichhofer from Salzburg and „ From word to action, a condition of modern theatre” lead by David Esrig from Germany.

„I would see the whole system of theatre directing education thus arranged. First, all students - future directors and actors - should go together through two years of training with subjects of general theatrical culture and a practical acting course.”⁷

⁷ David Esrig, „Pentru un caracter mai universitar al învățământului teatral”, in *Ce credeți despre învățământul de regie*, Teatrul Magazine, no. 1, January, 1969, pp. 6-8.

The theatrical experiments of that time, which we explored at the level of the working group and individually, opened bridges of self-knowledge of our artistic resources and capacities from which we nurtured the inspiration for whole seasons. Our artistic activity made possible, in 2015, a third meeting with Professor David Estrig, this time our request came as a doctoral student in the project "Romanian culture and European cultural models: research, synchronization, sustainability" supported by Romanian Academy. Our paper, *The actor an athlet of the mind, memorizing with all the senses*, at the urging of the guiding tutor, professor doctor Silviu Angelescu from the team from Bucharest, took place in close collaboration with professor David Estrig during the mobility at the Athanor Academy in Passau. We have agreed that the method of investigating our topic will take the form of recorded dialogues in order to give efficiency and transparency to our study related to the act of memorizing.

The first dialogue with David Estrig brings light on our quest to memorizing the dramatic text. The actor must not refer to the dramatic text by limiting the notion only to the text printed on paper, he must perceive the phenomenon in a much wider and deeper way. *The text is a verbal outburst*, knowing that Stanislavski tells us in his writings about the verbal action, Estrig distinguishes the existence of an entire *inner film*.

„David Estrig: You have already made me curious by telling me that you want to find a way to memorize the text for the scene with all your senses. This is already a huge step towards my definition of memory and memorizing. In my opinion, one more step is missing, namely: the memorization we expect from any actor cannot be limited to memorizing the text. The text is just a verbal outburst, what Stanislavski called the verbal action, of an entire *inner film*, which is actually his life. The big problem is that the character that an actor plays, that starts with reading the role at the table, continues with the understanding of the text, reaching his memorization, is actually an attempt to enter, to reproduce all the material that he has to play it, in his own spiritual biography.”⁸

The creation of the character starts from *reading at the table, understanding and memorizing the text*, a rendering of all the information he has to interpret in his own spiritual biography, a *reflection of the life that the actor has to embody on stage*. A first stage emerges: the actor still does not know the evolution of his character at the beginning, *the inner film is*

⁸The dialogues with David Estrig from the study period spent at “Athanor” Academy in Passau, July 8-August 7, 2015, are part of our research within the project “Romanian culture and European cultural models: research, synchronization, sustainability” supported by the Romanian Academy .

now unclear, but he feels the need for gestures, intuitive / rational manifestations that encourage the path to *intellectual analysis* that David Esrig *calls more intellectually calligraphic signs of trying to identify with the character*; a certain walk, a special way of speaking, moving etc. The incipient form in this first approach of understanding the text and implicitly of the character, the adoption of a behaviour inside a *borrowed biography*, has as a starting point *the events described in the text* but also *the events played on stage*. We are convinced that the actor in this stage of character construction must not equate the two meanings. *The ability to adopt a foreign life* is the most beautiful definition given to acting talent by the pedagogue David Esrig when he states the importance of accepting a borrowed biography.

Memorizing the role should not be confused with memorizing the text, some actors do not make a clear distinction between the two mnemonic processes. *Memorizing the text* is limited only to a certain stage that belongs to an entire and complex reticular sequence that belongs to *memorizing the role*. Only through *action* we discover how the text *becomes autobiographical for the actor*. *Full acceptance of the text* is a long process that takes time from the first reading to the last show. We notice the phenomenon quite common for some actors given by *the impossibility to say / memorize* such lines, which is just an *inability to autobiographize the text*.

The actor is the one who communicates the author's words and the spectator is the one who to understand what the intentions are from the text spoken by the actor. *The intention* is to promote a reception of *the character's figure*. Through practice and availability one can achieve the performance of acquiring an *immediate autobiography*. „There is memorized a foreign life not only some foreign words” David Esrig says, the work of understanding and memorizing the text must be fully integrated and consented. The configuration of acting through *personal touches* is the confirmation of the character through small truths that work as imprints of the actor's personality. The more dominant these imprints of the actor's personality are, the more the autobiography of the text is outdated and the *transfer of the actor in the role* takes place, a copy of the role in his own personality.

At this stage of our research on finding a mnemonic matrix, we note these three important stages: *behavior inside a biography* (*"what if I were"*), *autobiography of figure and text*, and *human profile based on intentions*. The inner film becomes more and more outlined, the actor's responsibility becomes more and more conscious, a phenomenon that leads us to a *total integration in the role*. Sometimes we are put in the situation of getting stuck in front of some difficult lines / words. In these moments of stagnation of the memorizing process, the

solution that David Esrig recommends to us is *the interpretation* of the text, a method that requires *the analysis* of the text, using as a decryption tool *the intention*. „*I have a tool so I have an aim*” is the phrase that links the action to the past and the future in the actor's path to discover *possible sources* for his character.

We distinguish two functions of memory, the first reveals my past starting from the text and stimulates the intention, the other one requires the transformation of the goal itself inside the memory. If we admit the character's motivations, *the text becomes friendly*. The friendship with the character, even intuitive, allows the actor an action of autobiography that leads to identification in order to make a *living character*. *Friendship with the character* is another step in memorizing the role. The mnemonic process acts and transforms the dramatic text from a sum of words into *something alive*. The actor will pursue an external will that will make him exist without saying so.

Together with David Esrig we have come to the opinion that the actor's engagement in memorizing with all the senses knows an autobiographical journey of the character, which can only be fulfilled through *a total theatre*, which confirms that the body, *rhythm, mimicry, express what the word expresses*. At this point we understand from the autobiography of a dramatic figure that the actor identifies without difficulty with the figure itself. Memory gives us the opportunity to transform, *the memories* become identified as the character himself, sometimes by *accessing a vocal memory*, because the voice can help us become someone else. Therefore, the pedagogue director considers that "memorizing should not be limited to fixing foreign words but to access all the senses that incorporate in *my imaginary biography of the character's life, the lived form*."

The second dialogue with Professor David Esrig accumulates a valuable concept regarding our searches related to memorizing with all the senses: *memorizing the text is when there is an engraving of the human type who is the character and the motivations that lead him to say so*. If the foundation on which a dramatic text is built is *the action* that has as a starting vector *the intention*, the path of memorizing becomes easier “if with the words we memorize a possible network of intentions.”

„David Esrig: *Intention is the most genuine product of the human spirit*. We produce intentions all the time. We always want something. We don't even realize it. So, intention is first of all and foremost the trigger for action: I have an intention, I do something. Sometimes I do something in the immediate sense

of intention, sometimes I do something in the opposite direction of intention so that I don't get caught saying I have that intention. *Intention is decisive for action*. The intention is decisive to recover in the work of art, which is fictional, the feeling of truth.”⁹

Esrig speaks about a pre-chrome memory, an imaginary leap with different frames. We believe that *role memory axes* can become *text memory axes*. „When the actor feels the character as a real being, we are in front of a memory with all the senses and the show becomes autobiographical in an way" says the professor. Starting from the core of understanding a role, an actor begins to build on all channels of human sensitivity *the image of the character / the image of the destiny of the character*.

The third dialogue with David Esrig related to memorizing the dramatic text starts from the perspective of a double manifestation that the *action* acquires: *the impression and the expression*, which is closely related to the *cause-effect* binomial. The teacher's reasoning is valid because, he explains from personal experience, in his work with actors he started from the *impression* that causes *a sense of truth, purely rational*: "I feel, the tone convinces me", human intuition is caused by active actions. Esrig tells us about the way he divided the characters: *active characters* (they have initiatives in action) and *reactive characters* (they are not necessarily passive): "in the memory plane you have to receive the correct impression" to get an organic reaction. So we have another way of memorizing our mnemonic matrix: *impression - line - reaction*. It becomes important for the actor what exactly he will keep in his *active memory*. Memorization is not just about retaining the meaning that is received: it will also memorize the *aesthetic impression*. The actor's memory becomes fertile if he works on the entire sensorial keyboard, what accumulates in this memorized substance is a living product not only a rational one.

„David Esrig: The important thing is what I keep in the most active part of my memory. The memory also has floors. The thing that impresses me is not only the meaning that impresses me, positively or negatively. I am also impressed aesthetically, I am also impressed by the colouring of the voice, it is also a colour; that is, I also memorize the form in which a certain meaning is offered to me. The senses are associated with the rational and influence the rational.

⁹ Excerpt from the dialogues with David Esrig from the study period spent at "Athantor" Academy in Passau, July 8-August 7, 2015.

The rational gives only an abstract structure, while the senses give the sensual concreteness of things.”¹⁰

In the process of working on the text, director David Esrig mentioned that he uses a method that requires its "interpretation". It starts from the *periodization of the action*, which delimits the moment when the character's intention changes: *caesura* (the simplest change of intention, which is produced by an inner need of the speaker), *the unit of action* (an action reduced to an intention), *the fragment of action* (consisting of several, larger units of action, which also include the others), *the round* (many fragments of action) and *the period* (the sum of several rounds, it is a larger intention). Although the way the text is decrypted refers to the action and not to the text, it is important to note that these intentions will be implemented in the actor's memory by preparing the way for the dramatic text. Another stage follows, which the master evokes and which starts from the questions “Who are you?”, “What are you doing?”, binomials which are *the secret of dynamics* and which produce *spontaneity* in good actors. We believe that the actor who memorized everything at the rehearsals, at the show has to forget, to reinvent himself taking into account what he memorized: *an induced forgetfulness* comes here.

In this configuration, *forgetting is a form of memorizing*. "To be so sure that I risk forgetting," said Professor David Esrig in our talk, referring to *talented forgetting*, a form of *talented living* that turns the fiction given by the inner film into a *total surprise* and not a *total forgetfulness*. We consider that for Esrig the intention comes before the form. Contemporary theatre, the young directors, focus too much on form, which often has nothing inside. The actor has *to be impressed again* every time. All that can be more productive for the actor when he memorizes with all his senses is to *capitalize on impressions*, to play by canceling everything he has in memory and to exist on stage as if he did not know the destiny of his character: *now and here*, during being in character, thus producing a repetition of *structure* not of *living*.

The fourth dialogue completes our study of the mnemonic path that the actor takes in his art. We started from the atmosphere of contemporary German theatre, which is currently governed by the strong influence of the director Thomas Ostermeier. The conversation aimed to discover new concepts related to our topic. The portrait of the German theatre made by director David Esrig is plausible and warns us about a phenomenon that traces the new tendency in contemporary theatre, referring to the show "Hamlet", produced by Schaubühne. The

¹⁰ Excerpt from the third dialogue with David Esrig, from the study period spent at "Athanon" Academy in Passau, July 8-August 7, 2015.

director's vision should balance the entire cast, attention should not be paid exclusively to the actor in the leading role that best meets the requirements of the director, it should expand in order not to diminish the importance of other characters. We have returned to our topic and what is important in our mnemonic journey; we have found that it is crucial to remember why we are acting. If we remember the reason, the line will gain freshness with each interpretation, "it will be as if I were saying it for the first time", in a spontaneous manner. Keeping the freshness during the play, memorizing what triggers the reaction is the obligatory act, not to imitate an interpretation from the past. With each performance, the actor is put in the situation to recover what is lost from a show resumed after a long break. We are convinced that it is more important to remember the moment of construction of the situation, a technique that stimulates and demands all the feelings.

„David Esrig: So the memorization problem is also a selective problem, because you are not talking just about a psychological memory, but about a specific application of the actor's ability to memorize. Then there are the aesthetic and professional issues that influence the quality of this function of memory. And then the problem in the theatre, where I have to play a role several times, is not like in the movie, where things are final. For this, as I told you before, but I will always repeat, in my work I did repetitions to fix the impression, not the expression.”¹¹

We know that memory is selective, we remember what impresses us, what amazes us, what we like best, we consider that the value of a *dynamic reading of the dramatic text*, during which all the senses are connected, will direct our attention when memorizing the text from *how we say the text* to *why we say the text*. If we are aware of what impresses us and this becomes *memorable* then the mnemonic matrix becomes *alive / active*. The actor must perceive the dramatic text / text to be interpreted first as *a study of human behaviour* and then as a *literary concept*. Perceiving the text in this specific way means that we will develop a certain type of memory, educated and trained specifically for the mnemonic effort on the stage.

In the fifth dialogue with David Esrig, which we also called "Do Memories Distort?", We tried to find more subtle answers to our questions *about forgetting*, and perhaps it was no coincidence that this conversation was marked by *memories* about Romanian theatre. Talking

¹¹ Excerpt from the fourth dialogue with David Esrig, from the study period spent at "Athonor" Academy in Passau, July 8-August 7, 2015.

about his work on „The Tempest” by W. Shakespeare, he pointed out that he had made an interesting discovery regarding the interpretation of the Shakespearean text, namely that "the Trojans speak pompously and nobly, and the Greeks speak as in the country side." We believe that this way of personalizing the text in the first phase of reading can be a very original method of customizing the form of expression at the level of memory. Esrig helps us in our research with a new concept of memorizing: "the sum of impressions creates the relief of our images of the world." The actor's ability to bring together and build a world of spaces and images through the senses will increase the ability to memorize easily.

„David Esrig: My dear, for me memory is actually a very active form in work, memorizing the text is, it seems to me, a simple operation. Who can't memorize a text ?, only those who stupid. The problem is that the sum of the impressions that our senses, as much as we have, provide us, creates *the relief of our images about the world*. We see relief because we have two eyes, if we had more, we would see even more relief. Victor Brauner¹², who lost an eye, painted his self-portrait with one of the eyes running down his cheek. He, since he was left without an eye, began to paint paintings without relief, flat ... because he could no longer see relief.”¹³

The more the senses are activated, the greater the possibility of memory to store new items. We believe that by activating the five senses, memorizing the dramatic text becomes possible, if they are in perfect synchronization with our mental projection of the text. The harmony between thought and sensory allows the actor to perceive the text as an entity at the moment of the mnemonic act that gives the possibility to be lived, expressed, and engramed in infinite possible interpretations.

In the second part of the paper *For a practice of Memory*, we aimed to prove by specific examples the theoretical expositions from the beginning. The elaboration of some practical, original exercises in the specialized literature is our personal contribution regarding the finding of a mnemonic matrix through memorizing with all the senses. As an intermediate stage between theory and practice, I wrote a chapter that addresses the pedagogy of *performance speech* and its importance in preparing the professional actor, a preamble that aims to show the importance of the spoken word in the process of memorizing the dramatic text.

¹² Victor Brauner (1903-1966) Jewish surrealist painter and poet. He was born in Piatra Neamț and died in Paris. The work David Esrig mentions dates back to 1930.

¹³ Excerpt from the fifth dialogue with David Esrig, from the study period spent at the "Athantor" Academy in Passau, July 8-August 7, 2015.

In the subchapter *Training for verb-vocal performance. Performance speech and the actor's memory* we researched over time the evolution of theatrical pedagogy and the care that generations of teachers showed to the word spoken on stage and we drew attention to the pedagogical approach of four teachers: Sandina Stan, Marietta Sadova, Nicolaie Gafton and the consecrated Valeria Covătariu.

Performance speech pedagogy. About theoretical and practical methods is the second subchapter in which we analyzed each method and we considered significant for our research topic the system proposed by Gafton and that of Professor Covătariu. In this search stage, the conclusion that brings us closer to the definition of the mnemonic matrix becomes more obvious. Memorizing the dramatic text is strongly influenced by the quality of speech. If the actor masters the utterance of the word on stage and takes it to the stage of art, *memorizing becomes a phenomenon that can be activated and trained through performance speech*. The written word changes and becomes alive / enlivened by the human voice. Speaking correctly, *the imaginative language* becomes more clear, and artistic memory develops *mnemonic and verbal performative abilities*.

To answer the questions at the beginning of our research, in the *Memory Training chapter. Memory exercises*, we designed *ten practical exercises* to finalize our mnemonic matrix. Actually, the trainings start from memorizing some scenic items / simple tasks and continue with more complex mnemonic operations that are given by the evolution of the character construction, the role and the show. Each exercise has a structure that contains the *statement, purpose and comments*. Inspired by authentic scenic situations, situations that we experienced in the process of creation and memorization, the exercises helped us to be aware and to find precise solutions to real problems that we encountered in the artistic act. The key to solving truthful situations through which we combined various mnemonics led us to simplify artistic memory by presenting proposals for organizing and planning intellectual resources under the pressure of limited rehearsal time, in the individual study of role setting. We introduced new terms: *float-scene, nodal action / action node, emotional route / itinerary, identification reply, active-waiting or active-rest, verb-cursor etc.* The uniqueness of our approach, of the memorizing process is complemented by clear explanations regarding the possible psychic / mnemonic processes that take place during the work on the text or when we practise / interpret on the stage.

The first exercise: *Memorizing the character's name*, aims to train short-term memory, *develop a memory of proper names, activate auditory memory through the phonological loop,*

a notion belonging to psychologists Baddeley and Hitch, all in synchronization with the phonation mechanism and motility of the oral cavity.

The second exercise: *Visual memorizing of lines or Colour Code - the traffic light method* aims to develop *the actor's sensorial memory and that of images*. The use of colours helps the actor to order / classify his lines according to their importance and determines him to distinguish between *my lines* and those of *the stage partner* using different colours.

The third exercise, *Memorizing the character's journey*, was specially designed to develop and train *a memory of spatiality*, how to memorize the paths in physical spaces on the stage, always changing, and deliberately, the choreography / physics that the actor has to go through along the respective spaces; how these spaces can be associated with the speaking / fixation of the lines using them as a visual support in a logical way.

The fourth exercise completes our study and proposes to the actor the stimulation of the visual memory, which should include in it the architecture of the scenographic space. Spatial-visual mental projection prepares the working memory to allow the actor to *memorize abstract, pluriform and plurichrome spaces*.

Exercise five, *Memorizing (changing) the stage costume*, helps the practitioner to understand and adjust to the grandeur of the *stage clothes* or on the contrary to their minimalism. The mnemonic training proposed by us contains important details about the energy / time we give to the costume changes behind the stage, the exercise of *distributive attention* and the activation of the *sensorial trinomial I hear-I see-I touch*, senses that maintain the working memory in the time preceding the artistic act.

Exercise six, *Memorizing the cast*, wants to develop the actor's ability to easily memorize the numerous cast, "who plays who !?" - *the name of the character (fictional / imaginary / social status / marital status, age) and the name of the actor who plays him*. The efficiency of the mnemonic process is maximum by involving the phenomenon of associative engraving between *the name of the character with the physiognomy and the personality of the actor* who interprets the role.

Exercise seven, *Memorizing the relationships between the characters*, aims to enable *the investigative-mnemnotic effort of the connections between the characters*, as revealed by the author, the director or as perceived by the actor, the *emotional map* between our character and the other characters.

Exercise eight, *Memorizing the emotional journey of the character*, aims to train the emotional memory, the conscious reliving of the whole affective range given by *emotions, moods and temperaments*. I used the scheme of emotions proposed by the psychologist Daniel Goleman, in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, and I exemplified with the help of a graph, the multiple states that the actor attributes to his character at the time of interpretation. Mnemonics aims *the synesthesia of the sensory capacities* of working memory.

Exercise nine, *Memorizing the sequence of scenes*, imposes more difficulty on working memory. Through this mnemonic training, the actor memorizes the order of all the scenes, of the whole show, the moment when he enters or leaves certain scenes / acts of the play, when the costume / scenery change takes place, the *float-scenes* are fixed / memorized, *the psycho-emotional preparation* of the moments he is going to sustain on the stage. The exercise involves memorizing moments that involve *active waiting* or *active rest during stage play*, quick memorizing techniques that require *elaborate coding* used by psychologist Ed Cook through *keywords / key lines*.

Exercise ten, *Memorizing the author's conception versus the director's conception*, concludes our mnemonic proposals and brings the mnemonic training to the maximum, because it is intended to be the most complex exercise that we recommend to the practicing actor. The aim is to memorize the vision of the author, of the original text, then that of the director through the Aristotelian prism of the *rule of the three units: time, place, action*. We manage to make a clear distinction between the two artistic creations, which are *convergent and divergent fictions*, how the original text changes its meanings in the vision proposed by the director and the importance of the *verb-cursor* in artistic memory as an element of identification. The memory will fix the *dynamic images* given by the *semantics of the verb* in the form of sequences, connecting *film flashes*. The ability with which the actor orders these *active items* at the level of working memory can be acquired over time, through daily training, through experience. With the learning of this mnemonic technique, he develops his own artistic memory, a memory that the actor will use when working on abstract texts or where the text is replaced by a scenario of movement as in dance theatre or physical theatre.

The last chapter entitled *The prestige of the word* contains two articles: *Words, words, words ...* and *The Ossuary of memory. Spaces-time*. The first paper was part of the project *Romanian culture and European cultural models: research, synchronization, sustainability*, co-financed by the European Union and the Romanian Government from European Social Funds through Operational Sectoral Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, and was

presented at the Conference of Theatre Sciences: *Shakespeare: the own and the foreign*, University of Arts in Târgu Mureș, November, 2014. Written in the form of an inner dialogue, I approached a topic related *to the form and strength of the spoken word*. We believe that the speed with which the performances take place today in the Romanian theatre should produce an effect of adapting the actor's training in the university system. The training of the actor should take more into account the concrete changes in the theaters and the physical needs of communication of the text, as there was a resettlement of the training models taking into account the new dramaturgy. More emphasis should be placed on preparing the text while lecturing, on clarifying its meanings in accordance to the wishes of the author, even if he is no longer alive, on discovering, as I have already shown, the underground current of ideas that bite into the written work and, last but not least, on the correctness with which the future actor approaches the word, in all its aspects: its understanding, its emphasis, its role in a sentence and, further, of the sentence in a phrase. We believe that postmodernity must return to the correct theatrical word in all its aspects, just as, in a short period of time, it denied it the leading role in the show. The second work was written within the same project and was published in the magazine *Colocvii teatrale*, number 19, from 2015, in Romanian and English, and aimed at an investigation of the memory of the theatre, a deep form of conserving the art of theatre. We are able to use our own memory and talk here about a personal experience. In 2005, during a trip to Sweden, at the Malmö Theatre Institute, a school that is part of Lund University, we visited a "sound exhibition". In one of the rooms of the Institute, emptied of any element that would involve a volume, a suite of compositions that were related to a text written on one of the walls of the room could be heard. The visitor could sit at any point in the room. He took a chair himself and could change his position at any moment. The arrangement of the text and the sound defined a *sounding space* that forced us, through the action of moving the chairs, to function as participants in a theatrical act. The conclusions of our research confirm that the path taken by the actor in his approach to memorizing the dramatic text starts from a careful, investigative reading that aims to decrypt the play in its entirety, both at the micro / my character and macro level / the other characters. Then, the activation of *working memory*, at the sensory level, leads to mental storage specific to the five senses. The presence of sensations, emotions, feelings guides the actor to identify the biography of his own character to whom we attribute an *emotional memory*. The mnemonic matrix is completed with the moment when the actor accepts / assumes the *borrowed biography* of the character, who at every moment must aim at the ability to adopt a *foreign life*, by projecting an *inner film* at the level of imagination.

Full acceptance of the text *requires time and perseverance*. It is a staged process that can be trained and practiced. The actor's goal must pursue a *double memorizing* that will function simultaneously; *memorizing the biography of the character and the text that accompanies this identity*, phenomena that cover the *living form*. When *personal imprints* are dominant, responsible memorizing takes place which intensifies the engraving of the dramatic text. *If at the level of memory, the actor will perceive the character as a living / real being, there is a memory with all the senses.*

We aimed to show through our research that the act of memorizing the dramatic text should not remain a secret activity, a hidden craft of the great masters. We want our theme to open a new path, to bring other researchers in the field of theatre closer to the new aspects of study related to the art of the actor, to support the dramatic artist.

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