

### 3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TALENT AND SUCCESS IN THEATRE AND SPORT

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**Abstract:** *The origin of success must be sought in man, in his abilities. In the approached theme, we pay attention towards the athlete and the actor, in the beginning of their career, when the selection because of physic, mental and artistic abilities is made. The inborn need for the endowment of the athlete and actor seems to be a qualitative one and not a quantitative one. What we inherit, the talent is and always has been contested in sports or art.*

**Key words:** *theater, sport, talent, success*

#### 1. Introduction

Certainly, anyone can accede to a particular sport or to the theatre. But most people recognize that in order to initiate and carry out a performance sport and /or to become an actor, it is necessary first of all to discover in those who aspire certain skills that will be subject to adequate training programs, since all the individual qualities of sportsmen (good physical capacity, imagination, intuition, spontaneity, etc.) and of the actor (sensibility, presentableness, ease of communication, power of fantasy, etc.) must be cultivated in the spirit of the laws of performance sport and of the theatre, of the contest space and of the stage, through exhausting work. In an interview, published on the Internet, Professor Ion Cojar states that “talent is the ability to update the existing latent potential in human individuality.” Web Source 1. Talent manifests itself through a series of characteristics, of which the main one is considered to be the following: exceptional hereditary fund; the optimal sanogen level; general and specific skills of great value; superior intelligence; strong and balanced nervous system; great capability to understand, execute and motor creativity; a permanent need for achievement, independence, domination and confirmation of the self. Valuing these fundamental characteristics of talent in order to achieve success requires an adequate educational framework that also develops a strong and long-lasting professional motivation. However, the term talent is often used ambiguously, because there are many things that one can learn and which for others that exist as a “given fact”. If someone has the talent and the instinct to think in the sense of a particular sport or in a theatrical way, when they take the responsibility, they see whether their talent resists or not. There are many talented athletes and actors who are lost because they do nothing and remain only with the ability with which they were found.

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## 2. Acceptances of the meaning of the word „success”

The psychological training of the athlete and of the actor aims to achieve professional success (we use the term success in the meaning of great success, performance). Inspired by the Sociology of Success<sup>169</sup>, we find that, at the basis of a quality sports competition and at the basis of the theatrical creation process, there is the will to affirm, self-accomplishment of both the athlete and the actor, always aiming at the success. Surely success has a scale: “medium success, great success, resounding success, brilliant success, ephemeral success, lasting success, and three main meanings:

- success meaning a favorable result of an action;
- success meaning victory over an opponent (in a competition);
- success meaning a rewards, a public recognition of a merit.”<sup>170</sup>.

The first meaning, with a very broad usage, refers specifically to victory in achieving a goal through extraordinary efforts, heavy and are used for technical, economic, cultural or political actions. The second meaning has a more precise use, referring to a sporting competition, in which there is a confrontation between opponents, and designates a success. This category includes sports of which competitions are completed by fixed objectives: by score or through parameters through which the time is measured, by space (in case of speed run, of the jump in length, height) etc. The third meaning refers to the relationship between an individual or a group of individuals who commit a deed and a society or a particular group of it, in our case, the public. It rewards in one way or another any individual or collective work or action that is qualified as a success. In the case of theatre, it is said that the an acclaimed play is successful or if a certain actor plays in it, qualified by intense and long-standing applause from the public, is successful. In the case of performance sports, with particular reference to artistic skating, acrobatic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, synchronous swimming, the appreciation and reward of success comes first of all from a small number of people in society (public) gathered in a commission of arbitration (of appreciation) by giving notes or other ratings and, secondly, the appreciation comes from the general public through praise and applause. The phenomenon of success, with its indisputable psychological character, results from the qualitative co-operation of psychic processes based on the existence of the given skills (talent) subjected to the professional training operations.

## 3. Psychological Processes of Success

We have to mention that the psychological processes involved in the training of the sportsperson and of the actor follow the same goal: achieving success. Taking into account that the performance sportman and the student actor have been selected according to some criteria, depending on the requirements of

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<sup>169</sup> Mihai Ralea, T. Hariton, *Sociologia succesului*, București, Editura Științifică, 1962

<sup>170</sup> Ibidem

each given profession, acceding, step by step, to success, we will highlight important aspects of these steps. We made the following pyramid (figure 1) after we documented in the sport and theatrical field, regarding the involvement of the psyche in the professional training of the sportman, on the one hand, and the actor, on the other. The hierarchy of psychological processes has been set in accordance with the requirements of general psychology, and in particular, according to similar elements in the two researched areas.



Figure 1 (pyramid success)

### **3.1 Talent**

Previously we mentioned some aspects of talent that underlie success. This quality becomes a psychic process because it exists in the individual from the beginning of the activity and it is dependent on the qualitative development of all the other psychic components. It is important not to lose sight of the relationship of interdependence between psychic and physical qualities, which must be present in the appreciation of talent, at the sportsman and the actor, more than then in the case of an individual with native endowment to other fields of activity.

### **3.2. Motivation**

The motivation to achieve success in sports or theatre is not based on an innate need. It is learnt and develops throughout life as the individual's sporting or stage experience becomes enriched. In the competitive situation, the athlete's motivation to achieve success must be stronger than the fear of failure, so he will be tempted to get involved in the situation. But if the fear of failure is stronger than the desire to compete, he will avoid the competition. The athlete must be motivated both internally and externally, through different ways of appreciation and reward in case of success, such as:

- an honorary title, a medal, a sum of money, a good ranking, etc;
- the desire to fulfil a childhood dream of becoming a sports star;
- the desire to redeem the title in front of a particular opponent.

The general psychology states that there is an intrinsic (inward) motivation, referring to the realization of an activity, in that the activity seems

interesting, pleasant, provoking by itself or because the activity generates joy and satisfaction. This type of motivation is stronger for the actor than for the athlete, with both the subjects of influence from the outside, through the positive public opinion. Creativity can thus be influenced and creative motivation is an important step in the psychological process. K. Stanislavski, as well as other pedagogical authors concerned with the actor's training, motivated their students by surprise lessons, with tasks of a special emotional load, which, being fulfilled, strengthened the motivation and self-confidence of the respective pupils. A motivational task-orientated climate promotes self improvement of the skills. It is recommended that the athlete and the actor receive positive „reinforcements” from coaches and teachers when: they work hard; are making progresses; help others to evolve through cooperation; believe that each athlete, respectively, an actor has an important contribution to the creative act or to the task.

### ***3.3. Self confidence***

Self confidence is associated with the belief that success depends on the effort that was carried out and the improvement of all psycho-motor skills. In this respect, Michael Cehov encourages students to be diligent and correct with themselves when they perform the workout exercises and any other action, as they will gain confidence in their own strengths. And K. Stanislavski proposes the use of the verb “I want” in the given themes so that the future artist can reach the determination and the safety to make a real action. Nowadays, in American sports, there has been a growing confidence that athletes must always be convinced that they will win. But true self-confidence is expressed through a realistic perspective on the chances of success. Trust itself does not appear ad-hoc, but is the fruit of a sustained training activity. In other words, self-confidence does not equal the hope of the athlete or the actor in success, but with expectation, surely they will succeed. Self-confidence and motivation are not synonymous, but they are in a direct relationship. Thus, it has been observed that highly motivated individuals are also confident in their abilities.

### ***3.4. Attention and spirit of observation***

Attention is at the heart of any activity. We discover the importance of attention especially when, for some reasons, it weakens or is totally absent. In these situations, human consciousness is devoid of clear information, actions are no longer in line with the real situation, and mistakes are made. But, to be more precise, let us remember the definition given by psychologist Mihai Epuran: “Attention is the ability of man's psyche to orient and focus on a phenomenon or activity. The orientation of the psyche on a phenomenon consists in choosing among many phenomena present simultaneously, of that one that is important for man or it imposes through its qualities, and the concentration means expanding, deepening, insistence on the phenomenon or activity”<sup>171</sup>. Thus, in

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<sup>171</sup> <http://psihologia.sinners.ro/tag/motivatia-in-sport/>

the psychological training of both the athlete and the actor, we believe, the attention has the role of improving the reception of information, subjecting it to thinking processing and providing the most appropriate responses, and focusing on the specification and delimitation of the task. By its very essence, attention is focused on a phenomenon or activity.

### **3.5. Perceptions**

According to Mihai Epuran, “perception is the main process of knowing the world through the organs of the senses. The perceptions reflect objects and phenomena in their whole “<sup>172</sup>. Perceptions underlie observation, playing an important role, providing the actor and the athlete with the basic information needed for their work.

### **3.6. Imagination**

Imagination, visualization or imagining - under these names is found in Sport and Theater, involving the use of senses to create or re-create an experience in mind. The training of this psychic capacity is the mental training. Imagination plays a very important role in the actor's life. It is the basis of the creation process, so that the written piece can come alive. Imagination contributes from the very beginning to studying and creating the role and, finally, to externalizing it. Imagination helps the sportsman to develop a pattern for basic muscle activity, making the movement become familiar and automatic. Visualizing an aptitude is transmitted by nerve impulses to the central nervous system (SNV), which retains it, and the improvement of the performance occurs as that aptitude is transmitted from the central nervous system to the effector organs (usually the locomotor apparatus). Imagination involves the extraction from memory of the information stored there, information from several types of experiences and their transformation into an image that supports the thinking process.

### **3.7. Thinking**

Thinking has at its basis the sensations, perceptions and representations that appear in the process of man's practical work. It is the highest level of processing and integration of information about the external world and about one's own person (the self), acting as a true command-control mechanism over other psychic processes. Thinking is used in some specialized works about sports and theatre in the sense of inner speech, meaning strategic thinking at key times. This type of thinking is cultivated by the training of the athlete and the actor, and it becomes useful in situations in which doubt prevails but can be controlled by the inner speech.

### **3.8. Affectivity**

Although closely related to other psychic phenomena, affection processes have a more pronounced specificity in the athlete and the actor than in individuals in other professions. The analysis of this psychic component in the

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<sup>172</sup> Mihai Epuran, *Psihologia sportivului*, pp. 36-37

areas we address is placed around the relationship of reason-emotion. This relationship can take a negative or a positive direction, depending on the preparation of previous processes: self-confidence and thinking (inner speech). Affectivity is the psychic process that gives sensitivity and beauty to the sport, but also to the athlete. There are sports such as artistic skating, rhythmic gymnastics, in which the athlete gives brilliance to the sport performance through the expressiveness of the movements performed on the rhythm of music, through inner feelings and their transposition. But in general, affectivity is present in any sport by the vigor of emotions that the athlete is feeling. The affective life of the actor on the stage is stronger than that of the average man, so that he, the actor, can convey the true feeling to the public, using all the elements of his body, but especially with the help of mimics, gestures and eyesight. The actor must be trained not to pay attention to the audience during the play because it will be harder to focus on the role.

### **3.9. Will**

Will, from a psychological point of view, is seen as an obstacle to success. This obstacle is a confrontation between the possibilities of man and the objective conditions of his activity. The rigorous, correct assessment of the will is quite difficult to accomplish, often appearing in cases of under-appreciation or overestimation, such as experience of success and failure, type of personality, etc. The role of the will in the psychological training of the sportsman and the actor aims to involve him in the coordination and regulation of all conscious actions. Will is a psychological process acquired and it is developed in close connection with thought, language and imagination, by voluntary actions required by circumstances and by special exercises.

## **4. Conclusions**

The psychological processes between talent and success, through which we have briefly summarized, only with the basic idea that supports our topic is actually the psychological training the actor and the athlete need for good performance. Psychological training is not mandatory for any of these two fields, theatre and sports, but where it is earnestly adopted and especially willing, high indices will be obtained in the development of intellectual, affective, volitional and personality qualities.

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