

Konstantin stanislavski essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), was a Russian actor, director and author of many books such as “ An Actor Prepares” and “ Building a Character”. Stanislavski is widely known as the most influential personality of Russian Theatre. From 1907, Stanislavski devoted himself to developing the system of actor training.

All actors have an ego and Stanislavski was well aware of this fact. He found that actors chose to play characters in a way that highlighted what they wished to be seen rather than a way that was true to the playwrights intention. So, the ego of actors must go. We as actors must be responsible enough to not use a character as something we would like to be, or how we would want people to see us as.

Stanislavski believed that “ first, an actor has to know themselves”. One exercise we did was to write down five things true about ourselves. Then ask somebody who is ‘ distant’ to us; to write down five things that they believe were true about us. This allowed us to consider the differences and similarities between a character and us. From this, we can decide which characteristics are appropriate to use for our character.

Stanislavski found that actors felt the need to ‘ overact’. Actors felt that they had to overact everything they did to make it more interesting for the audience. Stanislavski took all decorations in the theatre, so that the audience could focus on the actors and not the stage around them. Stanislavski had to teach his pupils how to act if they were in a given situation, this is known as “ the magic if. He put he students through different scenarios and some of them we acted ourselves.

“ Find the Brooch”. This evolved two people, one of them was about to go to a drama school, but has no money to pay for it. The other person, being a friend makes a sacrifice of her grandmother’s brooch (we used a ring), which is worth a lot of money and can pay for her to go to drama school. She tries to refuse the offer of the brooch, but the friend is very persistent and leaves it for her on her bedside table. She is very grateful and shows her friend to the door. When she returns the brooch has gone. The actor now has to act as if she has actually lost her friend’s brooch. This “ magic if” is one of the most important and fundamental elements of Stanislavski’s theory.

The actors now had the responsibility to develop discipline. This would enable them to put their talents at the purpose of the play and its meaning.

An actor must be responsible for his or her physical and mental well being. It is important for an actor to stay flexible, so that they can take on a wide range of characters. Otherwise, the character will look just like the actor. We went through some muscular and relaxation techniques to help us take control of our unwanted tension. We got into pairs, and gave each other massages from the head down. This released tension from our body.

The actor is also responsible for knowing the before and after time of the character’s life. Everyone has a past and past experiences make us who we are. The way we talk, walk, and react to different situations is comes from our past, for example, past relationships. So, we must apply this to our character. The character is more believable to the audience once the past is known. It is not always clear what the character’s past is. It has to be imagined and is based upon the given circumstances.

The actor also imagines the after time of a character. This information can be drawn by what the actor believes does happen, and/or what the character hopes to do. By knowing the character to its death, can make the character more believable because the actor is acting a role within a whole life and not a portion of a life. The after time of the character will be affect the last scene. For example, the way the character walks off stage. However, this will be directed subtly and the audience feel something for the character but are not sure why.

Emotional memory can help an actor perform situations more realistically if they draw upon their own relevant experiences. It can be triggered by sound, smell, or touch. However, the actor has to be responsible when using emotional memory. These memories have to be ' safe' that are resolved. If the memory is still ' fresh', it could make you cry and break down. That is not the purpose of emotional memory and it will not help an actor create a role.

The actor must thoroughly go through the play and study it before taking on a character. This is not interpretive; it is based on only factual information. However, attention needs to be drawn to finer details such as, historical, economic, and social context to help process a role. The given circumstances affect the way the actor interacts with other characters. If the actor is not sure of these circumstances, it can lead to misdirection and going against playwright intension.