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Between Two Stages: Russian and American Acting Training and Its Impact on Craft, Process, and Artistic Identity.

How do Russian and American acting training systems shape an actor's craft, working process, and artistic identity?

Based on my experience training within both Russian and American acting environments, this paper argues that these traditions differ not only in technique and rehearsal methodology, but also in how they shape an actor's relationship to emotion, discipline, creative freedom, and artistic identity.

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Russian Acting Tradition

The Philosophy of the Russian Acting Tradition

Before examining specific methodologies, it is important to understand the broader objectives of Russian actor training. Rather than focusing solely on performance outcomes, the Russian tradition has historically emphasized the systematic development of the actor through discipline, psychological understanding, and long-term rehearsal practice.

1. What Is the Goal of the Russian Acting Tradition?

The primary goal of the Russian acting tradition is the pursuit of profound meaning and absolute psychological truthfulness in performance.

For the purposes of this study, the Russian acting tradition is examined through two of its most influential systems of actor training: Konstantin Stanislavski's System and Vsevolod Meyerhold's approach.

Stanislavski's System requires actors to move beyond the mechanical reproduction of actions and dialogue and instead experience the character's life authentically through their own human experience. This methodology seeks to develop a creative actor who practices the art of living truthfully on stage rather than merely representing a character.

In contrast, Meyerhold's system aims to develop a versatile and physically accomplished performer capable of embodying dynamic, grotesque, and highly expressive stage images through precise bodily control. Unlike psychological realism, Meyerhold emphasized

physical expressiveness, rhythm, and stylized movement, reducing actor training to a disciplined and highly structured physical process.

2. What Principles Form the Foundation of Stanislavski's System?

“Belief in the Given Circumstances”

The actor fully accepts the fictional world of the play, including its time, place, and circumstances, responding to them with complete psychological and physical authenticity as if they were real.

“Truth of Experience”

Rather than artificially portraying emotions, the actor genuinely experiences them in the present moment. Emotions emerge naturally from a sincere belief in the given circumstances.

“The Superobjective”

The actor identifies the purpose behind each individual action and understands how these actions contribute to the character's overarching objective throughout the play.

“Living Interaction”

Actors must actively listen to and genuinely respond to their scene partners instead of relying on predetermined reactions. Through this process, performance becomes truthful, spontaneous, and alive.

3. What Principles Form the Foundation of Meyerhold's System?

Meyerhold's most influential innovation was the system of biomechanics, which sought to transform the actor's body into a highly trained instrument capable of executing actions with precision, efficiency, and control.

"Theatrical Grotesque"

The grotesque combines opposites such as tragedy and comedy, realism and fantasy, or the elevated and the ordinary. Rather than encouraging actors to "live through" a role psychologically, Meyerhold emphasized the presentation of a vivid and stylized theatrical image.

"Breaking the Fourth Wall"

Unlike traditional psychological theatre, where actors remain within an imaginary fourth wall, Meyerhold frequently encouraged direct engagement with the audience.

"Rhythm"

For Meyerhold, rhythm occupied a central position in performance. He believed that emotional states could emerge from physical action and rhythmic movement rather than preceding them.

4. What Kind of Actor Does the Russian Tradition Seek to Create?

The Russian acting tradition seeks to develop a sincere, reflective, and psychologically aware actor. Performers trained within this tradition are encouraged to analyze a character's motivations, inner nature, and objectives in order to create a believable human being on stage rather than a collection of theatrical clichés.

This outcome is achieved through several key principles:

“I Believe / I Do Not Believe”

This principle serves as a fundamental criterion of evaluation. If the actor genuinely believes in the circumstances of the role and the logic of the character’s actions, the audience is more likely to believe in them as well.

“Truthfulness and Justification”

Every movement, line, or moment of silence should have a clear psychological motivation. Actors continually ask themselves questions such as: What do I want? and Why am I reacting this way?

“Personal Experience and Emotional Memory”

To communicate emotions such as joy, fear, or anger, actors may draw upon similar experiences from their own lives and adapt them to the circumstances of the character.

“Wholeness”

The actor strives to maintain a balance between emotional immersion in the role and professional control over the body and voice.

However, the Russian actor is shaped not only through psychological work. Meyerhold’s influence contributes physical precision, rhythmic discipline, and conscious control of movement. As a result, the actor combines emotional depth with expressive stage form.

5. What Is the Relationship Between the Actor and the Character?

Within the Russian acting tradition, the relationship between the actor and the character is based on empathy, identification, and genuine emotional engagement.

Rather than observing the character from a distance, the actor seeks to justify the character's actions by understanding and experiencing their motivations, struggles, and desires through personal experience and emotional connection.

In this methodology, the character is not viewed as a separate object but as a living image shaped through the actor's own interpretation and points of connection with the role.

Throughout the creative process, the actor establishes an ongoing dialogue between their own personality and the circumstances of the character, allowing the performance to emerge organically.

6. Why Is the Actor Considered an Instrument of Art?

The actor is considered an instrument of art because their body, voice, emotions, and intellect serve as the primary means through which dramatic ideas are communicated.

Unlike a painter who works with paint or a musician who performs through an instrument, the actor embodies both the creator and the artistic medium. Through their own physical and emotional resources, they bring the vision of the playwright and director to life.

7. How Do Psychological and Physical Training Work Together?

Together, the approaches of Stanislavski and Meyerhold create an actor capable of combining psychological truthfulness with physical expressiveness.

The ability to experience emotions authentically works in harmony with disciplined control of the body and movement. As a result, the actor trained within the Russian tradition

develops as a unified artistic instrument in which internal psychological processes and external physical expression exist in constant interaction.

Training in Practice

Learning Environment in Russian Actor Training

1. Structure of Actor Training in Conservatories and Theatre Schools.

In leading Russian theatre institutions, including GITIS, the Boris Shchukin Theatre Institute, the Moscow Art Theatre School, VGIK, and RGISI, actors are trained through a studio-based system. Training involves long-term and intensive immersion into the profession, where students undergo rigorous daily preparation under the guidance of a master teacher and artistic director.

Classes typically consist of 15–30 students, and the full program lasts four years. In addition to acting, students study stage speech, stage movement, dance, vocal training, theatre history, dramatic analysis, and other disciplines designed to support the comprehensive development of the performer.

Thus, practical actor training within the Russian tradition combines long-term mentorship, continuous rehearsal practice, strict discipline, and collective artistic work. The system aims not only to teach acting techniques but also to gradually shape the professional mindset of the artist. At the center of this approach lies the idea of dedication to the craft, responsibility toward the ensemble, and deep engagement with the creative process.

2. The Role of the Long-Term Rehearsal Process.

One of the most important elements of actor training in Russia is continuous practical work, particularly through the etude-based method. Students progress gradually from simple tasks to increasingly complex creative challenges. Training often begins with silent observational studies of people, animals, and everyday behavior. As foundational skills develop, students move toward physical action etudes and eventually work with dramatic material and scenes from plays.

The long-term rehearsal process forms the foundation of the psychological acting tradition established by Stanislavski. It allows actors to immerse themselves deeply in the material, carefully develop character psychology, and strengthen ensemble cohesion. As a result, theatrical performance becomes not merely entertainment but a meaningful artistic and ethical statement.

Rehearsal is therefore viewed not as technical preparation for performance, but as the primary tool for exploring both character and dramatic material.

3. Teacher–Student Hierarchy and Director-Led Learning.

A distinctive feature of Russian actor training is its strong teacher–student hierarchy.

Throughout their education, students work under the guidance of a master teacher who serves not only as an instructor but also as a mentor responsible for the artistic and professional development of the entire course. In many Russian theatre institutions, the same master leads a group of students throughout all four years of training, shaping both their artistic approach and professional values.

The relationship between master and student is traditionally built on respect, discipline, and trust in professional experience. The master guides the learning process, determines the direction of training, and gradually introduces students to the standards and ethics of the profession. As a result, the teacher's authority occupies a central position within the educational environment.

This hierarchical structure reflects the broader traditions of Russian theatre, where artistic knowledge is passed from one generation to the next through direct mentorship. Students are expected to demonstrate commitment, responsibility, and respect for both the educational process and the collective nature of theatrical work. While the atmosphere may vary between institutions and individual teachers, Russian actor training is generally characterized by high expectations, rigorous standards, and a strong emphasis on professional discipline.

This hierarchical model extends beyond actor training and is reflected in professional theatre practice, where the director traditionally occupies a central artistic position within the production process.

4. The Importance of Discipline, Repetition, and Ensemble Work.

Within the Russian acting tradition, discipline, repetition, and ensemble work are considered the foundation of professional actor training. Education follows a gradual progression from simple exercises and etudes to increasingly complex scenic tasks. Repetition serves not only technical improvement but also the development of inner freedom, allowing actions to become natural, organic, and truthful.

Particular emphasis is placed on ensemble work. Theatre is viewed as a collective art form in which success depends not only on individual talent but also on an actor's ability to function

within a shared creative environment. Students learn to listen to one another, respond authentically, and develop a common rhythm and sense of partnership on stage.

Discipline remains essential both during training and throughout professional practice. Actors are expected to demonstrate responsibility, punctuality, respect for the rehearsal process, and commitment to sustained daily work. Within the Russian theatrical tradition, professionalism is understood not merely as talent, but as the result of continuous effort, self-discipline, and dedication to the craft.

Core Methods of Practical Actor Training

1. Etude-based Training.

In theatre schools, the etude method serves as one of the foundations of actor training. It teaches students to control attention, body, and emotions while developing organic behavior, observation skills, and the ability to respond instantly to changes in stage circumstances. The etude method is directly connected to the principles of the Stanislavski system. It allows actors to explore character behavior through action rather than external emotional imitation, gradually forming the ability for truthful and organic stage existence. Through a system of practical improvisational exercises, students develop attention, observation, imagination, the ability to exist naturally on stage, and skills of interaction with a partner. Throughout training, various types of etudes are used, each aimed at developing specific aspects of acting technique. The learning process includes several key formats:

1. Physical action memory etudes

Students recreate everyday physical actions (such as hammering a nail, peeling potatoes, or ironing clothes) without real objects, relying entirely on muscular memory and sensory imagination

2. Animal and object etudes

Exercises focused on studying movement, behavior, and physical patterns. They help release bodily tension and develop the “animal” nature within the actor

3. Observation of people

Students observe and replicate real-life behavior, including walking patterns, speech mannerisms, gestures, and facial expressions of people encountered in everyday life, later translating them onto the stage

4. Etudes in “given circumstances”

Short improvised scenes (often without words) where the character faces a specific objective, and the environment is limited or unexpectedly altered

Despite their variety, all etude forms share the same goal: to teach actors to act organically within given circumstances, justify actions internally, and create truthful stage behavior without predefined templates

2. Role of Improvisation in Training.

Improvisation plays an important role in Russian actor training. It teaches students to truly listen and observe their partner on stage, responding to actions and words rather than waiting for their turn to speak. Etude-based improvisations help actors independently construct dialogue, build given circumstances, and find the logic of a scene’s development.

During improvisation, students learn to make unexpected decisions, quickly adapt to changing conditions, and maintain organic behavior even in unpredictable situations. Special emphasis is placed on acting in the present moment, without relying on preplanned reactions or fixed patterns.

Improvisation also develops stage freedom and confidence. Through such exercises, actors gradually overcome fear of mistakes, learn to trust their instincts and creative imagination. Additionally, improvisational etudes help actors better understand conflict, character motivation, and principles of scene construction.

Thus, improvisation in Russian actor training is not treated as a separate skill, but as a core tool for developing organic behavior, partner awareness, and creative independence.

3. Emotional and Psychological Exploration Through Structured Exercises.

Russian actor training uses psychophysical exercises to achieve deep understanding of human behavior. Emotional exploration is based on Stanislavski's system (inner experience) and exercises aimed at relaxation, concentration, removal of physical tension, and development of imagination.

Inner experience refers to a method in which the actor lives the character's emotions and thoughts "here and now" rather than imitating them. This is supported by practical techniques:

1. Muscle relaxation and control

Students systematically tense and relax different muscle groups in order to release physical blocks, since the body directly influences psychological state

2. Circles of attention

Attention is focused first on a small space (small circle), then expanded to the room (medium circle), and finally to the entire theatre space (large circle), helping remove psychological tension and increase awareness

3. Inner monologue

During silent moments, the actor mentally articulates the character's thoughts, doubts, and evaluations of the situation, filling pauses with internal content

These exercises develop concentration and the ability to maintain attention under stage conditions.

4. Work with the "Magic If" (imaginary circumstances applied in action).

Work with the "if" principle is a fundamental tool of the Stanislavski system that activates truthful emotional response and creates the process of "I in given circumstances".

How the "if" method works:

1. Transition from "I" to the character

The actor places themselves into the fictional situation of the script and asks: "What would I do if I were in these conditions?"

2. Justification of action

The "if" encourages logical reasoning behind even extreme actions of the character. The actor does not perform abstract behavior but justifies it through personal logic

3. Activation of belief

The "magic if" allows the actor's mind to accept fictional circumstances as real, triggering authentic reactions

This method transforms intellectual analysis into physical and psychological action.

5. Partners Work on Scenes and Repetition under Different Conditions.

Partner work is the core of acting, where living emotion emerges. Repetition of actions under changing conditions teaches actors to remain present, respond spontaneously, and avoid mechanical performance.

Effective partner training is based on trust and sensitivity. Actors continuously exchange attention and energy rather than simply delivering lines.

1. Synchronization – adapting to the partner’s rhythm and physical state
2. Attention – acting is based on influencing the partner and responding to them
3. Adjustment – the ability to keep the scene alive through continuous adaptation

Additional exercises include:

1. “Siamese twins” – two actors perform a simple action in physical contact, developing coordination and shared attention
2. “Press conference” – one actor performs an action while answering unrelated questions from a partner
3. “Circumstances circle” – the same scene is played in different environments
4. “Mirror” – one actor leads slow movements while the other replicates them precisely

6. Physical Training as a Basis for Psychological Truth.

Physical training in the system of Vsevolod Meyerhold is not simply acrobatics, but a foundation for truthful emotion. While Stanislavski’s approach develops psychology from the inside out, Meyerhold’s works from the outside in—through physical reflexes, rhythm, and

bodily mechanics. Emotion arises as a response to precise physical action: “I run, therefore I feel fear.” The body becomes an instrument, like in music.

Meyerhold’s biomechanics is based on three phases:

1. Refusal – release of tension and preparation for action
2. Construction – formation of a precise physical position and stabilization
3. Transmission – immediate transition into action or expressive impulse

Actor Development Process

1. Gradual Formation of Psychological Realism Through Practice.

Psychological realism develops gradually through a structured system of practical exercises, etudes, and scene-based work. In the early stages of training, students focus on attention, observation, and physical action. They then progress to working with given circumstances, the internal logic of character behavior, and partner interaction.

As training develops, actors learn to construct behavior that is not based on external imitation of emotion, but on an understanding of the character’s motivations, objectives, and inner logic. This process gradually leads to the ability to create psychologically grounded and internally justified stage behavior.

2. Development of Attention, Observation, and Emotional Responsiveness.

The development of attention, observation, and empathy forms the foundation of acting technique, enabling performers to create believable stage behavior and manage their focus within a performance.

1. Training of attention and concentration

A core element of actor training is the ability to direct and sustain attention. One of the most widely used exercises for developing this skill is the “circles of attention” technique, previously discussed.

2. Development of observation

Actors are trained to become careful observers of human behavior, constantly observing details such as movement patterns, gestures, speech, and facial expressions. One of the most effective methods for developing this skill is the “mirror exercise,” also mentioned earlier.

Another common approach is the “type hunting” exercise, where actors collect behavioral patterns from real life to expand their repertoire of character references and creative material.

3. Development of Emotional Responsiveness.

Emotional responsiveness develops through imagination, observation, and the actor’s capacity for empathy within given circumstances. Authentic emotional experience on stage is achieved by transferring real-life experience into fictional conditions.

A key component of this process is partner awareness. The actor does not simply wait for their turn to speak, but actively listens and responds to the behavior, tone, and emotional impulses of their scene partner. This ability is essential for maintaining a living, responsive stage presence and avoiding mechanical or pre-planned reactions.

4. Internal Justification of Every Action.

Actors seek to justify their characters' actions in order to make performance truthful and behavior logically coherent. Rather than judging the character, they seek to understand the deeper motivations behind each action by analyzing given circumstances.

A common guiding principle in this process is the idea that when playing a negative character, the actor should search for their positive or human justification ("when playing someone cruel, look for where they are kind"). This reflects a central principle of Stanislavski's system, which emphasizes that human behavior is never purely good or bad, but always determined by internal and external conditions.

Through the method of given circumstances, the actor places themselves mentally into the character's situation and asks: "What would I do if I were in their position, with their past, fears, and objectives?" Instead of evaluating the character morally, the actor defends their actions, building an internal logic that makes behavior believable and necessary within the fictional context.

5. Transition from Exercises to Structured Scene Work.

The transition from isolated training exercises to fully structured scenes represents a key stage in the actor's professional development. At earlier stages, training focuses on individual skills such as concentration, observation, imagination, and partner interaction. These elements are later integrated into a unified system of stage behavior.

A central aspect of this transition is the work with super-objective and through-line action. The actor learns to perceive each action not as an isolated element, but as part of the

character's overall objective. Every movement, line, or pause gains meaning only in relation to the character's goals and obstacles.

Analysis of given circumstances also becomes essential. Scene work requires understanding who the character is, the conditions they are in, the obstacles they face, and how these factors influence their behavior. This creates internal logic and psychological justification for all stage actions.

As material becomes more complex, increased attention is given to subtext. Students learn to treat dramatic text not only as spoken dialogue, but as a system of hidden intentions, conflicts, and underlying objectives. As a result, meaning shifts from what the character says to what they are trying to achieve through speech and action.

Overall, structured scene work integrates technical skills developed through exercises with psychological role analysis, gradually preparing the actor for the creation of a fully formed stage character.

Actor Preparation for a Role

1. Text Analysis (Superobjective, Objectives and Given Circumstances, Subtext).

Text analysis in acting is the process of translating literary form into a system of physical actions. This approach reveals the essence of a role through a framework developed by Konstantin Stanislavski and his followers. The work with a text is divided into three key components: the superobjective, objective aspects, and subtext.

1. Superobjective

The superobjective is the overarching life goal and guiding purpose of the character — the reason for all actions throughout the play. It unifies all fragmented actions into a single line of through action, directing the actor's attention toward the central idea that must be communicated to the audience.

2. Objective Aspects

Objective aspects represent the structural backbone of a scene upon which the entire narrative is built. They include the “given circumstances” — facts, time, place, and conditions provided by the author. The actor analyzes what physically happens in the scene, constructing a logical chain of events that drives the story forward. Each fact that influences the character's thoughts or behaviour is carefully examined. The actor then mentally reconstructs the images described by the character (vision) and continuously maintains an inner monologue, commenting on the unfolding events.

3. Subtext

Subtext is the hidden meaning and inner content of spoken lines, which often contradict the explicit text. It emerges from the combination of objective circumstances and the character's true motivations. The actor is required not simply to deliver the author's text, but to express why it is said and what hidden desire or intention is being realised at a given moment.

2. Emotional Preparation Through Memory and Imagination.

Emotional preparation in acting is based on the Stanislavski's system, where the main tools are inner monologue, given circumstances, and imagination. These elements allow the actor to experience genuine emotions on stage rather than merely imitate them.

Imagination

The actor does not simply fantasise but creates an internal visual screen of images. They mentally reconstruct circumstances, detailing place, time, and the character's background. Imagination answers the question: "What do I see in my mind right now?"

Given circumstances

These are the conditions in which the character exists: the plot, time of day, location, physical environment, and events that occur before the beginning of the scene. The actor uses the "magic if": "If I were in this situation, like my character, what would I feel?" These circumstances make fiction psychologically justified and evoke a genuine emotional response from the actor.

Inner monologue

This is a continuous stream of thoughts, feelings, and internal reactions of the character during speech or silence. On the surface, the character may say one thing, while the inner monologue reveals true motives, doubts, and underlying intentions. It is anchored in the given circumstances and answers the question: "What am I thinking, and why am I silent?"

3. Physical Embodiment of the Character (Voice, Body, Rhythm).

In the Russian acting tradition, the physical embodiment of a character includes work on voice, body, movement, and tempo-rhythm. The development of physical approaches was strongly influenced by the ideas of Vsevolod Meyerhold. His system represents an integration of voice, body, and rhythm, where emotions arise not from internal psychological experience but through precise physical action. The actor controls their body as a finely tuned instrument, expressing meaning through expressive movement and physical form.

Body as a controlled instrument

The material of art is the human body (torso, limbs, head). The actor develops an “electric” responsiveness — an immediate and accurate reaction to physical or spatial tasks.

Voice as an extension of movement

Voice and breathing are subordinated to physical action. Vocal qualities, tone, and intonation are determined by the performer’s physical position, while exclamations and vocal impulses carry independent expressive meaning.

Rhythm as spatial organisation

Speech and movement rhythm follow the principles of musical and constructivist composition. Action is divided into structured phases (from preparation to a final “stop-frame”), and stage rhythm is consciously separated from the natural rhythm of everyday life.

4. Integration of Internal and External Work in the Rehearsal Process.

The integration of internal work prevents mechanical imitation of emotions (stereotypes) and ensures organic stage existence. This is based on several key principles:

Interdependence

Stanislavski noted that if emotion does not arise internally, one must move from the external to the internal. A physical detail (gesture, posture, costume, tempo of speech) can trigger a psychological process and evoke genuine emotion.

Principle of physical action

One cannot perform passion in its abstract form — the actor must carry out concrete physical actions in pursuit of a goal. Movement shaped by an internal objective becomes alive and meaningful.

These principles are complemented by the approach of Vsevolod Meyerhold, in which internal state is also shaped through external organisation of movement and rhythm:

Tempo-rhythm unity

Inner psychological tension (emotional tempo) is always reflected in external rhythm (movement impulses and speech speed).

Personal Experience of Russian Acting Training

1. Background of Training.

My experience within the Russian acting training system took place as a member of the youth company at the A. S. Pushkin Pskov Drama Theatre. Admission to the company was preceded by an intensive three-month selection process consisting of several audition stages. During this process, applicants were evaluated based on their skills in dramatic reading, physical expression, vocal abilities, as well as their openness, confidence, willingness to learn, and ability to work within an intensive creative environment.

I began the audition process at the age of eleven and officially started my training after turning twelve. I remained a member of the company for four years. During this period, I participated in two theatrical productions, which were performed more than sixty times and reached an audience of approximately 15,000 spectators. In addition, the company participated in the interregional “Obraz” Theatre Festival, which took place in Moscow at the S. V. Obraztsov Puppet Theatre.

The main training sessions were held on the theatre’s small stage twice a week — on Tuesdays and Thursdays — and lasted four hours each. The training was conducted under the

guidance of two teachers: a director responsible for stage productions and an acting instructor. During the first year, the primary focus was placed on developing fundamental skills in breathing, voice, and physical expression through approaches associated with the acting systems of Konstantin Stanislavski and Vsevolod Meyerhold. The training was structured around exercises and improvisational studies aimed at developing awareness of one's physical and emotional state, as well as the ability to work within given circumstances and create a stage character.

As the company moved toward the preparation of theatrical productions, the training program expanded. In addition to the regular acting sessions, additional classes in stage speech and physical training were introduced on Fridays. Stage speech classes focused on developing articulation, vocal expressiveness, and pronunciation, while physical training contributed to the development of endurance, coordination, and the actor's body as an expressive instrument.

A significant part of the training process was dedicated to the preparation period before performances. Approximately one week before each production, the company transitioned to a daily rehearsal schedule. The work began in the morning and continued until late evening, with a break for lunch. During this period, attention was given not only to refining acting choices and stage interactions but also to the technical aspects of production, including lighting and sound adjustments, musical accompaniment, costume fittings and modifications, as well as the preparation of the overall stage environment.

2. Structure of Classes.

A typical training session began with a warm-up that included breathing exercises focused on diaphragmatic control, as well as exercises designed to prepare the vocal apparatus. This was

followed by resonance massage and articulation exercises aimed at improving pronunciation and vocal flexibility. The further structure of each session varied depending on the stage of training and the specific goals of the work.

During the first year of training, significant attention was devoted to developing fundamental acting skills. We worked on tongue twisters, rhythmic exercises, and various acting practices. Among the most frequently used exercises were the “Mirror” and “Animals and Objects,” which focused on developing interaction with a partner, awareness of the surrounding space, and the ability to observe and respond to external stimuli. We also incorporated elements of stage combat, biomechanics, and rhythmic exercises based on Vsevolod Meyerhold’s approach, which contributed to the development of physical coordination, rhythmical awareness, and conscious control of the body as an acting instrument.

Another important part of the training consisted of exercises aimed at releasing physical and emotional tension. These included practices such as “Fire and Ice” and “Seed,” along with other exercises designed to develop relaxation, concentration, and freedom of expression. In addition, a significant part of the classes was dedicated to the creation of etudes — short improvised scenes that helped develop imagination, creativity, and the ability to work effectively with a partner.

Many sessions concluded with a discussion of the completed exercises and creative tasks. The instructors analyzed our work, provided feedback on our work, and offered recommendations regarding areas that required further development and improvement.

At later stages of training, when the primary focus shifted toward preparing theatrical productions, the structure of the classes changed. After completing the traditional warm-up routine, the work became centered around textual analysis, given circumstances, interaction with scene partners, and the creation of a character. Etude-based exercises gradually became

integrated into the rehearsal process and were replaced by more detailed work with performance material.

Additional stage speech classes included combinations of articulation exercises, breathing practices, and voice training designed specifically for performance in a theatrical environment. Physical training sessions consisted of exercises aimed at developing endurance, flexibility, strength, and coordination — physical qualities essential for an actor's work on stage.

3. Work on Roles and Performances.

The process of role distribution within the company was somewhat different from a traditional approach. Since performances were created by the entire ensemble, almost all participants were involved in the productions in some capacity. Some roles were assigned during the rehearsal process, as the director identified which actors demonstrated the qualities, abilities, and potential most suitable for particular characters.

In some cases, participants expressed their own interest in performing a specific role if they felt a strong connection to a particular character or scene. However, the final decision was made by the director and teachers after an additional evaluation process, during which the participant had to demonstrate their suitability for the role. This was the case with one of my own roles. At the same time, some participants who showed stronger interest or potential in backstage work became responsible for props, technical elements, and ensuring the preparation of specific aspects of the production.

Work on characters and scenes developed gradually and often changed throughout the rehearsal process. From the beginning, we were immersed in the given circumstances of the performance and encouraged to explore different ways of existing within the scene. If a

particular interpretation was not convincing enough or did not align with the overall artistic vision of the production, the director could adjust the character's objectives, modify the circumstances of the scene, or suggest a different approach to the performance.

When an actor experienced difficulties in developing a role, the teachers could provide guidance and suggestions; however, the primary responsibility for exploring the internal and external aspects of the character remained with the performer. This approach encouraged independence and developed the ability to analyze and take responsibility for one's own acting choices.

Work with the text usually took place directly within the physical process of rehearsing the scene. Actors were expected to know their lines and material thoroughly so that they could focus not on memorization, but on interaction with partners and the development of the dramatic situation. Personally, after memorizing the entire text, I focused my further work on exploring different actions, emotional depth, and forms of interaction with my partners. This process allowed me to gradually discover the most effective and convincing version of the character.

Regular rehearsals took place during the scheduled classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As the performance date approached, the rehearsal schedule became more intensive and included full-day rehearsals.

An important part of the preparation process consisted of the final stages before the performance. On the day before the show and on the performance day itself, we worked on lighting, sound, and music adjustments, checked props and costumes, and completed the final preparation required before going on stage. Therefore, the preparation process involved not only acting work but also an introduction to the technical and organizational aspects of theatrical production.

4. Teacher–Student Interaction.

The teachers were central figures in the educational process and played an essential role in organizing the work of the company. They held a high level of authority among the participants, and their feedback and guidance were perceived as an important part of our professional development.

During rehearsals, responsibilities between the two teachers were divided. The director and stage producer was primarily responsible for organizing the rehearsal process, constructing scenes, and developing the overall artistic vision of the performance. The second teacher, who specialized in acting training, focused on observing the participants' performances and helping them address acting challenges that emerged during the rehearsal process.

Since the training was based on the traditions of the Russian acting school, the relationship between teachers and students involved a clearly defined hierarchy. Participants were expected to demonstrate discipline, responsibility, and the ability to respond quickly to feedback and assigned tasks. In many cases, the expectations placed on members of the youth company were comparable to those typically required from professional actors during the preparation of a theatrical production.

The working process was highly intensive and involved managing a large number of different tasks simultaneously. Despite the demanding nature of the training, the teachers paid attention to the individual development of each participant, offering specific methods and approaches that, in their view, could help solve particular acting or performance-related challenges.

The level of discipline within the company was relatively high. Despite the young age of most participants, rehearsals rarely involved issues related to lack of attention or disruption of

the working process. Most students were deeply engaged in theatrical activities and demonstrated a strong level of motivation.

At the same time, one of the main challenges was maintaining consistent concentration and emotional involvement throughout long rehearsal periods. The intensity of the work required significant physical and psychological resources. Therefore, the teachers' role was not limited to organizing rehearsals; they also had to maintain the overall energy and motivation of the group, helping participants preserve focus, commitment, and creative involvement throughout the process.

5. Personal Observations.

It is difficult for me to identify a single specific moment from this long and intensive experience that had the greatest influence on my development. Rather, it was the entire process of training that became the most significant, as it had a profound impact not only on my own growth but also on the development of the other members of the company.

Most of us joined the theatre company at a relatively young age, bringing a strong interest in theatrical art and a deep motivation to study acting. However, from the very beginning of our training, we were immersed in a professional theatre environment where we encountered a high level of responsibility and expectations that were, in many ways, similar to those experienced by professional actors.

Throughout the years of training, we constantly had to overcome personal fears, uncertainty, and creative challenges. Despite these difficulties, our passion for theatre and desire to improve helped us continue working and gradually develop our skills. With each new project and performance, we gained not only acting experience but also greater confidence in our own abilities.

Over the years, the training significantly contributed to the development of both physical and emotional endurance. Long rehearsals, the necessity of maintaining concentration for many hours, and the constant process of self-improvement required considerable effort. At the same time, this experience taught us to perceive feedback as an essential part of professional growth and to approach our own development with greater awareness.

Another important aspect of this experience was the process of working within an ensemble. Continuous interaction with partners helped develop communication skills, mutual understanding, and collaboration. Through the process of creating performances together, we learned how to discuss scenes, resolve conflicts, and support one another during challenging stages of preparation. Over time, the company became an important part of our lives and created a strong sense of belonging to a creative team.

Despite the numerous difficulties we faced, this period remains one of the most meaningful and memorable stages of my education. Many tasks seemed challenging and, at times, almost impossible; however, overcoming these obstacles became one of the main factors contributing to our growth and development. Furthermore, being involved in the work of a professional theatre allowed us to experience the reality of the theatrical environment while still being school students.

In my view, this training system developed not only acting skills but also important personal qualities. It contributed to the formation of discipline, responsibility, and the ability to work effectively within a team. It also taught us to understand our individual tasks and objectives within the creative process. Equally important was the development of the ability to support scene partners, remain connected with the ensemble, and contribute to the work of a collective artistic environment.

American Acting Tradition

The Philosophy of the American Acting Tradition

The American acting tradition emerged through the work of several influential practitioners who sought new approaches to character development and performance. Rather than adhering to a single established methodology, American actor training evolved as a combination of complementary techniques that emphasize artistic independence, personal exploration, and the search for truthful stage and screen performance.

1. What Is the Goal of American Actor Training?

The main idea of American actor training is the development of the actor's creative individuality and the search for effective ways of achieving truthful stage and screen performance. In this study, the American acting tradition is examined in this work through four major approaches: the method of Lee Strasberg, the technique of Sanford Meisner, the approach of Stella Adler, and the system of Michael Chekhov. Despite their differences, all these methods aim to develop the actor as an independent artist capable of finding a personal path to the role and creating convincing dramatic work.

2. What Principles Form the Foundation of Lee Strasberg's Method.

“Emotional Memory (Affective Memory)”

The actor draws on strong personal experiences, such as loss, fear, or joy, in order to generate authentic emotional responses that are transferred onto the character.

“Sense Memory”

A training of physical memory through all five senses. The actor reconstructs past sensory experiences (such as heat, cold, taste, or physical fatigue) so that the body responds naturally and truthfully.

“Private Moment”

An exercise designed to overcome self-consciousness. The actor performs a private action in front of others, helping to remove internal barriers and increase emotional openness.

“Substitution and Improvisation”

Strasberg used improvisation to explore new psychological dimensions of a character.

Substitution allows the actor to connect fictional circumstances with personal experience in order to understand motivation more deeply.

3. What Principles Form the Foundation of Stella Adler’s Approach.

“Imagination over personal memory”

The actor creates the world of the character through imagination rather than personal emotional experience.

“The principle of action”

Acting is based on doing rather than feeling. Emotional truth emerges through physical and psychological action.

“The three pillars of artistic development”

Nature, art, and history. The actor must continuously expand knowledge of human behavior, artistic culture, and historical context.

“Social awareness”

The character is shaped by social conditions, time, and environment, all of which must be deeply understood by the actor.

4. What Principles Form the Foundation of Sanford Meisner’s Technique.

“Repetition exercise”

A foundational exercise where actors repeat simple observations about each other, developing spontaneity and reducing intellectual control.

“True listening”

The actor’s response is based on genuine listening and reaction rather than pre-planned dialogue.

“Instinct and spontaneity”

Acting is driven by impulse rather than intellectual preparation.

5. What Principles Form the Foundation of Michael Chekhov’s Technique.

“Imagination”

The central creative tool, allowing the actor to construct inner and outer worlds of the character.

“Psychological gesture”

A physical action that expresses the inner psychological state of the character in a clear and symbolic way.

“Atmosphere”

The ability to sense and transmit the emotional environment of a scene.

“Center and form”

The actor identifies a “center” of energy in the character, which influences physical behavior, voice, and movement.

“Higher self”

The separation between the actor’s personal identity and the creative identity of the character.

6. What Kind of Actor Does the American Tradition Seek to Create.

The American acting tradition develops a flexible, independent, and creatively autonomous actor who is capable of adapting to different artistic demands. Rather than relying on a single unified system, actors are encouraged to draw upon a variety of tools and techniques to create truthful and effective performances across stage and screen.

7. What Is the Relationship Between the Actor and the Character.

In the American acting tradition, the relationship between actor and character is based on individual creative interaction. Depending on the chosen technique, the actor may rely on personal experience, imagination, partner interaction, or physical action. The character is not treated as a fixed structure but as a dynamic process shaped by the actor’s creative contribution.

8. Why Is Individuality Central to American Actor Training?

Individuality is central to American actor training because its core principle is that the actor does not “wear a mask” but filters the role through personal experience. The tradition is historically rooted in psychological realism, emotional authenticity, and performance designed for the camera.

9. How Do Different American Methods Work Together?

Despite differences between Strasberg, Adler, Meisner, and Chekhov, all these approaches aim at truthful stage and screen performance. Contemporary actors rarely rely on a single method; instead, they combine different techniques as a flexible toolkit adapted to specific artistic tasks.

Training in Practice

Training Environment in American Actor Training

1. Studio-based and Workshop-based Learning Structure.

American actor training represents a combination of various pedagogical approaches shaped by the influence of Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, and Michael Chekhov.

These approaches are primarily focused on preparing actors for professional work in theatre, film, and television. The main emphasis is placed on practical experience, the development of an individual actor’s toolkit, stage performance, on-camera work, and preparation for professional activity within the entertainment industry.

Actor training in the United States is organized through several main educational formats:

1. University Programs (BFA / MFA):

Comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programs that combine professional actor training with broader academic education. Students study acting techniques alongside humanities disciplines, developing both practical performance skills and a deeper understanding of artistic and cultural contexts. Leading examples include the Juilliard School in New York and the USC School of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles.

2. Conservatory Programs:

Intensive professional programs of different durations that focus primarily on practical training. Students are immersed in acting practice, including scene study, movement, voice training, acting techniques, and on-camera performance. Many conservatory programs conclude with showcases designed to introduce students to agents and casting professionals. Examples include The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and Stella Adler Studio of Acting.

3. Independent Studios and Masterclasses:

Flexible training formats that allow actors to study specific techniques through workshops, short-term courses, and specialized classes with professional coaches. Popular examples include The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute, Atlantic Acting School, and HB Studio. The educational process is designed to introduce students to professional conditions as early as possible. Practical training typically includes:

1. Scene Study:

Analysis and performance of scenes from plays and screenplays in front of instructors and classmates. This process allows actors to explore character development, relationships, objectives, and different approaches to interpretation.

2. On-Camera Training:

Practice performing for the camera, understanding close-up work, adapting acting choices to different shot sizes, working with lighting, and developing awareness of the technical aspects of film production.

3. Voice and Movement Training:

Development of vocal range, speech clarity, physical awareness, and body control. This includes accent reduction, voice and speech exercises, breathing techniques, and physical approaches.

4. Audition Techniques:

Students learn how to prepare for auditions, create professional self-tapes, make effective performance choices under limited preparation time, and confidently present themselves in professional casting environments.

5. Business and Networking Skills:

Practical knowledge related to working with agents, developing a professional identity, understanding the entertainment industry, and creating independent artistic projects.

This multifaceted approach allows American actors to become prepared for both theatrical productions and professional work in film and television, providing them with the skills necessary to adapt to different performance environments.

2. Less Hierarchical, More Individual-driven Training Model.

Unlike the more traditional hierarchical model often associated with many Russian theatre schools, American actor training is more frequently based on principles of mentorship, collaboration, and individual artistic development. The instructor is viewed not only as a

source of knowledge but also as a mentor who guides students in developing their own creative process.

Significant attention is given to an individualized approach to training. Students are encouraged to explore different acting techniques and identify methods that best correspond to their personal characteristics, artistic goals, and creative needs.

In addition, many programs incorporate principles of collaborative learning, which emphasize cooperation between actors, directors, playwrights, and other participants in the creative process. Within such projects, students do not simply perform assigned roles but also contribute to the development of artistic material, participate in discussions of creative decisions, and engage in the creation of the overall stage concept.

This approach encourages the development of independence, initiative, teamwork skills, and creative responsibility. By allowing students to take an active role in their own artistic growth, American actor training aims to develop not only skilled performers but also autonomous and adaptable artists capable of making independent creative choices.

3. Emphasis on Personal Exploration and Self-discovery.

Personal exploration and self-discovery represent fundamental principles of American actor training. In the United States, the actor is often viewed not simply as a performer interpreting a role, but as the primary instrument through which the character is created. Therefore, the training process frequently involves a deep exploration of the actor's own psychology, the removal of emotional and physical barriers, and the development of greater freedom and authenticity in performance.

The process of personal exploration may include several key areas:

1. Work with the subconscious and personal triggers

In certain acting studios and methodological approaches, particular attention is given to the exploration of personal experiences, emotional memory, and internal responses. Actors may examine their own memories and psychological associations in order to better understand emotional processes and develop greater awareness of their reactions.

2. Practices of physical and vocal release

Techniques such as Kristin Linklater Voice focus on helping actors discover a more natural and unrestricted voice by addressing physical and psychological tension that may limit vocal expression. Such practices aim to increase bodily awareness, vocal freedom, and the actor's ability to communicate with greater authenticity.

3. Exploration of “being in the moment”

Many American acting studios emphasize self-observation and present-moment awareness as essential elements of the actor's creative process. For example, institutions such as HB Studio incorporate practices that encourage actors to develop personal awareness and responsiveness as part of their training.

At the same time, different acting schools interpret the role of personal experience in different ways. Some approaches emphasize the use of personal emotional memories, while others place greater importance on imagination, given circumstances, and active interaction with a scene partner. Despite these differences, personal exploration remains an important aspect of American actor training, as it helps performers develop greater self-awareness, emotional flexibility, and authenticity in their work.

4. Practice-Oriented Training Through Exercises and Performance Tasks.

Acting classes in many American training programs are structured around regular practical exercises rather than a long-term rehearsal system focused on preparing a single production. This exercise-based approach is designed to develop the actor's psychophysical abilities and build the capacity for organic and truthful behavior within given circumstances.

The training process typically combines work on voice, movement, improvisation, concentration, emotional availability, and interaction with scene partners. The skills developed through these exercises are later applied to scene work and dramatic material, allowing students to transfer technical abilities into practical performance situations.

Unlike rehearsal-based models, where actors may spend extended periods preparing one role or production, American actor training often emphasizes repeated exposure to different exercises, scenes, and creative challenges. This structure allows students to experiment with various techniques, receive continuous feedback, and develop adaptability in different performance contexts.

In many contemporary programs, significant attention is also given to on-camera training, reflecting the demands of film and television acting, where performers must demonstrate precision, authenticity, and emotional subtlety.

A crucial element of this approach is the regular repetition of exercises, which helps actors develop concentration, stage freedom, emotional responsiveness, and the ability to react naturally to changing circumstances during performance. Through continuous practice, experimentation, and feedback, students gradually develop a more flexible and personal approach to their craft.

5. Constant Repetition of Scene Work in Different Variations.

One of the defining features of American actor training is the continuous repetition and exploration of scenes through different variations. One of the most recognized exercises within American acting pedagogy is Sanford Meisner's Repetition Exercise, which is designed to develop active listening, spontaneity, and the ability to respond truthfully in the present moment. Instead of focusing on predetermined emotional states or mechanically delivering lines, actors learn to react instinctively to their partner's behavior and changing impulses.

The Repetition Exercise:

Sanford Meisner developed the Repetition Exercise as one of the central components of his acting technique in order to help actors move away from memorized, mechanical performance and develop a more authentic connection with their partner.

The basic structure of the exercise includes several stages:

1. Objective Observation:

Two actors sit facing each other. One actor makes an objective and non-judgmental observation about the other person (for example: "You have an unbuttoned shirt").

2. Repetition:

The second actor repeats the phrase using the same words. The phrase is exchanged between the actors until the focus gradually shifts from the words themselves to the real changes occurring in the interaction.

3. Shift of Focus:

As the exercise progresses, the meaning and emotional quality of the repeated phrase begin to

change naturally. These changes do not come from the actors' conscious attempts to create emotion but from their instinctive responses to each other's behavior, emotional state, and physical presence.

Purpose of the Exercise:

1. Reducing Intellectual Control:

The exercise helps actors move away from consciously constructing emotions or “playing with their minds.” Instead, they learn to respond through instinct, impulses, and genuine human reactions.

2. Focusing on the Partner:

Repetition trains actors to stop concentrating on their own appearance, performance, or vocal choices. Their attention shifts entirely toward their partner and the immediate reality of the interaction.

3. Developing Authentic Responses:

The words themselves become secondary, functioning only as a starting point for interaction. The actor learns to perceive subtext through the partner's facial expressions, breathing patterns, behavior, and emotional changes during the exchange.

Variations and Further Development:

As actors progress, the exercise becomes more complex and incorporates additional layers of emotional and situational context:

1. From Facts to Personal Perspective:

The introduction of personal viewpoints allows actors to move beyond objective observations and incorporate individual interpretations and reactions into the repetition process.

2. Scenes with Given Circumstances:

Actors repeat the exercise while placed in specific imaginary situations (for example, one character is rushing, running late, or has received difficult news). This allows them to explore how circumstances influence emotional responses, rhythm, and the meaning of simple phrases.

Many graduates of American acting programs and studios note that this exercise contributes to the development of empathy, flexibility, and emotional depth by teaching actors to remain fully present and responsive within a scene.

Core Practical Training Methods

1. Improvisation-based Exercises For Spontaneity and Truthfulness.

In American acting schools, improvisation is not viewed merely as a comedic skill but as a fundamental tool for developing organic and truthful performance. Core approaches, including the Meisner Technique, incorporate partner-based exercises that shift the actor's focus away from the script and toward active engagement with the scene partner. This allows actors to respond instinctively, remain emotionally present, and develop the ability to think and react in the moment.

The Repetition Exercise:

One of the most recognized exercises within the Meisner Technique is the Repetition Exercise. It is based on the exchange of simple observations between two actors. Through the continuous repetition of the same phrase, participants gradually shift their attention away from the words themselves and toward the real-time changes in their partner's behavior and emotional state.

As the exercise develops, the meaning and delivery of the repeated lines begin to transform naturally under the influence of emerging emotional impulses. This process helps actors develop spontaneity, active listening skills, emotional responsiveness, and the ability to remain fully present within the moment of performance.

2. Partner Work Focusing on Reaction, Listening, and Real-time Response.

Partner work in American actor training is based on the principles of active interaction and continuous attention to the scene partner. One of the primary goals of such exercises is to develop the actor's ability to respond authentically to what is happening in the moment rather than reproduce predetermined emotions or vocal choices.

Particular emphasis is placed on the development of active listening skills. In this context, listening involves not only hearing the partner's words but also recognizing subtle changes in their behavior, emotional state, speech rhythm, gestures, and non-verbal reactions. Through this process, actors learn to experience a scene as a continuous exchange of impulses and responses rather than as a sequence of memorized lines.

An essential element of this training is the development of spontaneous reactions. Actors practice responding to impulses that emerge naturally during interaction, allowing their behavior to be shaped by the presence of their partner and the given circumstances of the scene. This approach helps maintain authenticity in performance and prevents mechanical or predetermined acting choices.

Practical training often includes partner improvisations, interaction-based exercises, and scene work without fixed emotional or intonational structures. Such methods develop

flexibility, empathy, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances within a scene in real time.

3. Emotional Development Through Personal Experience, Imagination, and Connection.

The development of emotional expressiveness represents an important aspect of American actor training and is achieved through various pedagogical approaches. Among the most influential methods are the techniques developed by Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, and Sanford Meisner, each of whom proposed a different approach to achieving emotional authenticity in performance.

Key Acting Techniques:

1. Lee Strasberg Method:

Emotional Memory:

Lee Strasberg adapted elements of Stanislavski's system and developed exercises based on the actor's personal experiences and sensory associations. In this approach, actors use emotionally significant memories connected to experiences such as joy, pain, or fear and recreate certain sensory details associated with them — including smell, touch, sound, and physical sensations — in order to access emotional states required by the scene.

Sense Memory:

Sense Memory is one of the central practices associated with Strasberg's approach. It involves training the actor's ability to recall and recreate sensory experiences through the five senses. By focusing on imagined physical sensations — such as coldness, the taste of a lemon, or the feeling of touching a hot object — the actor learns to reduce excessive intellectual control and enter a state of more spontaneous and authentic response.

2. Stella Adler Technique:

Imagination:

In contrast to Strasberg's emphasis on personal emotional memories, Stella Adler argued that excessive reliance on personal trauma could be harmful to the actor. Instead, she emphasized the power of imagination, analysis of the given circumstances, and the actor's ability to emotionally justify the character's actions through the fictional world of the play.

Through imagination-based exercises, actors learn to establish a strong internal connection with the character's circumstances and develop emotional responses based on the reality of the dramatic situation rather than personal experience alone.

3. Meisner Technique:

The Meisner Technique focuses not on personal memories as the primary source of emotion, but on empathy, active connection, and the actor's ability to fully exist "in the moment."

According to Meisner's approach, emotional responses emerge naturally through continuous interaction with the scene partner and genuine reactions to their behavior.

Rather than attempting to create emotions consciously, actors learn to remain present, responsive, and open to the impulses that arise during the interaction. This allows emotional truth to develop organically through the relationship between the performers and the circumstances of the scene.

4. Physical and Vocal Exercises to Release Tension and Build Presence.

Physical and vocal training occupies an important place in American actor education. Its primary goal is to release unnecessary tension in the body and voice, develop physical and vocal awareness, and cultivate confident stage presence.

Many acting schools incorporate exercises designed to relax muscles, improve movement coordination, and develop effective breathing techniques. Physical training helps actors release bodily restrictions that may limit expressiveness and interfere with free interaction with scene partners and the surrounding space.

Particular attention is given to vocal training. Students develop breath support, articulation, vocal range, and speech clarity. These exercises enhance the expressiveness of the actor's voice and help maintain vocal stability during extended rehearsals and performances.

Body-awareness methods and various forms of movement training are widely used in contemporary actor education. Their purpose is to develop natural body coordination, improve posture, and encourage a freer and more organic physical presence on stage.

As a result, physical and vocal training is viewed not only as a technical component of actor preparation but also as an essential tool for developing confidence, concentration, and overall stage presence.

5. Work in Front of the Camera (film-focused training in modern studios).

Many contemporary American acting programs combine traditional theatrical training with specialized instruction in on-camera performance. Leading BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) programs provide students with professional studio environments, modern production equipment, and opportunities to engage with filmmaking processes from the early stages of training.

Specific Features of On-Camera Training:

In contemporary American university-based acting programs, on-camera training differs significantly from traditional stage-oriented preparation.

Understanding Camera Framing and Shot Sizes:

Actors are trained to understand how different shot sizes — from close-ups to wide shots — influence their expressive choices, eye focus, facial expressions, and overall performance technique. The actor learns to adjust the scale of performance according to the requirements of the camera.

Working with Production Equipment:

Many programs introduce students to basic aspects of cinematography and editing, allowing actors to better understand the technical environment behind the camera and develop more effective collaboration with the production team.

Specifics of the Filming Process:

Training often includes practical experience in studio environments, including work with green screen technology (Green Screen / VFX) and interaction with professional sound equipment such as lavalier microphones and boom microphones.

Industry-Oriented Preparation:

Students are also introduced to professional skills required within the entertainment industry, including audition techniques, self-tape preparation, and independent content creation such as web series, digital projects, and podcasts.

Actor Development Process

1. Focus on Building Personal Acting “Tools” Rather Than One Fixed System.

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary American actor training is the emphasis on flexibility rather than strict adherence to a single acting methodology. While many acting studios in the past organized their training around one specific system, most modern

programs seek to expose students to a variety of acting approaches and provide them with opportunities to develop their own professional toolkit. This philosophy is often described through the concept of the Actor's Toolbox, which suggests that actors should master multiple techniques and apply them according to the requirements of a particular role, genre, or artistic objective.

For example, the methods developed by Lee Strasberg may be used to explore emotional memory and personal experience. Stella Adler's approach emphasizes imagination and the analysis of given circumstances. The Meisner Technique focuses on spontaneous response and active engagement with a scene partner. These approaches are further complemented by various forms of physical and vocal training that contribute to the actor's overall development.

The central principle of this approach is not commitment to a single system, but rather the ability to select, adapt, and combine different techniques depending on the creative demands of a particular performance. As a result, actors are encouraged to develop their own working methodology, integrating elements from multiple acting traditions and tailoring them to their individual strengths, professional needs, and the specific requirements of each role.

2. Development of Individuality and Personal Acting Method.

A significant emphasis in American actor training is placed on the development of individuality and the search for a personal creative approach. Unlike systems that are structured around a single pedagogical methodology, many American acting schools seek to help actors discover their unique qualities, modes of perception, and artistic voice. The foundations of this approach can be traced to the ideas of Konstantin Stanislavski, which were later reinterpreted and expanded by American practitioners such as Lee Strasberg, Stella

Adler, and Sanford Meisner. As a result, the focus gradually shifted toward authenticity, individual experience, and the actor's personal way of existing within a role.

Throughout their training, students are introduced to a variety of acting techniques and are encouraged to develop their own approach to performance. Some actors rely primarily on emotional memory, while others draw upon imagination, the analysis of given circumstances, or interaction with scene partners. This process enables performers to build an individualized set of artistic tools that reflects their personal strengths and creative preferences.

Within this framework, the development of individuality is not viewed as a secondary outcome of training but as one of its central objectives. It is believed that a clear understanding of one's strengths, artistic tendencies, and creative identity allows actors to establish a sustainable professional practice and cultivate a distinctive artistic voice.

3. Actor Development Through Repetition, Feedback, and Experimentation.

In American actor training, professional development is achieved largely through consistent practice, repetition, and the application of acting techniques in a variety of performance situations. Through partner work and regular feedback, instructors encourage actors to trust their instincts, reduce excessive self-monitoring, and develop authentic responses in the moment.

Short Scenes Instead of Extended Preparation:

Unlike training models that devote substantial time to the preliminary analysis of a single role, many American programs rely on a large number of short scenes and practical exercises. This approach allows actors to apply different techniques continuously and gain experience across a wide range of circumstances.

Actors are often given scene assignments with minimal contextual information so that they focus not on constructing dramatic effects in advance, but on behaving truthfully within the given circumstances of the scene.

How it works:

The text must be sufficiently memorized so that the actor no longer needs to consciously control every line. This enables greater focus on the scene partner and the unfolding circumstances of the scene. The objective is to encourage responses that emerge from genuine interaction rather than from a predetermined performance plan.

Continuous Feedback:

American actor training places strong emphasis on ongoing evaluation and constructive feedback. Instructors and scene partners regularly provide observations and criticism following scene work, making feedback not only a method of assessment but also an essential tool for professional development.

How it works:

Instructors frequently interrupt scene work to address moments of artificiality, emotional overindulgence, loss of focus, or ineffective acting choices. This process helps actors identify habitual patterns and encourages the development of more truthful and responsive performances.

Experimentation:

Acting studios and training environments are often viewed as safe spaces for experimentation, where actors are encouraged to test different impulses, approaches, and creative choices without fear of failure.

How it works:

The same short scene may be performed repeatedly using different emotional preparations, objectives, physical actions, or interpretative choices. This process allows actors to explore multiple possibilities, develop creative flexibility, and become more comfortable taking artistic risks.

Ultimately, this training model supports the gradual development of a personal artistic approach. Rather than being provided with a single “correct” interpretation, actors learn to evaluate alternatives, discover what works most effectively for them, and develop independent creative judgment.

4. Development of Flexibility and Ability to Work With Different Acting Approaches.

The flexibility of the American actor lies not only in mastering a variety of acting techniques but also in the ability to adapt the creative process to the specific demands of a given artistic task. Contemporary American actor training emphasizes not the search for a single correct method, but the ability to select the most effective approach depending on the role, genre, performance medium, and directorial requirements.

Actors are encouraged to move freely between different approaches to character creation. One role may require extensive inner work and the use of emotional memory, while another may rely more heavily on imagination, improvisation, or physical action. In this context, technique is understood not as a fixed system but as a collection of tools that can be applied consciously and strategically.

Such flexibility is particularly important within the American film and television industry, where actors are often required to adapt quickly to changing production conditions. The

filmmaking process demands the ability to adjust performance intensity, respond effectively to scene partners, incorporate directorial feedback, and maintain authenticity across a variety of performance formats, ranging from stage productions to cinematic close-ups.

As a result, American actor training aims to develop not a performer committed to a single school of thought, but a versatile professional capable of selecting appropriate methods, adapting creative strategies, and responding effectively to the unique demands of each performance situation.

Actor Preparation for Role

1. Script Analysis Through Objectives, Given Circumstances, and Actions.

Many American acting methodologies trace part of their development to the ideas of Konstantin Stanislavski. However, these concepts were later adapted, expanded, and developed into distinct approaches by practitioners such as Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, and Sanford Meisner. Despite their differences, many American acting techniques are built around three fundamental questions: What does the character want? (Objectives), Under what conditions does the character exist? (Given Circumstances), and What does the character do to achieve that objective? (Actions).

As a result, American actors tend to focus less on portraying emotions directly and more on understanding a character's objectives, circumstances, and actions.

1. Objectives

An objective may be understood as the driving force of a scene—the specific outcome a character is actively pursuing at a given moment. Within American acting practice, objectives are generally expected to be active, directed toward another person, and achievable.

Super-Objective:

The character's overarching goal throughout the entire play, film, or story. Examples might include gaining recognition, achieving independence, or finding a sense of belonging.

Through-Line of Action:

The sequence of actions and decisions that guides the character toward the super-objective throughout the narrative.

Beat Objective:

A specific, immediate objective within a particular scene or dramatic beat. Examples might include persuading someone to confess, gaining another person's trust, or calming a partner's fears. In American actor training, objectives are often expressed as active verbs beginning with "I want to..." emphasizing purposeful action rather than emotional states.

2. Given Circumstances

Given circumstances refer to the factual conditions established by the playwright, screenwriter, or director that define the character's world. These circumstances provide the foundation from which the actor develops a believable and coherent interpretation of the role.

Events:

Major plot developments and significant occurrences that influence the character and shape the progression of the story.

Who Am I?

The character's age, profession, social background, personal history, psychological characteristics, and physical traits.

Where and When?

The historical period, time of day, geographical location, environmental conditions, and other contextual factors that define the setting.

Relationships:

The character's attitudes toward other individuals in the story, shaped by previous experiences, emotional connections, and current objectives.

3. Actions and Tactics

Actions are the physical and psychological behaviors a character employs in order to achieve an objective. In many American acting approaches—particularly those influenced by Stella Adler—the primary focus is placed on what the character does rather than on what the character feels. Emotions are viewed as natural by-products of purposeful action rather than goals to be performed directly.

Action:

A clear, active verb that expresses the character's intention within a scene, such as persuade, challenge, protect, seduce, confront, or investigate.

Tactics:

The specific strategies used to pursue an objective. Tactics may change throughout a scene depending on the reactions and behavior of other characters.

The analysis of objectives, given circumstances, and actions enables actors to transform dramatic text into coherent, purposeful, and psychologically motivated stage behavior.

Through this process, performance becomes rooted in intention and action rather than in the direct imitation of emotional states.

2. Emotional, Sensory, and Imaginative Preparation Across Different Acting Methods.

Many American acting schools trace their origins to the work of Konstantin Stanislavski, yet each has developed its own approach to the actor's emotional and creative preparation. As a result, different American acting traditions offer distinct pathways toward achieving emotional truth on stage, including the use of personal memories, sensory experiences, imagination, and moment-to-moment interaction with scene partners.

1. Lee Strasberg's Method (The Method)

Lee Strasberg's approach places a strong emphasis on psychological realism and the actor's personal experience as a source of authentic emotional expression.

Sensory Preparation (Sense Memory):

Sense Memory exercises are designed to develop concentration and the ability to recreate sensory experiences. Actors practice recalling physical sensations such as touch, temperature, taste, smell, or sound in order to create a vivid sense of reality and deepen their engagement with the scene.

Emotional Memory (Affective Recall):

Actors draw upon personal experiences that have generated strong emotional responses in the past. By recalling these experiences and their associated emotions, they seek to establish an authentic emotional connection to the circumstances of the role.

Imaginative Preparation:

Within this approach, imaginative work is often grounded in personal associations and lived

experiences. Memories and sensory details from real life may be used to enrich or supplement the fictional world of the character.

2. Sanford Meisner Technique

Unlike Strasberg's Method, the Meisner Technique does not rely primarily on personal memories as a source of emotional preparation. Instead, it emphasizes truthful interaction and responsiveness within the present moment.

Emotional Preparation:

In the Meisner approach, emotional readiness is often developed through imagined circumstances and personal imagination. However, the primary focus remains on the actor's ability to respond authentically to a scene partner. Emotions are expected to emerge naturally through genuine interaction rather than through the deliberate recall of past experiences.

Actors do not attempt to perform predetermined emotions. Instead, they strive to live truthfully under the given circumstances, allowing emotional responses to arise organically from the dynamics of the scene.

Imaginative Preparation:

Actors create vivid internal images and detailed imagined circumstances in order to establish an emotional foundation before entering the scene. These imaginative constructions help support truthful engagement with scene partners and dramatic situations.

3. Stella Adler Technique

In Stella Adler's approach, sensory work plays a less central role than it does in Strasberg's Method. Greater emphasis is placed on imagination, script analysis, given circumstances, and purposeful action.

Unlike Strasberg, Adler argued that relying extensively on painful personal memories could be psychologically harmful and artistically limiting. She believed that the actor's imagination should serve as the primary source of creative inspiration.

Emotional Preparation:

Emotional truth is achieved through a deep commitment to the imagined circumstances of the play rather than through the recreation of personal emotional experiences. Actors are encouraged to believe fully in the world of the character and to engage with it through imaginative exploration.

Imaginative Preparation:

Adler's technique places particular importance on expanding the actor's imaginative capacity. Actors are encouraged to develop a rich and detailed vision of the dramatic world, drawing upon cultural knowledge, observation, research, and intellectual curiosity. Through this process, the character becomes connected to a broader and more fully realized imaginative landscape.

Together, these approaches illustrate the diversity of emotional and creative preparation within American actor training. While they differ significantly in methodology, each seeks to help actors achieve truthful, compelling, and emotionally authentic performances.

3. Character Creation Through Behavior and Action.

Despite the differences among acting schools, many American acting techniques place significant emphasis on observable behavior and concrete actions as the primary means through which a character's inner life is revealed. Particular attention is given to physical expression—including habits, gestures, posture, movement, and patterns of speech—which can gradually generate authentic emotional responses. Rather than attempting to demonstrate

emotions directly, actors often work through behavior and action, allowing emotions to emerge naturally from the character's circumstances and objectives.

This approach is deeply embedded in both American theatre and film practice. Several influential methods reflect this emphasis on behavior and action.

1. From the External to the Internal (Character Acting and Physical Characterization)

Depending on the acting approach being used, character development may begin either with internal psychological exploration or with external physical choices and behavioral traits.

Many American actors employ physical characterization as a means of accessing a character's emotional life.

Rather than attempting to produce emotions directly, actors may first establish a physical framework for the role.

Physicality:

Actors make deliberate choices regarding posture, movement, eye contact, gesture, and overall physical presence. For example, slightly raised shoulders and avoidance of direct eye contact may immediately suggest insecurity, which can subsequently generate corresponding emotional responses.

Mannerisms:

Behavioral habits often serve as recognizable character markers. These may include repetitive gestures, distinctive ways of handling objects, specific speech patterns, or habitual movements that help define the character's personality and psychological state.

Psychological Gesture (Michael Chekhov Technique):

In Michael Chekhov's technique, actors employ a deliberately exaggerated physical gesture

that embodies the character's central desire, conflict, or psychological state. Through repetition and internalization, the gesture may evoke corresponding emotional and imaginative responses, helping the actor connect more deeply with the role.

2. The Principle of "Action-Based Acting" (Practical Aesthetics)

The approach known as Practical Aesthetics, popularized by David Mamet and William H. Macy, minimizes abstract emotional analysis and instead focuses on clear, actionable objectives.

Within this framework, actors concentrate on specific actions directed toward their scene partners, such as persuading, provoking, reassuring, confronting, or obtaining information. Rather than attempting to generate emotions directly, actors commit fully to pursuing an objective through action.

The underlying principle is that genuine emotions emerge naturally from purposeful behavior. By focusing on what the character is actively trying to accomplish, actors remain engaged in the dramatic situation and respond truthfully to their partners in real time. This emphasis on action helps create performances that are both authentic and psychologically grounded.

4. Balancing Preparation and Spontaneity.

One of the fundamental principles of American actor training is the balance between thorough preparation and the ability to remain spontaneous during performance. This balance allows dialogue to sound as though it is being conceived in the very moment it is spoken rather than reproduced from memorization. It is achieved through careful script analysis and character preparation, followed by a willingness to relinquish excessive control during the actual performance.

Many American acting schools operate on the principle that rigorous preparation should serve as a foundation for truthful and spontaneous behavior. After analyzing the script, exploring the character, and studying the given circumstances, actors are encouraged to shift their attention away from conscious control and toward genuine interaction with their scene partners. Within this framework, the most convincing performances emerge at the intersection of preparation and responsiveness to the present moment.

Actors are expected to enter a scene with a clear understanding of their objectives, circumstances, and actions, while remaining open to unexpected impulses and developments that arise during performance. This approach allows the actor to respond authentically rather than relying on predetermined emotional choices or rehearsed reactions.

One technique that strongly supports this principle is the Meisner Technique. In Meisner-based training, actors focus their attention not on their internal emotional states but on their scene partners. Through exercises that emphasize repetition, observation, and immediate response, actors learn to react truthfully to what is happening in the moment. This focus on present-moment interaction helps make performances feel alive, unpredictable, and free from mechanical repetition.

As a result, American actor training seeks to cultivate performers who are both highly prepared and capable of genuine spontaneity, allowing them to maintain emotional authenticity while adapting naturally to the evolving dynamics of a scene.

5. Adapting a Role Across Different Performance Environments (Theatre, Film, and Television).

Role adaptation in the United States is based on a fundamental principle: the size of the audience or the presence of the camera determines the scale and form of an actor's

expression. American actor training teaches performers to preserve the psychological truth of a character while adapting the external tools of performance to different mediums.

1. Theatre (Stage)

The primary challenge for a stage actor is physical and vocal projection. The performer must communicate the character's emotions, the meaning of the text, and subtle details of the performance to an audience, including those seated at the farthest distance from the stage.

Scale of movement:

Theatre often requires clearer and more expansive physical expression. Gestures tend to be larger, more open, and more precise, as subtle facial expressions may not be visible to the entire audience.

Voice:

Stage performance requires strong vocal support, clear articulation, and the ability to project the voice effectively without relying on amplification.

Energy and presence:

The actor must maintain concentration and emotional engagement throughout the entire performance, directing energy toward the audience while responding to the immediate presence of live spectators.

2. Film

In film, the scale of performance changes dramatically due to the use of close-ups. The camera functions almost like a microscope, capturing the smallest facial movements, changes in expression, and shifts in the actor's gaze.

Scale of movement:

Film acting often requires greater restraint and minimalism. The principle of “less is more” is central: instead of demonstrating emotions externally, actors allow the audience to perceive internal states through subtle changes in behavior, facial expression, and attention.

Voice:

Film performance usually relies on a more natural conversational vocal quality, sometimes approaching a whisper. The use of microphones, including boom microphones and lavalier microphones, allows actors to work with subtle vocal details and quiet emotional expression.

Production process:

Film production is typically non-linear. Scenes are rarely filmed in chronological order, meaning actors must quickly access emotional states, maintain continuity across different shooting conditions, and repeat performances across multiple takes while preserving authenticity.

3. Television

Television in the United States occupies a position between theatre and film, with performance requirements varying depending on the format and genre.

Dramatic television series:

These formats generally require a cinematic level of naturalism while also allowing for longer character development across multiple episodes or seasons.

Sitcoms (multi-camera productions):

A clear example of adaptation can be seen in multi-camera comedy formats, which often include a live studio audience. Performance tends to become more energetic, rhythmic, and slightly broader, with greater emphasis on timing, clarity, and comedic delivery. In this sense,

sitcom acting combines elements of theatrical performance with the technical demands of working for the camera.

Personal Experience in American Acting Training

1. Background of Training.

I received my training at the American Acting Center of Israel. The program lasted two months and was conducted entirely in English. Classes took place twice a week and lasted approximately three and a half hours each.

The training was based on principles of American acting education. The instructor had professional experience studying and working in Los Angeles and incorporated methods commonly used in contemporary American actor training. This allowed me to become familiar with approaches commonly applied in modern actor training in the United States.

The course was divided into three main stages. The first stage focused on working with unfamiliar scenes in pairs and included the analysis of character objectives, exploration of given circumstances, and the use of improvisation as a tool for acting research. The second stage concentrated on preparing individual monologues and developing on-camera acting skills. The final stage involved preparing a performance based on scenes from films.

One of the distinctive features of the program was its international learning environment. The group consisted of participants from different countries, including native English speakers and students for whom English was a second language. As a result, the entire learning process, including scene discussions, character analysis, and communication between

participants, took place in English, creating an opportunity for continuous language practice within a professional acting context.

In addition to group classes, a significant part of the training involved individual work with the instructor and scene partners. This format allowed us to analyze texts in detail, discuss challenges that appeared during the process, and explore the circumstances and relationships within each scene more deeply. Individual guidance helped clarify acting objectives and discover more convincing ways to approach character development and performance.

2. Structure of Classes.

The structure of the classes was built around the principle of quickly engaging the actor in the creative process. At the beginning of the course, the primary focus was placed on working with a scene partner, analyzing the text, and developing the ability to understand the internal logic behind a character's behavior. Particular attention was given to identifying the character's objectives, motivations, and actions, as well as using improvisation as a tool for exploring the scene.

Throughout the classes, we regularly returned to key questions related to the character's circumstances and intentions: "What is your objective?", "What do you want?", "Why does the character behave this way?", and "What is the relationship between the characters?" This approach encouraged us to focus not only on the external delivery of the text but also on understanding the internal reasons behind the character's actions.

A significant part of the training was based on repeatedly exploring the same scene through different approaches. We performed scenes multiple times, experimented with various reactions, emotional states, and ways of interacting with our partners. Through this process,

the search for an acting solution developed gradually and naturally, allowing us to discover the most authentic and convincing choices for the character.

An important aspect of this approach was that actors were not encouraged to search for a single “correct” interpretation of a scene. Instead, we were encouraged to explore different possibilities and choose the approach that felt most organic based on our own perception, personal experience, and interaction with our scene partner.

After developing the fundamental principles of scene work, the program expanded to include individual monologue preparation. At this stage, participants selected material that felt personally meaningful and allowed them to demonstrate their individual acting qualities. The work on monologues also included the development of on-camera performance skills.

The practice of acting for the camera allowed me to recognize significant differences between stage performance and screen acting. These differences were evident not only in the relationship with the audience but also in the actor’s internal experience, the level of expressiveness required, and the ways emotional states are communicated.

3. Work on Scenes and Performance Preparation.

The process of working on scenes and text was based on gradual exploration of the material through interaction with a scene partner and practical experimentation. At the beginning of the process, each participant was randomly assigned a scene and a partner. After receiving the material, we first became familiar with the text, analyzed the overall structure of the scene, its emotional direction, the given circumstances, and the main objectives of the characters.

After several readings of the text and a brief discussion with our partners, the instructor encouraged us to put the script aside and begin exploring the scene through improvisation. The main focus was placed on pursuing the character's objective and developing natural interaction with the partner rather than searching for a predetermined intonation or attempting to reproduce a "correct" emotional state.

During the rehearsal process, the same scene was performed multiple times using different approaches to behavior, reactions, and forms of interaction. This method allowed us to gradually explore the characters and circumstances, discover new possibilities, and select the most organic approach to the performance. The acting choices were developed not only through textual analysis but also through direct practical interaction with the scene partner and personal interpretation of the situation.

Later, we began preparing for the final performance. Participants were provided with scenes from different films and assigned partners with whom they continued working according to the previously developed methods of analysis and exploration.

One of the distinctive features of this preparation process was the absence of an extended period of intensive rehearsals immediately before the performance. Despite this, the format did not negatively affect the final result, as the main preparation took place throughout the regular training process. By the time of the final performance, we had developed a strong understanding of our scenes, characters, and interactions with our partners.

Another important element of the preparation process was the opportunity for reflection and independent analysis of the material. This allowed the creation of each scene to be based not only on technical rehearsal but also on a deeper understanding of the character's personality, objectives, and relationships with other characters.

4. Teacher–Student Interaction.

Within this course, the instructor acted not only as a traditional teacher but also as a mentor who guided the learning process and encouraged students to independently develop their own acting solutions. The primary role of the instructor was not to provide ready-made answers, but to create an environment that supported independent analysis, exploration, and the development of an individual approach to acting.

The learning environment was characterized by a calm and supportive atmosphere based on more equal interaction between participants. The absence of a strict hierarchical structure between the instructor and students encouraged open discussion of creative ideas and created a safe space for experimentation and the exploration of different performance choices.

A significant amount of attention was dedicated to individual work with scene partners and the instructor. Throughout the training, we had the opportunity to examine challenges in detail, analyze texts thoroughly, and explore the specific aspects of each scene, including the relationships between characters, given circumstances, and acting objectives.

The instructor primarily used a method of guiding questions, helping students independently determine the direction of their work. Rather than explaining what the solution to a scene should be, she encouraged the process of reflection and analysis by asking questions about the character's objectives, motivations, and the circumstances of the situation.

This approach contributed to the development of actor' independence. We were not taught to search for a single "correct" answer; instead, we learned to formulate deeper questions, analyze our own choices, and develop a personal understanding of the character through practical exploration and individual perception.

5. Personal Observations.

For me, as an actor who already had experience studying within a different acting system, this course became a new and, in many ways, unfamiliar experience. The most significant aspect of the training was the use of improvisation as a foundation of the acting process and the opportunity to choose an individual path toward creating a character.

Working through personal emotions, experiences, and individual perception while simultaneously considering the character's objectives, circumstances, and tasks allowed us to discover more natural and truthful emotional responses. This approach helped avoid mechanical reproduction of emotions and encouraged a more organic existence within the given circumstances of the scene.

One of the most distinctive features of this methodology was the absence of a single "correct" way to interpret a role. Throughout the process, actors were encouraged to explore different possibilities of behavior, emotional responses, and creative decisions through the lens of their own experiences and perceptions, choosing the approach that felt most authentic to their individual understanding of the character.

During the training, participants were encouraged to explore characters through various methods: creating an external image, interacting with physical objects, analyzing internal emotional experiences, or drawing from personal memories and observations. This process supported the development of individuality in acting and helped create a more personal connection between the actor and the character.

This approach allowed me to better understand the importance of individual interpretation in acting and significantly strengthened my ability to analyze characters through my own experiences, ask deeper questions, and develop a personal understanding of the material.

Furthermore, this experience demonstrated that an acting choice does not always have to be created through the search for a predetermined result. Instead, it can emerge through a process of exploration, experimentation, and personal discovery. The freedom to make individual choices and incorporate personal perspective became one of the most meaningful aspects of this approach and had a significant influence on my further development as an actor.

Comparative Analysis

Theoretical Foundations and Relationship with Character

1. General Philosophy of Actor Training.

Both Russian and American acting schools strive to create truthful characters and believable performances in both theatre and film. Authentic acting, rather than the mechanical reproduction of a story, is the primary goal of both traditions. However, the key difference lies in the methods used to achieve this objective.

In Russia, a coherent and structured system of actor training has been developed. The methods of Konstantin Stanislavski and Vsevolod Meyerhold became the principal foundations of this educational tradition. As a result, the Russian acting school seeks to develop a psychologically deep actor who is capable of sincere transformation, living through another person's life, and searching for inner truth on stage. The actor is viewed as part of a unified artistic vision of the production, which is realized through collaboration with the director.

In contrast, the American acting tradition places greater emphasis on the individuality and identity of the performer. It encompasses a variety of methods and approaches, such as those developed by Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler, which offer different perspectives on character development and the actor's inner work. Rather than following a single unified system, actors within the American tradition are encouraged to discover their own artistic path and develop an approach that works best for them. This tradition aims to create a natural, theatrical, and cinematic actor who relies on personal experience, subconscious impulses, and the truth of the present moment.

The defining characteristics of such an actor include emotional authenticity, an inside-out approach to performance, and a high degree of adaptability, particularly in front of the camera.

Thus, both traditions seek to achieve truthful acting, yet they differ in their understanding of the path toward this goal. The Russian acting school relies on a relatively unified system of training that emphasizes psychological analysis, discipline, and work within a cohesive artistic vision. The American acting tradition, by contrast, incorporates a variety of methodologies, providing actors with greater freedom in choosing the tools and techniques they use to create a character. As a result, both systems produce truthful and compelling performers, while emphasizing different aspects of an actor's artistic development.

2. Relationship with the Character.

Within the Russian acting tradition, the relationship between the actor and the character is built through the search for personal points of connection between the performer and the role. Throughout the creative process, the actor engages in a continuous dialogue between their own personality and the circumstances of the character, allowing for the creation of a vivid and believable portrayal. Through empathy and the internal justification of the character's actions, the actor gradually develops an understanding of the character's motivations, objectives, and underlying logic of behavior. This approach encourages actors not merely to represent a character, but to experience the character's story as a genuine human reality.

In the American acting tradition, this process is more strongly based on the actor's individual creative interaction with the role. Actors are often given greater freedom in determining how a character will be developed and explored. Depending on the technique being used, performers may rely on emotional memory, imagination, improvisation, physical action, or interaction with scene partners. As a result, the character is viewed not as a fixed and predetermined figure, but as a dynamic construct that evolves through the actor's chosen methods and creative tools.

Thus, the Russian tradition emphasizes deep psychological immersion in the character, whereas the American tradition provides actors with greater freedom in selecting the techniques through which the character is created.

3. Source of Acting Truth.

From the perspective of the Russian acting tradition, acting truth is achieved through a sincere belief in the given circumstances of the role and genuine reactions to them. By accepting the circumstances of the character as real, the actor begins to behave naturally within the fictional reality of the play or film. A thorough understanding of the character's motivations, objectives, and internal logic helps make this process more effective. Within this methodology, actors do not simply portray emotions; they strive to genuinely experience them in the moment, allowing one truthful reaction to generate the next. Particular emphasis is placed on deep character analysis and the disciplined application of the system, both of which contribute to the creation of a highly believable performance.

In the American acting tradition, the source of acting truth is often associated with the actor's personal experience. Performers may draw upon past events and emotional memories that evoke feelings similar to those required by the role. Another commonly used approach involves reaching emotional authenticity through action. Rather than attempting to reproduce an emotion directly, actors focus on carrying out meaningful actions within the circumstances of the scene, allowing genuine emotions to emerge naturally from the process. Truth may also be found through imagination, as actors place themselves within fictional circumstances and mentally experience situations similar to those of the character. As a result, there is no single method for achieving acting truth within the American tradition. Actors are encouraged to choose the tools and techniques that allow them to create the most authentic emotions and reactions.

Thus, the primary difference between the two traditions lies not in the result they seek, but in the way acting truth is achieved. The Russian acting school approaches truthful performance through deep immersion in the character's circumstances, an understanding of the character's internal logic, and sincere emotional experience. The American tradition, by contrast, offers a more flexible framework in which actors may use a variety of tools—including personal experience, imagination, improvisation, partner interaction, or physical action—to discover the most organic way of existing within a role. As a result, the Russian system seeks to develop actors capable of deeply living through a character, while the American tradition develops performers who can independently choose an individual path toward creating a role.

4. Working with Emotions.

In the Russian acting tradition, emotional work is developed through the actor's search for points of connection with the character, as well as through a deep understanding of the character's inner world. The process begins with the acceptance of the given circumstances and a careful examination of the character's motivations, objectives, actions, and behavior. By understanding why a character acts in a particular way, the actor is able to experience emotions as a natural consequence of those actions. Emotional truth is therefore achieved through immersion in the character's circumstances, combined with active interaction and genuine responses to scene partners.

In the American acting tradition, actors often use personal memories and sensory experiences as tools for creating authentic emotions. Emotional memory allows performers to access feelings through their own past experiences, while Sense Memory focuses on physical sensations in order to produce more natural emotional responses. Imagination also serves as an important creative resource. Actors construct the world of the character through circumstances, actions, and exploration of the fictional environment. In addition, some

approaches view emotional truth as the result of genuine interaction with a scene partner, where reactions emerge spontaneously from the present moment rather than from predetermined emotional preparation.

Despite these differences, both traditions share an important principle: the actor must do rather than simply feel. Emotions are not treated as isolated goals but as natural outcomes of meaningful actions within the circumstances of the role.

Thus, both traditions seek to create emotionally truthful performances, yet they achieve this objective through different methods. The Russian school primarily relies on the systematic analysis of the character, circumstances, and internal motivations, whereas the American tradition provides actors with a broader range of tools for achieving emotional authenticity through personal experience, imagination, action, and interaction with scene partners.

5. Final Comparison.

In conclusion, both acting traditions pursue the same fundamental objective: the creation of truthful and convincing performances on stage and on screen. Both systems seek to develop emotionally expressive actors who are capable of analyzing a character, understanding their motivations, and creating believable and engaging portrayals.

The primary difference between the two traditions lies in the methods used to achieve this goal. Russian acting training is based on a more structured and systematic approach, in which actors develop through psychological analysis, discipline, and the gradual mastery of established principles. Great importance is placed on understanding the character's inner life, motivations, and objectives within a coherent artistic framework.

The American acting tradition, by contrast, offers a more flexible approach. Actors are encouraged to explore a variety of techniques, combine different methods, and independently

discover the tools that best support their creative process. Personal experience, imagination, spontaneity, and adaptability often play a central role in the development of a performance.

Therefore, the Russian system tends to shape actors through deep internal investigation and work within a unified artistic tradition, whereas the American approach promotes creative independence, flexibility, and the ability to adapt to a wide range of professional and artistic challenges. While the paths differ, both traditions ultimately aim to prepare actors who are capable of creating truthful, emotionally compelling, and professionally accomplished performances.

Working Process

1. Organization of Training.

Russian acting training is largely based on the principles developed by Konstantin Stanislavski and Vsevolod Meyerhold. As a result, actor education is built around systematic preparation through psychological exercises, character analysis, and physical training, including biomechanics, speech, and movement. Training involves work within the given circumstances of a role, analysis of a character's objectives, the search for a super-objective, and the development of the ability to exist organically within a role. At the same time, significant emphasis is placed on discipline, regular practice, and an extensive rehearsal process.

Particular attention is devoted to etudes and the development of physical mastery through biomechanics, rhythm, and various physical exercises. These elements are intended to strengthen the actor's expressive abilities and enhance the connection between physical action and psychological intention.

In contrast, American actor training is often oriented toward the exploration of personal emotions, experiences, and memories. As discussed previously, American acting education is based on a variety of approaches that may be selected according to the individual actor's needs and preferences. Training frequently includes exercises focused on partner work, active listening, and spontaneous reaction. Actors also work through improvisation, emotional and sense memory, imagination, and the analysis of circumstances. Considerable attention is given to broadening the actor's artistic perspective, developing adaptability, and cultivating the ability to work with a wide variety of roles and dramatic material.

Thus, both traditions seek to prepare actors who are capable of deep character analysis and truthful performance. However, Russian training primarily relies on the gradual mastery of a unified system based on discipline and structured instruction. American actor training, while not necessarily less structured, tends to derive its structure from the combination of multiple acting methods rather than from a single overarching system.

2. Role of the Teacher and Teacher–Student Relationship.

Within this area, the two acting traditions demonstrate significant differences. In the Russian training system, there is a more pronounced hierarchy and a strong emphasis on discipline, where the teacher often serves as an authoritative figure who guides the direction of the work and oversees the actor's development process. Within this approach, students are expected to demonstrate responsibility, organization, and the ability to respond effectively to feedback and changes that occur during rehearsals. The expectations placed on students are often comparable to those found in a professional theatre environment, where commitment, discipline, and readiness to meet artistic demands are essential.

In the American acting tradition, the role of the teacher is generally less directive. The instructor often acts as a mentor who supports students in discovering their own solutions to creative challenges. Rather than providing predetermined answers, the teacher encourages exploration through questions, discussion, and collaborative investigation of the material. Significant attention is also given to an individual approach, allowing the teacher to consider each actor's personal qualities, creative process, and methods of artistic development.

Thus, the Russian system involves more structured guidance from the teacher and a clearly organized educational process, whereas the American tradition places greater emphasis on student independence and the ability to explore the material individually under the guidance of a mentor.

3. Character Development and Partner Work.

Within the Russian acting tradition, character development is built through a gradual and systematic analysis of the character's personality, motivations, and given circumstances. The actor progressively explores the inner world of the character, including their goals, objectives, and the reasons behind their actions. Significant attention is given to discovering the logic of the character's behavior and creating a complete and internally consistent image. The development of a role occurs gradually through etudes, rehearsals, and continuous refinement of acting objectives.

Partner interaction also plays an important role in the training process. However, within this approach, the scene partner is primarily viewed as a part of the overall structure of the scene, helping the actor reveal the character and achieve the established objectives. The performer is expected to remain attentive to the partner's actions and reactions while existing within the given circumstances together with other participants of the scene.

In the American acting tradition, the process of character creation often develops in a different way. Instead of relying primarily on detailed preliminary analysis, actors are frequently encouraged to explore the role through practical work, improvisation, and direct interaction with their scene partners. The character may develop gradually throughout the rehearsal process, changing as the actor discovers new reactions, behaviors, and approaches to the scene.

Partner interaction holds a particularly significant role within many American acting methods. The scene partner is often considered one of the main sources of acting truth. The performer learns not only to understand their own character but also to respond continuously to another person's behavior in the present moment. As a result, emotional reactions emerge more naturally and become a product of genuine interaction rather than predetermined responses.

Thus, both traditions recognize the importance of character development and partner work, but they emphasize different aspects of the process. The Russian system focuses primarily on deep character analysis and the gradual construction of the role, whereas the American tradition more often uses partner interaction and practical exploration of the scene as essential tools for creating the character.

4. Rehearsal Process and Creative Exploration.

The rehearsal process within Russian and American acting traditions also demonstrates significant differences, despite their shared goal of creating a convincing and truthful performance.

In the Russian acting school, rehearsals are typically structured as a long-term and gradual process of exploring the role. Considerable attention is given to text analysis, given

circumstances, the character's super-objective, and the internal logic behind their actions. The work on a scene develops progressively: through etudes, discussions, and repeated exploration of the material, actors examine different possibilities for the character's behavior. The rehearsal process is aimed at achieving a deep understanding of the role and creating an internally justified and psychologically grounded stage existence.

In the American acting tradition, rehearsals are more often built around practical exploration of the scene through action. Instead of spending an extended period on preliminary analysis, actors frequently move more quickly toward partner work, improvisation, and direct interaction within the circumstances of the scene. Significant attention is given to experimenting with different behavioral choices, discovering new reactions, and exploring the scene through direct experience. The same scene may be performed in multiple ways, allowing actors to gradually discover the most organic and truthful way of existing within the role.

The two traditions also differ in their approach to creative exploration. In the Russian system, the rehearsal process often develops within a specific artistic concept of the production and the overall vision of the director. In the American tradition, actors are generally given greater freedom to investigate the material and develop their own creative solutions, using different tools depending on the chosen method of work.

Thus, both traditions view rehearsal as a space for exploring the character and the scene.

However, the Russian school places greater emphasis on systematic analysis and the gradual construction of the role, whereas the American approach more frequently relies on practical experimentation, improvisation, and discovery through action.

5. Working Across Different Performance Media.

One of the important differences between Russian and American acting traditions lies in their approach to different performance media, including theatre, film, and television.

The Russian acting school has historically developed primarily within the theatrical tradition. Therefore, significant attention is given to preparing actors who are capable of existing on stage, creating psychologically complex characters, and maintaining the emotional truth of a performance throughout an entire production. Work with voice, physicality, movement, and internal state helps actors preserve expressiveness within the conditions of live interaction with an audience. Even when working in film, actors often transfer principles of theatrical analysis, including a deep understanding of the character, given circumstances, and the internal logic of their actions.

The American acting tradition, in contrast, is connected not only with theatre but also with the development of film and television. As a result, considerable attention is placed on the actor's ability to adapt to the camera and perform naturally within the conditions of a close-up. Methods based on improvisation, emotional memory, partner interaction, and the truth of the present moment allow actors to create more subtle and natural performances that correspond to the requirements of screen acting.

The two traditions also differ in their approach to the scale of acting expression. In theatre, actors must consider the physical space of the stage, vocal projection, physical expressiveness, and direct interaction with the audience. In film, however, the camera can capture minimal emotional changes through the actor's eyes, facial expressions, and internal state. American actor training often places greater emphasis on these specific demands of screen performance, whereas the Russian tradition maintains a stronger connection to the actor's theatrical foundation.

Thus, both schools aim to develop versatile actors capable of creating truthful performances; however, they have historically developed within different professional environments. The Russian system emphasizes the depth of internal work and stage presence, while the American tradition places greater focus on flexibility and the actor's ability to adapt to different performance mediums, particularly screen acting.

6. Comparative Evaluation of Both Systems.

When comparing Russian and American acting traditions, it becomes evident that both systems are directed toward the same fundamental goal: the creation of a truthful, emotionally convincing, and professionally prepared actor. Despite differences in training methods, both approaches aim to develop an actor's ability to deeply understand a character, interact with scene partners, and create a genuine stage or screen presence.

One of the main strengths of the Russian acting tradition is its structured nature and emphasis on internal exploration. Stanislavski's system and the influence of Meyerhold have contributed to a comprehensive approach in which actors develop through psychological analysis, physical discipline, vocal training, and an understanding of the overall artistic vision. This approach creates performers who are capable of deeply investigating characters and developing complex, multi-layered portrayals.

However, the high level of structure within this system can also limit creative exploration, as actors often work within an already established tradition and specific principles of training. The strong emphasis on process, gradual development, and mastery of established techniques requires significant time, commitment, and discipline.

At the same time, one of the greatest strengths of the American acting tradition is its flexibility and focus on the individuality of the performer. The variety of available methods

allows actors to select different tools depending on the specific role, genre, or professional challenge. This approach is particularly effective within the contemporary film and television industry, where actors are often required to adapt quickly to different working conditions and creative environments.

However, the absence of one unified system may also create certain challenges. Since the American tradition combines multiple approaches, actors must independently determine which methods are most suitable for their development and gradually build their own personal process of work. This requires a high level of self-reflection, independence, and artistic awareness.

Therefore, it is impossible to determine that one system is universally more effective than the other, as each tradition develops different aspects of acting ability. The Russian approach is particularly strong in psychological depth, character analysis, discipline, and systematic preparation, while the American tradition emphasizes individuality, adaptability, and the ability to utilize various creative tools to solve artistic challenges.

The most effective approach for the contemporary actor may be the integration of elements from both traditions: combining the psychological depth, discipline, and analytical structure of Russian training with the freedom, flexibility, and individual exploration encouraged by American methods. Such integration allows actors to become more versatile performers who are capable of working effectively both in theatre and within the modern screen industry.

Artistic Identity

1. How the Russian School Shapes an Actor.

Traditionally, Russian acting training is oriented toward discipline, psychological depth, and an actor's responsibility to the artistic integrity of a production. Influenced by Stanislavski's

system and later developments in Russian theatre education, it aims not only to teach performance techniques but also to shape the actor's mindset and approach to creative work. As a result, actors often develop a strong analytical approach to character creation and a deep commitment to the rehearsal process.

Discipline

Through long rehearsal periods, continuous work on a role, and high expectations from teachers and directors, actors develop discipline, responsibility, and a strong work ethic. This emphasis on consistent effort encourages performers to approach their craft with dedication and professionalism.

In addition, actors develop a sense of artistic responsibility, viewing themselves as contributors to the overall artistic vision rather than focusing solely on individual performance.

Psychological Depth

Drawing on Stanislavski's system, actors are encouraged to explore a character's motivations, objectives, and emotional life. This process helps them develop psychological awareness and the ability to create believable and emotionally truthful performances.

Analytical Thinking

Russian acting training often promotes analytical thinking through the examination of a character's super-objective, given circumstances, and logical sequence of actions. Actors learn to approach a role as a complex structure that requires careful study and interpretation.

Commitment to the Creative Process

The Russian tradition places significant value on the rehearsal process itself. Rather than focusing solely on the final performance, actors are taught to appreciate the gradual development of a role through preparation, experimentation, and reflection.

Ensemble Awareness

Russian theatre has a strong ensemble tradition. Actors are trained to see themselves as part of a larger artistic whole, where collaboration and collective achievement are often valued more highly than individual recognition.

2. How the American School Shapes an Actor.

The American system of actor training is often characterized by flexibility, self-expression, and an emphasis on individual artistic development. Influenced by approaches such as Meisner's technique and contemporary acting methods, it encourages performers to explore their own experiences and instincts as creative resources. As a result, actors often develop a strong sense of individuality, adaptability, and emotional openness.

Individuality and Self-Expression

One of the main distinctive features of the American acting tradition is its focus on the individuality of the performer. Personal experience becomes an important part of the creative process, allowing actors to search for their own unique path toward understanding and creating a character. Instead of following one established model, actors are encouraged to develop their own interpretation of a role, which allows each performer to develop their own artistic voice and unique approach to acting.

Emotional Openness

American acting methods often encourage performers to remain open to their own emotions and internal experiences. Working with emotional memory, imagination, and personal experience helps actors develop the ability to express feelings freely and use them as creative

resources. As a result, actors learn not only to access emotional reactions but also to consciously incorporate them into the process of character creation.

Creative Independence

The American acting system also promotes the development of creative independence. The actor does not simply perform given tasks but actively participates in the search for artistic solutions. Performers are encouraged to independently explore the material, analyze the character, and choose the most effective tools for their work. This approach develops responsibility for the creative process and the ability to make independent professional decisions.

Adaptability and Flexibility

Since the American acting tradition combines many different approaches and techniques, actors become accustomed to working with various methods and adapting quickly to new challenges. They learn to choose specific tools depending on the requirements of a particular role, genre, or performance format. This flexibility is especially important in the modern film and television industry, where actors constantly encounter new working conditions and artistic demands.

Responsiveness and Presence

Influenced by approaches such as Meisner's technique, significant attention is given to the actor's ability to listen to a partner and respond authentically to what is happening in the present moment. Actors learn to remain fully engaged in the scene and build their performance through genuine interaction rather than relying only on prepared emotional states or predetermined reactions. This contributes to the creation of more natural and organic performances.

3. Influence on Artistic Identity.

The Russian and American acting traditions pursue the same fundamental goal — achieving truth and authenticity in performance. However, as discussed previously, they approach this goal through different methods, which consequently shape the actor's artistic identity in different ways.

The Russian acting tradition develops an actor who is responsible, disciplined, and guided by a structured system of training. Such an actor learns to work as part of an ensemble and respond effectively to the director's artistic requirements. Russian acting education develops endurance, the ability to deeply analyze a character, and a strong pursuit of psychological authenticity in performance. Significant attention is given to understanding the internal logic of the character's actions, discovering motivation, and gradually building a complete image. As a result, actors become accustomed to asking not only how to perform a role, but primarily how to achieve a deeper understanding of the character and their inner world.

In contrast, the American approach places greater emphasis on individuality and freedom of choice. Through various techniques and methods, actors learn to independently explore their own emotions, experiences, and creative abilities, as well as approach characters through personal experience, imagination, or interaction with a scene partner. As a result, actors within this system develop flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to use different tools depending on the specific artistic task. Therefore, the actor is often encouraged to consider not only how to understand the character, but also which method or technique will be the most effective in creating the role in a particular situation.

As a result, the differences between the two traditions are reflected not only in the process of training but also in the formation of the performer's artistic identity. The Russian tradition often shapes the actor as part of a unified artistic vision, emphasizing discipline, collective work, and deep psychological analysis. The American tradition, on the other hand,

encourages creative independence, the development of an individual artistic style, and the ability to adapt to various professional environments. Despite these differences, both approaches ultimately develop professional actors capable of creating truthful and emotionally convincing performances.

4. Main Conclusion.

This research is dedicated to exploring how an actor changes when transitioning between two different acting traditions — Russian and American. Throughout this study, the main methodologies and approaches used in both acting schools were examined, as well as the differences in their understanding of acting, character preparation, and the formation of an actor's artistic identity.

Despite the many differences between these traditions, both aim to achieve the same fundamental goal — the creation of a truthful, emotionally convincing, and professionally prepared actor. However, the paths toward achieving this goal are significantly different. The research has demonstrated that the Russian acting tradition primarily offers the actor a system, while the American tradition provides a set of tools. The Russian school seeks to create a complete approach to the profession through consistent training, discipline, and deep analysis, whereas the American school provides actors with a variety of methods and techniques, allowing them to independently choose the most effective approach for their creative process.

The research also demonstrated that the transition between these two traditions affects not only acting technique but also the actor's overall perception of the profession. It changes the actor's relationship with the character, the rehearsal process, the search for emotional truth, and their own role within the creative process. The transformation involves not only the

development of professional skills but also a change in the actor's way of thinking, understanding of creativity, and perception of their place in the creation of an artistic work.

The exploration of both traditions has led to the conclusion that they do not contradict each other. On the contrary, each reveals different aspects of acting and has the ability to complement the other. The psychological depth and systematic structure of Russian acting training can successfully coexist with the flexibility, adaptability, and creative freedom of American methods.

By moving between different approaches, an actor expands their professional perspective and begins to understand not only various acting techniques but also themselves as an artist. Exposure to different traditions allows performers to recognize their own strengths and limitations, develop self-reflection, and make more conscious decisions when choosing tools for creative challenges. Experience with multiple approaches also helps actors avoid professional limitations and prevents dependence on a single method of approaching a role. As a result, the actor becomes more flexible, open to new challenges, and capable of adapting to different requirements of directors and artistic material.

Each tradition reveals different dimensions of acting development. The Russian school strengthens analytical depth, discipline, responsibility, and the ability to psychologically explore a character. The American tradition develops independence, flexibility, emotional openness, and the ability to utilize various tools to solve creative challenges.

Therefore, the most versatile contemporary actor may be the one who is able to combine the psychological depth of the Russian tradition with the flexibility and creative freedom of American actor training. The integration of the strongest elements of both approaches allows actors to fully develop their artistic potential and prepares them to work within an increasingly diverse and constantly changing professional environment.

Strengths and Limitations of Each Approach

1. Strengths of Russian Acting Training.

Deep Psychological Analysis of Character

Through deep character analysis, actors develop an understanding of the character's motivation, objectives, super-objective, and internal logic of behavior. This approach allows performers to create complex, multi-layered characters and achieve a high level of psychological authenticity in their work.

Systematic Approach to Training

The Russian acting training system provides actors with a clear structure of professional development, gradually building essential skills and techniques. This consistent process helps performers develop technical abilities, a deeper understanding of character creation, and the ability to approach different artistic challenges.

Discipline and Professional Responsibility

Actors trained within this tradition develop a high level of self-organization, responsibility toward the artistic work, and the ability to maintain long-term commitment to a role. This approach creates performers who are capable of accepting professional demands and working effectively within the overall vision of the director and production.

Ensemble and Collaborative Skills

The strong ensemble culture of the Russian tradition develops an actor's ability to perceive themselves as part of a larger artistic process. Performers learn to interact with partners, understand their role within the production, and work not only toward individual achievement but also toward the integrity of the entire performance.

Physical and Psychological Endurance

Through a demanding training system that includes work with the body, voice, and extended rehearsal processes, actors develop both physical and psychological resilience. This allows performers to maintain the quality of their work even under significant emotional and physical demands.

2. Limitations of Russian Acting Training.

Limited Flexibility in the Creative Process

One of the possible limitations of the Russian acting system is the high level of structure within the training process. Since education is based on established principles and the gradual development of a specific methodology, actors often develop within an already formed artistic framework.

This approach helps create a strong professional foundation; however, it may sometimes limit the ability to quickly search for unconventional solutions. Actors can become more focused on following an established process correctly rather than freely experimenting with different approaches to character creation.

High Dependence on Structure and Established Methods

The Russian acting tradition involves gradual skill development through a clearly organized training system, where each stage of preparation has a specific purpose. This approach helps form disciplined and technically skilled performers.

However, a strong dependence on structure may create challenges for actors who need to quickly adapt to new working conditions, genres, or unconventional creative tasks. Compared to more flexible systems, actors may require more time to move beyond familiar methods of approaching their work.

Less Emphasis on Individual Creative Exploration

Although the Russian acting tradition also values the individuality of the performer, its primary focus is often placed on revealing the character through analysis, systematic work, and the artistic vision of the production.

As a result, an actor's individual style often develops within an established tradition rather than through continuous independent exploration of different creative tools. This may limit experimentation with personal interpretations of a role and the development of a completely individual acting approach.

Strong Connection to Theatrical Tradition

Historically, Russian acting training developed primarily within a theatrical tradition, where significant importance is placed on extended rehearsal processes, stage presence, voice, physical expression, and interaction with a live audience.

This connection to theatre remains one of the system's greatest strengths; however, it can also create certain challenges when transitioning into modern screen formats. Acting for the camera requires greater adaptability, naturalism, and the ability to work effectively within shorter preparation periods and with more subtle external expression.

Long and Intensive Training Process

The Russian training system requires significant time to fully develop and internalize its principles. The development of psychological depth, physical technique, vocal abilities, and stage skills is a long-term process that requires high discipline and continuous practice.

This approach creates strong and resilient performers; however, it may be less effective in situations where the industry requires rapid results or when an actor needs to quickly develop a wide range of professional skills within a limited period of time.

3. Strengths of American Acting Training.

Individuality and Self-Expression

One of the strongest aspects of American actor training is its focus on the individuality of the performer. Instead of requiring actors to follow one unified system, American approaches encourage performers to discover their own creative process and develop a personal relationship with the character.

Personal experience, imagination, emotions, and individual interpretation become important artistic resources. This allows actors to create unique performances and develop their own artistic identity rather than simply reproducing a specific method of acting.

Creative Freedom and Independence

American acting training encourages actors to become independent artists who are capable of making their own creative decisions. Through different methods and techniques, performers learn to explore characters from various perspectives and choose the tools that are most effective for a particular role.

This approach develops responsibility for the creative process and helps actors become more confident in solving artistic challenges independently.

Flexibility and Adaptability

Because the American tradition combines multiple approaches, actors are trained to work with different techniques depending on the demands of the role, genre, or performance medium.

This flexibility is especially valuable in contemporary theatre, film, and television, where actors often need to adapt quickly to different working environments, directors, and styles of performance.

Emotional Openness and Authenticity

Many American methods emphasize the actor's ability to access emotions, personal experiences, and imagination as creative resources. Techniques such as emotional memory, sense memory, and imagination-based work help actors develop emotional openness and the ability to create truthful reactions.

As a result, actors learn not only to represent emotions but to connect them with personal and psychological experiences, creating more natural and immediate performances.

Strong Partner Interaction and Presence

Approaches such as Meisner's technique place significant attention on listening, spontaneity, and genuine interaction with scene partners.

Actors learn to respond to what is happening in the present moment instead of relying only on prepared emotional states or predetermined reactions. This develops a stronger sense of presence and creates more natural and dynamic performances.

4. Limitations of American Acting Training.

Lack of a Unified Training System

One of the possible limitations of American actor training is the absence of a single structured system shared by all performers.

While the variety of methods provides freedom and creative possibilities, it can also make the learning process less clearly organized. Students often need to independently explore different approaches and decide which techniques work best for them.

High Dependence on Personal Exploration

Since American training often emphasizes individuality and personal interpretation, actors are expected to actively participate in creating their own artistic process.

This can be beneficial for experienced performers, but for beginners it may create uncertainty because they must develop their own structure instead of relying on a clearly established methodology.

Less Emphasis on Long-Term Systematic Development

Compared to the Russian tradition, which often focuses on gradual development through a structured curriculum, American approaches may place more emphasis on immediate practical work and individual exploration.

As a result, some actors may need to consciously build additional discipline, technical foundation, or long-term training habits on their own.

Possible Over-Reliance on Personal Experience

Some American methods strongly rely on personal emotions and memories as tools for creating characters.

Although this can lead to authentic performances, excessive dependence on personal experience may sometimes limit an actor's ability to completely separate themselves from the role or explore characters whose experiences are very different from their own.

Industry-Oriented Adaptation

Because American actor training developed alongside the growth of film and television industries, it often focuses strongly on adaptability and practical performance skills.

However, this emphasis on professional flexibility can sometimes reduce attention to broader theatrical traditions, long-term artistic philosophy, or deeper theoretical exploration of acting.

5. Final Comparison.

The comparison of Russian and American acting training demonstrates that neither system can be considered universally superior, as each tradition develops different aspects of the actor's professional identity and creative abilities.

The Russian acting tradition provides a strong foundation through its structured methodology, psychological depth, discipline, and emphasis on detailed character analysis. It teaches actors to approach a role through careful research, understanding of motivation, objectives, and internal logic of the character. This system develops performers who are capable of deep emotional exploration, long-term commitment to the creative process, and strong collaboration within an ensemble. However, its highly organized structure may sometimes limit individual experimentation and personal approaches, as actors are primarily trained within established principles and traditions.

The American acting tradition, in contrast, emphasizes individuality, flexibility, and creative independence. Through the variety of available techniques, actors are encouraged to explore different tools, including personal experience, imagination, improvisation, physical action, and partner interaction. This approach allows performers to develop their own creative identity and adapt more easily to different professional environments, particularly within the film and television industry. At the same time, the absence of one unified system requires actors to take greater responsibility for their own development and consciously choose the methods that best support their artistic goals.

Despite these differences, both traditions ultimately pursue the same objective — the creation of a truthful, emotionally convincing, and professionally skilled actor. The Russian system offers actors a strong artistic foundation, while the American system provides a wide range of creative tools and opportunities for individual exploration.

Therefore, the most effective approach for the contemporary actor may not be choosing between these two traditions, but understanding how they can complement each other. The psychological depth, discipline, and analytical structure of Russian training can be combined with the flexibility, openness, and creative freedom of American methods. Such integration allows actors to become more versatile performers who are capable of adapting to different

artistic challenges while maintaining both technical skill and personal authenticity. Rather than representing opposing approaches, the Russian and American traditions can be viewed as complementary systems that offer different perspectives on the same artistic goal.

Actor's Reflective Journal

1. Selected Journal Entries.

Selected Journal Entries from My Personal Experience within the Russian Acting Tradition.

These journal entries demonstrate how my experience within the Russian acting tradition was strongly connected to discipline, collective work, perseverance, and the gradual development of my artistic identity through long-term commitment to a theatre ensemble.

March 14, 2021

“I can breathe.

I have found my place.

I have only spent a few days here, but my lungs can breathe again, my heart is beating, and my eyes are burning with passion. I endlessly wish that every road in my life could lead only to theatre.

I am exhausted. However, this exhaustion does not destroy my motivation; instead, it seems to ignite it even more. I want to disappear here for days if it were possible. I am ready to explore stories, characters, and emotions again and again. For hours. This place gives me an inner fire.”

August 22, 2021

“How much I love them. They are something more than family. I cannot imagine how life could have given me people like this.

Theatre brought us together. We all burn with the same passion and desire. We breathe, cry, and feel together. We are one organism — and this makes me think and see everything differently.”

September 17, 2021

“I cannot believe it. Are we really going to do this? We are about to begin preparing for the performance.

I know everything is ready.

I am ready.

But I am scared. Ahead of us is a long and difficult process. I know that I will have to break myself again. And not only once. But I know it is worth it. I have no doubts.

I have incredible courage and fear inside me, and both demand that I take this step forward.”

June 7, 2022

“I have not written here for a very long time. I am not even sure that anything remains of the person I was before. I spent days disappearing into the theatre. How much can really happen during a single preparation process for a performance?

So much that it would probably be impossible to describe it all in one day.

Hundreds of times I wanted to give up. Nothing worked. My teachers suggested that I find another activity and told me that theatre was probably not for me.

Did I cry? Many times.

But not because it was unbearable.

There were thousands of moments that were much stronger than the difficulties — moments that reignited my passion, made my soul scream with emotion, and led me to new stages that were not easy to reach but were deeply desired.

We worked together as a group despite moments when we lost confidence, energy, and motivation. This was the most precious thing I had.

Tomorrow is the premiere. I am incredibly happy that I reached this stage. I know there is more ahead. I know that now I can truly handle it.”

Selected Journal Entries from My Personal Experience within the American Acting Tradition.

These reflections represent a different stage of my development, characterized by exploration, personal responsibility, and the discovery of individual creative freedom.

November 24, 2025

“More than a year has passed without theatre. An endless amount of new things happened: moving, a new country, a new home, and new people. I thought that within this constant change I would not have space for art.

But I was wrong.

I became tired from not doing this. I want to speak, make people laugh, and see how I fill them with emotions.

Every day I search the internet for something. I feel like if I do not find something, I will go crazy.

Honestly, I just want to come to a theatre and say that I belong to this world. I can do this, I want this, and I am willing to take risks.

Just let me become part of this place. Please.”

December 11, 2025

“Oh my god, I found it. An American acting studio. I was invited to an audition. I only hope this opportunity does not disappear from me.”

December 24, 2025

“I am coming home from the audition by train. I like that it felt meaningful. They listened to me, asked questions, and evaluated me. It did not feel like just another step toward passing through — it felt like they were choosing me as a member of the acting course.

I suddenly understood everything I was doing.

This will definitely become something familiar to me, but at the same time completely unknown.

A different language, different people, and a different system.

I do not really feel fear, only a small nervousness before something unexplored. I cannot

imagine how acting can exist beyond strict teachers, Stanislavski, and endless training.

We will see.

I believe a completely different world is about to open for me.”

February 15, 2026

“I am on the train home again. Outside the window there are, as always, high-rise buildings and car lights. But inside my head there are countless thoughts.

I was broken again, but this time it did not hurt and did not feel impossible. It felt as if everything had simply been placed in the right position.

Yes, I need to learn how to live with these changes, but they no longer seem heavy or frightening.

I cannot believe that now I am the main force driving my own progress.

Now I do not have to break myself to fit a certain text. Instead, the text can change depending on how I feel it.

The new environment does not scare me. The language is not a barrier but a blank page in this story.

I am only beginning to understand how much it brings into emotions — completely different facial expressions, gestures, and reactions.”

March 7, 2026

“Today I feel that something has changed in me completely. Or rather, something has finally found its place.

During the process of preparing a monologue, our coach responded to a student who was struggling with a creative problem:

Student: ‘I do not understand how I am supposed to do this. It feels like the way another actress performed it in the film is the only correct version. But I cannot do it the same way.’

Coach: ‘You are not supposed to. Never. Why are you comparing yourself to another person’s performance? Do it the way only you would do it in real life.’

Student: ‘But it feels wrong.’

Coach: ‘It is not wrong. It is your nature and your feelings. Do you know why there are so many actors and why they all matter? Because nobody will play this character exactly the way you will. Nobody else has your eyes, your smile, your reactions, or your emotions. This is your character, and the only truthful behavior for this character is the one you create yourself.’”

March 30, 2026

“I cannot believe how much these two months have changed me. How much I have grown to love our classes and the people here.

We also breathe together, but in a slightly different way — allowing space for each person and each individual voice.

Tomorrow is the final performance.

I am completely in love with every character I created because each of them contains a part of me. The real me. It feels easy.

I simply do what I feel.”

2. What the Journal Revealed That I Did Not Notice at the Time.

After many years, extensive experience, and working within a new acting environment, I return to my journal entries and read them with a completely different perspective. Looking back at these reflections today, I realize that many things that once seemed like simple

personal emotions were, in fact, connected to the differences between two distinct approaches to acting.

Now I can clearly see my own development. I see how, from a young and often inexperienced girl, I gradually became a person shaped by art. I learned to take responsibility, continuously explore the creative process, and withstand long periods of preparation and rehearsal.

Through difficulties, doubts, achievements, and new discoveries, I changed not only as a person but also as an actress. Over these years, theatre gradually stopped being simply an interest and became an essential part of my identity.

Working with different characters, stories, and artistic challenges taught me not only to understand the acting process but also to understand myself. This experience created a strong foundation that later allowed me to encounter a completely different acting tradition and reconsider my understanding of the profession.

Before experiencing American acting training, many aspects of acting seemed to me to be the only possible way of approaching the profession. I understood theatre through the system in which I had developed as an actress. It seemed natural to me that an actor should constantly analyze the character, search for motivation, challenge themselves through discipline, and strive to find the most accurate interpretation of the role. This was the way I had understood acting for many years.

However, my introduction to the American acting tradition challenged many of these beliefs. For the first time, I encountered an approach in which attention was given not only to the character but also to the actor themselves. It was unexpected for me to discover that the performer's individuality could be viewed not as an obstacle to transformation, but as one of the main instruments for creating a role.

One of the most significant ideas that influenced me was the understanding that there is no single correct way to portray a character. Within the Russian tradition, I had become accustomed to searching for the most accurate understanding of the character and their internal logic. Through the American approach, I encountered the idea that different actors can create completely different yet equally truthful versions of the same character. This changed not only my approach to character development but also my perception of myself as an actress.

Gradually, I began to understand that acting can be built not only on analysis and discipline, but also on trust in one's own emotions, imagination, and individual perception of the material. This realization did not diminish the value of the principles I had previously learned; instead, it allowed me to view them from a different perspective.

Today, I believe that the most important result of this research is not only the comparison of two acting traditions. More importantly, this experience helped me understand my own artistic identity. I stopped viewing different methods as competing systems and began to see them as complementary tools that can strengthen each other.

From the Russian tradition, I preserved respect for discipline, deep character analysis, and responsibility toward the material. From the American tradition, I gained creative freedom, trust in my individuality, and the understanding that the actor's personality is also an essential part of the artistic process.

Therefore, today I do not feel the need to choose between these two approaches. Instead, I believe that experiencing both traditions has made me a more flexible, conscious, and open-minded performer. This journey has not only expanded my professional understanding but has also helped me redefine the kind of actress I want to become in the future.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore how an actor changes when moving between two different acting traditions — the Russian and American schools of acting — and how these approaches influence not only acting technique, but also the artistic identity of the performer.

Throughout the research, it became clear that despite their differences, both traditions pursue the same fundamental goal: achieving truth, emotional depth, and authenticity in performance. However, the ways they guide the actor toward this goal are significantly different. The Russian acting tradition provides the actor with a structured system based on discipline, psychological analysis, physical preparation, and a deep understanding of the character's inner world. The American acting tradition, in contrast, emphasizes flexibility, individuality, personal exploration, and the ability to use different creative tools depending on the demands of the role.

The research demonstrates that the transition between these two traditions affects not only the technical skills of an actor, but also their understanding of the creative process itself. Moving between different approaches changes the way an actor perceives the character, the rehearsal process, emotional work, and their own role within artistic creation. The actor no longer sees acting as a search for a single correct solution, but as a continuous process of exploration, interpretation, and personal discovery.

The central conclusion of this research is that these two traditions should not be viewed as opposing systems. Instead, they represent different perspectives on the same artistic goal. The discipline, depth of analysis, and responsibility developed through the Russian tradition can

coexist with the freedom, adaptability, and creative independence encouraged by the American approach. Their combination allows the actor to become more versatile, conscious, and prepared for the changing demands of contemporary performance.

The significance of this research lies not only in comparing two methods of actor training, but also in understanding how different artistic environments shape the performer. By experiencing both traditions, an actor gains a broader perspective on their profession and develops the ability to consciously choose the tools that best serve a particular artistic task.

Although this research is based partly on personal experience and therefore reflects an individual perspective, it demonstrates the value of combining theoretical analysis with practical reflection. Further research could explore how actors who train across multiple cultural traditions develop their own hybrid approaches to performance and artistic identity.

Ultimately, the most complete actor is not the one who belongs exclusively to one system, but the one who can understand, combine, and transform different approaches into their own unique artistic language.

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Online Resources and Personal Experience

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The research also incorporates my personal experience of training within both Russian and American acting environments, which provided a practical perspective for analyzing the similarities and differences between the two traditions.

