

Opponents review for Antonio Kitanovski's Master Thesis named **The Actor and the Training** by Kateřina Daňková

Antonio's thesis consists of 6 chapters, roughly 46 pages of the body of work followed by the bibliography and photos.

In the abstract the author invites us to follow his path from his first enchantment with theatre up to current state of experience and training. He promises to mention theoretical inspiration and claims to draw a link from notorious theory to his practice.

How the interest and passion for theatre was born is described in the **Introduction** chapter. The power of shared experience, enchantment of the magic (page 10.). The first joy of being applauded and the first attempts to work on a role, the feeling of satisfaction of being accepted through stage presence. Then we can follow Antonio's path pursuing his stage career, first in school productions later enrolling theatre school.

The Actor and the Training is the name of the second chapter. It seems to me the candidate wanted this chapter to serve as a theoretical body from which he would draw a link to his own experience.

It is in my point of view an unfulfilled ambition. This part concentrate absolute majority of this thesis problems.

Formal flaws are plenty. Quotations are mixed with paraphrasing. Quotations are not properly used, framed nor indexed in the summary of links or Bibliography. Some paraphrasing changes the meaning of the quotation to an opposite meaning.

(example: *“There are different exercises for the development of our body which can not be only physical. It is clear that the physical exercises are necessary but they don't have to be built on principles other than usual ones encountered in the theatre schools. The body of the actor should be developed under the influence of the mental incentive. The vibrations of the thought, emotions and mood which fulfill the body of the actor, makes the body become alive, sensitive and flexible. If we exaggerate with physical exercise, it could prevent the body to accept the inner sensitive experiences.”* it says on page 18, as supposed quotation/paraphras from Michael Chekhov. Whereas the original states: *“Physical exercises are needed to overcome this, but they must be built on principles different from those used in most dramatic schools. Gymnastics, fencing, dancing, acrobatics, calisthenics and wrestling are undoubtedly good and useful for what they are, but....”*)

We are presented with terms like *“Authentic theatre”*, *“classical European theatre”*, later in the text as well *“honest theatre”* and *“conventional theatrea”* and the terms are never explained or rooted. Probably due to an overall confusion also the English language is the most confusing in this part.

Where the ambitious text calls for an example from candidates experience, we do not get it.

(*“The preparatory exercises which beat the tiredness and enhance the concentration placing the actor in the situation of excitement or creative condition, is what I call the Training of the Actor. On one hand, they are acting etudes, but on the other hand – development of certain attributes of the body, voice and articulation.”* Page 18.)

We get pages full of quotations (page 18. and 19.) and there is no link to personal experience. I think the title it self symbolizes the problem, we do not know the Actor ... yet.

I understand the chapter 2.4. Authentic theatre is an attempt to express Antonios views on how theatre, possibly authorial theatre (?) should be created. I assume that this chapter was meant to involve the newly gained perspective of the temporary DAMU student, as Antonio puts it *“inspired by theatre individuals”*. But again no examples of candidates practice are given no link to personal experience drawn.

As it was commenced in the introduction, Antonio comes back to tracking his own path and experience again in Chapter 3. It is dedicated to his theatre education in Macedonia and Chapter 4 to his KATaP studies. He follows his steps of advancing actor, speaks about difficulties he had to overcome.

The moment Antonio starts describing his own views and experience the work is much more coherent. There is honesty, openness and sincerity yielding humor. When I read the story of Antonio's studies in ESRA I can smell the sweat and the dust of the theatre and remember the difficulties of the complicated interpersonal relations between students of drama schools and the stress and psychophysical struggle when he describes the rehearsals. Antonio is sincere about the mistakes and clumsiness and that makes this part of the work not only fun and enjoyable but also enlightening read. (I would be very interested in the specifics of Macedonian theatre and theatre training, and maybe at its regional differences, as this motive is lightly mentioned. I miss sometimes more of a description of the inner proceedings and summarizing of the lessons learned. I do not understand the term "initiators" on page 35 as well I do not understand what do you mean by "process analogous to reality".)

What also stands out is the process of common authorship mentioned a few times for example when you had to agree on a compromise during the work on **Prometheus bound**.

When you mention "Pragmatic laws" speaking of rehearsing **Tartuffe**, I crave for some personal examples of the use of those laws during your practice.

The most personal experience the reader gets in the chapter dedicated to KATaP DAMU. Antonio describes the process of creating his authorial performance and I wish recording of that performance was a complement to the thesis.

Let me just note that there is a humorous typo on page 43. in sentence: I made my idea come true, to study at an academy where acting is learned in a psychopathic manner and from professionals.

Description of the doubts and rigmaroles is very interesting to follow.

Gray is the theory and green is the tree of life.

In the **Epilogue** Antonio rephrases his reasons to become an actor and says for example: "when the things in the theatre went well I felt that I belong to this world and I could consider myself functioning well as a human." and ".....theatre is a lot of hard work that always pays back less, but keeps you motivated and it is a place where separate individuals should act together. In that place not only that you should grow as an actor but you should be a good colleague." The ever arising importance of the means of social interaction, personal interaction and the appreciation of kind approach I noticed throughout this whole thesis.

I think the work truly speaks about the candidate's passion for theatre and life, about his path, about the possible ways of creating performance and about the importance of certain quality of communication with self and others, rather than about the description of specific actor's training. Therefore I think the name doesn't quite resemble the content. But I value and appreciate it nevertheless for the openness sharing personal story and recommend it for defense.

My question are:

How did the studies at KATaP affected you and how has it changed your approach to theatre?

Has Dialogical acting (Interacting with the inner partner) affected you, and if yes how has it influenced your acting?