

WHEN LIFE AND ART MEET: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN VYGOTSKY AND STANISLAVSKY¹

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ABSTRACT. Vygotsky and Stanislavsky, besides sharing the same cultural origin and having the historical-dialectical materialism as their theoretical basis, addressed the theme of human experience in life and in art. The term *perezhivanie* (переживание) was widely discussed in the works of both authors; by Stanislavsky, to designate the actor's experience in the character construction; by Vygotsky, in his studies on human development, and to understand personality formation as drama. We started this work from a guiding question: What are the relationships between *perezhivanie* and the creative processes in art and in life? We intended to promote a dialogue between the works of Vygotsky and Stanislavsky, exploring the problem of *perezhivanie* and the creative processes in art and in life, from an interlocution between Psychology and Art. Just like actors on stage, we are always acting. In each scene that is structured in our life, we are compelled to incarnate the roles that constitute us, living the contradictions inherent to human experience. In this perspective, we can say that theater is a microcosm of life, where relations are stressed to the maximum level; from them we can analyze the intricate web of human determinations, transformed into poetic truth. The present work verified the need for a look at the *perezhivanie* in art from a dialectical perspective with the psychological studies on the *perezhivanie* in life, understanding the relations between Psychology and Art from the prism of complementarity, and not as separate fields of study.

Keywords: Emotional experiences; historical-cultural psychology; art (psychology).

QUANDO VIDA E ARTE SE ENCONTRAM: UM DIÁLOGO ENTRE VIGOTSKI E STANISLAVSKI

RESUMO. Vigotski e Stanislavski, além de compartilharem da mesma origem cultural e terem se nutrido do materialismo histórico-dialético, abordaram o tema da experiência humana, na vida e na arte. O termo *perejivanie* (переживание) foi amplamente abordado nas obras dos dois autores; por Stanislavski, para designar a experiência do ator na construção da personagem; por Vigotski, em seus estudos sobre o desenvolvimento humano, e para compreender a formação da personalidade como drama. Partimos de uma questão norteadora para a composição deste trabalho: Quais são as relações entre a *perejivanie* e os processos criadores na arte e na vida? Promovemos um diálogo entre as obras de Vigotski e Stanislavski explorando conceitualmente a *perejivanie* e os processos criadores na arte e na vida, a partir de uma interlocução entre a psicologia e a arte. Assim como os atores no palco, nós estamos sempre *atuando*. A cada *cena* que se estrutura em nossa vida, somos compelidos a *encarnar os papéis* que nos constituem, vivendo as contradições inerentes à experiência humana. Nesta perspectiva, podemos dizer que o teatro é o *microcosmo da vida*, onde as relações são tensionadas ao máximo, a partir das quais podemos analisar a intrincada trama das determinações humanas, *transformadas em verdade poética*. Constatamos a necessidade de um olhar sobre a *perejivanie* na arte em uma perspectiva dialética com os estudos psicológicos sobre a *perejivanie* na vida, entendendo as relações entre a psicologia e a arte a partir do prisma da complementariedade, e não como campos de estudo separados.

Palavras-chave: Vivências emocionais; psicologia histórico-cultural; arte (psicologia).

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CUANDO VIDA Y ARTE SE ENCUENTRAN: UN DIÁLOGO ENTRE VYGOTSKY Y STANISLAVSKI

RESUMEN. Vygotsky y Stanislavski, más allá de compartir de los mismos antecedentes culturales y se haber nutrido del materialismo histórico y dialéctico, han estudiado el tema de la experiencia humana, en la vida y en el arte. El término *perezhivanie* (*переживание*) fue ampliamente discutido en las obras de ambos autores; por Stanislavsky para designar la experiencia del actor en la construcción del personaje; por Vygotsky, en sus estudios sobre el desarrollo humano y para comprender la formación de la personalidad como un drama. Partimos de una pregunta orientadora en este trabajo: ¿Cuáles son las relaciones entre la *perezhivanie* y los procesos creativos en el arte y en la vida? Así, ponemos en diálogo las obras de Vygotsky y Stanislavsky, que conceptualmente abordan la *perezhivanie* y los procesos creativos en el arte y la vida, desde un diálogo entre la psicología y el arte. Así como los actores en el escenario, siempre estamos actuando. A cada escena que se estructura en nuestras vidas, encarnamos los papeles que nos constituyen, viviendo las contradicciones inherentes a la experiencia humana. En esta perspectiva, podemos decir que el teatro es el microcosmos de la vida, en que las relaciones son tensionadas al máximo, donde podemos analizar la intrincada red de determinaciones humanas, transformadas en verdad poética. Observamos la necesidad de una mirada acerca de la *perezhivanie* en el arte, en una perspectiva dialéctica con los estudios psicológicos sobre *perezhivanie* en la vida, comprendiendo las relaciones entre la psicología y el arte desde la perspectiva de complementariedad.

Palabras-clave: Vivencias emocionales; psicología histórico-cultural; arte (psicología).

Introduction

The present theoretical study intends to put in perspective the aspects of *perezhivanie* in life and in art, regarding specifically the creative work of the actor. In order to accomplish that, we analyzed studies developed by L. S. Vygotsky (1896 – 1934), in the scope of historical-cultural psychology, and the writings of Constantin S. Stanislavsky (1863 – 1938) on the work of creating the character under the perspective of the actor's job.

With this aim, we intend to promote a dialogue among the works of Vygotsky and Stanislavsky, revealing the intimate relations among them by means of the analysis of the concept *perezhivanie* and of the creative processes in art and in life, from the interlocution between Psychology and Art. Our intention was to create a bridge, by means of which it is possible to move between both areas, without, however, overlapping one with another. When analyzing the works of the two authors, we intended to understand the aspects that involve the concept of *perezhivanie*.

Besides providing the encounter of the works of Vygotsky and Stanislavsky from a perspective between art and psychology, we aimed at: 1) analyzing the concept of *perezhivanie* articulated to the creative processes in art: the construction of the character according to Stanislavsky and the actor's training according to Vygotsky; 2) problematizing the relationships between *perezhivanie* and the dramatic training of the person in Vygotsky's work put into dialogue with the person's development (actor) according to Stanislavsky – the ethics and the aesthetics.

Considering the fact that the studies promote a dialogue between the works of Vygotsky and Stanislavsky are still recent, we start our reflection from a guiding question for composing this work: What are the relationships – approximations and tensions – between *perezhivanie* in art and in the life? In an extension, we intended to analyze what are the aspects that interrelate *perezhivanie* and the creative processes on the actor (in art) articulated with the *perezhivanie* and the processes (also creative) in the dramatic constitution of the person (in life).

Psyche and Theater: the incarnation of drama and *perezhivanie* in life

In his studies on genesis of human psychism, Vygotsky (2000) verified that the action of the man on the environment is not direct, but mediated by instruments and signs. When creating such mediating elements, which modify the natural landscape, the man transforms himself. According to the author, this dialectic process man-nature determines the appearance of culture, making him different from the other animals.

Vygotsky and his co-workers intended to explain how the specific human characteristics develop in each individual. According to their studies, the categories fundamental for understanding the genesis of conscious activity are history and culture (Luria, 1991). Thus, the superior psychological functions, typical of human beings, are constituted in the social relationships, mediated by instruments and signs of a certain culture and a specific historical context.

This way, for the historical-cultural perspective, there is not conscious activity out of the social relationships, and, as a result, the typically human psychological functions arise from those relationships. In the author's words: "Any superior psychological function was external – which means that it was social; before becoming a function, it was a social relationship between two people" (Vygotsky, 2000, p.24, free translation).

Vygotsky also affirms that any function in the child's cultural development appears in two plans: "first, in the social plan, then in the psychological one, first among people as an interpsychological category, then – inside the child" (2000, p.26, free translation). This notion – later attached to the understanding of the experience (*perezhivanie*) role at the constitution of human consciousness – will determine the understanding of the development of the person as a dramatic synthesis of social relationships, or "a set of relationships incarnated in an individual." (Vygotsky, 2000, p. 33, free translation).

In this sense, the human being appropriates the social and cultural acquisitions that preceded him, through his insertion – by means of his experience with the word – in a culture and in an ongoing historical flow, being able of, equally, becoming culture when being part of it and providing his experience his own significance, giving a meaning to it. This way, the subject is constituted within the dynamics among the various roles taken in the social relationships, in a dialectic process between internal and external, as Vygotsky teaches (2000, free translation): "Drama is really full of an internal struggle impossible to happen in the organic systems: the dynamics of personality is drama... Drama is always the struggle of such connections (obligation and feeling; passion, etc.). Otherwise, it cannot be drama, i.e., *systems crash*." (p.35, free translation).

In this sense, understanding the personality in its dramatic formation presupposes considering the social determination of the subject, but permeated by the creation by means of the conscious action (re-signification), which overcomes the classic view of a static and harmonic psychism (Sawaia & Silva, 2015). This way, life is structured as an "internal struggle of social positions converted into a personality dynamics that, therefore, cannot be harmonic, but stressed, dramatic, in the sense of contradictory systems". (Vygotsky, 2000, p. 35, free translation).

For Vygotsky, drama constitutes the human personality and consciousness, notion that he will develop from a dialogue between *perezhivanie* in life and in art. In his studies on superior psychological functions, Vygotsky (2006) emphasizes *perezhivanie* at the constitution of our perceptions and feelings, as a process of signification and attribution of meaning to what is experienced by the subject, as we will present following.

But what meanings and senses does the term *perezhivanie* take in the work of Vygotsky and of other authors who dedicated to the understanding of this theme?

According to Toassa (2009, p.55, free translation), the Russian word *perezhivanie* (переживание) means "spiritual state evoked by strong impressions and sensations". It conceptualizes a special psychological state, characterized by the presence of sensations or feelings experienced by someone. It can be the result of the experience with those feelings and sensations, or the act of experimenting them. In Russian language, the word has a notion of inconclusiveness, meaning experiences of content of an uncertain finalization.

In accordance with Delari Jr. & Passos (2009), the noun *perezhivanie* derives from the verb *perejivat*. In the psychological texts, *perezhivanie* emphasizes the process, aiming at a detailed analysis of experience, which generally is not understood as a goal in the daily speech. As the author affirms, the various meanings taken by the term *perezhivanie* brings some difficulties to be translated in psychological texts, particularly regarding the possibility to translate it as experience. Nevertheless, in relation to other Russian terms, *perezhivanie* is used to describe strong emotions, while other terms – such as, *opit*, term also used to describe experience – stem from more practical activities, having them produced intense emotions or not.

Following this reasoning, it is possible to interpret *perezhivanie* as a specific type of experience, result of a process – difficult, laborious, time and energy-taking – usually understood as effective experience in the consciousness. Therefore, it can be “concluded that *perezhivanie* is, therefore, a modality of experience coming from a concrete situation, to which certain subjective attitudes co-related to personal particularities were constructed” (Delari Jr. & Passos, 2009, p. 13, free translation).

The term *perezhivanie* is, therefore, in an intimate connection with the notion of dramatic consciousness, for *perezhivanie* would not be only the *dynamic unit of consciousness*, as mentioned before, but, in a certain sense, the consciousness itself.

The modern theory introduces *perezhivanie* as a unit of consciousness, i.e., as a unit at which the basic possibilities of consciousness appear as such, while in attention, in thinking, there is not such relation. Attention is not a unit of consciousness, but an element of consciousness, lacking other elements, with the particularity that [in this element], the integrity of consciousness as such disappears. The true dynamic unit of consciousness, full unit that constitutes the basis of consciousness, is *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 2006, p. 383, free translation).

It is important to highlight that *perezhivanie*, in Vygotsky’s understanding, must not be seen as a synonym of all psychic experience, but one of its aspects – considered in the totality of connections among one’s experiences, being them temporal, personal, social, historical – or as a combination of those. It is a more concrete psychological category, which involves intensity, in comparison to the broader meaning of the word *opit* (Delari Jr. & Passos, 2009, free translation).

In a study entitled *El problema de la edad* (“The problem of age”) (2006), Vygotsky discusses the necessity to analyze the development as a process, and not only by milestones (such as dentition or sexual maturation, for example) that would determine the transition from one phase to another. For the author, psychology should dedicate to the child’s acquisitions along those moments of stability and crisis, taking into consideration the constitution of the subject as a historical and cultural being, in order to understand common factors in human development and the singularity of each individual in this process.

The author comprehends the child’s development from a dialectic view of the internalization of social living, affirming that the development happens as a constant process of “microscopic changes on the child’s personality, which accumulate up to a limit, and are manifested later as sudden formation qualitative new of a new age” (Vygotsky, 2006, p. 255, free translation). Therefore, childhood would be characterized at its most by those apparently stable phases, but a comparison between the beginning and the end of a certain phase would be able to evidence significant changes on the child’s personality, with milestones that are not always visible, but which would occur from the inside, by underground via.

The development, therefore, takes place by “revolutionary”, not “evolutionary” way (Vygotsky, 2006, p. 258, free translation), i.e., with qualitative changes in personality, and not in a succession of phases more biologically evolved than others.

Regarding the development crises, the author claims that determining the limits between the beginning and the end of the critical phases becomes a harder task for psychology, for they are completely indefinite. Nevertheless, the crisis is worsened in its intermediate period, and the existence of a culminating point in all the critical ages, noticeably differentiating them from the development stable phases.

We cannot miss the point that, to understand the child’s development, it is necessary to consider that the relationships between the child’s personality and their social environment are dynamic in each phase of their constitution, as Vygotsky analyzed in his manuscript *Quarta aula, a questão do meio na pedologia* (“Fourth lesson, the issue of the environment in Pedology”) (2010). In this work, the author affirms that, in order to understand the role of the child environment, it is necessary to consider it not from absolute standards, but from relative parameters, analyzing the relation established between the child and their environment.

An aspect to be considered in this analysis is that the environment changes, for the child, at each age range. Besides that, the child themselves changes in the development process and, therefore, the role and the meaning of the elements of the environment, which remained as if they were not changeable, change; thus, the same element that has a meaning plays a role at a certain age, but

gains a new meaning and plays another role in another moment, for the relationship of the child with a certain element of the environment has changed (Vygotsky, 2010).

Vygotsky calls attention to the importance to interpret the child's development in their relation with the environment from an out-to-in perspective, analyzed by means of absolute milestones applicable to every human development, but from a view that considers the child within the process – i.e., the singularity in their relationship with the environment.

Therefore, the study of child development must analyze the way that the child becomes aware of and conceives their environment, and how they relate affectively with a certain happening. Vygotsky (2010, p.686, free translation) calls it "prism", what determines the role and the influence of the environment on the development of the child's personality and psychological development.

Therefore, not only will the child's particularities determine how the experience character will be, but also the environment itself will constitute their singularity, determining the child's particularities, which, in their turn, will be crystalized on the experience in a dialectic process:

...The singularities that constitute the person, generally, the personal singularities of the child, are mobilized under the form of a certain experience [perezhivanie], and are accumulated to crystallize within this experience [perezhivanie], but, concomitantly, such experience consists not only in the totality of those particularities of the child, which, in their turn, determine how they experimented this happening, but is also constituted in the different happenings experimented in different ways by the child. (Vygotsky, 2010, p.687, free translation).

Vygotsky teaches us that the environment, as a concrete situation, will always be represented in a certain experience; this one is a unit of environment elements and personality elements. As a method to analyze the influence of the environment on the child's development, Vygotsky highlights the importance to take into account the other influences, the level of understanding of the child regarding a certain experience, the possibility of awareness of what has been experimented, and the comprehension of what occurs in the child's surrounding environment.

In relation to *perezhivanie* in art, we can go back to Vygotsky's writings, in which the author refers to the social function of art, to the aesthetics reaction and its relationship with the other human reactions, clarifying the role and the meaning of art at the general system of the human behavior. His first analysis on this subject, entitled *Psicologia da Arte* ("The Psychology of Art") (1999), is, until nowadays, one of the most fruitful explanations already given about the art as a human expression. The author starts from the problem of the scientific study of art, emphasizing the importance of a detailed exploration of the art role in human constitution.

From this perspective, Vygotsky claims that, in order to become an object of scientific study, art must be considered "one of the vital functions of society, in permanent relation with the other fields of social life and on its concrete historical conditioning" (Vygotsky, 1999, p.9, free translation). This way, art must be seen as an inseparable part of life in society, constituting an expression of the historical context where the individual is inserted, acquiring forms of an ideology originated from economic and production relationships.

Concerning the comprehension of aesthetic reaction, Vygotsky points out the necessity of going beyond the elementary aesthetic emotion – caused by the components of the work of art itself, and that reach the senses at the appreciation – and studying the experience of the spectator from two other components: feeling and imagination.

In his explanations on the theories of aesthetic perception, Vygotsky uses the studies of authors about the topic, in which the artistic feeling is sometimes seen as a waste of energy, and sometimes is seen from the notion of the "*law of the least effort*". According to Vygotsky, his investigation points out to the complexification, in comparison with the non-artistic activity, to which the law of the least effort would apply only to its consequences, its secondary effect, and not to the aesthetic reaction before the work. For the author, the art violates the law of the least effort, for it is connected to the excitation of the complex game of feelings manifested in men – and the feeling is considered as a waste of spiritual energy.

Still in relation to the feelings, Vygotsky relates them, in the aesthetic reaction, to the fantasy, in order to explain that *perezhivanie* with the work of art by means of the sensations it causes is not just

related to what is noticed of the arranged artistic elements. It is also linked to our own capacity to imagine and create from those sensations, and the emotions that it evokes involve a conscious activity for the appreciation of the work: "The emotions of art are intelligent emotions. Instead of manifesting in clenched fists and shaking, they resolve themselves mainly in images and fantasy" (1999, p. 267, free translation).

This way, the author explains that the aesthetic experience happens in a distinct way from the other reactions of men, formulating, afterwards, the concept of catharsis. According to the author, the logical contradiction between the concrete work and its content, characteristic of art, also arouse an emotional contradiction generated by art in its spectator. This way, art promotes an intense discharge of emotions contradictory to the content of the work, contradicting the Aristotle concept in his *Poética* ("Poetics") (335-323 a.C.), at which the catharsis is, in fact, the purification of the feelings. Vygotsky defends that the catharsis is a complex process of "transformation of emotions": It is in this transformation of the emotions, in this self-combustion, in this explosive reaction that causes the discharge of emotions immediately aroused, that consists the catharsis of the aesthetic reaction. (1999, p. 272, free translation).

As for the relation between the aesthetic reaction and the other human reactions, Vygotsky contests the understanding that the feeling caused by the work of art can be compared to the other feelings experimented by man; on the contrary, the art implies something that transforms and overcomes the common feeling. Hence, every sensation and feeling, when aroused by means of art, would have something beyond the elements that are inserted in it, "and this something overcomes those feelings, eliminates those feelings, turns its water into wine, and thus realizes the most important mission of art (Vygotski, 1999, p.307, free translation).

To determine our theoretical discussion on art, we will analyze the specific issue of the actor's creative work. In *Sobre o problema da psicologia do trabalho criativo do ator* ("On the problem of the psychology of the actor's creative work") (2009), Vygotsky seeks to understand the actor as a product of the social relationships, associating it to its historical meaning, instead of seeing it from an individual point of view, from a psychotechnical perspective of emotions – i.e., the way that the actor develops certain skills (mainly emotional ones) that would assure their professional success.

In his text, Vygotsky verifies the possibility for the actor to select voluntarily the emotions in their work, aiming at transmitting to the audience the internal experience of the character. This is combined to Stanislavsky's ideas, formerly presented, which alluded to the actor's work with their own emotions and with the others' emotions, in order to be able to select consciously a certain emotion when performing his work.

From this point, our restlessness led us to observe the experience developed under the stage lights: the drama and the work of the actor. Our purpose is to understand it from the peculiar elements that compose it, in whose dimensions the social function of art is taken to the extreme level, for drama is the art that can only be realized through the inseparable relation among the basic scene technical elements, the actor and the audience.

Drama and Life: *perezhivanie* in art and its unfolding in Psychology

We have reached, then, the key point of our analysis of life experience and its relation with drama: the actor's *perezhivanie*. In order to analyze the actor's *perezhivanie* in his work, we must do it from a very specific point of view, once the actor's feelings differ, in various aspects, from the feelings experimented by the audience that appreciates a work of art.

In *Psicologia da Arte* ("The Psychology of Art"), Vygotsky (1999, p. 298 – 299) sought to analyze the actor's feeling, from that assumption, based upon the theory of Denis Diderot (1713 – 1784), the main theory of his time regarding the actor's feeling. Diderot claims that the actor experiments and represents not only the character's feelings, but magnifies them in an artistic way. According to the philosopher, the actor's feelings are measured, and are part a system of declamation, and, therefore, they are not true. The actor's feelings are not subjected to any law of unit, satisfying only the conditions required by means of a long studying process.

But it is not in this that the actor's triumph consists of: this triumph dwells notoriously in the dimension that they give to this despair. The issue has nothing to do with the fact that the aim of aesthetics is, as Tolstói joked with, one of reducing to the demand of "describing an execution as if it were flowers". The execution on stage remains execution and not flowers, the despair remains despair, but the one who resolves it is the artistic action of the form, and, because of this, it is very likely that the actor does not even experiment until the end and in a full way those feelings that the represented character experiments (Vigotski, 1999, p. 299, free translation).

We have, therefore, that the actor's feelings differ from the common feelings experimented in day-by-day life, for they assume this *artistic action of form*, once they appear as a work with aesthetics by means of proper technical resources. This way, it is not possible to equate, as an analysis via, the feelings aroused on the stage – which aim at provoking certain reactions on the audience – to the non-intentional ones, stemming from life experience. But what would be, in relation to the actor's feeling, this *not experimenting until the end*? Would the feelings experienced on the stage only a mere imitation of trajectories, gestures thought to create an illusion to the audience? Or would those actor's feelings, where our own feelings reverberate to beyond our routine sensations, be something completely different and that should be seen from a new point of view?

In order to understand this issue, Vigotski (2009) resumes the discussion on the actor's feelings in his text *Sobre o problema da psicologia do trabalho criativo do ator* ("On the problem of the psychology of the actor's creative work"), proposing a discussion of a point of view in the psychological field. The great contribution of Vygotsky to the understanding of the actor's *perezhivanie* was seeing it as a phenomenon that must be analyzed from a social-psychological point of view, understood in relation to the whole context to which it belongs. Therefore, the actor's feelings cannot be analyzed from only one point of view of the individual experience, but from its function in a certain time and class, within the same scenario in which the audience's aesthetic *perezhivanie* also has a place.

In the joyful German expression, the actor's experiences³ are not as much a feeling of 'I' as a feeling of 'we'. The actor creates on the stage infinite sensations, feelings and emotions which become the emotion of all theatrical audience. Before they became an object of incorporation of the actor, they were given in a literary formulation, they were born in the air, in the social consciousness. (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 14, free translation).

This affirmation leads us to perceive the actor's *perezhivanie* from a broader point of view, being necessary, for that, "going beyond the limits of the actor's direct experience to explain it" (Vigotski, 2009, p. 18, free translation). The claim of the Belarusian psychologist refers to the necessity of analyzing the actor's *perezhivanie* without missing the social experience, in which the actor's feelings will search for their raw material. However, *moving farther* also reminds us of the analysis of the actor's *perezhivanie* itself, with a conscious and meticulous look under the laws that rule it, starting from the human experience in the sense of its multiplicity, in its constitution as "we".

It is interesting to observe that one of the most prominent theoreticians of Russian drama of the 20th century, Constantin Stanislavsky, recognized this constitution of drama as *we*, when claiming:

Well, – I thought then – our art is not lasting, but, in compensation for that, it is the most irresistible of all arts for contemporary men. What strength! Its influence is not the product of the creation of only one man, but of a whole group of actors, painters, scene directors and musician simultaneously, of many, of the most diverse arts such as drama, music, painting, declamation, dance, etc. And in this set the theatrical influence is not perceived by one person, but simultaneously, by the entire crowd, what creates the general, mass sensitiveness, which deepens the moments of perception (Stanislavsky, 1989, p. 498, free translation).

At the end of the 19th century, Stanislavsky sought to understand the elements involved in the actor's creation. His experience and his questioning led him to believe that the actor should engage with knowing himself, on and out of the stage, as well as knowing his role. The centrality of the actor's

³ In the original Russian work, "переживания актёра" (*pereživaniia aktiōra*) – according to the translation note by Delari Jr. & Passos (2009).

figure guided the work of most directors of the beginning of the 20th century. However, only Stanislavsky sought to create a didactics that could guide the actor's performance, by means of the exploration of personal and technical elements that could lead to the creating state, always aiming at the truthiness of the work's aesthetic sense (Benedetti, 2011).

Regarding the actor's creative work, Stanislavsky (2014) conceptualized the term *perezhivanie*, mainly, in his search for the actor's experience that went beyond the ordinary one, experimented by the common man in his daily life. His intention was going beyond the meaning of common experience, alluding the meaning of the laborious and difficult process that the actor would go through, in order to be in contact with the character's feeling (Mollica, 1991).

For the Russian director, the transformation would happen by means of the actor's access to his own feelings, understanding them, and being concerned about improving them by means of experience, so the creative process could emerge without mannerisms or clichés (Stanislavsky, 2014). The aim of the art would be, for Stanislavsky, creating *the life of a human spirit*, and not only to represent the exterior characteristics of the feelings, as Diderot would claim.

To access *the life of the human spirit*, the actor, for Stanislavsky, actor must tune his psychophysical instrument in a way that, as Vygotsky (2009) observed, they can persuade the emotion to manifest, once it cannot be directly evoked. The actor bases upon, then, the intellectual analysis of his role, at the sharpening of his perception of the world, upon the conscious aims and upon imagination to create the circumstances to *live* the character.

This approximation with life is crucial for the actor's *perezhivanie*, once that the whole system is based upon it. The acting must appear by means of interior processes, but not only from them; it should be supported by the actor's lived and continuously renovated experience to be considered true. For Stanislavsky (2014), "truly acting means being right, being logic, coherent, thinking, fighting, feeling and acting in unison with the role" (p. 43), and the actor must "adapt his own qualities to the life of this other person, and pour his own whole soul in that" (p. 43).

This process of *adapting* to the quality of the human life to be incarnated reminds us of the work with the emotions: to truly live their role, the actor uses his own emotional material, approaching the character's emotions, by means of a shared emotion that surpasses the limits of the individual experience. Their approximation to life concerns, mainly, *living* in himself the broadest sense of human experience, in order to transmit it in an artistic way, transform it into an aesthetical experience. However, his art allows remaining in this *threshold* between himself and the other, between *being* and *not being* of the alteritarian experience, for the character is established as this *other* of the relationship, while also representing a broader whole that synthesizes the general human experience.

To start, the actor *is* neither one [thing], nor another. He has, in his own person, an interior and exterior individuality that can be vividly or indistinctly developed. It is possible that there is not, in his nature, neither the villainy of one character nor the nobility of another. But the seeds of those qualities will be there, because we have in ourselves elements of all human characteristics, good and bad ones. The actor must use his art and his technique to discover, by natural methods, the elements that he needs to develop for his role. This way, the soul of the person who acts will be a combination of the alive elements of his own being (Stanislavsky, 2014, pp. 217 - 218).

The actor, therefore, lives the other's *perezhivanie* from his own *perezhivanie*, once that he experiments, by means of his own experiences, the emotions of the *other*, transformed into artistic composition through imagination. To live someone else's emotions in himself, the actor must penetrate into the deepest of the human spirit, know the psychology of the soul and of nature, understand the spiritual essence of human passion, providing his interpretation with rich details, in complexity and in variation (Stanislavsky, 2010).

Our emotional palette, our sheet music, which must portray human passions, must be colorful, varied, rich. When portraying any human passion, the actor must not think of this passion itself, but of the feelings that are in its composition, and the larger is the impetus that he aims to attribute to it, the more varied and contradictory the emotions he will have to look for will be. The extremes extend the range of human passions and amplify the actor's palette (Stanislavsky, 2010, p. 91, free translation).

Those *extremes*, according to Stanislavsky, are necessary to mobilize the actor's mind, will and feelings, a triad that the Russian director considered to be the basis for the work of constructing a character. Nevertheless, this magnified emotional state can only be reached by means of creating aims, the driving force of creativity, the *bait* for the emotions. Such creating aims are responsible for keeping the continuous and uninterrupted line of action, in a way that the actor remains identified with the character's feelings during all the process.

On the other hand, Stanislavsky also believed that the actor's feelings are not equal to the ones aroused in the common experience⁴, even though they identify with the broader human experience. They differ, mainly, for not being aroused by the direct human experience, but for making use of memory and imagination. This way, the actor's feelings are generally more condensed, more compact and substantial than the ones lived in the immediate experience (Stanislavsky, 2014).

That is why the actor of our kind needs to work much more than others, in his interior equipment, which creates the life of the role, as well as in his exterior apparatus, physical, which must reproduce with accuracy the results of the creating work of his emotions (Stanislavsky, 2014, p. 45, free translation).

The actor must work on his interior and exterior *equipment*, once that it is by means of it that the feelings, the gestures and a whole range of actions that will provide the finishing to the theatrical aesthetic purpose. The feelings of the theatrical scene must be selected in function of the whole dramatic text context and of the acting; therefore, the actor's creation is determined by implications specific of drama, and must aim their end of creating a work of art. In this aspect, it is important to resume the claims of Stanislavsky regarding the actor's *perezhivanie* in his role:

It is a mistake to think that the actor experiments a second state of reality when he is on stage doing his creating work... As you already know, we, in scene, live the emotional memories of reality. Sometimes those memories reach a point of illusion that makes them similar to the real life itself... These times, a creating artist feels his own life in the life of his role and the life of his role identical to his personal life. The result of this identification is a miraculous metamorphosis (Stanislavsky, 2014, p. 338, free translation).

The actor, therefore, is never disconnected from the reality; he does not create a new reality, but condenses and amplifies it, and, sometimes, his life mixes to the life of the character that he incarnates in him. Even though, his *perezhivanie* happens from an exotopia logics⁵, i.e., when the actor, when remaining in a constant identification with the character, remains aware of himself, watching his own actions, in order to be able to select the feelings evoked by imagination. On the contrary, his emotions would quit serving the aesthetical purpose of the drama creation, would lose their artistic finishing. Or, as Stanislavsky (2010) would appropriately say: "when our emotions are in chaos, when we miss the

⁴ It is important to highlight that, in that case, we are referring to the experience denominated by the Russian term *opit*, hence differing it from the experience referred by Vygotsky and Stanislavsky when dealing with the actor's experience, i.e., *perezhivanie* (Author's note).

⁵ *Exotopia* is explored as a concept in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895 – 1975), defined by him in the following way: "When I contemplate a man located out of me and in front of me, our concrete horizons, such as they are effectively lived by we both, do not coincide. Even though the other is very close to me, I will always see and know something that himself, in the position that he occupies, and that positions him out of me and in front of me, cannot see: the parts of my body inaccessible from his own look – the head, the face, the facial expression —, the world to which he is back to, a whole series of objects and of relations that, in function of the respective relation that we can be situated into, are accessible to me and inaccessible to him. When we look at each other, two different worlds reflect on the apple of our eyes. Thanks to appropriate positions, it is possible to reduce to the minimum this difference of horizons, but to eliminate the completely, it would be necessary to merge in one, to make only one man. This constant excess of my view and of my knowledge about the other is conditioned by the place that only I occupy in the world: in this place, this precise instant, in a set of certain circumstances — all the others are placed out of me. The concrete exotopia that benefits only me, and the one of all the others regarding me, without exception, like the excess of my view that it conditions, in comparison to each of the others (and, co-relatively, a certain lack — what I see of the other is precisely what the other sees when it is about me, but it is not essential for our purpose, for, in my life, the inter-relation '*i-other*' is concretely irreversible)" (Bakhtin, 1997, p. 43 – 44, free translation).

logics and the consecutiveness of the aims, we do not live the role authentically” (p. 77, free translation).

We can conclude that the notion of exotopia synthesizes the actor's *perezhivanie* under Stanislavsky's perspective: the actor truly lives his role in the fictional situation, at the same time that he stays in himself, aware of his actions and of the context where his creating work takes place, being able to *choose* his actions according to the demands of the techniques, of the dramaturgy and of the staging.

Understanding the actor's *perezhivanie*, in his specific context, is extremely important to analyze *perezhivanie* in life, once drama shows us, in a poetic way, the contradictions and the conflicts characteristic of human relationships, or, as Vygotsky claims:

The actor's experiences, his emotions, appear not as functions of his personal mental life, but as a phenomenon that has objective significance and social meaning, which serve as a transition stage from psychology to ideology (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 20, free translation).

The actor's *perezhivanie* hence takes place under a perspective where his experience takes proportions of ideology, for it is established as a phenomenon whose meanings are social, based upon the function of art as a *social technique of the feelings*. Regarding this topic, we bring the words of Stanislavsky into the discussion:

But, on the stage, such as in real life, it is impossible to perform any movement without any obstacles, effort or action. Inevitably, we shock against the opposite movements and the efforts of other people, or with conflicting happenings, or with obstacles caused by the elements, or with other hindrances. Life is a relentless *effort*: either we win or we are defeated. The same way, on the stage, side by side with the direct action, there will be a series of *opposite direct actions*, carried out by other characters, other circumstances. The mutual shock and the conflict of those two opposite direct actions is what constitutes the dramatic situation (Stanislavsky, 2010, p. 103, free translation).

Thus, we can find, in the relationships between art and life, our answer: *on the stage, like in real life*, we constantly deal with the *drama* of the human condition, full of contradictions and conflicts, at each new *scene* in which we *incarnate* the various *roles* that constitute our personality. From this understanding, we paraphrase Vygotsky (2001)⁶: *the theater is the microcosm of human life*, for it is in the life created on the stage that we can observe, synthesized and magnified, the experience between *internal* and *external*, between the *I* and the *other*... Between *being* and *not being*, where the human nature is effectively constituted

Final considerations

The studies on the *perezhivanie* phenomenon from psychology and art perspectives, by means of the works of Vygotsky and Stanislavsky, lead us to the understanding of the relationships established between art and life, in order to open a differentiated view on the dramatic constitution of human consciousness. In our effort to resume the concept, following a path that led us to current works until the beginnings of its constitution as an object study of Psychology, noticing the importance of establishing the relationships between art and life regarding the *perezhivanie* phenomenon, so as to comprehend all the dimensions that the topic takes, not only in Vygotsky's writing on art, but in all of his works.

We believe that it is necessary to look at *perezhivanie* in art from a dialectic perspective with psychological studies of *perezhivanie* in life, understanding the relationships between Psychology and Art from the prism of complementarity, and not as separate study fields. The understanding of the relationships of Vygotsky's theories with art is indispensable to comprehend deeply all the concepts developed over the constitution of human consciousness, once that Vygotsky considered that our consciousness is structured in a *dramatic* way. Like actors on the stage, we are always *acting*. In every scene of our life, we are compelled to *incarnate* the *roles* that constitute us, *acting* according to each

⁶ “Una palabra es un microcosmos de conciencia humana” (Vigotski, 2001, p. 128).

situation: as mothers, fathers, professionals, lovers... between the desire and the obligation, moved by passions and yearnings, living the contradictions inherent to the human experience. We incarnate those roles to the *audiences* of our relationships, while we live the *conflict* between the *external* and the *internal*, which always leads to the question: *to be or not to be?*

By means of the study of drama and of the actor's *perezhivanie*, we become able to understand the human constitution from this *dramatic* perspective, for it happens within this *threshold* of alteritarian experience. The actor, in his occupation, always acts like *I* and like *the other*, approaching someone else's experience represented in the life of the character; he presents as this *other* external to himself, but preserves his own characteristics, which serve at the same time for the identification and for the distancing in the experience with this *other*. In his occupation, therefore, the actor lives a dialectic experience, acting consciously with the clear aim of the artistic creation, from *exotopia*.

It is in the *exotopia* that the real freedom issue ends: when we are able to understand the human conditions from a new view, we can act on our determinations and determine ourselves, reaching a conscious state of *I am* in our lives; thus, we can get hold of our experiences, aware of our participation not only for our own history, but under the perspective of the whole huge plot of human relationships. Therefore, we complete our *perezhivanie* process: we live, feel, see, become aware and *act*.

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