

**ACTING STYLES AND ACTOR TRAINING
IN MODERN CHINESE DRAMA THEATRE –
ON THE EXAMPLE OF NANJING ACADEMY OF ART**

In this age of rapid information development, the arts can be a very efficient and rapid medium for cultural exchange between countries. Theatre is a comprehensive art performed on stage, and there are various emerging theatre styles that are influencing each other from country to country. For China today, avant-garde, absurdist and post-realist theatre styles are emerging and being accepted by audiences. But realism has always been the main style of modern Chinese theatre.

In the early 20th century, drama was introduced to China from the West, and Chinese theatre began to evolve from the classical era to the modern era of theatre, which "abolished singing and used dialogue". In the last century, modern Chinese drama has gone through different historical periods of inception, development and maturity, and has produced a generation of great and outstanding realist dramatists, such as Guo Moruo, Cao Yu, Lao She, Tian Han, Xia Yan, Yang Han Sheng, Hong Shen, Ouyang Youxian, Chen Baishen, Li Jianwu and many others. Their dramatic activities and plays have left a glorious page in the history of Chinese theatre.

However, the development of theatre is not complete with great playwrights and dramatic works alone. Drama needs to be presented through stage performances, and without the stage performances of actors, drama loses its artistic life. The acting style and performance system of modern Chinese theatre is an integral part of modern Chinese theatre art that cannot be missing. The formation of this theatre performance style and performance system is one of the main signs that modern Chinese theatre has completed its modernization process.

Realistic acting has a very important place in performance, because it comes from life. In other words, it is the actor's understanding of what is happening in the real world, and the actor's interpretation of it, which creates a realistic storyline with a certain degree of alteration. Due to the nature of realistic acting, it is easier to draw the viewer closer to the performance.

It is easier to bring the viewer closer to the screen. Due to the specificity of realistic acting, performers need to have excellent acting skills, firstly, they need to have a certain understanding of the character they are performing, the nuances of the character's language and body language, the meaning of the character's existence and the specific role of the character in the specific storyline. After understanding the character, you need to experience the character first hand, feel the psychological changes in the different storylines the character is in, understand the plot of the character's performance and incorporate some of your own thoughts to find ways to make the character you are performing realistically. With a certain understanding of the techniques involved in acting, and an overall grasp of the relationship between one's life and one's role, one is able to present the role to the viewer in a better way.

For the vast majority of theatre actors, their basic acting skills are largely developed at various professional theatre arts colleges. Herein lies the distinction between the academy and other ways of learning acting, as the teaching of acting in the academy is based on a realistic approach to creativity. Many of those who succeed in becoming stars and outstanding performers cannot, I am afraid, completely deny the fact that they are much more likely and contingent to succeed than those who have not been trained in this creative method and technique In terms of professional foundation training,

solidity of basic skills is also the key to success. As with the training of scales and fingering for pianists, the training of musicality, the foundation of sketching and the development of a sense of color, line and space for painters. In the acting profession, the mastery of those basic elements of action, the creation of a sense of creative self and the ability to cast those characterizations essential to creating a character, the training and strengthening of the qualities of the actor, the sharpening of understanding, sensing, imitation, imagination, sense of conviction, concentration, observation, memory etc. are all essential to later stage. The sharpening of understanding, sensing, imitation, imagination, sense of conviction, concentration, observation, memory, etc. are all fundamental abilities that develop for later practice on the stage that cannot be underestimated.

It is therefore important to summarize and examine how the relationship between the acting style of modern Chinese theatre art and the acting system that actors are trained in complements each other. This is an important part of the research for this report.

The ultimate expression of theatre is the art of stage performance, and the core of performance is the actor's performance. Performance training is an important method of training and strengthening the actor's basic skills. The teaching of drama in China's major art schools is heavily influenced by the Soviet Stanislavsky system of acting.

Stanislavsky says in his book «The Birth of a Character is similar to the System in its organization of the actor's creative process, but it is different. It changes the four periods of the System's rehearsal process into three, merging the first two to form three stages: preparation for the role, rehearsal for the role and performance of the role» [1, p. 3]. Stanislavski's understanding of the actor's process of creating a role has always been in flux. As early as the 1940s, one of the most influential was his 'four periods' of awareness - experience - embodiment - influence, which he published in a rehearsal of *The Agony of Wisdom*. --The four periods of influence.

On the basis of Sze's system, Chinese dramatists wrote a syllabus for theatre in 1956. The teaching plan in the "Acting" syllabus was as follows: The task of the first year - to enable students to achieve organic, genuine, i.e. rational, purposeful and effective movement in the prescribed situations they create for practicing their own sketches. (i.e. elemental training - ed. added) The task for the second year - to enable the pupils to achieve organic, genuine movement in the prescribed situations established by the author - the playwright. Use fragments of the play as material to complete the task. (i.e. fragmentary training - added by the editor) Task for the third year of study - begin to create characters. Use individual acts of the play as material to complete the task. (i.e. creation of a one-act play - editor's addition) Task for the fourth year - create a complete stage image in a play. (i.e. the creation of a multi-act play (big play) - editor's addition) Students should learn internal acting techniques alongside the hard work of mastering external means of expression (mastering the laws of the logic of the lines, training the breathing correctly, practicing the voice, loosening up the body, etc.). The actor must master his physical condition to the same extent as he masters his mental technique. The tutors of the courses (e.g. lines, physical training, etc.) are therefore expected to work closely with the acting teachers and to carry out their work in accordance with the requirements of the acting faculty [2, pp. 8–9].

This syllabus is constantly being updated and revised, but has always been used by Chinese theatre and art schools. As one of the top eight art schools in China, the Nanjing Arts Institute is no exception. In the acting classes of the Nanjing Arts Institute, teachers always emphasize the essence of the Sze system, and students are constantly practicing in class to experience the characters and the situations.

The exploration and practice of actor training and training began with the study and application of Stanislavski's acting system, and then moved on to absorbing and learning from the world's best acting training methods, and then to building a "Chinese School" of actor training system by combining the essence of ancient and modern acting arts.

The realist approach is still the mainstay of acting training, and whether it is for actors to experience different styles of theatre or to act in today's film and television productions, the realist system is the basic acting training method that universities should grasp.

Although the study of the Sze system is not yet systematic and in-depth, and the training techniques and artistic experiences of foreign countries have not yet been absorbed and borrowed in an analytical, selective and critical manner, I believe that in the future we should maintain our own characteristics in the process of incorporation and inclusion, and gradually manifest the Chinese national temperament in the process of innovation and transformation.

LIST OF USED SOURCES

1. Stanislavski, K.S. *An Actor's Work on a Role*. Trans. and ed. Jean Benedetti. London and New York: Routledge, 2010. – 272 p.
2. The syllabus for the course "Acting". – Central Academy of Drama, Beijing, 1956. – 136p.