

**TEACHING STAGE ACTING AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY:
TOWARDS A SOMATIC EDUCATION**

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The teaching of drama took a singular turn in the twentieth century. It became official, institutional, and established its pedigree in universities. Now it is time to question. This is evident in the discussions of theoretician and critic Josette Féral, with great European and North American directors and actors, for example. Among their number are some eminent teachers. Reading these discussions, (Féral, 2001) even if they do not focus primarily on the training of the actor, allows us to sketch an initial portrait of the situation.

While generally admitting that training schools are necessary, some North-American artists have some harsh comments to make. Gabriel Arcand, for example, talks about a "culture of facile and superficial emotions" (in Féral, 2001, vol. 2, p.64), while Pol Pelletier adds that "we don't know what emotion is, where it comes from, how it finds expression in the body," while external pressure "leads to doing anything whatever" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.243). For Richard Schechner, the quality of eastern forms is strongly linked to the fact that "Asians are not afraid to make training last a long time, to tell you that it will take ten years for you to be good, while our students expect to be good in ten minutes" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.310).

Following the same line of thought, in Europe, Philippe Sireuil reminds us that we must continue physical and intellectual training our whole life long, while we should "view results (of training) with modesty and relativism" (in Féral, 2001, vol.1, p.329). For Philippe Van Kessel, "the occupation of actor is one of the only ones to abandon students to their own devices after they leave school. That no refresher courses exist is an aberration" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.351). Iouri Lioubimov, in turn, affirms that the training of the actor must be changed. "The great masters probably teach well but Stanislavski's psychological method, as we understand it, has not existed for a long time and its students have turned the system into a doctrine. As a result, the system is no longer effective. Today, television is smothering theatre" (in Féral, 2001, vol.1, p.219).

We have probably never upheld more contradictory rules than we do today in the ambiguous relations we entertain in teaching between art, creation, technique and conformity of thought and form. We are perpetuating a serious schism between theory and practice. We continue to use rather vague vocabulary to talk about the process of the work since it seems more important to achieve the required results quickly. We are just as wary of acting techniques and of instinct as we are of the intellect. Words and commitment seem frightening. "At first, I looked for masters, with all that implied: authoritarianism, abandon, discipline ... That isn't easy to accept," admits Gilles Maheu (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.194). In fact, the institution of theatre, in general, now refuses to accept the principal of "master." We don't dare affirm anything. We prefer to say we have no work method.

TRAINING THAT HANDS DOWN A TRADITION, BUT WHICH ONE?

The tradition of Western theatre rests on a series of rebellions, reforms and counter-reforms. Artistic trends appear when curious thinkers and artists resist a tradition that they know in depth. Referring to Stanislavski is the only tradition remaining that people admit to teaching, and yet one to which, more and more, everyone is opposed. Still, few people understand "the system" well, since translations of his writings are fragmentary and truncated. The same is true of Brecht. Artaud, Grotowski, Meyerhold, and the Far East - all fascinate us. But who understands them thoroughly?

In short, there is no longer any "great tradition" with which we can challenge ourselves. And too, art is no longer the concern of an elite but must be accessible to anyone with any "talent" at all. The vocabulary can no longer be esoteric but must be such that it can be transmitted quickly and democratically. And so, a large part of training consists of "surfing" through theories and practices in order to expose students to the greatest number of approaches possible. And practically speaking, to prepare actors to be able to do everything and anything so they can make a living when they hit the job market (television, film, advertising, dubbing), sometimes doing stage work but still in situations of accelerated production (110 hours of rehearsal) while continuing to attend auditions ...

Since everything has to be done quickly (in three or four years in Québec), the choice is generally to emphasize technical learning: a technique, basic techniques that we hope students will master one day if they continue to work on them after they graduate. Then we teach them to develop a certain amount of creativity and assume responsibility for learning how to get along in life, to see themselves both as a marketable products and managers of their own careers. All of this, against a background of general ideas on art, creation, social commitment ..., while the notion of making a contribution within a theatre company these days seems almost utopian.

Do young artists perhaps still dream of doing theatre, of continuing to learn and going deeper when they finish school? Have we made them believe that they have no need to continue their development as artists and craftspeople? As students move from one course and from one project to the next, isn't the paradoxical logic that develops in their minds the *real* "living tradition," (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.89) to borrow the terms of Eugenio Barba, that we teach in training schools these days? How can it be otherwise? How can we reconcile values that appear so contradictory?

THE SMALL DIFFERENCE THAT WOULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

In artistic training, we are taking more and more interest, though, in the creative process of the artist. While, historically, we often placed much more importance on the subject matter, the instrument, the piano, fingering and notes, on history and analysis rather than on the musician, we are beginning to discover ways of having more direct access to the quality of the sound and music. For music is first and foremost within the musician. And the theatre of the future lies within the actor. Until now, Western civilization has very rarely turned within, not knowing what to call the "indescribable", how to touch the "illusive," how to point to the "invisible." For a long time, it has distrusted anything that can be neither objectified nor quantified.

We have long preferred the surface to the depths and placed more importance on appearances and results than on the neuromuscular organization of musicians, the quality of their movement. We are beginning to take an interest in the quality of the movement of their interaction with the movement they sense in the score, and in the quality of the movement of their interaction with the movement of another musician, another living organism. We can begin to do the same thing with regards to the actor. We can begin to place more importance on what neurologists define as the question of the *qualia*, awareness from the point of view of sensory and lived experience (Edelman & Tonini, 2001, chapter 5).

On both sides of the Atlantic, we are reacting more and more to a way of perceiving ourselves as disembodied heads or as headless bodies. Movement (associated with the body) has long been experienced as something dangerous and of little importance, insofar as it remained impossible to describe and very difficult to control (the head being metaphorically dissociated from the body). Theatre anthropology, stemming from Europe, suggests a totally new order of traditions (Barba & Savarese, 1991). At the heart of these, Eugenio Barba is interested in what he considers the essential, "reconstructing organicity on stage" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.104). Robert Wilson himself, in North America, now conducts workshops for his actors and insists, "We must begin with very simple things. How to walk on the stage: it is very complicated. Where is the body's weight? What is the point of contact of the foot with the ground? How do we sit on a chair? How do we take hold of something with our hand? How do we speak? We need to learn all these things" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.364). Robert Wilson, like Eugenio Barba, is rediscovering the continuum of movement and immobility, of speech and silence.

In the history of ideas, it is to the notion of movement that the nefarious consequences of the evolution of this metaphor of opposing mind and body can be traced, a metaphor that continues to rule a certain perception of the human being in the West (Guimond, 1987, introduction). It confuses two levels of description of the human experience with a vision of the human being that is at the outset philosophical and religious. It postulates the immortality of the soul as opposed to the mortality of the body to establish the dominance of reason over passion, of the head over the senses, of the written word over oral expression and sensory experience. The twentieth-century aesthetic, believing that in doing so it was rebelling against a 'psychologizing' theatre tradition, absorbed to a large extent the confrontation between word and movement, dissociated one from the other. At the end of the century, people became interested in finding a "connection to the body" as Alice Ronfard indicates: "When the body and mind are really connected, when there exists a back-and-forth movement between the mind and the body, a communication route is established, giving the artist a great deal of freedom" (in Féral, 2001, vol. 1, p.315).

HOW TO GET BEYOND DUAL THINKING

The issue remains a central one. How can we connect the text to the body? It seems that present-day theatre training has not yet been able to find a way of overcoming the use of a kind of dual thinking, other than miraculously by a few especially gifted artists. "Unfortunately, most often, work on the text employs only atrophied bodies. Dancers often have a discourse, an expression that is totally cold, almost intellectual, abstract," remarks Gilles Maheu (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.198). Eugenio Barba, advocating the use of paradoxical thinking,

has been doing research for several years to break the impasse created by this habit of thinking in terms of a duality: "It is still the text that serves as starting point, but it is not just a collection of symbols on a sheet of paper. The text becomes a living process and so there is no longer a separation between word and action. Everything then becomes living word, living process, living reaction. That is why I talk about vocal actions in exactly the same way as physical actions: these vocal actions are rooted in the same physical impulse" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.106).

Should we start from the inside or the outside? The inside or the outside of what? Of whom? For Robert Lepage, to start from an emotion "suits certain actors, certain characters, but the contrary also exists. We start from outside and move in slowly, until we find the core of the character" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.173). Should we start from knowledge? Is knowledge necessarily opposed to experience? Emotion to intelligence? There too, Robert Lepage suggests, "To lead toward a dramatic emotion, to offer it, to bring it forth, we have to know what we are talking about ... Often we don't appeal to the actors' intelligence. And so, there is no appeal to the intelligence of the spectator either ..." (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.174) This is also the opinion of Peter Sellars who points out, for example, "How can we put on a Shakespearean play about the corridors of power if we've never worked at the White House?" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.342)

In the United States today, Harold Guskin's research, rediscovering a dialogue that he terms instinctive with the text, seems like a revelation: "Taking your time to breathe in and out while you look down at the page to read the phrase to yourself allows you to access whatever unconscious thoughts or images it evokes. It doesn't matter what comes up – however trivial, simple, deep, or apparently unrelated it is – as long as it is your actual response at the time, and not what you *think* is appropriate" (Guskin, 2003, pp.6-7). Instinct, thought, action still remain irreconcilable terms for the author of *How to Stop Acting*, while in his practice, he seems to be an important guide for well-known actors who consult him throughout their careers and have begged him to write about his way of coaching.

Practitioners are afraid to describe their method of work for fear that the sphere of influence of their thinking be immobilized and then betrayed, as we see in Jean Asselin, for example, who says he has developed a bias against theories. "Also I am becoming reticent to finalize my essay on the grammar of mime and to put into writing the insights that have charted the way of research in dramaturgy during the last fifteen years of Omnibus. I feel somewhat afraid of seeing this research shackled by formulas" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.76).

The author of *How to Stop Acting*, favouring an instinctive approach to the text, struggles with vocabulary that seems unequal to his practice, because his practice rests on theoretical foundations that have yet to be formulated and requires some manipulation of accepted vocabulary: "The important thing is to take the time to explore as deeply and as boldly as you can. Never skim. Leave no line of dialogue or moment unprobed. I don't want the actor to analyse, but that doesn't mean I don't want him to think about the character and the text. On the contrary, I want the actor obsessing passionately over the character and text. But I want him thinking about them in a way that isn't neat or tidy. I want him wandering around the character's dialogue, thoughts, feelings, and experiences" (Guskin, p.56).

Jean Asselin poeticizes, which is another way of twisting concepts no longer appropriate: "What is essential to our reflection and our experimentation is to establish two-way traffic from the mind to the body and from the body to the mind. This is called the 'feeder,' an open road, an imaginary oesophagus where physical alarm (the tendency) and mental inspiration circulate indiscriminately, each feeding off the other ... The ego must not come between the movement and the idea that generated it, so that neither is repressed or censored" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.79).

Moving from the verbal to the non-verbal and from the non-verbal to the verbal requires being able to move from one level of consciousness to another, which becomes possible when we cease to consider these levels of consciousness as impervious. Human beings do not live with two separate consciousnesses but are equipped with a nervous system that functions in a global manner and with a complex brain, an organ that is really unique to each of us as a result of our personal history. As a matter of fact, it is through movement, the search for the vertical, that the faculties of abstraction and language appear as the brain forms and adapts to every new situation. The theatre is the place for the meeting between very different beings with one thing in common, the fact that they move and speak. Shouldn't we before anything else count on the specificity of human consciousness, count on what Eugenio Barba calls "organicity"?

Francisco Varela, biologist and specialist in the cognitive sciences, aptly comments in *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* on the usual way of questioning oneself and interpreting the world. "The anxiety is best put as a dilemma: either we have a fixed and stable foundation for knowledge, a point where knowledge starts, is grounded and rests, or we cannot escape some sort of darkness, chaos, and confusion. Either there is an absolute ground or foundation, or everything falls apart" (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991, p.140).

SOMATIC EDUCATION: THE MISSING LINK ...

This anxiety so well described by Varela expresses rather a kind of rigidity of thinking and, at any rate, a fundamental misunderstanding of life and movement to the extent that the ground rarely collapses under our feet. The crack exists, rather, inside us. From the time we begin school, in fact, education is divided into two branches: physical education and intellectual education – often, in both cases, a lot of “sound and fury signifying nothing” as Shakespeare would have it. At best, can religious and “moral” education, popular psychology and artistic education fill the gap and assuage the anguish created by such a split in the unity of the person for whom learning makes less and less sense anyway?

Education of the senses, of the fine sensibilities, of the emotion as support of an intention - all of this is set aside at the end of early childhood and continues to be learned amateurishly on the fly. In this area, artists, who are especially prone to anguish, are very gifted but often lacking in guidance. How and where is education of the sensibilities carried out? We place importance on emotions and sentiment without much idea of where we stand between them and, especially, without understanding their fundamental relationship to the experience of a movement lived in all its “organicity.”

“Spinoza was right,” affirmed the neurologist Antonio R. Damasio in the French title of one of his books (1999, 2003), elaborating recently on the major difference between emotion and sentiment. This new clarification allows for a better understanding of the distinction that Robert Wilson establishes between exterior emotions and an interior formalism (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.368) based more on a feeling from which we can distance ourselves than on the raw projection of an emotional reaction. It is evident to Eugenio Barba as well that “the actor feels all the time, and it is precisely this kind of interior process that determines the subtext, the underscore, what designs its form, the architecture that it has fine tuned, what determines its stage comportment ... It isn’t always possible to verbalize it and to reduce it to psychological and emotional categories such as we learn in school” (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.110). Between the approaches of feeling and distancing in the way an actor plays a role, a great gulf has been created around a misunderstanding and a conceptual void that has never been filled since Diderot and the formulation of his famous “paradox” (Diderot, 1830/1967).

According to Jacques Nichet, the stage is what saves great actors, what makes them human (in Féral, 2001, vol.1, p.257). It is to this vast human domain (above and beyond muscles and intellect, the animal and the conceptual) that somatic education opens up the missing link between physical and intellectual education, both the result of an internal rupture causing anguish. Somatic education is concerned with the living body, with movement felt and lived from within. A new discipline, it brings together methods developed, some more than a century ago, by men and women of a number of cultural and professional origins exposed to difficulties that led them back within themselves, whether we think of Frederick Matthias Alexander, Elsa Gindler, Lily Ehrenfried, Gerda Alexander or Moshe Feldenkrais . In their own way, each opened up avenues in health and education, sports and the arts, leading to freedom from Descartes’ error as set out by Antonio R. Damasio (Damasio, 1994). In Québec, there is a regrouping of these methods and a certain sharing of their different applications, among others in the arts field (www.education-somatique.ca).

Since, in general, art and modesty go together, artists usually prefer not to explain, not to talk about their problems, but rather to use the secrets of their private lives to serve the expression of another’s word. Badly managed, this modesty leads to an *aesthetic of pain* to which artists are strongly attached, perpetuating in themselves conflicts and violence that they try to explain aesthetically. Where does this tradition come from that, to be acceptable in the arts, movement, like emotions, still must seem not only dangerous, be acrobatic and unnatural but also hurt and pander to the hero within? Before such a notion of the body and emotions, there is no choice but to change paradigm. “We must transform the difficult into easy, the easy into habitual, the habitual into beauty and the beautiful into admirable,” said Stanislavski (Ovadis, 1999, p.123, note 5) who was interested in the creative process of the embodiment of the actor’s physical actions that seemed to him so far removed from the pictorial discourse of his era (Stanislavski, 1956).

MOSHE FELDENKRAIS AND THE THEATRE

Moshe Feldenkrais was not a man of the theatre, but he was fascinated by the work of the actor. As a judoka, doctor of physical science and especially as a pioneer of somatic education, he knew that “to have one’s head in the clouds” and “to have one’s feet on the ground” seem to be contradictions only in a world of static ideas. He knew that using our heads freely to direct movement and maintain a constant relationship with the ground by continually shifting our weight is a fundamental condition of maintaining the unstable balance of the bipeds that we are (Feldenkrais, 1948/1981). There is no question that this is what led him to offer several workshops for Peter Brook who praised the virtue of his work. “In him I found,” Brook said, “someone with a scientific background who had a global understanding of his subject area. He had studied the body in movement with a precision that I have found nowhere else. The body, for him, is a whole. From that starting point, he developed his teaching, teaching

that incorporates most eastern and western systems" (in Schechner, 1995, p.44). A large number of artistic directors and actors refer to Peter Brook these days. It is rather interesting to see how often this reference appears. To define theatre, Brook returns to an empty space that we must inhabit and offer to the experience of the spectator. But how?

For Moshe Feldenkrais, it is through movement, foremost, that the thinking, emotions, sensations and self-image of the person, and the overall state of the nervous system, are revealed. Movement not only reveals the person, but it is a place for concrete intervention to facilitate change. For Feldenkrais, the somatic educator, ignorance seemed to be the root of all evils, ignorance especially in the sense of loss of contact with what we know, with who we are. Civilized beings (even actors) are often characterized by their loss of sensitivity, their loss of the capacity to feel what is happening within them and around them, and therefore, by difficulty in responding in a healthy way to what happens to them or difficulty in carrying out simple intentions. Doesn't the fascination for Harold Guskin of the United States these days stem from his maintaining that the actor does not have to "create the character" but to respond continually and personally to the text? For him, responsibility and the ability to respond (*response ability*) seem like two sides of the same coin.

In his message presented to the first international conference on psychodrama in Paris in 1964, Feldenkrais developed a line of argument bringing to light three principal aspects of his work in relation to the work of the actor: the importance of self-image, of muscle action connected to skeletal awareness and, finally, of the essential unity of mind and body (Feldenkrais, 1988-1989). In an interview given to the *Tulane Drama Review* in 1970, Feldenkrais returned to these ideas. Questioned on how to recognize quality of movement in theatre, he referred to efficacy and the awareness of a reversible movement. As for spontaneity, Feldenkrais recalled that spontaneity is based on a long period of learning: "Those actors who claim to do it," he said, "give an abysmal performance on one day and a perfect one the next. ... But when the actor is well trained, aware of his body, his mouth, his eyes, his volitions and has full contact between the outside and the inside, he can pick his own way" (in Schechner, 1970, pp.122-123).

Thus, Feldenkrais insists on the actor's need to develop awareness of the neuromuscular system through movement. It is an improved relationship with gravitation that will allow the actor easier access to the neutral state necessary to create different characters. The awareness of his skeletal support in movement through the gravitational field, allowing freedom from compulsive muscular habits, returns all creative potential to the actor. In this way, "the impossible becomes possible, the possible, pleasant and the pleasant, elegant" to return to one of Feldenkrais' sayings that recalls Stanislavski's (in Purcell, 1980). Could this be the key to the ideas of presence and energy that raise so many questions these days? (In her discussions, Josette Féral questions all the artistic directors and actors about these two ideas.) In any case, it is one way of examining these phenomena.

Feldenkrais and Brecht were contemporaries. Not only does Brecht emphasize the need to produce gestures that are a source of astonishment and "unhabitual" perception but, what is more, he employs paradoxical advice. Some of it is given in the negative form of indirect suggestion. (Brecht, 1964, p.245) Similar strategies have since been developed in hypnosis, for example, if we think of Milton Erickson's use of language and some of the verbal suggestions used in *FELDENKRAIS* ®. To whom should we refer, then, if the external directions seem contradictory? Harold Guskin uses similar strategies (Guskin, 2003, especially chapter 2).

Similarly, Brecht's direction of actors obeys the principal of incomplete information that stimulates the creation of meaning at the same time as it shows a kind of communication similar to *pacing and leading*, developed later and used widely in somatic education (Brecht, 1963, p.101) . Like Feldenkrais, Brecht, who thoroughly understood Stanislavski's thinking, supports the research of the actor in an indirect manner and points out paths to explore by bringing the actor back to the image of himself in movement.

RESTORING THE POTENTIALITY OF THE ACTOR

The *FELDENKRAIS* Method ® defines itself as a method of learning. In the movement lesson proposed, we take care not to describe the content in advance; it is easier for the nervous system to be open when it doesn't know what to expect. It is on the alert and it busies itself with giving meaning to whatever is presented to it. Thus, a *FELDENKRAIS* lesson fosters discovery of the process by which we can most easily manage to organize a movement and integrate it into an action.

For this reason, a *FELDENKRAIS* lesson depends on the use of a movement that feels "unhabitual" to the nervous system. The nervous system actually recognizes the organization of a movement and its context, but not the muscular work involved. Thus, pain or a "block" can be overcome, in *FELDENKRAIS*, by changing the context in which it appears, rather than pressing, pulling or pushing on whatever is resisting. It is on the level of changing the organization of movement as the latter is perceived and felt by the student that the *FELDENKRAIS* Method is especially effective and original. It fosters this overcoming of appearances, facile emotions and conformist or repetitive interpretations; moreover, it helps to prevent injury.

Feldenkrais believed that the responsibility of the teacher (and his competence) consists in inventing appropriate learning situations that lead the student to develop unsuspected potential by gradually broadening the range of his possibilities. Being constantly faced with one's limits and one's pain is to learn over and over again how painful it is to feel powerless and thus to risk becoming more so. Isn't this what we find, unfortunately all too often, in schools?

This way of looking at things aims at restoring the potentiality of the actor. Moshe Feldenkrais often said that what interested him was not the suppleness of the body but that of the mind and the potential of each person to recover his own dignity. How is it that we manage to rediscover the pleasure principle and the principle of play so dear to Brecht by choosing gentleness and by respecting the limits of others in the same way we respect our own? How is it that profound changes can be effected which otherwise might never have happened by allowing people to become their own specialists and their own principal point of reference once more, by avoiding all judgment and every corrective approach?

TAKING THE TIME TO GET PAST APPEARANCES

"The Feldenkrais Method cannot be used as a band aid solution because it is a comprehensive method. Whatever is said about it, it does not give quick results," affirms Peter Brook. "On the other hand, for those who are pursuing a personal quest, even a single session can provide real enlightenment that helps you for years" (in Dreyfus, 1981, p.113).

It really takes time then to come to grasp the more and more subtle differences on the level of sensation. It also takes time for the nervous system to integrate the new self-image as it changes with each lesson. People who develop these possibilities increase their capacity at the same time to construct a rich "subtext" (if we refer back to Stanislavski), to create with greater and greater ease "astounding effects" (if we think back to Brecht) through the quality of their alertness.

One *FELDENKRAIS* lesson leads the student to become more and more sensitive and more and more intelligent, if we accept intelligence as the ability to understand "the inside" of differences that are more and more subtle, without really having "willed" it, simply because the functioning of the nervous system has been refined. The capacity of the student to be attentive and to concentrate increases to the extent that he develops contact with himself and an acceptance of what he progressively learns to understand as his identity (Guimond, 2004). From a relational perspective, he or she comes to "sense", in the same way, the unique character of the other person and, in so doing, to develop a contact that is a winning one both in quality and authenticity. *Being present to oneself* and *being present to the other* is something that can be learned by anyone who wants to learn it using this kind of practice.

The pedagogy of Feldenkrais is based on the fact that it considers effort (useless muscular effort, forced emotion, intellectual volition) as proof of immaturity in the development of a function, as a missing skill. On the contrary, a well-coordinated action, maintained with clear intention, is always experienced with an inner feeling of ease, grace, harmony and pleasure, even if it demands time, attention and precision.

Awareness of self (and consequently of others in the entire complexity of their persons) can only be achieved through sensitive work with a minimum of useless tension and very slowly so that a finer perception becomes possible. Just like Richard Schechner who bases his presentations on the practice of yoga with his actors, like Peter Sellars (in Féral, 2001, vol.2) or Harold Guskin who endeavour to work the text sentence by sentence in a sensitive and experiential way, so too does somatic education place more importance on the process than on the result.

And the quality of the result will be totally different. Repeating the same sentence twelve times, each time finding in it a new meaning, as Peter Sellars does (in Féral, 2001, vol.2), or forcing yourself to interpret it in five different ways as Harold Guskin suggests requires you to find what Eugenio Barba calls the *sats*, "the state of alertness that makes us ready to act in any direction, a state of alertness with no quality of energy that is harsh or stiff ... This quality of neutrality, ready to be transformed into a precise reaction, is one of the qualities of being present" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, p.111).

The state of alertness that Feldenkrais evokes when he refers to the neutrality of the judoka, perhaps similar to the *sats* as Eugenio Barba defines it, is also found in the neutrality of the actor, which is inseparable from his maximum capacity of mobility, i.e., of transformation. Jorge Lavelli is on guard against the personality of the actor and of the image he plays of himself. He is more interested in "... his transformation, his metamorphosis. It is these changes that are interesting and that give an actor presence, in other words, multiplicity, the thing that is unexpected, changed, inexplicable, that is the actor's own" (in Féral, 2001, vol.1, p.208).

In this way, the actor develops his capacity to allow his vulnerability to show by placing it at the service of the work offered to the public, as Philippe Sireuil would have it. "For me, to be vulnerable – as an actor – is to be open; it is to allow yourself to be seen; it is to accept to reveal yourself without wanting to show off. To be an actor, it seems to me, is to have the ability to present several credible images of yourself: to start from yourself to return to yourself. And as long as we have no clear image of who we are, as long as we haven't accepted it, it seems to me it will be difficult to "play": we enhance or we disparage our self-image, but we do not play with it" (in Féral, 2001, vol.1, p.328).

From this perspective, the student actually learns to overcome both the rigid masks he has created throughout his history in order to survive and those that are imposed on him in the daily social context. He learns to dissociate them from situations where they used to have (or still have) a real function. This increase of personal freedom is accompanied by increased mobility in using these masks to overcome them on stage as well. And so, the availability that allows him to stop "faking", as Harold Guskin would like, and to take responsibility for his presence and his choices on stage is restored to him.

FOR A SENSITIVE AND REFLEXIVE PRACTICE

According to Maturana and Varela (1980), cognition is an organic activity, an activity of somatic experience, of the lived body, phenomenological, of the body felt from within. This cognition must be differentiated from knowledge that is the representation of our understanding through language, nourished by observations that we call "objective" and that underpin all our theories. Nevertheless, to nourish further experimentation, all artistic practice, like all scientific research, necessitates moving from experience to the construction of theories that result from this experience. In the theatre, moving from the experience to the representation of this experience is in itself an experience. All artistic practice is always a reflexive practice for it necessitates making choices, exploring, nourishing a process. We are always moving from the "I" to the "he" or "she", we enter into dialogue with other "I"s who are so many "he"s or "she"s, creating characters, fictional worlds, perhaps, but nevertheless real insofar as they inhabit the same space and the same time frame as we do.

For Moshe Feldenkrais, thinking and action cannot be dissociated. Thinking cut off from action is nothing but useless babbling and potentially dangerous. An action without thought turns us into robots and testifies to our powerlessness. The organization of thinking is constructed in the same way as movement is organized. The organization of movement is based on the organization of thinking. Peter Sellars states: "Of course, my work is based on theory. And the theory that interests me is the one that defies appearances, the one that requires us to go beyond appearances to gain access to models or types of connections that aren't obvious at first but that are, in fact, essential. We have to reach these connections" (in Féral, 2001, vol.2, pp.339-340, translation). The school of the future, in my opinion, should cultivate an approach to the training of artists that is both sensitive and reflexive, a somatic education.

Since many access routes have existed for more than a century, to begin with, why not count on establishing privileged links with a practice of self-awareness through movement within the space of our environment? Why not change the paradigm? A new theatre practice requires new theoretical hypotheses. It must be based on the creation of new concepts, the use of a new vocabulary associated with the description of living phenomena. Perhaps a century after Stanislavski, a century of research and innovation in the area of the "process of incarnation," of somatic education, we are being invited to pursue the questions he formulated. How can what we know now of the "process of embodiment" be integrated into the training of the actor? Among other things, where do we, in turn, place ourselves in relation to the pictorial discourse of our time, a discourse that has become multimedia?

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