

# The Influence of K.S.Stanislavsky's Teaching on the Development of Chinese Theatre

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## ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the last century, the world's performance system was gradually formed and developed. The Stanislavsky performance system was established on the basis of absorbing the essence of various world plays: a combination of performance, directing, drama teaching and methods. The Stanislavsky system is a precious treasure of the world. It is of great significance to the theory and practice of Chinese watchmaking art. In China, "From the 1930s to the end of the 1970s, in the performing arts, it can be said that Stanislavsky was a god-like being. While accepting him, the Chinese theater scene in the 20th century also had experience in learning and researching the system. a complex process that reacts to the evaluation shows a trend of ups and downs. However, to this day, although Stanislavsky is long gone, his system remains focused on the relevance of concrete learning research.

## KEYWORDS

Performance; Stanislavsky System; Chinese Theatre; Mei Lanfang; Acting.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Stanislavsky and his "system" have had a profound impact on the history of modern Chinese drama, especially on the improvement and development of Chinese drama art. But today to retell his topic, maybe we can only hear some historical echoes, except that the higher art colleges still use his "system" as the basic teaching material for the director, it seems that few people mention it.

For drama people over the age of 60, he is a bygone idol and the unpredictable "god" and "devil" in Chinese politics. I am afraid that there is no foreign artist who has been entrapped by Chinese politics like him, caught in the ups and downs of political vortex, which is something that Si Shi himself could never have imagined! As time goes by, why bother to study and pursue it?

For the young art friends born in the 1980s, maybe it is just a vague shadow in the drama Tianyu - just listen to its existence, but you can't see him, and I don't know why he is always mentioned.

To the radical new wave and theatrical "reformers", it is a symbol of pedantry and obsolete, a stumbling block to advance to the avant-garde drama, it cannot be removed, but it can only be weathered and annihilated.

The Stanislavsky system is a drama system that includes systematic expertise in acting, directing, drama teaching, and methods. It is a summary of Stanislavsky's lifelong creative and teaching experience, as well as his pioneer in the field of drama art. Summarizing the experience of the world's outstanding masters at the same time is based on his "organic nature" theory. He believes that human nature has infinite possibilities for development, and it is the living environment that shapes human character. The basis of mutual understanding is also the premise of the actor's incarnation

performance. Therefore, Si Shi requires the actor to "start from the self", put himself in the position of "reaching the subconscious through consciousness", and completely incarnate into a character. At the same time, Si Shi attaches great importance to acting skills, and for this reason A set of methods for actor's physique and generation training is proposed. The system does not completely exclude improvisation in performance, and even regards it as a form of expression of actor's creative personality. It is the first time to make dramatic performance art, from actor training. To the stage practice, there is a complete scientific system, which affects the world. Actors are required not to appear on the stage, but to actually exist on the stage, not for performance, but for life. Actors should always be real people on stage. They must obey the logical and organic laws of life, feel, think and act sincerely in prescribed situations. [4].

In general, the Stanislavsky "system" can be divided into three parts.

The first part, aesthetic principles and theatrical propositions. This part is concentrated in the book "My Life In Art". In fact, in this book, he concentrated on writing an "introduction" to the "system" to be written in the future.

The second part, "An Actor Prepares". This part is divided into two aspects - internal skills and external skills. In his internal skills he created several elements such as concentration, communication, emotional memory, imagination, belief and reality, action and purpose. Among the external skills, he proposed "the development of physical expression, modeling, voice and articulation, language and grammar, speed and rhythm, control and modification, as well as personality, stage charm, moral discipline, etc.". Stanislavsky believes that only by mastering these elements can an actor establish a correct internal and external self-feeling and create a living stage image, so he must undergo rigorous training. If the actors cannot obtain the same sense of self in real life in the fictional stage time and space, and do not think, act and feel according to the logic of real life, it is impossible to create a living character image.

The third part, "Creating A Role". For example, an actor has three stages in creating a character—(1) how to correctly understand the script and the character; (2) how to experience the character on the basis of knowledge; (3) how to embody the character on the basis of experience. At the same time, when creating characters, he discovered the importance of the highest task and running through actions, inner monologues, subtexts, prescribed situations, physical action methods, etc. These are the basic principles and methods that make up an actor to create a character. The actor's role creation has transformed from unconsciousness to self-consciousness, from hazy state to sobriety, and from superficial to profound.[3].

(1) The development of Stanislavsky's system has a similar social background to the development of Chinese realist drama

The germination of the Stanislavsky system was when the Russian proletariat just entered the stage of history in the 19th century. At that time, traditional religious consciousness and the corrupt art and culture of the bourgeoisie dominated, and wantonly destroyed the life and spiritual world of the general public, confusing the audience. At the beginning of the last century, China was in a turbulent era. The intensified exploitation and oppression of the three mountains made the living standard of ordinary people decline day by day, and the fate of the country was in jeopardy. tools to transform society

(2) The Stanislavsky system and Chinese realist drama are complementary to each other

The Stanislavsky system has inherited and carried forward the important theories of European drama. Although Chinese realist drama does not belong to the experiential school, many of the methods and methods of performing arts are in the same line as the Stanislavski system. While the actors teach various performance routines, on the one hand, they emphasize that "boxing does not leave the hand, and music does not leave the mouth", that they must learn the procedures and insist on practicing; on the other hand, they emphasize that the actor must carefully experience the thoughts and emotions of

the characters, and master the character's character. Lan Fang once emphasized that actors and roles should be "indistinguishable", "as if he was the one who played, and at the same time, the audience under the stage saw God and forgot that he was an actor, and took him as the one in the play. "Human" has reached the realm where the actors and the people in the play are indistinguishable. Even if the actor sings in the play, this is the highest realm. Realist drama and Stanislavsky system figured out.

It has been eighty or ninety years since Stanislavsky's "system" came to China. As early as the 1930s and 1940s, Zhang Min, Zheng Junli, Huang Zuolin, Qu Baiyin, He Mengchu, Jiang Chunfang (Lin Ling) and other old artists and scholars in the fields of drama, film and translation, based on Russian, British, Japanese, etc. Edition, began to translate various works that introduced Stanislavsky's "system". Except for "My Artistic Life" translated by Qu Baiyin and "Self-Cultivation of Actors" (Part 1) translated by Zheng Junli, which are relatively complete, the rest are relatively scattered and not organized. In 1935, Mr. Mei Lanfang went to the Soviet Union to visit and perform. This was a historic meeting between the two great drama masters from China and the Soviet Union (Russia), and was warmly welcomed by the Soviet government and Stanislavsky himself. Mei Lanfang's performance was hailed by Stanislavsky as "regular free action", breaking away from naturalistic performance methods. Mr. Mei Lanfang has absorbed the rich nourishment in the experience school from Stanislavsky's "system". This is the first contact and academic exchange between Chinese opera artists and Stanislavsky, which is deeply engraved in the history of drama in China and the world. In the early 1940s, the Drama Department of Yan'an Lu Xun Academy of Arts also translated and published the performance and directing art papers written by Stanislavsky and his students. At the beginning of the founding of New China, under the active organization and support of Mr. Ji Hua, a film historian and former chief programmer of China Film Publishing House, Mr. Zheng Shelley and others have translated and published a variety of his works, such as "Director (Othello)". "Plan", "The Seagull Director's Project", "The (Bottom) Director's Project" and "The Complete Works of Stanley" (four volumes), "Thesis, Lectures, Talks and Letters", etc., not only widely disseminated, but also put Stanley Stanislavsky "system" was identified as the basic teaching material for the National Academy of Arts to study the methods of acting and directing, because it was the only advanced academic theory considered to be socialist in nature. Looking back now, the understanding of Stanislavsky's "system" at that time was still relatively superficial, and there were even mistakes in understanding. It was not until the Chinese government hired a large number of Soviet experts to teach in China that they truly understood, understood, and mastered the true meaning of Stanislavsky's "system" - a model of realism, a thorough experience school! From the founding of New China to the complete breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations So far, he has invited his students, director artist Lesli, theater director theorist Guriev, performance artist and educator Kulenev; stage artist Rekhov; watch director and educator Lepkovs Kaya, etc., who gave lectures at the Shanghai Theatre Academy and the Central Academy of Drama successively, directly disseminated his "system". Dramatists from Beijing, Shanghai, and even all over the country flocked to study devoutly, try to imitate them, and regarded Stanislavsky as the supreme "God" in the drama world, a sacred and inviolable idol. It was not until 1962 that Mr. Huang Zuolin published the article "On the "Drama View" at the Guangzhou Conference, and put forward the point of view that the phenomenon of the "system" of the only one should be broken, which caused a great shock. He said: "The expression method of this 'fourth wall', which attempts to create an illusion of life on the stage, is only one of the many expression methods of drama... But people who are engaged in drama in our country seem to think that this is the only way to create drama. In this way, we are completely restrained and severely limit our creativity." (See "The View of Drama") This passage is obviously a dissatisfaction with the phenomenon of Stanislavsky's "system" and "uniqueness". . Because the climate of contention had not yet formed at that time, it did not cause greater repercussions. However, in the early 1980s, the theater circles re-emphasized the "Drama Views of Drama", and launched a heated debate between "freehand drama view" and "realistic view of drama". The details of the debate are not discussed here, and will be written on a separate topic. However, in the debate, it is mentioned that there are "three major systems" in our country's theatrical performance methods, which must also be said here. In Chinese

theater circles, there has always been the theory of three major systems: Stanislavsky, Brecht and Mei Lanfang. This point of view arose from a report made by Mr. Huang Zuolin, a famous Chinese scholar and director artist, at the Guangzhou Conference in 1962, which was later written as "On "Drama Views". In this report, Mr. Huang did not clearly put forward the conclusion of the "three major systems", but explained the three different aesthetic pursuits and creative methods of Stanislavsky, Brecht and Mei Lanfang respectively. In the academic articles of later generations, it is summarized as "three major systems", which has continued to this day. The difference between the "three-day system" is that the so-called "system" of Stanislavsky belongs to the experience school in artistic creation, Brecht belongs to the expression school in artistic creation, and Mei Lanfang belongs to the high degree of combination of experience and performance 's school. Therefore, it is believed that Mei Lanfang's system is more dialectical and scientific. Mr. Huang Zuolin also explained with an image metaphor. He believed that in order to promote his experience school and achieve the effect of artistic fidelity, Stanislavsky advocated that the "fourth wall" between viewing and performance must be constructed on the stage. Make the actors "lonely in public"; and Brecht's expressionists believe that this "fourth wall" should be torn down without hesitation, allowing actors to enter and play freely; however, the Mei Lanfang school believes that the art of opera is inherently There is no "wall", so there is no need to tear it down, because the characters all live in a freehand virtual time and space. The basic characteristics of the three major systems and their different aesthetic pursuits are illustrated through the construction, tearing down, and non-existence of "walls". However, some experts pointed out not long ago that Mei Lanfang's "system" was not very precise. The reason is that Mei Lanfang can only be said to be one of the many genres of Chinese opera, and the genre of opera cannot be confused with the performance system. If you want to say it's "system", it should be more appropriate to say that it is the Chinese "drama system".[2].

From the above, it can be seen that although there are commonly known “three systems” in China, they are only the characteristics that distinguish their different artistic expressions, so in a strict sense; only those who can really be called “systems” are Stanislavsky!

## **2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS IN CHINA**

The Stanislavsky system has an eighty-year history in China. There are three questions that we cannot avoid.

First, has the goal of introducing a "system" been achieved in the Chinese drama industry?

Since 1935, dramatists have called for the establishment of a national drama system for Chinese drama through a "system". Judging from the current drama reality, this dream has not yet come true. The reason why it has not been realized is mainly because it is closely related to China's political and cultural system. Due to the abnormal interdependence between drama art and politics for a long time, the historical process of drama naturally follows the pace of "revolution" and "movement" and presents a relatively independent plate structure. The development of dramas in different historical periods is less connected and more fragmented, and even the latter often impacts the former. As a result, the accumulation of the art of acting is very weak, and the theater industry has not summed up the past experience and lessons enough, and more closely follows the political trend and sways from side to side. The study and practice of the "system" is the same, and the same is true for the reference to the national opera. The same problem applies to the study of traditional opera. Due to the identity sensitivity of opera itself, it has suffered bad luck in previous political movements. In the drama world, the time to really learn opera is very short, the period of the Anti-Japanese War, the "seventeen years" and the new period add up to no more than 20 years. Certainly.

There are plenty of lively and vivid cases in the creation of the Chinese school of national drama or "system" of drama. It is not uncommon for an excellent theatre group to have mature directing and performing talents. However, these achievements are individual, partial, and scattered, and they do

not mean that the century-old drama goal has been achieved. In the new century, Chinese dramatists must face up to this goal and cannot turn "creating the national drama of Chinese drama" into a historical slogan.

Second, is the understanding of the "system" in the Chinese theater community in sync with the world?

The answer is also no. Whether in academia or theater, there is still a lot of room for improvement in the understanding and application of "system". First of all, the overall understanding of the theater industry has not gone very far on the basis of the "seventeen years", and even appears to be rigid. Misunderstandings and confusions from the past are still widespread today. For example, (1) The issue of the unity of opposites between "experience" and "embodiment" is still a topic that scholars and artists struggle with, and sayings such as "'system' emphasizes experience rather than expression" and "emphasis on the heart rather than appearance" are often seen in newspapers; (2) The debate between "experience school" and "expressionism" is still changing, leaving mechanical and dogmatic habits everywhere; (3) There is no consensus on whether "experience" is the process of creating characters or the result. , the Russian theater circle has basically reached a consensus, that is, "'experience' is not the beginning, but the end of the organic process of re-embodiment". The Chinese theater circle still generally understands "experience" as a process; (4) For Stanislavsky's major discovery in his later years, the "physical action method", was not paid enough attention. This method has had a huge impact all over the world, and its advanced nature has not been fully explored in China; There are many similar problems.

Third, is the "system" open or closed?

Because the openness of the "system" is not fully understood, the "obsolete theory" and "limitation theory" are rampant. The closed-minded dramatist has a deep-rooted notion that the "system" is complete. This view itself is fundamentally wrong. There are various indications that the "system" was still being constructed during Stanislavsky's lifetime, and could never even be perfected. First of all, the only real "system" achievements are "My Life In Art" and the first part of "An Actor Prepares". It is a basic fact that the so-called "Complete Works" are obtained by later generations arranging the manuscripts of Stanislavsky during his lifetime. The manuscripts themselves are not very systematic, they reflect the thinking process of Stanislavsky at different times, and the contradictions emerge in an endless stream.

### **3. STANSLAVSKY'S SYSTEM IN MODERN THEATRICAL**

In the 1980s, with the continuous improvement of Sino-Soviet economic, political, and cultural relations, and with the renewed interest in Stanislavsky's theory as a "scientific" system in the Chinese theater circle, there was a His performances come into contact with the art of Chinese opera, and he marvels at his incredible insight into the art of Chinese opera - a myth that has been reborn with new brilliance and vigor over the past four decades. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, it has also left its cross-cultural imprint on the international stage. It is necessary to deconstruct this myth in order to make a historical understanding and assessment of Chinese opera (especially Mei Lanfang's performing arts)[5] and its place in world theater. This historical understanding and assessment is not based on the evaluation or affirmation of Chinese opera by internationally renowned or authoritative artists, whether such evaluation or affirmation is true, beautified, or (re)created, nor is it based on how old it is To some extent, it conforms to a certain "scientific system", whether Stanislavsky or Brecht, [6] but is based on discovering its artistic differences and Uniqueness, find its place in the past and present world drama, and then define and construct its place in the future world drama.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The Stanislavsky system plays an important role in Chinese performance and directing. The overall teaching of acting and directing in China is deeply influenced by the "Stanislavsky System", whether it is to follow the direction or just for basic training. In the syllabus, the arrangement of the "Stanislavsky system" is regarded as an important part. Under the influence of Stanislavsky's system, the director's teaching has established its own clear teaching structure. In the specific performance practice, the influence of Stanislavsky's system is also confirmed by the stage practice of many famous contemporary performance artists.

Stanislavsky attaches great importance to the moral cultivation of actors. In "An Actor Prepares", he devoted a chapter to emphasizing the morality and discipline of actors. The actor's own moral cultivation is the foundation of the actor's artistic cultivation. The thoughts of the actor will be revealed through the performance and conveyed to the audience. Actors must first be a moral person and shape their images under the guidance of a correct outlook on the world and life, in order to give the audience a correct ideological orientation. "The first condition of establishing a pre-work state is to live up to the adage: 'Love the art in yourself, not yourself in art.' So the first concern should be to make your art in the theatre a Excellent art." Stanislavsky referred to this adage frequently in lectures, essays, talks and letters. If our actors can stick to this maxim, then the level of performance can be improved.

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