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**THE PART OF IMAGINATION IN THE ACTOR'S ART**  
**STRATERGIES IN COMPOSING A ROLE**

**SUMMARY OF THE PhD THESIS**

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**Key words:** *image, imaginary, artistic imaginary, reproductive, imagination memory, reason, representation, perception and feeling, creative imagination, social creativity, artistic creativity, fantasy, intuition, inspiration, enlightenment, control, prediction, inference and deduction, substitutive imagination, invocation, internal elaboration, identification, empathy, sympathy, fusion, transposition, affectivity, emotion, quasi-emotions, impersonation, imaginary object, fiction, invention, internal vision, adjustment, belief, stage work authenticity, expressivity, creative personality and individuality, innovation and originality, catharsis.*

### **Summary of the main Parts of the Thesis**

This work is an analysis of the highly controversial notion of imagination, a notion that represents a permanent topic of research and debate for a number of scholarly fields such as aesthetics and philosophy or psychology, sociology and anthropology. Nowadays, it can be argued that most of contemporary philosophy is committed to show the importance of imagination, constantly highlighting the crucial part it plays in our lives, in human activity and, more importantly, the influence it bears upon our psychological system. Given the fundamental part that imagination plays in the human activity, extensive specialised literature has been dedicated not only to the research of different types of imagination and to the knowledge of the mechanisms and processes of its production and functionality, but also to the relationship that such a notion engages with the other psychological processes, like cognition, perception, sensation, memory, affectivity, empathy or motivation.

If the place and the part of imagination in the general taxonomy of psychological processes have always been given special scholarly attention, in exchange, the concept of artistic imagination is a lesser-researched topic. In fact, although a subject like the *Art of the Actor/Acting* relies mainly on the building and development of imaginative senses, on the psychology of the actor and, implicitly, on imagination and imaginary, very few works deal exclusively with this notion.

For an actor, imagination is one of the most powerful and complex instruments at hand, to the point that it sometimes becomes even more important than reason or memory. It is imagination that enables a subject to dream, to experiment things that go beyond the reach of his daily or perceptive reality. The imagination of an actor is a tool for artistic creation but its impact goes beyond the mind and soul of the artist as it constantly engages the mind and soul

of the audience; it becomes an instrument of seduction, stimulating the receptor through various analogies, similitudes and fantasies. The ways in which an actor manages to materialise and transpose the products of his/her imagination on stage and, equally important, the way in which he/she makes an invisible (imaginary) object present to the perception of the spectator should be at the core of any theatrical performance. An actor's extraordinary capacity to create images, to give life to representations, to transform them into real facts or beliefs, and to deform them with equal force (by ensuring and facilitating both the selection and combination of images stemming from a subject's previous experiences, as the production of new images, with no correspondent in the material reality), all come from imagination. The imagination of the actor allows him/her to create and project fictional realities or fantastic events that go beyond perceived reality, in front of the audience; it gives an actor the power to provide different versions of reality, to defy the limits of verisimilitude and to explore not only what seems possible but also the impossible.

Consequently, due to the importance of imagination in *Acting*, we consider that a more rigorous analysis of its various definitions and of the paradigms and conceptions that emerged around this notion is necessary. Also, concerning this topic, we chose to focus mainly on the way in which these aspects regarding imagination are employed in scenic creations.

The guideline of our research is the need to offer a better knowledge of the different forms or versions in which imagination becomes manifest, a better understanding of the mechanisms and procedures that stimulate and make imagination function. This frame of thought helped us illustrate different strategies or techniques of part elaboration, which are formulated in the third chapter of our thesis. As anticipated, our work is structured into three main Parts.

The **First Part** of our thesis highlights several important paradigms and conceptual delimitations issued by researchers who dealt closely with the notion of imagination. On the one hand, this Part focuses on both more general and specific definitions of the notion of imagination while, on the other hand, it aims to make a clear distinction between the concepts of imagination and the imaginary. Eventually, we will bring into debate the various types of imagination and the processes each of them implies and, last but not least, we will discuss the nature of the relations between imagination and different psychological processes.

Thus, by imagination we refer not only to the process of reproduction, of realisation, transformation and evocation of past events, but also to a process that implies the construction of what is new, of fiction, a process that implies a productive activity. In addition, the imaginary or the artist's imaginary world is not only a result, a virtual world built by the

imagination as a sum of images, an imaginary and fictional world, but also an internal and personal world that comprises the psychological emotional and expressive luggage which depends on dreams, fantasies, memories, urges and wishes. The relationship between imagination and the imaginary reveals, on the one hand, the importance of the creator, of the material from which he is build (memories, the past, the present, the future, wishes, thoughts and aspirations, the imaginary being the material that makes imagination work); on the other, it shows the importance of imagination (in the context of scenic arts, the imaginary is also a product, a new creative process) that creates a new world, it makes it concrete and possible while it remains virtual, fictional and imaginary, by evolving from one form to another, from one process to another. In this context, the imaginary as important as the actor's sensations and perceptions, allowing him/her to explore his/her inner world from which one can extract the creative material necessary to the production and accomplishment of a work of art. Nevertheless, the imaginary is a product of imagination, a parallel separate world, an illusion that is both veridical and possible. The actor creates real images with the help of the imaginary, which in their turn may determine a set of sensations, while the products of imagination may become an object of perception, of the imaginary as product.

In this first part we also analyse the various types of imagination and we determine their importance and functionality in the creation of stage works. If, for example, when we talk about the concept of imagination the approaches tend to vary from one author to another, when it comes to the types of imagination, most authors focus on the following forms: reproduction imagination, creative imagination, substitutive imagination, the reverie, the dream, perspective dreaming and hypnotic processes. While the reverie, the dream, perspective dreaming and hypnotic processes all denote types of spontaneous and involuntary imagination, reproductive imagination, creative imagination and substitutive imagination represent forms of voluntary imagination. In the the case of stage works art, it is these three types of voluntary imagination that can be trained, developed and oriented according to the requirements of the artistic process involving one actor on another.

Thus, if by reproductive imagination we refer to the representational capacity of an individual, to his/her ability to construct various mental phenomena, situations or events that respond to verbal narratives, without any interference of a concrete, intuitive, material – the reproductive imagination being strongly linked to memory (they develop complementary, but they are not identical) - then creative imagination is the most complex form of imagination that relies on value and qualitative principles. The latter is defined by reference to its purposes, it is a product that denotes originality and novelty. Yet, as in the case of

reproductive imagination, the creative side of creative imagination cannot be reduced to the mechanisms of combination and transformation of imagistic sequences. Besides its novelty and its originality, it creates a link between the product, the idea (characterised by novelty, originality and social meaning) and a more revealing and profound signification regarding the meaning of life. Consequently, the difference between these two types of imagination concerns not so much their creative manifestations, but their element of originality.

Substitutive imagination concerns that type of imagination that enables one's imaginary transposition as another, it determines both the act of projection and the act of introjection, of substitution of one's own self with an objective model. In the context of stage works, this type of imagination underlines not only the capacity of the actor to penetrate the intimacy of things, eventually identifying himself/herself to them, but also it emphasizes the fundamental role of imagination, revealing how strongly it weighs on the emphatic process.

In this first part of our work we have also bring into attention and we analyse the most important processes of imagination, such as: agglutination, analogy, association, adaptation, modification, substitution, amplification, division, rearrangement, multiplication, omission and empathy. It is important to bear in mind that when we talk about the concept of imagination and its specific operating structures, an important difference between structures that are linked to imagination and structures that refer to reasoning and cognitive activity is to be made. In contrast to the operation of reason, which are logical operations that process, analyse, synthetize and formalize information under the form of concepts, judgements and reasoning, the processes that concern imagination display a high degree of combinational freedom and a high degree of plasticity. Therefore, if it is by the means of reason that an individual aspires to deeper knowledge, it is through imagination that new realms of research are opened, offering unexploited areas to our thoughts and innovative solutions to existing problems.

We would like to underline that this section of our first part, in which we analyse the relationship between imagination and the other psychological processes (memory, sensation, perception, reasoning, affectivity), is a pivotal point in our demonstration and to our research in general.

We would further argue that if memory represents the support and primary mechanism of imagination and of the imaginary developments that sustain it, sensations are not only the material with which imagination operates and through which images are formed, they are not simply instruments or constitutive elements, but they also represent causal elements that enhance and foster the illusion of reality. Sensations are the ground on which perceptions



develop. The latter are in close relation to representations (they cannot emerge unless a certain set of perception is assimilated) and reason (they provide information, they analyse and synthesize various concrete situations from a perceptive point of view etc.), memory (material for representations) and imagination. All processes and relations that we deal with in this first part play an extremely important part for stage works. By resorting to memory, an actor can make use of past experiences in order to construct certain scenes; with the help of different representations and mental pictures he/she can bring an experience into the present in a intuitive and significant way. In his work, an actor largely employs his memory (be it sensory, visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, kinaesthetic, imagistic, voluntary and non-voluntary cognitive memory, affective memory), past experiences, sensations, perceptions, representations and imagination.

We could also say that imagination is in a state of permanent connexion and interaction with reason. If solutions and various pieces of information on a certain matter appear through reasoning, imagination enables the subject to elaborate and invent hypothesis and resolution strategies in order to confront certain problems by using a large number of processes at hand (agglutination, amalgamation, amplification, reduction, analogy and association, remoteness and proximity, substitution, adaptation or empathy).

The power of reason is associated to the imaginative power and they both influence the way in which, once on stage, an actor adapts to different situations that an author confronts him/her with. The function of objectification that influences a creative process – by analysis, reflection and critical thinking – also determines the understanding, the knowledge, the intuition and transposition of an actor into various situations and actions on stage. In this case, imagination becomes a caution for logical thinking. In its turn, this characteristic triggers invention by intuition and prefiguration of solutions. Imagination modifies, restructures, eliminates, includes and creates new elements, ideas and images, it analyses them, controls, develops and enhances them. Although, as we already know, in the act of creation, the power of reason is associated to the imaginative power, if by using his imagination an actor creates and works with fictional situations treating them as if they were real ones, it is through reason that a permanent analysis and formulation of hypothesis is made possible during the artistic process.

In so far as affectivity and empathy are concerned, we should underline that they are also in strong relationship with the reproductive imagination (it generates empathy towards situations, events, past circumstances, invented images, fictional worlds, people or objects) and with the creative imagination. The latter does not only have the impressive ability to

combine and reconstruct images, but it is also able to represent and anticipate what is new and to associate an important meaning to the newly obtained product, that is significant to both man and society. Empathy denotes the capacity of a person to transform on an imaginative level someone else's attitudes by perceptive, cognitive and affective transposition. We should lay emphasis on the fact that such a transformation implies both a participatory will and an imaginative effort that allows us to transpose into and to predict someone else's psychology, to affectively penetrate the background of our partner and partially identify ourselves with him/her, provided that the *as if* convention is preserved. On stage, empathy, affectivity and motivation become elements that influence the quality of the creative act and facilitate the production of affective, emotional and behavioural responses. This process makes a work of art innovative and valuable.

Consequently, we consider that imagination should be taken into account as being inextricably connected to all psychological mechanisms. Despite the fact that it has been considered as a recess of reason or even associated to a sinful crime against the spirit that is to remain pure and secluded, as Mielu Zlate states, imagination needs to be addressed differently. Both on a more general level and in the context that our research attempts to define, imagination is an extremely important part of human psychology. Without imagination, actions, values and cognition would be paralyzed and the subject would become sterile.

In the **Second Part** of our thesis we conducted a more specific inquiry, by transposing in the theatrical context some of the most influent and largely used theories on imagination, issued by Leslie Stevenson, a distinguished professor of the Department of Philosophy and Anthropology at the University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom. In her article "Twelve conceptions on imagination", Stevenson offers a broad philosophical view on some of the most common approaches of the concept of imagination. Very rich in examples and extensively preoccupied to show the theoretical productivity of the concept of imagination, her perspective makes reference to different fields of research, ranging from the philosophy of the mind to aesthetics, ethics or poetry to religion.

Being extremely diverse, these conceptions tend to vary a lot and, at the same time, they shed a new light on the different capacities of the individual. Among these, as formulated by Stevenson, some of the most common are: *the ability to think of something not presently perceived, but spatio-temporally real; the ability to think of whatever one acknowledges as possible in the spatio-temporal world; the liability to think of something that the subject believes to be real, but which is not; the ability to think of things that one conceives of as*

*fictional; the ability to entertain mental images; the ability to think of anything at all; the non-rational operations of the mind, that is those explicable, in terms of causes rather than reasons; the ability to form perceptual beliefs about public objects in space and time; the ability to sensuously appreciate works of art or objects of natural beauty without classifying them under concepts or thinking of them as useful; the ability to create works of art that encourage such sensuous appreciation; the ability to appreciate things that are revelatory or expressive of the meaning of human life; the ability to create works of art that express something deep about the meaning of life.*

This second part of our work is extremely important as it aims to bring a consistent reinterpretation of Stevenson's conceptions on imagination. It is in this part that we issued out and we classified the most important characteristics of creative imagination with respect to stage works and, implicitly, to part elaboration strategies.

In the lineage of Stevenson's philosophical perspective and conceptual classifications concerning imagination, which were a stepping-stone to our investigation, we illustrated the most important characteristics and qualities of creative imagination and those of scenic talent. We also developed these features in the Third part of our thesis, in which we formulated a series of strategies used in part elaboration. To give our research a more practical core we resorted to the example of our bachelor degree show, "Părinți și copii" [Parents and children], based on the novel *Peyton Place* by Grace Metalious. As a result, we have identified the following characteristics:

1. The capacity of imagination to illustrate a certain imaginative content or an absent object, which was previously perceived under the form of a concrete-intuitive image, of a symbolic image.
2. The capacity of imagination to amplify or diminish a previous experience.
3. The capacity of imagination to reproduce or reiterate an experience, to evoke and update an experience. In this case, the imaginative product is seen as an authentic perception. The capacity of imagination to evoke expressive and original representations with the help of memory.
4. The capacity of imagination to create an indirect causal relation between an actor's previous experience(s) with an absent object and his/her present thoughts concerning it: accommodation. The capacity of imagination to anticipate and to attribute significance to a certain product, by creating an adaptive situation of correspondence between the products of imagination and present reality.

5. The capacity of imagination to amalgamate and agglutinate segments from a single experience or from a number of situations in order to create a new image.
6. The capacity of imagination to transform what is familiar into something that is unknown and its ability to create, transform and combine representations into new and original imagistic sequences.
7. The capacity of imagination to mentally represent images from a part and from the imaginary world a part presupposes.
8. The capacity of imagination to speculate with respect to the past and the future, to anticipate.
9. The capacity of imagination to adapt to possible innovations.
10. The capacity of imagination to participate in creating concepts and notions, its capacity to create mental representations: imagination as *background for logical thinking*.
11. The capacity to detect and speculate on different imagined states or behaviours, to adopt them and project them under the form of a significant internal image.
12. The capacity of imaginative self-projection: the ability of imagination to create, develop and motivate a presupposition by using the *if* notion; to create possible realities in which the actor behaves *as if*.
13. The capacity of imagination to develop the initial premises: its elasticity and fluidity.
14. The capacity of imagination to facilitate the production of a requested type of behaviour: the identification, the prefiguration and expressivity of imagination.
15. The capacity of imagination to induce a process of quarantine: the double power of imagination.
16. The ludic capacity of imagination.
17. The capacity of imagination to think up and represent the unreal or even the absurd, without any rejection or any loss of its value and aesthetic function.
18. The capacity and expressivity of imagination and reason to assume and develop a purely fictional material, be it internal or external, and to impersonate it in a composition, in an artistic form.
19. The capacity of imagination to communicate a product, in an original and organic, way by merging two elements: the internal elaboration of the scenic message and its scenic, original expression.

20. The capacity of imagination to develop internal visions, strong images, visual and auditory sensations, to generate and attract similar emotions that concur with an imaginary object and which will further reflect other visions that are related to the visions of the character.
21. The capacity of imagination to play an internal film made of images which is in conformity with *if* or with different inventions of imagination and with other suggested situations, and the ability to generate internal and external actions.
22. The capacity of imagination to develop an internal model and to translate it into a certain expression. The expressive power of imagination: an organic relationship between representations evoked by both memory and the reproductive imagination and the physical expression, the scenic transposition.
23. The uniqueness of imagination: the blending of imagination, of an internal vision, of the image that arises from this process. The relationship between the body, the voice and the psychological level.
24. The intuitive capacity as a fundamental trait of creative imagination and creativity: the ability to predict stage tasks in a non-rational, plastic and symbolic, to create live and flexible images concerning the partners on stage and any other stage signals.
25. The capacity of imagination to generate and then operate with representations and images: the flexibility of imagination to interpret and reflect purely intuitive traits of an experience, the capacity to restructure and to reproduce a representation or a previous situation in an intuitive way, the capacity to develop and intuitively anticipate, to invent original images, to predict and to intuitively transform emotions and an imagined model.
26. The capacity of imagination to form and create convictions and beliefs based on impressions and spontaneous previous perceptions that are involuntary and irrational: the natural tendency of an actor to illusion, a fundamental trait of artistic personality and talent.
27. The capacity of imagination to trigger emotions and irrational or negative affective states.
28. The capacity of imagination to adapt and to communicate a stage reality that will influence both one's own perception and the receptor's perception.
29. The capacity of imagination to play with ideas, images and forms, to create them and to transpose them on stage; the capacity of imagination to associate

information, representations and perceptions by using the following processes: analogy, omission, appropriation, amalgamation, association, prediction, invocation, substitution and emphatic fusion.

30. The capacity of imagination to combine scattered elements and transform them into meaningful, plastic and organic images; these images are at the basis of a new, original and revelatory product; the flexibility, mobility and adaptability of imagination that make it able to complete, restructure and invent images, to generate ideas and solutions, to evoke representations of memory or to create and think up illusions – the resolving power of imagination.
31. The capacity of imagination to adapt to an imaginary model, substitution and expressive transfiguration.
32. The capacity of imagination to create revealing images or to find legitimate analogies between an actor's inner life and the life of the author, of the playwright: the capacity of the actor to find or create inner, individual, correspondences between the themes suggested by the author and his/hers own creative personality (idea, image, super-theme) that will guide him/her throughout the duration of a stage work.
33. The capacity of imagination to create plausible and veridical realities and worlds that will act upon the receptor in a revealing way generating emotions.
34. The capacity of imagination to stimulate, to indicate or to evoke and reveal hidden contents.
35. The capacity of imagination to project, anticipate, explore and substitute.
36. The capacity of imagination to compensate, to create emotional discharges (*catharsis*) and a feeling of purification.
37. The capacity of imagination to adjust the moral standard of humanity through aesthetic emotions.

As we have already underlined, on one level, this part of our research aims to shape the most important abilities and characteristics of creative imagination and, on another level, it intends to issue or determine a set of clearly defined creative strategies. According to an actor's disposition, personality and creative task, these strategies are designed to help the actor conceive, guide structure and, last but not least, accomplish a creative act. We believe that all these capacities are in fact abilities that we can attribute to talent and to the creative imagination. In addition, we should take into account that by following a set of exercises and activities these capacities can be trained, educated and improved. Bearing all these in mind,

this part of our work is crucial to the understanding of the general research questions that we have highlighted in our thesis.

In his work on stage an actor uses either logical operations of inference or deduction, either he/she evokes and thinks up inventions that imply memory and imagination (the process of imagination); an actor continuously strives to improve his/her creative activity, and permanently employs comparisons, analogies, he analyses, indicates, projects, substitutes, transposes and builds new forms of synthesis.

The **Third Part** of this thesis is essentially conceived as a case study, a rigorous analysis of the creative process developed by second year students, graduates of 2014, specialised in the *Art of the Actor*. For this reason, this third part of our research has a more practical overtone, resorting to multiple examples taken from the show *Părinți și copii* [Parents and children], based on the novel *Peyton Place*<sup>1</sup> by Grace Metalious.

The stage allows the actor to play with representations, with images, situations, actions or circumstances, in a word with a multitude of fictional worlds that one does not actually own, but which are accepted as if they authentically belonged to the one instrumenting them. In this sense, imagination is paramount to acting. Consequently, an actor should pay close attention to the importance of imagination; he must be able to find a disciplined way to work with images, with representations or memories, with his/her own wishes and desires, with the subconscious and with dreams. This implies that actors are active participants of a broader process and their skill also resides in finding the right way to generate a feeling of artistic construction. An actor should enhance the compositional rules by a constant modification of the past, the present and the future.

As stated at the beginning of our research, this thesis responds to a well-defined set of objectives, meaning the identification and elaboration of a series of strategies or techniques of creative acting, which – as illustrated in the previous part of this work – are in direct relationship with the most important characteristics of imagination. For this reason, we associated the most important characteristics of imagination with the essential instruments that an actor uses to create and experience, the thoughts and ideas of a character in the real world. The following characteristics have been taken into account: the capacity of creative imagination to stimulate logical deductions, to complete a given material, to logically and thoroughly invent, analyse and empathise with a certain fictional material, its capacity to update the past and previous experiences according to the state of the present (by continuous

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<sup>1</sup> Grace Metalious, *Peyton Place*, translated into Romanian by Veronica Șuteu, Bucharest, Univers, 1970.

transformation of images and details), its capacity to create and develop new images that have no correspondent in a perceptive experience, to use fiction and, last but not least, the capacity of imagination to transpose and to communicate a significant and revealing experience to the receptor.

As we have largely illustrated in this part of our thesis, the strategies of part elaboration accompany the actor throughout the entire creative process, their function is to guide and stimulate both logical thinking and speculation ; they trigger logical deduction and imaginary inferences, they give an actor the possibility to visualise, anticipate, use the tools of intuition in order to create the possible and the impossible. In so far as the students are concerned, we should underline that they were constantly guided, both on a theoretical and on a practical level, by the strategies and techniques developed in the third part of our work. During the creative process, the students used analogies, they blended suppositions and images to their personal visions, they invented and impersonated the unreal, the fantastic, the absurd, they generated new significant realities characterised by originality and artistic individuality.

Eventually, our research concerning the role and operational methods of creative imagination during the scenic process, resulted in the following strategies which we consider to be of crucial importance to any creative act:

### **1. Rational and affective knowledge of the part: reason, memory and imagination.**

#### **Guiding the imaginative process**

The rational and affective knowledge of the fictional world of a part is a necessary condition to the creative process. It permanently depends on the actor's intuition, on his/her capacity of prefiguration and transposition with respect to stage reality. During the acting process memory is concentrated on the identification and reproduction of memories, sensations, feelings, movements, of the information and knowledge that is accumulated and assimilated in the mind and spirit of the subject/ the actor. In its turn, imagination is concentrated on their transformation and recreation (it evokes them, separates them, colours them, it changes their meaning and makes them original). If memory is a starting point for imagination, reason is the one offering imagination data and ideas, allowing it to further transform them into hypothesis and strategies. As we know this activity involves a large number of processes, such as: agglutination, amplification, reduction, multiplication, readjustment, analogy, association, substitution and empathy. By using a series of cognitive operations, reasoning and judgements, an actor places himself in the sphere of knowledge and performs in fact an analytical understanding of the



aspects that are essential and necessary for his creative process. In exchange, by using imagination, an actor explores the unknown, the possible, the future, he/she invents a reality that is not present in his/her perceptive experience. If reason enables an actor to analyse, synthesise, infer and incessantly build connections and also allows him/her to verify them, then we should state that imagination brings modifications, it restructures, eliminates, includes and recreates them into different elements, ideas and new images, it adopts and transposes them. In conclusion, rational and affective knowledge is an important premise that continuously influences invention and imagination and it determines the affective-emphatic fusion of a creative process.

The rational and affective knowledge of the part is a skill that also presupposes the rational, imaginative and affective assimilation of that part, by channelizing the imagination. This activity implies: gathering external and internal data, drawing the physical and psychological profile of the model/the character (biographical record, internal information, circumstances: When? Who? What?, identification of the objectives and intentions of the character; internal information, understanding of the behavioural and affective states of a potential character: Why? For what?, filling in data by using memory, reason and imagination: conceptualisation, synthesis, prediction, issuing new connections with the help of imagination, generating dreaming topics, personal analogies, both direct and indirect, incorporation of suppositions, images and visions of the actor with regard to the fictional world.

We should also underline the fact that if rational knowledge uses logical analysis to deal with different situations and it produces logical structures (consisting in both elements that are already mentioned in the play and in elements that an actor can deduce by using supposition and hypothesis), then imagination invents and incorporates these situations.

**2. Accommodation by creating indirect causal relationships between an actors's previous experience(s) with an absent object and his present thoughts about that object, by using reproductive imagination.**

Such an activity involves the restructuring and transformation of a previous experience according to a subject's present dispositions. This process cannot be accomplished without the implication of reproductive imagination as this type of imagination associates past representations to present projective elements. The actor will be able not only to reproduce the past, but also to transform it, to impersonate it, to make it significant, and last but not least, to bring it into the present. This technique denotes an augmentation or

minimisation of a past experience, it involves its schematic transformation into an intuitive image, a symbolic image and an updating of the experience in an image or succession of images seen as chains of associations. When analysing this process we should take into account the following elements: the need to identify and place situations and implicitly the part in a familiar environment, by determining, updating and accommodating memorized experiences with the help of reproductive imagination; also, actors should search for analogies, be they direct and personal, or created, indirect; the subject should look for correspondences between sensations, feelings and representations existing in his/her memory and activate them through imaginative modifications of the past and through new perspectives on the future ( an actor must work with images, he/she must allow them to dwell in his/her subconscious, to stimulate their transformation and their adjustment according to a certain state of the present); lines should be carefully read not only from a semantic standpoint but also from the perspective of the literature, of the images and of the analogies it engenders (actors should discover personal images and analogies for every event); scenic situations must become concrete by using a personal text, by psychologically assimilating any new reality, by emphatic and imaginary transposition, by integrating the external model to a personal system of reference, by adjusting a new situation to one's own individuality.

### **3. Imagination and fantasy: combining experiences into new images that have no correspondent in the concrete intuitive material of the actor. Creating new foreign realities**

This technique implies the amalgamation of previously perceived experiences, the agglutination of segments from an experience or from a multitude of information into a new image, the transformation of the unknown into what is familiar, the blending of new experiences into new images that have no correspondent in the concrete intuitive material. When an object is associated with another object or when an experience is associated with another experience, and they are all assembled into a new image, its elements become new to the subject, displaying a feeling of unfamiliarity. In this way, our imagination creates a state that is either unknown or indirectly perceived by reconstructing the structure of representations and memories, in a word of the absent object. Also, memories become reorganised and they are recreated to fit the necessities of various situations that occur on stage, by amalgamation and fusion of real and objective elements with invented images. In their turn, these images will generate new structures, they will help transform the familiar into the unknown or the other way round.

#### **4. Thinking up and impersonating the fictional, the unreal, the absurd and the fantastic: imaginative inventiveness.**

This technique supposes the creation of an imaginary world, it denotes invention by the use of fantasy, it concerns the development of an internal and external material that is purely imaginary and the remodelling of this material in a new compositional and significant structure, in a new artistic form; the result of this transformation and of the incorporation of different internal visions is a product that is both expressive and symbolic, plastic and original.

In this situation we discuss the elasticity, fluidity and originality of imagination, we insist on its ludic capacity (not only the capacity of imagination to fill in gaps but it's capacity to create pure fantasy) and, last but not least, we highlight the organic relationship between the representations evoked by memory, the reproductive and creative imagination of the actor and their physical expressions, meaning the paramount relationship between the body, the voice and the psychological level. Through fantasy and invention, by stimulating its functions of creation and production, the creative imagination inaugurates an original and innovative product.

#### **5. Communicating stage realities in a revealing manner. Expressivity, individuality and artistic originality.**

The communication of stage reality in a revealing way denotes the blending of several characteristics of creative imagination, such as the visionary, the emphatic and the aesthetic orientations. Due to these characteristics, the feelings of the artist and the unity of his/her personality are transformed, incorporated and conveyed to the audience in a revealing way (the cathartic ability of imagination).

As Konstantin Stanislavski suggests, the theatrical performance creates a sort of spiritual acoustics between the actors and the audience, it assimilates and produces live human emotions.

This technique suggests the apparition of a concrete relationship between a mental image and a subject's convictions and beliefs, which will determine the physical expression and the scenic embodiment of any requested behaviour. The physical, corporeal expression of the model does not only have to correspond to an actor's inner vision, but also it must permanently defend and enhance it. Consequently, every bodily detail, every gesture and movement, every action, mimicry and word must acquire the right resonance, it must attain scenic beauty, periodicity and unity. By using his body movements and actions, his voice and the text, an actor must translate in theatrical plastic

terms his inner states, visions and images. An actor must not only be able to develop an internal model but he must also give it a physical expression and convey its meanings. The expression of his internal vision and, implicitly, of his creative individuality should be determined by a conscious, meaningful and fruitful action, because – as Michael Chekhov suggests – every movement that an actor makes is a small work of art due to the forms it creates.

In conclusion, lightness, form, beauty and unity are primordial qualities in determining the value of a theatrical work. This value refers to the originality of the imagination accompanying the final product and to the degree of personal implication, meaning to transposition, to communication and to scenic incorporation. Throughout the entire stage process an actor should be guided by a sensibility to form and by a feeling of completeness (a panoramic view suggests the fact that the show is a unitary whole to which an actor is attuned with and which he can influence by accentuating or diminishing certain elements which he considers to be essential); an actor should constantly perceive his own actions from an aesthetic point of view because it is these actions that trigger the sense of beauty (an inner emotion associated to a profound satisfaction) from the audience during the development of the creative act.

We would eventually like to emphasize that during the creative process leading to the show *Părinți și copii*, students were encouraged to express their inner visions with the help of significant and plastic forms in accordance to a general orientation of the director, to change and recompose them and to find new values for these forms.

In conclusion to our work, in order to provide a complex vision for the concept of imagination and to further highlight its importance for human psychology and beyond, especially for the theatrical creation, we resorted to Mielu Zlate's perspective which he developed in his volume *Psihologia mecanismelor cognitive* [The psychology of cognitive mechanisms]. Zlate's definition is extremely synthetic and comprehensive, revealing a point of view that is very close to our own perspective concerning the importance of acting. In his view, imagination resembles *a hand with its five fingers, where the palm refers to imagination proper, while the small finger stands for sensations, the third finger for perceptions, the middle finger for reason, the index finger for memory and the thumb stands for affectivity and motivation. Personality would be the force keeping all fingers together, it brings them close to imagination, transforms them into a fist, gives them power to spread, detaches them or weakens their grasp, suggesting that everything we hold can fall apart. Imagination is like the fist that strikes a powerful blow or like the*

*palm that opens and lets everything slip through its fingers. Also, the idea of a continuum between imagination (at one end) and all the other psychological mechanisms (at the other) is very suggestive, allowing us to explain the relational expressions of imagination. We all know that any sensation (like pain, for instance) triggers a long cohort of images, just like a live image determines a powerful sensation. Let us remember Flaubert who confessed that when he killed Emma Bovary he could feel the arsenic in his own stomach; consequently, perceptions are a starting point and the products of imagination are prone to become objects of perception. Imagination is a background for reason and, in its turn, reason is the backbone of imagination. Imagination stems from memory, from the memories it withholds, and just like a treasury memory stocks and sometimes reinvests the products of imagination. In addition, affectivity and motivation trigger imagination or provide it with energy, they are the matches that light up and keep its fire burning. Imagination can transform everything, it can amplify or diminish, stimulate or inhibit any affective and motivational state<sup>2</sup>.*

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<sup>2</sup> Mielu Zlate, *Psihologia mecanismelor cognitive* [the Psychology of cognitive mechanisms], Iași, Polirom, 1999, p. 511.