

DOSSIER “Human development, drama and perezhivania:
Vygotsky and the question of the psychology of the actor’s creation”^{1 2}

Vygotsky and the actor’s art: for a psychology of the actor-performer^{3 4}

5

Vigotski e a arte do ator: por uma psicologia do ator-performer

José Tonezzi ^⓪

^⓪ Universidade Federal da Paraíba – UFPB, Centro de Comunicação, Turismo e Artes, Departamento de Artes Cênicas, João Pessoa, PB, Brasil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1499-4267>, josetonezzi@gmail.com

Abstract

Considering that the performing artist’s creative act seeks to make another being present through their personal memory and the evocation of living experiences and feelings, this article reflects on the direct and objective relation of the actor’s creative work with life. Accordingly, we address here manifestations that intend presentification more than representation, a practice that arose later, but which is associated with Vygotsky’s writings on the art of acting. Thus, we seek to consider the term perezhivanie as a manifestation in a hybrid zone of intersection of life with artistic creation and as a consequence (or source) of the art exercised by the one that is now called actor-performer.

Keywords: perezhivanie, performance, psychology, actor-performer

¹ For more information, please see: Vigotski (2023).

² Thematic Dossier organized by Priscila Nascimento Marques <<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7111-6372>> and Ana Luiza Bustamante Smolka <<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2064-3391>> .

³ Responsible editor: Cesar Donizette Pereira Leite. <<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8889-750X>>

⁴ References correction and bibliographic normalization services: Piero Younan Kanaan (Tikinet). <revisao@tikinet.com.br>

⁵ English version: Roberto Cândido (Tikinet). <traducao@tikinet.com.br>

Resumo

Considerando que o ato criativo do artista da cena visa tornar presente um outro ser por meio de sua memória pessoal e da evocação de experiências e sentimentos vivos, este artigo reflete sobre a relação direta e objetiva do trabalho criativo do ator com a vida. Nesse sentido, aborda-se aqui manifestações que pretendam mais a presentificação do que a representação, uma prática surgida posteriormente, mas que se vincula aos escritos de Vigotski sobre a arte de atuar. Nesse sentido, busca-se pensar o termo pereživanie como manifestação em zona híbrida de intersecção da vida com a criação artística e como consequência (ou fonte) da arte exercida por aquele que hoje se denomina ator-performer.

Palavras-chave: *pereživanie, performance, psicologia, ator-performer*

Based on the original text written by Vygotsky in Russian and published in 1936, whose Portuguese translation is in this journal⁶, this reflection also draws on a study based on an English version of the referred text. That is because the latter is a translation for studies that makes analogies between languages, as the version published here implies in relation to the translated title. Thus, it is noted that certain terms refer to understandings that are specific to the Russian language, leading the English translation to cause connotations that can certainly affect the understanding of what Vygotsky sought to say. Thus, there is a perception of the effective possibility that the English version meets the function of mediation for translation into other languages. Consequently, the variation in the meaning that accompanies certain passages allows us to ponder on what the author actually proposed for a theme that still involves questions to date.

In his reflection, Vygotsky highlights as a problem the fact that, in order to ascertain the subject's ability to achieve success in theatrical creation, the psychological tests applied until then sought to constitute a profession chart for the work of acting in theater. Thus, by evaluating the motor system and verbal memory, fantasy and degree of enthusiasm of the person, the intention would be to detect potential traits of talent for the exercise of this function combined with general qualities. The point is that, according to Vygotsky, thinking about a profession chart for the actor's work would be associating such activity to the same principle "by which

⁶ Text entitled *Sobre a questão da psicologia da criação pela ator*, by Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, with translation by Priscila Nascimento Marques, published in this issue (Vigotski, 2023).

analogue psychograms are built, for any other professions” (2009, p. 7, free translation). And that, in its sense, effectively does not apply to the activity that constitutes the actor’s art.

It turns out that psychotechnical research, according to Vygotsky’s understanding, would not reach the specificity—he even uses the term singularity—of the actor’s psychology. It would be as if good performance in this function resulted from a simple combination of mental qualities arising from the same formula applicable to other professional activities. As a result, restricted to the banal psychology of the tests, psychotechnical research would generalize and consequently dissolve the issues related to the actor’s creative work, disregarding the subject who acts, as well as their psychological particularity.

According to Vygotsky, although it is important to consider the more general psychological patterns, in the actor’s psychology the major issue is to perceive their differentiated character. It is situated there what he calls qualitative singularity, since in the scope of the psychological assessment applied to a specific and unique subject, the problem ceases to be abstract and acquires concreteness. This is what leads to the perception of art as an instrument, as he already detected in *The Psychology of Art*, a work written in 1925 and published in Russia only in 1965. Thus, art constitutes itself as a practice for the emanation of knowledge, since it “collects its material from life but produces above that material something that is not yet in the properties of that material” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 307-308, free translation).

Subsequently, Vygotsky mentions the issue raised by Denis Diderot, long taken as a reference in thinking about the art of acting: should the actor effectively experience the role or simply imitate an ideal prototype in order to convince the viewer?

If, according to Plato (c. 380 BC/2004), art is distant from the true precisely because it is imitation and not the truth of sensible phenomena, in turn Aristotle (c. 350 BC/1987) restricts and analyzes the term imitation (*mimesis*) in the scope of art, perceiving in this act a variation that enables the enrichment of such phenomena. In this sense, it is possible that Vygotsky’s questioning in the relation of a profession chart with the specificity of the actor’s psychology is reflected in the Aristotelian approach to the epopee, which emphasizes that the elocution of poets (actors) who experience the same passions of their characters is more perceived. Therefore, while purely imitating prototypes — as mentioned by Diderot — keeps the actor on the surface of the creative act, effectively living an experience of a situation brought to the stage

would enable a possible immersion in that which constitutes — according to Vygotsky’s — the actor’s art.

The first decades of the twentieth century compose a period in which there was a strong resonance of realism in theatrical art. The events represented on stage are associated with quotidian life and human relations both in the personal and social spheres, governed largely by moral standards. In his texts, Vygotsky defended the existence of an extra-quotidian stage, apart from ordinary life and that can be achieved in the actor’s creative work. To that end, a possible use of strategies and resources proves justifiable.

For example, William Shakespeare is pointed out as an author who, in the composition of a dramatic text, knows how to focus on the art of acting, showing the differential contained in this creative work. Shakespeare had long been indicated as an excellent strategist in the use of words as an instrument to make the theatrical performance a place of access to a higher plane in the perception of human relations and behavior. Vygotsky deals with what he calls a dynamic hero and, resorting to other authors, he notes Shakespeare’s genius in making the viewer touched by the use of the verbal language of his characters. In the conduction of scenes, it is in their speech that the English playwright reaches and makes emerge what Tolstoy called a movement of feeling, leading to the conclusion that: “This ability to propitiate the change of feeling is precisely what constitutes the foundation of that conception of dynamic hero to which we have referred a moment ago” (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 291, free translation).

Admitting Diderot’s paradox (experiencing a role or imitating some idealized prototype), as an effective reference for a possible scientific theory of the actor’s creative work, Vygotsky observes that “intertwinings of the feelings of a role with the feelings of the actor must be resolved primarily on the historical plane and not on the plane of naturalistic (biological) psychology” (2009, p. 13, free translation). Such psychology refers to physical reactions that, stimulated in test, led to metaphysical formulations inherent in abstract psychology, which would not solve a question that, according to him, must be treated from a dialectical point of view. That is because, if socially contextualized, the psychology of the actor reflects changes in the process of historical development of humanity, which is shown in the changes in style and content of the theatrical work, which basically “consists in the relation of the artificially produced emotion of a role with the natural, living, real emotion of the actor representing the role” (2009, p. 18-19, free translation).

Alternatives to Diderot's paradox were perceived in what had been developing at the Moscow Art Theater (MAT), under the command of Konstantin Stanislavski, when important points are detected in the study of emotions. The first concerns the involuntary quality of feelings, that is, the impossibility of commanding them in certain situations. However, if feelings cannot be voluntarily evoked, as occurs with thought and movement, Stanislavski's research pointed to the possibility of eliciting sensations through strategies unrelated to the direct interference of the will.

It was observed that the experiments carried out at the Moscow Art Theatre seemed to reinforce the Platonic understanding that, if they undergo a process of artistic composition, feelings differ from effective emotions. However, in the exercises performed there, they were still alive and true, showing to be purified and devoid of what is superfluous, as noted by Vygotsky in *The Psychology of Art* (1999), referring to the aesthetics exercised there:

The issue has nothing to do with the fact that the goal of aesthetics is, as Tolstoy joked, to reduce itself to the requirement of "describing an execution as if it were flowers." The execution on stage continues execution and not flowers, despair continues despair, but what solves it is the artistic action of the form, and therefore it is very possible that the actor does not even experience to the end and fully those feelings that the character represented experiences (Vygotsky, 1999, p. 299, free translation).

In recent reflections, Erika Fischer-Lichte (2019) notes that not only can there be varying degrees of involvement of the actor-creator with the character they play, but also in the viewer's perception in relation to those who perform on stage. When dealing with presence and representation in the study entitled *The aesthetics of the performative*, Fischer-Lichte notes that, for a long time, such terms were considered to be conceptually opposed. It turns out that presence was conceived as something immediate, "experience of fullness and completeness" (p. 351, free translation), while representation was seen as an instance of control and censorship, a kind of mediated access to the world. Between the 1960s and 1970s, the author detects the actor's body as a place and model of presence, while the dramatic character was imposed as a prototype of representation.

The character on stage, predetermined by the “instance of power and control” of the literary text and reproduced by the actor through their own body as a representation of everything that was “prescribed” in the text, was evidence to the repression that the text exerted on the actor and, above all, on their body. Therefore, it became necessary to free the actor’s body from the chains of representation, from their chokehold, and thus contribute to letting the spontaneity and authenticity of their physical existence come to light (Fischer-Lichte, 2019, p. 352, free translation).

In her text, it seems to us, the German author echoes what Vygotsky presupposes in allusion to a necessary *perezhivanie* in the actor’s creative work. According to Fischer-Lichte, a dramatic character should not occur as a simple reproduction or copy of something predetermined, but as processing and practice constituted by the use of incarnation procedures:

The character created is indissolubly linked to the specific corporeality of the actor who creates it. The actor’s phenomonic body, their corporeal being-in-the-world constitutes the existential foundation for the emergence of the character—this does not exist beyond this individual body (2019, p. 352, free translation).

Regarding the duplicity of emotion in the work of actors, still in *The Psychology of Art* (1999), Vygotsky cites a passage in which Diderot refers to a scene in which a man and a woman became lovers and moved the audience, while in reality they detested each other. Therefore, it is noted that although different from what is experienced in life, a feeling experienced in the actor’s artistic practice may be far from a simulacrum. The point is that, even outside reality, the feelings achieved there may not be fictitious and remain legitimate as they are manifested in another scope, in an extra-linear dimension thus pointed out by him:

In this sense, we agree with Gurevitch that the solution to the problem, as usually happens in many obstinate and long-running controversies, “lies not in the middle between two ends, but on a different plane that makes it possible to see the object of study from a new point of view” (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 20, free translation).

Thus, even if the staging of an event is sought as part of a story to be shown, more than theatricalizing life through the simple reproduction of the forms of a given situation, what becomes possible is the stimulation of an effective interface between the actor’s work and the act of living, the creation of opportunities so as to live a practice or experience on stage. As two

fields for action, perception and analysis of life, the art of acting and psychology have in their frontiers a liminal terrain, of possible incidence on each other.

In this sense, *perezhivanie* is the term that strengthened Vygotsky's approach to the work of Konstantin Stanislavski, whose precepts about the actor's work state that, in the creative process, this artist is able to make present before the viewer a being whose actions and sensations are alive and credible. And that this being, although composing a work of a fictional character, detaches itself from the stigma of mere figure of the imagination. To this end, it is necessary that the actor be able to go beyond simulation by means of artifices arising from the stage system and mechanized imitation.

In the expression of his thoughts and in the pursuit of a possible method for creation in the art of acting, Stanislavski used terms that emphasize the necessary awareness of being before the other on stage, valuing the perception that one then has of him and of oneself. This is what is added to the approach that, in his initial writings, Stanislavski takes to tempo-rhythm in gestural expression and speech, of to the plasticity of movement, to intonations and pauses in the act of speaking on stage. However, he dedicates much of his work to the relation of the actor/actress with himself/herself: inner state, imagination, concentration of attention, memory, inner motivating forces. In this context, it is important to reiterate that the stimulus to living an experience and the consequent relation of the artist with life is what constitutes the singularity in the psychology of the actor, addressed in Vygotsky's text. Being on stage enables understanding that the awareness of oneself and of the presence of the other before oneself can complement each other, since in a presentation the artist plays simultaneously with self-perception and with the fact of being perceived. That is, perceiving and letting oneself perceive are correlated and interpose. With reference to the term used by the Russian director, the translators of the work entitled *Action-analysis. Practices for Stanislavski's theatrical ideas* (Knebel, 2016), in a footnote, note the following: "The word, borrowed from the colloquial *perezhivanie* (worry, overcome, suffer) is composed of the radical *jít* (live) and a prefix that denotes transition, transformation, transposition of the frontiers of my own *self*. From *myself* toward the *other*" (Knebel, 2016, p. 26, free translation).

Finally, still in this context, it is worth mentioning the contribution of Fischer-Lichte (2019) on the viewer's perception before the presence of the artist in their work of

representation. It is, in principle, something caused specifically by the art of the actor, the one who makes oneself into another one:

[...] what is first perceived as the presence of the actor in the next moment is perceived as a dramatic character and vice versa. [...] Even when, in a show, no perceptible connection is established between the characters mentioned in the playbill and the actors who play them, there will be viewers who will always continue to see the actors as characters. Similarly, there will always be viewers who, in a coherently psycho-realistic show, will always feel the presence of the actor (2019, p. 353-354, free translation).

This is what is called perceptual multi-stability, as mentioned in the work, in which the viewer is between the person of the artist who is performing and the figure of the character they represent. Then, the author points out that in recent decades there has been an increase in the use of such an effect in theatrical productions outside the psycho-realistic axis that, deliberately, aim to evoke the perceptual destabilization of the viewer. To this end, there are directors whose stagings have this as their main characteristic, that is, the use of images and effects for simulation or concealment of presences. It is a place where the function of the actor ceases to be only the interpretation of a character in a linear and progressive context.

Aiming at updating

When addressing the psychological issue that constitutes the actor's art, in addition to Konstantin Stanislavski, Vygotsky realizes the importance of other scholars, thinkers and creators who worked at the Moscow Art Theatre, such as Nemirovich-Dantchenko and Evguení Bagrationovich Vakhtangov. There was the pursuit of the implementation of a technical system that served the creative act of the performing artist, in the composition and representation of a being that rose from the fictional to the credible. This is what Fischer-Lichte (2019) seems to outline: "The dramatic character is not generated by reproduction or as a copy of something predefined, but by a process that implies precise incarnation procedures." (p. 352, free translation).

Although there was, in the art of theater at the time, a strong incidence of psychorealism that occurred basically through dramatic literature, Vygotsky's notes include the experiments

proposed as a means to go beyond the representation of characters and the pure reproduction of events.

A step towards separating the system from its concrete expression was taken by E. B. Vakhtangov, whose stylistic aspirations were indeed very different from the initial naturalism of the Art Theatre, but who, despite everything, was aware that his own system was an application, to the new tasks, of Stanislavsky's basic ideas (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 16, free translation).

This perception leads us to consider the various events and effective transformations that occurred in the practice and theory of the arts as a whole in the course of the twentieth century, with emphasis on the performing arts. The purpose is not to imagine that there could be new theories and conceptualizations on the part of Vygotsky, but to detect possible applications of his thinking considering the stage that the art of acting has reached today.

In the English translation of the text analyzed here, it should be noted the term *performance*, which would gain strength when such act came to be considered as a possible artistic manifestation, which gave rise to the so-called art of performance. However, it is a word whose meaning is difficult to define in languages of Latin origin, especially in the context of the arts, lacking proper contextualization.

In principle understood as an act or execution, performance gains varied meanings—among them, operation—which may even relate to an event or act involving something other than a human being, such as a machine or an animal. In the arts, on the other hand, the term refers to a specific execution in real time, carried out directly or indirectly by a person. As a consequence, performance is linked to the artistic manifestations that occur in the direct relation with human life. Referring to the performative act of the performing artist, Vygotsky observes:

Many of those who were active in theater produced extremely complex systems of actor performance in which they found a concrete expression not only of their authors' purely artistic aspirations, not only style canons, but also systems of practical psychology of the actor's creative work (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 6, free translation).

It should be noted that the actor's performance is referred to as the result of complex systems that go beyond the artistic scope, showing that the creative work here requires practical psychology systems, since there is an intrinsic relation of the art of acting with experiences that

were or are being lived by the artist and, even if it is a remembrance of something already past, it acquires a presential character in the execution of the event. Today, in addition to theater, dance and circus, the performing arts also include performance art, which was constituted from the 1960s onwards, as an act performed live by someone before others. Therefore, it is important to consider that, in the contemporary performing arts, a performance is an event announced and carried out by the executer, called a performer, in the presence of spectators both in the physical space of the theater and in public or private places.

Succinctly, Patrice Pavis (1999) clarifies that the term performer—the name given to the executer of a performance—can be used to “mark the difference in relation to the word actor, considered very limited to the performer of spoken theater” (p. 284, free translation). Conventional theater is where the performing artist (actor) represents a character, acting on their behalf and being “the living link between the author’s text, the director’s acting directives and the viewer’s gaze and listening” (Pavis, 1999, p. 30, free translation). Therefore, although theater occurs live in front of human beings—which makes it performative—the classic executer of the theatrical scene is acting and speaking on behalf of another and not themself.

In turn, without making themselves into another, the performer acts, interacts or manifests based on an articulated purpose that, without a prior conclusion, is open to the unexpected. The major point of a performance art is precisely to be perceived as an event added to its due consequences. Thus, the adjectivation of the term expands its intersections, making reverberate an act that may or may not use elements linked to a previously stipulated artistic manifestation.

Among the adjectives for the term *performance* are performative, performativity and performatic, which give another dimension to the scope of a work, showing the artistic character possibly contained in a situation that in principle would be considered only as something unusual within ordinary life. The performative act comprises initiatives that take place live, having as effect an intervention in the life, whether social or particular, of the one who perceives the event. In an artistic exhibition, for example, the work is performative when it causes reactions that interfere with the progress of life in that place. Most of the paintings exhibited do not go beyond the appreciation in visual terms that focus on the momentary sensation of the observer. On the other hand, certain works of painting evoke effective reactions such as indignation or pleasure at the exhibition venue, but which can resonate in the social sphere.

That is what happened in the case of *L'origine du monde* (The origin of the world), an 1866 painting by the realist painter Gustave Courbet.

It is worth noting that, since the mid-twentieth century, the relation with other artistic manifestations has been intensifying in the theater, in which the performer is no longer restricted to being the one who makes themselves into another, representing a character previously created in a written work. It is noted, then, the performative character associated with the combination of theater with various artistic manifestations, which are commonly carried out live, such as musical, dance, circus or visual arts performances. These are works that concern the artists' relation with life, even when in an allegorical style or representing some character, as is the case of the actor.

Over time, the performativity present in the theater led creators and scholars of the actor's art to examine more in depth issues related to the work of Stanislavski and other members of the Moscow Art Theater. With the help of intense experiments, a plural denomination emerged for the performer in the theatrical performing art: actor-performer.

As found in Vygotsky (2009), Diderot's paradox—to technically reproduce or actually experience the action on stage—was preceded by other theater thinkers. And the reasons are various:

First, as in any concrete mental phenomenon, the actor's work * represents a part of the socio-psychological activity that must be studied and defined primarily in the context of the whole to which it belongs. The function of a stage performance at a given time for a given class must be revealed as should be the basic tendencies on which the effect of the actor on the viewer depends and, consequently, it is necessary to determine the social nature of the theatrical form in the context in which the given stage experiments ** will have a concrete explanation (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 14, free translation).

It should be considered that the experiments that resulted in the rise of the term actor-performer deepened the link between the actor's art and life in the present time, being freed from the need for a previously written text that determines what should be said and done on stage. It is an unfinished work, but which will take place in manifestation and happening. A study would be necessary to detect, in this context, a possible application of the psychology of the actor in the manner proposed by Vygotsky, especially considering the term *perezhivanie* widely used in his texts. Certainly, this would require intense, specific and promising work, given that

Vygotsky's precepts on the relationship between psychology and art—especially that of the actor—point to the clear need for perennial attention and constant analysis.

According to the studies of Delari Junior and Passos (2009), *perejivanie* is a neutral noun composed of a radical (*jivanie*) that derives from an archaic verb (*jivat*) whose meaning is to live. In turn, the prefix (*pere*) gains possible variations of meaning: “(a) orientation of the action through something (for example ‘pereshagnut’—traversing, overcoming); (b) performance of the action again and/or in another way (for example: ‘peredelat’—redoing, reforming; and (c) overcoming (for example: ‘perestradat’—overcoming a suffering” (2009, p. 9).

It is noted the procedural character determined by the prefix, and it is worth revisiting here the use of the term in the theater proposed by Stanislavski, justifying once again mentioning Knebel's translation note:

Within Stanislavski's theatrical system, *perejivanie* refers to the process of experience lived in the present moment. Theater as “the art of lived experience” (*iskústvo perejivania*) is precisely the new definition of theater as imagined by Stanislavski and the Russian school. The sensation or the life that is experienced here and now are opposed to the theater of representation, or of imitation; this is a theater where it is necessary to live, and not to appear alive. In Latin languages, *perejivanie* is often mistranslated as “reliving [a past experience]” (Knebel, 2016, p. 26, free translation).

According to the study presented in Vygotsky (2009), which was based on the English version (Vygotsky, 1999) in relation to the Russian original, the translator and scholar Achilles Delari Junior makes a correlation between the languages and notes that, in English or Portuguese, the Russian term *perejivanie* and its plural, when they appear, can mean scenic practice or artistic experiences in the sense of ability to write, adapt or enact a play and also as experiences of the actor. In all these cases, it is possible to notice that the term gains a sense of practice or lived experience in the art of theater. On the other hand, as observed in the annexes, in other writings of Vygotsky the word brings significations that, in our view, greatly enrich the study of the actor's creative work in the historical evolution of theater in the twentieth century. Meaning emotional experience, vital experience, ordeal or affliction, the term is associated with experiences that can affect an individual's personal development, influencing their social relationships and may even change their life trajectory. That is precisely what Capucci's (2017) investigation also shows, citing scholars who give the term the meaning of lived experience as a

state or condition of living. This means that, in the actor's craft, *perejivanie* means more than living, enduring and identifying with someone's (the character's) emotion. Ergo, beyond experience lived by the actor in the personal sense that can coincide or identify with what is happening with a fictitious being, created to be represented, *perejivanie* (state or condition of living) can be translated as human experience. Consequently, in the art of acting such condition would imply the production of aesthetic effects of what would also be experienced by the audience before the theatrical work, especially with regard to catharsis.

Seeking to continue what Konstantin Stanislavski proposed in his studies on the actor's work, the Polish Jerzy Grotowski chooses to call *performer* the artist who shows himself on stage before someone he will no longer call a spectator to consider a witness. This process took several decades and started with his trip to Moscow to study and get to know Stanislavski's place of work, still in the 1950s.

Theater director and scholar of great importance, who lived between 1933 and 1999, Grotowski seems to have given extension to what operated etymologically in the Moscow Art Theater, whose space provided for the scenic work ceased to be called theater or rehearsal room, being called studio and enabling former collaborators of Stanislavski to advance in the experimentation with what they saw as acting work. According to Grotowski, what was happening under his command proved a place of ritualistic activity, a laboratory that was detached from the idea of producing a spectacle or work to be exhibited: "Ritual is performance, an action performed, an act. The degenerate ritual is a spectacle." (2015, p. 1, free translation). Therefore, more than creating a finished work that resulted from the staging of a play, the goal was the creation of a cathartic state involving the spectators: "Then the witnesses enter into states of intensity, because, so to speak, they feel a presence. And this is thanks to the Performer, who is a bridge between the witness and this something" (2015, p. 3, free translation). Thus, the Performer is considered a "bridge maker," which is close to the term *perejivanie* in the sense of orientation of the action through something, this being true both for the one who acts on stage and for the one who witnesses their act. And it should also (once again) be noted what Knebel's translators observe, in reference to *perejivanie* in Stanislavski's theater: "It is important to emphasize that it should never be understood as the result to which the actor aspires, but as the very source of action, that which literally sets them in motion" (Knebel, 2016, p. 26, free translation).

Not separating art from life and, through theater, seeking a possible renewal of meanings to live is what has been perceived in proposals of creators and thinkers of theater art for a long time. In the eighteenth century, the Frenchman Denis Diderot (1713-1784) already proposed his well-known paradox for the work of the comedian, being one of the references used by Vygotsky, while in the Russian theater itself there were also good examples for such discussion. The actor Mikhail Shchepkin (or Schepkin), who lived between 1788 and 1863, and the playwright Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) prove strong influences on the thought and practice of Konstantin Stanislavski aiming at the work of the actor. In a lecture, held in 1924, cited by Nikolai Gorchakov (member of TAM), Stanislavski reportedly said:

La tradición del Teatro de Arte de Moscú hunde sus raíces en el período de Schepkin y Gogol. [...] Schepkin exigía que los preceptos de Gogol se encarnaran sobre la escena en imágenes artísticas, realistas. Fué el artista realista más grande. No aceptaba situaciones que no pudieran justificarse, que no se extrajera de la vida misma. Exigía del actor conocimiento de la vida, una reflexión completa acerca de ello en su trabajo en escena (Gorchakov, 1956, pp. 24-25).

Since then, the point was to overcome the simple idea of imitation or artificial representation of life by the one on stage. With this, the performatic act gains strength, which is linked to life, equaling or even overlapping speech, classically considered supreme in the art of theater. As proposed by Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), the performatic act should impose itself as a sensation, something above the dramatic text, aiming to suspend the barrier between the actor and the spectator, between the stage and the audience, between the scene and life. In dramaturgical terms, it is what Danan (2019) indicates as being dramaturgy in sense 2, which opens conditions for the experience:

The path is narrow. What to do with the character when we no longer believe in the character and want to see a performer perform on stage a series of actions that refer only to themselves, without mimesis? [...] Stripping the character of itself to let the actor be seen as a being, in their existential “nakedness,” outside of any composition. Not trying to create an “other world,” but believing in this one, in the present of the scene in its materiality (Danan, 2015, p. 18, free translation).

Hence, in this “theater of experience,” it will be necessary to give way to new forms of dramaturgy, in which the author does not detach themselves from the scenic practice. Thus, the

future of writing for performance is increasingly imposed through the art of performance, and it is worth questioning whether the literary text will survive this.

Two expressions that refer to the unfolding of the happening itself, as well as to its perception: performativity and *performity* (here, a neologism). They deserve to be highlighted because they concern the relation with life and, with regard to artistic manifestation, we can consider performativity as the incidence (interference) of a work on the life of the artist and their surrounding in real time, including there the people who witness the fact. In turn, in our opinion, *performity* would concern the incidence (influence and presence) of life (of the artist, of the place or the observer) on an artistic work. In the performing arts, pertaining to live happenings, such as theater, dance, circus or a musical, such adjectives can occur simultaneously. There is an interaction between the scenic act and the life that is current.

The incidence of the work on current life (performativity) is noticeable especially in *performance art* and installation (a type of work of the visual arts). That is because, in such manifestations, the major characteristic is precisely the fact that they are created to interfere in the space and/or in the relationship with the observer. On the other hand, performity refers to a real situation that in the present time interferes in the course of the work, either in the space or in the body of the performer and, consequently, in the observer's perception. Therefore, in both cases there is an interaction between the work and the course of life, which can lead the viewer to the re-enchantment of the world, as expressed by Erika Fischer-Lichte (2019) regarding the aesthetic experience. Based on such concepts, it is worth revisiting the following statement:

Many of those who were active in theater produced extremely complex systems of actor performance in which they found a concrete expression not only of their authors' purely artistic aspirations, not only style canons, but also systems of practical psychology of the actor's creative work (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 6, free translation).

The psychology of the actor is associated with and concerns the individual (here conceived as a social being), the person (ontological being) and the subject (in this case, the being who acts). Each of these terms refers to a function with distinct but complementary relations and consequences that fall on a particular and unique being. Hence the uniqueness proposed by Vygotsky, which denotes a necessary updating of the words that compose the art of acting. As he noted, acting scenically requires the consideration of historical issues that imply

human evolution in terms of social, cultural and ontological values. Therefore, it seemed important to us to update the approach to the psychology of the actor considering, according to Fischer-Lichte (2019), the re-enchantment of the world as a cathartic effect. Thus, it will be possible to admit the art of performance as fertile ground to also sow a psychology of the actor-performer through the need for catharsis, “without which there is no art” (1999, p. 298, free translation), as written by Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky.

References

- Aristóteles. (1987). *Poética*. Nova Cultural. (Original publicado em c. 350 a.C.)
- Capucci, R. R. (2017). *Perejivanie: um encontro de Vigotski e Stanislavski no limiar entre psicologia e arte* [Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade de Brasília]. Repositório Institucional da UnB. <https://repositorio.unb.br/handle/10482/23604?mode=full>
- Capucci, R. R., & Silva, D. N. H. (2018). “Ser ou não ser”: a perejivanie do ator nos estudos de L.S. Vigotski. *Estudos de Psicologia*, 35(4), 351-362.
- Danan, J. (2019). A dramaturgia no tempo do pós-dramático. *Revista Cena*, (29), 14-23.
- Delari Junior, A., & Passos, I. V. B. (2009). *Alguns sentidos da palavra “perejivanie” em Vigotski: notas para estudo futuro junto à psicologia russa* [artigo apresentado]. III Seminário Interno do Grupo de Pesquisa Pensamento e Linguagem (GPPL), Capinas, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2019). *Estética do performativo*. Orfeu Negro.
- Gorchakov, N. M. (1956). *Las lecciones de “regisseur” de Stanislavski*. Ediciones Pueblos Unidos.
- Grotowski, J. (2015). Performer (P F. de Mendonça, trad.). *eRevista Performatus*, 3(14).
- Knebel, M. (2016). *Análise-ação: práticas das ideias teatrais de Stanislavski* (M. Tenório, & D. Moschkovich, trad.). Editora 34.
- Marinis, M. (2005). *En busca del actor y del espectador*. Galerna.
- Pavis, P. (1999). *Dicionário de teatro*. Perspectiva.
- Pavis, P. (2017). *Dicionário da performance e do teatro contemporâneo*. Perspectiva.
- Platão. (2004). *A República*. Nova Cultural. (Original publicado em c. 380 a.C.)

- Smagorinsky, P. (2011). Vygotsky's Stage Theory: The Psychology of Art and the Actor under the Direction of *Perezhivanie*. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 18(4), 319-341.
- Stanislavski, C. (1976). *A construção da personagem*. Civilização Brasileira.
- Stanislavski, C. (1989). *Minha vida na Arte*. Civilização Brasileira.
- Vygotski, L. S. (1999). *Psicologia da arte*. Martins Fontes.
- Vygotski, L. S. (2009). *Sobre o problema da psicologia do trabalho criativo do ator* (A. Delari Jr., trad.). Original publicado em: Vygotsky, L. S. On the problem of the psychology of the actor's creative work. In L. S. Vygotsky. *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky*. (Vol. 6). Kluwer Academic; Plenum Publishers.
- Vygotski, L. S. (2023). Sobre a questão da psicologia da criação pelo ator. (P.N. Marques, Trad.). *Pro-Posições*, 34, ed0020210085. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1980-6248-2021-0085> (Original work published 1936).
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1999). On the problem of the psychology of the actor's creative work. In L. S. Vygotsky. *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky*. (Vol. 6). Kluwer Academic; Plenum Publishers.

Submission Information:

Submitted to evaluation on July 28, 2021; revised on January 24, 2022; accepted for publication on August 9, 2023.

Corresponding author: *Universidade Federal da Paraíba – UFPB, Artes Cênicas, João Pessoa, PB, 58051-900, Brasil.*