

REALITY -- MORE THAN ONE:
REALITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE PROCESSES OF ACTING

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1994

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I. Introduction

When everyday terminology gains considerable significance for the scientific community, it becomes necessary to look more closely and try to apply more rigorous standards for its use. Such is the case with terms: "reality," "irreality," "fictive," "make-believe," "fantasy" and "imaginary" which are often used in psychology. These terms are used in different ways and not always consistently. They are also very often, although not always, used with their "valuative"¹ implications, even for some theories in which they occupy the central place. "Reality" as a concept, often implies the value of being "true" or "objective" things as THEY ARE in and of themselves. By default, then, the concept of the "fictive" is that which is not true, not objective, something which borders on lies, deception or just a figment of imagination.

Valuativeness of the concepts of "reality" and "fiction" in the scientific analysis is represented by taking up a judgmental stand toward the individual's or group's concepts and beliefs, prescribing what should be "real" and what "fictive" and then "measuring" individuals' conformity with such norms. Thus, for instance, both Freud and Lewin look upon personal development as a progressive ability to be "realistic," to differentiate between reality and fiction. "Normal development brings with it, [...], an increased differentiation in the reality - irreality dimensions of the life-space" (Lewin, 1976/1951, p. 75). This differentiation concerns increased distinction between "daydream wishes and reality" (Lewin 1976/1951, p. 75). In other words, "during development the perceived environment seems to become less

'subjectively colored' [...] reality and fantasy are more clearly distinguished" (Lewin 1976/51, p. 112). Lewin mentioned, "reality is essentially characterized, as far as dynamics is concerned, by its independence of the will of the person" (quoted in Maibaum, 1990, p. 130). "Irreality" is broadly characterized as fantasy. Although Lewin made this point about the relative nature of "reality" and "irreality,"² his notion of reality, especially social reality, as independent of and given to the person, seems to be valuative. It is, as Lewin puts it, "an increasing crystallization of an objective world within the life space and increasing tendency to be realistic" (Lewin, 1976/1951, p. 113).

As concepts which carry this valuative load, "reality" and "fiction" are not adequate as analytical tools in research. One of the goals of this article is to develop a different conceptual framework for description of the same phenomena, a framework which would be free from the valuative or normative approach. Therefore, "reality" and "fiction" are not defined as ontological phenomena, but as "fields" or "worlds"³ in the life space of an individual and/or a group. These fields, however, have different statuses. Being "real" (true) or "fictive" (not true, not real) is a status, a value given to a "world" by an individual and/or a group. In other words, both concepts are relative to a person or a group at the particular point in time in their lives. This is especially true in regard to what is called "social reality," since it consists entirely out of constructed categories based in symbolic activity and therefore dependent on interpretation by the person/group. This paper aims at a socio-psychological analysis which is not concerned with the judgment of this value, but must take it into an account. In other words, it is not the task of a researcher to determine what is real and what fictive but it is her/his task to recognize that if a world or a field is real to its participants (an individual or a group) it will have a different status, a different function and different consequences than if it is assumed to be "fictive."

Several issues regarding the "reality" and "fictive" worlds will be explored in this paper. These are: different functions of the reality and fictive worlds; the boundaries between them and their

functional relationships to each other; movements and transitions between them; and their cognitive and emotional dimensions.

This paper grew out of my research on the psychological processes involved in the construction of meaning in children's symbolic play, and, more recently, in acting. Construction of "reality" in acting is a deliberate and conscious process which is more open to study than most everyday spontaneous imaginations. Although it differs greatly from spontaneous child play and spontaneous adult thinking and imagination, there are some significant similarities. I will explore these similarities and the significance of the findings of the study of acting for the everyday construction of "irreality" in play and imagination.

II. A Psychological Study of Adult Acting

What we usually call "reality" in everyday life is a multifaceted phenomenon, or a "life space" with different, interacting and sometimes almost independent "levels" (or areas, regions, compartments, roles, situations, events, etc.). In these regions, there are many ongoing processes that are running simultaneously, although some have begun at different times and unfold at different speeds. . . . One can look at them from different angles and note them all, or one at the time. We are usually mildly aware of this multiplicity of life situations which surround us, or situations of which we are a part every single moment. The awareness becomes accentuated when we find ourselves in two or more conflicting "fields" or situations. In these moments one is making deliberate decisions which will affect the further course of "reality."

In addition to "reality" -- the daily passage of events in our lives of which we are not always in complete control, there is also the "irreal" -- or the world of fantasy, wishes and dreams. This is the world of imagination, daydreaming or play (in children and adults). While with "reality" we have only partial control over events and situations, in the world of imagination we can be in full control (Vygotsky,

Freud). Things that are impossible to do in reality, may become possible in fantasy, wishes fulfilled, goals reached, fears conquered, etc.

We make a sharp difference between the "real" and the "irreal" (or "fictive") worlds, although we constantly live in both and move in and out of them. Studies on children's play show that play is "framed" activity with a marked beginning and an end (Bateson, Bretherton, Giffin). Actions and speech in play have a different meaning than in reality. Children use numerous clues and marks to signal that "this is play." Adults use the same framing devices when they play. For the participants in a communication it is important to know whether an action, a gesture, an utterance belongs to the real or to the fictive world. The knowledge of its belonging to one or the other frame determines its interpretation and its meaning. Therefore, both children and adults tend to keep the difference between play and reality as clear as possible.

Besides the active play situations with others, there also exists another form of irreal or fictive level: fantasy. This is a private sphere, often uncommunicated to others. It exists without a need for an overt expression, although, of course it can be expressed and communicated. In the course of daily life, one's inner thoughts and emotions can and often do cross the boundaries between the fictive and the real. This motion between the two planes -- the real and the irreal (fictive) -- is the process which is the subject of this research.

Acting, a deliberate effort to present, to enact the imagined or the "irreal" is a skill that has to be learned. Although, in ordinary life, the movement between the real and the fictive planes takes place innumerable times every day, the barriers between the two planes are kept clear (for the most part), and it is not easy to make the fictive plane "look" real. (See later discussion about obstacles). But the objective of acting is precisely that: to make the fictive look real, to achieve a "temporary suspension of reality."

The period of acquisition of acting skills is the best time to observe the movement between the real and the fictive planes. Learning to act takes place in a communicative situation of an educational setting. According to Vygotsky, every psychological process (or skill) is first learned in an overt communicative situation. The "zone of proximal development" is the time in which a student achieves certain skills only with the help of others. It is, therefore, an ideal period for the study of the psychological processes; the more developed and/or learned they are, the more they become "inner" processes, hidden from the outside observer.

Acting classes have one more advantage for a researcher: one can observe both the actual attempts to enact a role and the discussion of these activities. These discussions reveal what the students thought they were doing in their acting attempts, their individual understanding of what the barriers are and their plans to conquer them. An additional advantage is the opportunity to watch one and the "same piece" of irreality repeated several times.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

The participant-observer method is one of the best methods for the study of the psychological processes in acting. It has a double advantage: on one hand, by learning how to act, the researcher gains a personal experience of the processes involved. On the other, as a colleague, one is in a least obtrusive position. It has to be stressed that student actors as well as actors in the market place are already, by the nature of their profession, exposed to public scrutiny and criticism. Any additional observation, for purposes that are "alien" to acting, would add to the stress and complicate their work. This is the reason why I decided to become an acting student myself and to gain both some familiarity with acting and obtain the social recognition and confidence of the students.

In the next pages I will describe the acting classes in which I took part. This description in itself is not only a necessary research requirement to identify time, space and procedures used in the inquiry, but it also refers to a particular "reality" as perceived by the participants. The description will include some of the terminology, or jargon used by the teacher and students to depict their own activities and to orientate themselves to the time-space of each class. In other words, one of the identifiable "realities" which I shared with other student actors was the reality of acting classes.

I. PLACE, TIME, PARTICIPANTS

The research took place in The Wilma Theater Acting School in Philadelphia, during the period of July 1991-July 1992. Acting courses I observed and participated in were a sequence of courses given by Gordon Phillips, a student of Lee Strasberg. The Gordon Phillips' Process Acting, as he calls it, is a continuation of an acting school founded by Stanislavsky in Moscow at the beginning of this century, and developed into "method acting" by Lee Strasberg in the United States.

The acting courses are divided into three levels: the beginners' or "orientation" courses, the second level and the third level courses. I took an "orientation" course in July and August 1991, and 5 second level courses between September 1991 and June 1992. There were between 10 and 14 students enrolled in each course. The students' age varied between 18 and 67. There were approximately the same number of male and female students in each course. A few students, 5-6, attended all the second level courses throughout the year. Other students would take one, two, even three courses and then leave or, in some instances take a leave and then come back. Classes were held once a week for 4 hours.

Most of the classes began with a half hour of physical exercise and relaxation. These are used to mark the transition from the "outside world" to the special world of the acting class, to signal different rules and potentials of existence for the participating students. During each class, periods of "work"

alternate with periods of "comments." Comments are given both by the teacher and by fellow students. "Work" is a particular monologue or scene and/or a particular exercise in using one or more acting "tools." "Tools" are actions through which specific acting "goals" are achieved (See definitions of "tools" and "goals" below).

Periods of "comments" have a dual purpose. They give the students a chance to reflect on their own and a colleague's performance. They also facilitate achieving a degree of intimacy and a feeling of group solidarity to build an atmosphere of trust.

II. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected in three ways: (1) notes on personal experiences--a journal; (2) notes on observation of classes and fellow students; and (3) videotaping individual pieces of "work" and "comments." In two instances I videotaped a student watching his/her own "work" on tape, and commenting on what was actually taking place "inside" her/him during the preparation and presentation.

Research data consist of descriptions of observable behavior, introspective descriptions of the ways of achieving certain acting goals, dialogues between the teacher and the students at work, video records of students at work and their explanations of the processes taking place during their acting.

Analysis of the data is qualitative. It involves two parts: (a) a description of the terminology used by the participants in acting classes with examples of their actual use; and (b) an identification of the units of analysis or "fields" (or "worlds") and a description of their dimensions, mutual relationships, and movements between them.

B. ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed in a two step process: first, the terminology used in the acting classes is analyzed; second, different "fields" or "worlds" in the life space of an actor were identified, and their interaction in the course of a class is described. This two step process of analysis was necessary to achieve the goal of this research: to closely examine the interaction and the movement between the unreal (fictive) and reality. The terminology of an acting class has to be analyzed because it maps out both fields in the life space and the movement between them. Moreover, as a communicative device it also serves to construct fields of the life-space between the members of the class. This makes it possible for the participant observer to "walk through" them together with another student-actor. This is specifically possible in the "orientation" or beginners class when the novice student is almost literally walked through the process. For the purpose of clarity, key terms (concepts) are further illustrated with examples intended to show the reader actual processes and actions which are discussed.

The second part of the analysis builds on the first. It identifies and describes different "worlds" or "fields" of the student actor's life-space. It also describes relationships between these "worlds" and student's movements between them.

A word about the analytic terminology and units of analysis

Lewin used the term "field" to explain different parts of the life-space of an individual. "Context" is used in contemporary language studies and cognitive psychology. Other terms, each in its own way, loosely describe similar phenomena: "frame," "setting," "situation," "event," etc. The acting class supplied us with at least one more term: the (past) "experience." Each of these terms mixes topological, temporal and evaluative dimensions of different domains of the life space. However, they contain inconsistencies and implicit premises which complicate the picture and our understanding of the psychological processes.

For the purposes of this study I needed a concept which could broadly encompass multiplicity of orientational aspects of each field in a life-space, and yet be non-evaluative in terms of their status. Thus, the main analytic unit I use is the "world." I intend to use it during the analysis as descriptive as possible, almost as a "place holder," trying to avoid evaluating its status. But after describing various worlds encountered by student actors in acting classes, I will discuss relationships between the concept of the "world" and other previously mentioned ones and I will try to point out elements which allow a researcher to evaluate these worlds regarding their fictive or reality status.

One more thing: the concept of the "world" in this paper always refers to a socio-psychological construction made by the participant(s) -- not to any "objective" or given entity which exists out of the socio-psychological sphere.

I. AN ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY OF G. PHILLIPS' ACTING CLASSES

The actor had to be trained to both feel and express all of his inner states fully. (The Stanislavsky Technique, M. Gordon)

To teach somebody to act is like teaching somebody to pronounce a guttural sound. You can't make them see the position of the vocal cords in your throat. You can only make them hear you and hear themselves, and try to explain what are you doing and what you see them doing. But ultimately every student has to discover how to do it and this discovery is neither an easy nor a smooth process. Several basic notions about acting have been present in every class from the very beginning. The following is a partial list of the basic vocabulary in G. Phillips acting classes.

- **self as an acting instrument** -- Like a musician, an actor is a performer, but while a musician uses an instrument to perform, an actor uses his/her own persona (body and mind). Therefore, one considers oneself as an instrument, and, consequently, has to learn techniques to "tune oneself

up" and control oneself. Looking upon oneself as an instrument, means to create a field in the life-space in which one relates to oneself in ways different than usual.

- **acting tools** -- Techniques of controlling oneself as an instrument are called "acting tools." There are many different acting tools and some are described below. The main and indispensable one is the "experience." Others are: personalization, sensory memory, intention, obstacles, feedback loop, and various exercises for body and mind which all help an actor have a better control of her/his "instrument." The concept of a "tool" is also found in Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. There, language and other symbolic behaviors are tools which help a developing human being achieve control of cognitive and emotional processes and extend them beyond the sensory experienced "here and now" field. I will discuss the relationship of acting tools to symbolic tools in the second part of the analysis.
- **experience, walking through or talking through the experience** -- Experience is the main acting tool in process acting.⁴ Experience is not just an ordinary memory of past events but reliving those events in their greatest possible fullness. In the beginning and especially the first time one learns how to evoke a past experience, one is helped by the teacher, or, as this is usually called: the teacher "walks or talks one through" their experience. This "walking through" the experience can also be done with the help of a fellow student actor and, finally, by oneself. (See Appendix: Example 1)
- **being in the experience or out of it** -- Terminology used to describe the "topology" of different fields in the life space and movement between them. There is a recognition of a state of "being in the experience" and being out of it or coming "back" to reality.
- **loosing the experience, sustaining the experience** -- Experience is a reconstructed field or world of the past. It is sustained only by the actor. It runs parallel to the present fields in a life space and

sometimes also against them. An actor has to rely only on his/her inner will to exist in this field and his/her ability to keep it vivid and alive when nothing else in the environment supports it. That is why it happens that actors, and especially novice students "loose" their experiences, i.e. they cannot continue to sustain it and it vanishes like fog.

- **personalization, relationship to other people and things** -- Personalization is another important acting tool. It is a way of relating to people and things in the environment as if they were people and things from our "real" life. For example, depending on the character's relationship to other characters in the play, the actor may choose different personalizations from her/his own life that embody that relationship. Like "experience," personalization is not a universal, impersonal relationship, but a very specific one. It cannot be explained in general terms like, for instance: "mother-daughter" or "husband-wife" relationship. It has to be an actual person (thing) in one's own life and all the particular feelings that accompany that specific relationship. (See Appendix: Example 2)
- **intention and obstacles** -- An actor can also choose to have a definite intention, a goal to achieve during a scene or a monologue. There are two kinds of goals (intentions): the actor's personal goal and the character's goal. The two may not be the same, but the actor's goal works as a "subtext" to the more or less overt character's goal. For instance the character's goal may be to get something from another character. At the same time the actor's goal may be to make the person in his experience feel in a particular way: S/he may want to enchant, induce, intimidate, infuriate, molest, silence, pacify, fool, comfort etc. his/her personalization. There is a list of active verbs students in G. Philips' class had. They could choose from those or any other goals. To make it even more dramatic, the actor has to overcome different obstacles in the way of achieving her/his goal. An exercise used for learning the basic technique of having an intention

and overcoming obstacles was to have two students play the following game: one of the students imagines that the other possesses something s/he has to get. The instruction is to imagine something very important, something one's life may depend on and to use every possible means (except force) to try to get it from the other person. The other student is instructed also to imagine having something so important that one wouldn't want to give to anyone else. Then the two students are left to improvise this situation.

- **emotional tone (sad, mad, glad, fear)** -- For the purpose of learning to act it was assumed that the four basic emotions are: sorrow or grief, anger, happiness and/or love and fear. They are called in the students' and teacher's lingo: "sad, mad, glad and fear." It is assumed that each scene or monologue can be done with one of these emotions dominating. The orientation class started with trying to feel and express one of the emotions at the time. Later, in successive higher level classes, students also learned how to "layer" the emotions so that the product is as in "real" life, a complicated mixture of different feelings, sometimes even the opposite ones at the same time. An actor can make her/himself feel these emotions by "getting into an experience" particularly chosen for this purpose. But there are also specific exercises which help "get" these emotions to "flow" and also help to swiftly change between them. An exercise known as "four walls" was often used in the class (See Appendix: Example 3)
- **universals ("like when")** -- In G. Phillips' process there is usually little discussion about the character, the role, its meaning, etc. It is understood that intellectual analysis will not only be of little help but maybe even have a bad effect on acting by arousing expectations which could be in the actor's way to create a role. Yet, the Process is not quite "blind." "Like when" is an expression used to construct a universal, a generalization based on the monologue or scene, a generalized experience everybody can relate to. When a student reads a monologue or a scene, s/he is asked

to say what is universal about it. "This [scene/monologue] is like when..." Then a generalized situation or event is supplied. For instance: "This is like when your greatest secret is found out and you are publicly embarrassed," or "This is like when you meet your first love and s/he told you s/he loved you," etc. Once the student/actor decides on a universal, s/he can proceed to think of a unique experience in her/his own past which is an embodiment of the same universal experience. Thus, universals are tools used to search for suitable experiences: from a monologue/scene --> to a universal (a generalization) --> to a personal past experience --> to a performed character/scene.

- **feedback loop** -- An actor's behavior and actions should have an impact on her/his fellow-actors in the scene they are doing together. An appropriate reaction in the fellow actor not only has an effect on the audience, but also serves as a feedback to the actor her/himself. All the actors in a scene need to encounter certain "appropriate" reactions in their partners. These reactions facilitate each one's acting and help them sustain their own experiences and personalizations. The feedback loop is what creates a true situation between two or more actors in a scene.

"Appropriate" is not used in a normative sense, there is no "norm" or a criterion to judge the "appropriateness" of the partner's reaction. Anything that "works" is appropriate, anything that helps a particular actor in using other acting tools and helps to enhance the experienced emotions. There is a lot of experimenting until these "appropriate" actions are found. (See Appendix: Example 4)

- **"real" vs. "natural"** -- The aim of "process acting" is to teach actors to be "real" vs. to be "natural." In other words, the actor is really feeling the emotions of his/her character and not just trying to appear natural and imitate or fake the emotions. "Being real" is one of the crucial notions for understanding the process of acting. In order to construct an imaginary field in the life space,

and to be able to walk into it and be there, it is not enough to "Know," it is necessary to "Feel" it too! In the classes this was stressed over and over again: the feelings have to be real--an actor can construct the fictive character, scene and/or event, but it is her/his real emotions that give it life, credibility and ultimately the beauty of real art. Acting "naturally," appearing "natural" is not enough because there is no inner motivation, there are no feelings no matter how carefully their presence is indicated. Most of all, the actor doesn't have a personal charge which lets her/him experience the moment of the creation. Being without this "inspiration" (Stanislavsky), an actor appears to the audience as a hollow puppet, whose actions are not fully motivated.

The insistence on having and using real emotions to create characters and scenes is one of the most significant discoveries in this study and will be explained in detail in the second part of the analysis. Let me just say here briefly that while we make distinction between reality and fiction, and while we believe that fictive events don't actually exist, emotions in the fictive "field" are real, or this is not a field of a life space at all. Therefore, real emotions are the keys to "enter" a fictive field.

- **character, scene, monologue** -- In acting classes, as well as in true acting for theater, film or TV, one has to adhere to a script which is usually written by somebody else. In contrast to free improvisation and spontaneous child play, the end product of acting is determined in a large part by the script of a play. Characters, scenes and monologues are products of an interactive social negotiation between an author of the script, an actor, other actors--participants in the play, the director and the larger social environment--culture represented by the audience. In the context of the distinction between the real and the fictive, they are the ultimate fictive world (field).
- **lines** -- The text of a role is called "lines." When an actor forgets her/his text s/he can always ask for help from somebody who holds the text for her/him. It is enough to say: "Line." This may be

said without breaking out of the experience (character). There is another important thing about lines. One of the first instructions a student actor gets is to memorize the lines in the "neutral" mode. In other words, the text to be uttered for the character is not to have any meaning before the actual acting attempt with the experience and personalization and other acting tools. Putting meaning into the text before acting it out may, in fact, be detrimental to the actual performance. Thus, the text is called "lines," something without a life of its own, without a significance beyond an actual acting out.

- **neutral vs. actual** -- The imperative task an actor has is to become able to control his/her emotions, intentions, meanings and significance of behavior. That also means to be able to "empty" oneself of all meaning. Just like in the physical exercises one learns to relax muscles, the skill one has to acquire for acting is to "relax" one's psyche, to become "neutral" or blank. This is how the "lines" of a scene/monologue are learned, to be actualized only at will--with all the other tools required to make them live again. The skill of neutralization is a learned control over the contents of one's thoughts and emotions. It is a way to "navigate" between different "fields" of reality/ fiction landscape. To neutralize a meaning or an emotion means to be able to "step out" of a field of an experience. To "actualize" a meaning or an emotion, means to be able to "step into" a field and be there fully. Neutralization during the phase of learning the lines helps to prevent unchecked thought and emotions become associated with the lines. That, in turn, means that the lines will be "more flexible," more "limp." This is necessary to enable the actor to concentrate fully on her/his experience, personalization and intentions chosen for the scene, without false expectations. The lines then really become just an empty glove which takes a shape of the hand which happens to be in it (when actualized). In other words, an actor "works" on shaping the "hand" (real emotions, meanings and intentions from his/her experience) and not on shaping the "glove" (a fictive character, action, scene).

Practical advice we as students actors had to help us with learning how to neutralize, was to rewrite the text (lines) in vertical columns, one word on a line, and to take out all the punctuation and capitalization. Reading a text down a column like that helps one neutralize any nuances of sense and meaning and pronounce it flat like a list of nonsense syllabi. (See Appendix: Example 5)

- **exercises** -- Exercises are among the very important tools both in preparation for acting and in marking the boundaries between different fields. Almost each class with G. Phillips began with exercises called "psychocallistenics." These are physical exercises combined with breathing, voice and imagination. They were aimed both to help students concentrate on future tasks in the class and to mark a transition between the world outside the class and the special world of the acting class. These exercises were always ended with a relaxation exercise and a relaxation combined with imagination of different places and fantastic trips.

There were other exercises, too. Each one of these served to help gain control over some psychological function. Exercises have been one of the main ways of learning to act in Stanislavsky's system and Strasberg's method acting. "The intention is to help each individual to use, control, shape and apply whatever he possesses (to the task of acting) . . ." (Strasberg: p. 104). I have already mentioned the "Four walls exercise" and improvisations based on trying to get/keep something. Other important exercises included: "sensory memory," "magnetism," "intimacy," etc.

- **preparation** -- is a period before a performance of a particular monologue/scene in which actors start working on getting themselves into their chosen experiences, choose personalizations and perform other exercises necessary for them to get into that particular state of mind and feelings which they need for performing. Some actors need a longer period to "work themselves up" to

that desired state, some need less time. During the classes, the student who was next to "work," would go to the other end of the classroom to prepare, while the others were still occupied with making comments on the work of the previous student. Preparation is an active construction of the field of one's past experience and the movement into this experience.

- **work** --Work is an actual "performance" of a monologue or a scene in the course of the class (or in a regular theater setting). It was very customary to refer to performing as "work." "Who is going to work next?" -- meant who was the next student to perform his/her monologue. Everything else happening in the class and around it was subordinated to "work." If somebody came an hour before the class to prepare, the class would not start with exercises as usual, but with the work of that student (or group of students) because it would be assumed they were ready to "work." Work is *raison d'être* of acting classes, work is acting.

C. IDENTIFICATION OF DIFFERENT "FIELDS" OR "WORLDS" AND THEIR DIMENSIONS

For the student actor there are several "realities" or "fields" which s/he has to maintain at the same time, yet moving in and out of them as well. In this section I'll describe these "fields" and their characteristics.

I. THE "WORLD OUTSIDE" AND THE "WORLD WITHIN" AN ACTING CLASS

As mentioned several times, exercises at the beginning of each class were used to make a boundary between the "world outside" the class and the "world within" the class. In the world outside the class we were "civilians" but in the world within the class we were "actors" (albeit novices). These two worlds differed from each other in several aspects. First of all, in the "world outside" we are what

we are in life: individuals expected to behave and relate to others according to our true relationships and the norms of the society. Our thoughts and feelings arise spontaneously and we are expected to express them in culturally learned and accepted ways. In other words, the world outside the class, for the participants represents REALITY. It should be noted that characterization of the world outside as reality, is not an analytic device, but a description of the participants' belief: The world outside the class has a status of reality for the class participants.

The world within the class is different. Its purpose is to be a place where one not only may, but is expected to reveal much more of her/his feelings, in ways that would "normally" be inappropriate in the world outside. The world within the class is specifically set to facilitate expression of usually unspoken thoughts and feelings and behaviors which could be "outrageous" in the world outside. Moreover, in the world within, one's behavior is not judged for what it represents, but for its expressive power regardless of its contents.

In the world within the class one has a special relationship to oneself: s/he regards her/himself as an instrument that one has to learn to master and control. This means that different criteria are applied to judge oneself. For the participants the world within the class has a status of special reality. It is the reality of their attempts to master the skill of acting. They relate to the teacher and to the fellow students on the basis of this given task in a very focused way. They expect the teacher to help them resolve certain problems and overcome obstacles. They relate to the fellow students according to three basic dimensions: (a) the fellow students' acting skills; (b) their comments of one's own "work"; and (c) their suitability and willingness to become a good partner for a scene one wishes to do. These three dimensions are instances of the more general dimensions of relating to other people: (a) the other person's perceived characteristics; (b) what we perceive the other person thinks about us; and (c) what we intend to do with the other person.

In *The Process of Drama*, J. O'Toole described three contexts which surround drama: the "real context," the "context of the medium" and the "context of the setting" (O'Toole, 1992). The "real context" corresponds roughly to the world outside. The "context of the medium" and the "context of the setting" are both present in the world within although in slightly different forms than defined by O'Toole. For O'Toole, the "context of the medium" is the "coming of people for the event [of drama] In conventional genres of western theatre, this coming together happens in a theatre. . . . The theatre is not just an external setting for the drama, like a randomly chosen picture frame, but germane for the social occasion that is drama... The makers of the drama, and where and when it happens, are therefore all part of the medium by which the elements of dramatic form are made manifest" (O'Toole: 49). The "context of the setting" can be different than the context of the medium especially if drama takes place in settings other than theatre. Drama in education is one of these settings. O'Toole described schools as settings for drama in education, which in fact "actively mediate against the ready suspension of belief" (O'Tolle: 50). The world within acting classes in Wilma Theater had elements both of the context of the medium and context of the setting. As far as the context of the medium is concerned, there was a "coming of people for the event" of drama every time a student or a group of students was performing, i.e. "working." The rest of the class would become the audience and there were other elements of the context of the medium described by O'Toole (dimmed lights and other devices which facilitate suspension of belief).

However, there were also strong elements of the context of an educational setting which worked against the students' performance (work) of a dramatic piece. For the students who are observers of another student's work, it is not quite like being in a theatre. One does not watch a performance for the performance sake. Instead, one watches the "work" of the other student(s). And for the student actor who is working it also is not quite the same as performing in the "real" theatre. Her/his acting is still in the learning stage. Problems are expected to occur with possible intervention by the teacher even during the work. There is no need to finish the given monologue or scene if it "doesn't work." Repetitions of

the same piece are almost a rule. Therefore, students have different expectations and different reasons for doing whatever they are doing than an actor in a real performance.

II. THE "WORLD OF THE PRESENT" AND THE "WORLD OF THE PAST EXPERIENCE"

The most important acting tool described in the previous section is the past "experience." We have seen that, for acting, it is not enough to think of an experience, or just to remember it: one has to reconstruct it and relive it. By learning how to "walk oneself through an experience" one learns how to enter a world of one's own past and be there all over again. This is not an easy task and considerable practice is needed. The transition into the world of the past was often probed by the teacher. "Are you more there than here?" was the often asked question.

The world of the present is the life-space: the totality of all the regions with all their complicated relationships and interactions. In a way, as Lewin had described, this is the only world that in fact exists, since both past and future are contained in it. Yet, in the narrower sense in which it is used in this paper, the world of the present is made up only of those fields that make the ongoing, actual, present situation of a person.

The term "present" is used in a slightly different way than a purely temporal one. It means that for some fields in the life space the "present" will be covered by a wider time boundary, and for other fields it will be a narrower one. For instance: "one is employed by a company, at present"--which can mean several months, even years, as opposed to her/his previous employment. But, "one is at the theater, now"--usually means a period of several hours. The past and the present are not always sharply differentiated in time. Psychologically, though, the world of the present is that which is still ongoing and which we can still affect through our actions. Past, on the contrary, is something that was and is over. Psychologically, there is a boundary between the present and the past, because we feel that those events

which belong to the past are not any more, that they are unchangeable, and that we have no access to them anymore.

But for the purpose of acting, one learns how to enter one's own past and "walk through it." Experiences from the past are enlivened and relived all over again. Obviously, this process is a process of construction of a field in the life-space. The product of this construction is something that is called "experience" by actors. "Experience," however, differs significantly from the actual past event. First of all it happened in a different time, in a different space, and with just one of the original participants present--the actor her/himself. Every element and dimension of the experience has to be imagined. here is nothing in the "here and now" to sustain it but the actor's imagination.

The biggest difference between the "experience" and the remembered past event is in the following: one reconstructs one's feelings and thoughts, wishes and intentions--more than the actual event. Moreover, one is allowed to change the past event now, to let her/himself openly express feelings, regardless of whether they were expressed openly at the time. "Talk to . . . [the person in the experience]! Tell him/her what you really feel, what you really think of them! What you never dared tell them before!" was another instruction in the class, aimed at helping a student step into her/his world of the past. In other words, one may reconstruct an experience in such a way that it becomes very different from what it was. It becomes what it could have been or what the person had wished for it to be, regardless of how it actually had happened at the time. The important thing is to recreate feelings and the whole psychological state, not to be true to the past (if that is possible at all).

The world of the past differs from the real past in one more way. It has a completely different order of events. Since the role an actor plays has its own logic, demanding an actor go through a particular succession of psychological states, the actor has to piece together several different experiences which may be completely unrelated in her/his real past each happening in some other period, probably

not in the same order. The resulting world of the past is more like a mosaic made up of the broken pieces of one's life. What holds these experiences together is the role the actor is playing, i.e. the world of the character.

III. THE "WORLD OF THE ACTOR" AND THE "WORLD OF THE CHARACTER"

The very purpose of acting is to create the world of the character, i.e. to create a world that belongs to the play. O'Toole defines what he calls the fictional context as "comprising situations embodying characters that interact with each other and their physical, social and cultural environment as presented in the fiction" (O'Toole, 1992:14, italics by the author). All of the previously described worlds intrinsically belong to the actor: the worlds outside and within the class and the worlds of the present and the past experience. However, the world of the character has a different origin. It is a world which an actor first gets to know from the outside as a person in the audience. It only gradually becomes the world into which the actor enters in the process of its creation.

Several characteristics distinguish the world of the character from the world of the actor.

- The world of the character is a joint creation between at least the playwright and the actor and often in conjunction with the director and other actors. Speaking even more precisely, the world of the character is also created by the audience, since the intended audience is significant for this creation.
- The world of the character is predictable and "fixed." In other words, the actor is given a "fixed" role, "lines," the whole play--the character's relationships and the dynamics of their interaction. The actor is not completely free to change that and has to play within given rules.⁵

- The actor first meets the character from the "outside" before s/he meets her/him from the "inside," i.e. the character is at first somebody else and then, gradually as the actor creates the role, the character becomes the actor.
- The actor knows a lot more about the character than the character her/himself. The actor has an overview of the characters entire life (as given in the play) at any moment of the play: while the character knows his/her situation only from the limited point of view of the moment in which s/he is caught.
- The character's existence is the function of the play and the segments known about her/him depend on this function. The character has no other dimension: i.e. anything that is revealed about any character in a play is there for a reason. But in the actor's world, like in everybody's life, there are many things without any reason, not connected to a particular world (field). For instance: if a character in a play has a toothache, that is in some way important for the play, while of course, we can have a toothache quite unrelated to a situation in life. Or, if a character in the play says that s/he just met somebody on the street, that is in some way significant for the play, while our meeting somebody on the street does not have to be connected to a situation in which we are at that moment.

An actor uses the acting tools to create the world of the actor. S/he assembles and relives her own experiences, but expresses them through the "lines": words that belong to the world of the character. S/he personalizes other actors and things on the stage (props) and relates to them as if they were people and things from her own life, yet these relationships are guided by the dynamics of the play. It could be said that the acting tools are as much the actor's devices to orientate her/himself in the world of the character, as they are the tools for creating this world. In fact they work both ways: shaping the world of the character and helping the actor explore it.

In fact, the world of a character, even when portrayed realistically, is significantly different from the world of the actor. It is a mixture of, on one hand, the actor's feelings and ways of relating to others and, on the other, the world created by a playwright, a director other actors and the audience. The result is quite different from the "real life" of the actor or anybody else for that matter. O'Toole said: "One major aspect of the fictionality is that the fictional context is finite and selective--in other words it is a selection, with established parameters, of the human subjects, their relationships and the environment which would exist if the context were in fact real. It is a model" (O'Toole, 1992:14). What is important to understand is that this model is a communicative device: it is created through social interaction and it is intended to convey a particular social message.

When an actor "enters" the world of a character, s/he does not just live in it, s/he communicates something through it. The intended message transcends the "fictional context." It is addressed to the real world in which the actor lives: to her/him and to the larger audience.

IV. CHARACTERIZATION (STATUS) OF DIFFERENT WORLDS

The majority of psychological theories speak about reality--irreality distinction (or lack of it) as if it were completely clear what is the difference between them. "Reality" is simply assumed to be that what is, what exists, while "irreality" takes attributes like "nonexistent," "imaginary," "fantastic," "wishful thinking," "not true," etc. In this section we will see that this distinction has to be refined in several ways. The questions that immediately arise from the study of learning to act concern our scientific concepts of reality and irreality as well as the distinction between them. For instance: to what realm does the experience as an acting tool belong? Is experience in the reality or irreality? When the actors reconstruct and relive their past experiences, are they "for real" or just imagined?

Or, is the world within the class "real"? Is relating to oneself as an artistic "instrument" of representation a step away from reality, from simply being in a situation as one is?

Or, if the world of the character does not exist in reality, what are the ways in which it actually affects reality, i.e. the world of the actor (and of the audience)?

In other words, we are confronted with questions pertaining to the criteria by which an event, an experience is qualified to be real. Finding these criteria is crucial because knowing or believing that something is "real" determines our relationship to it and our responses to it (Bateson, Marjanovic-Shane).

The best way to distinguish between the different worlds of an actor is to be functional. All the above described worlds except the world outside the class are specially and deliberately constructed to fulfill a particular function. The world inside the class functions as a place where one assumes a special perception of oneself, relating to the self as an instrument of artistic expression. This shift is deliberate and necessary for learning how to act. At the same time it removes a person (student actor) from the mere existential world having her/him look at it from a distance, thinking of her/his own past experiences and life in terms of their applicability to create the world of the character. One's own life is used as a material for constructing another world: the world of a character. The world of the character is in the function of the play. Moreover, the play is an artistic form designed to communicate particular meanings. As O'Toole pointed out, the fictional context is a model. That means that its particular purpose is to make sense of human experiences, to give a special significance to some ideas and feelings, to shape them in a certain way and communicate that to the audience.

Therefore, instead of describing reality and fiction in terms of their existence or nonexistence, it is far more useful to describe them in terms of their functions: reality is a direct experience of the ongoing events in one's everyday life;⁶ fiction is a tool used to create an understanding of these experiences and communicate them to others.

The second important distinction between different worlds is the way in which each of them depends on social construction. If the direct experience of everyday life is, for humankind socially constructed by ways of necessary interactions with others and co-participation in life situations, then the fiction, the world of the character appears to be a form of the social self-awareness. In other words everything about the world of the character is social: its origins, its function and its destination. It is constructed to relay a social message. The world of the actor, the world outside the class, the existence of each one of us is certainly there but it does not contain a given meaning. To make sense of the untidy stream of events in life, one sorts them out and gives them a particular meaning. However, construction of meaning is a social process. That is why the world outside the class and the world of the actor seem to have a less apparent meaning, or a less pronounced meaning compared to the world inside the class, the world of the past experience when used as a tool and, ultimately, the world of the character. The world of the character, may, indeed become an explanatory system for our everyday existence. The fact that this world is not existent, that it is fictive, is besides the point, because, in another sense it is very significant for the very existence. Therefore, the world of the character is a socially constructed "analytical" tool--or a social analytic device for creating a meaning.

V. THE ULTIMATE CRITERION

An important thing became clear in the G. Phillips' classes: For an actor there is only one criterion when judging a world to be real: a world is real if the feelings are real. In fact, the world of the past experience and the world of the character cannot even be constructed unless REAL⁷ feelings are aroused, unless one can truly and fully feel them.

The difference between the world outside and the world of the actor on one hand and the world of the character on the other, lies in the ways feelings are aroused (see discussion bellow). But once they are aroused, once they get to flow and their intensity grows, the world which they belong to becomes

more and more significant, and therefore more and more real. The greater the emotional reality of a world, one may say, the stronger will be an impact upon the person and the group. In other words, if fiction is a temporary suspension of disbelief, it is not a suspension of the feelings. Quite contrary, without the feelings, the fiction cannot have its full significance, one cannot relate to it. Ultimately, without feelings, the world of the character remains only a sketch, a project, a thought--but not a world that belongs to the life space of an individual or a group. Feelings are among the main criteria individuals and groups use in judging a world to be "real."⁸

The reality (truth) of the feelings one may experience in a fictive world may be one of the main motivating factors for constructing fictive worlds at all. That may be true both for the children's play and for the adult acting. There probably are other motivating factors, as well: cognitive (a wish to learn something) and social (to have an opportunity to relate to somebody in a different way). However, it seems to me that they alone would not be sufficient if the creation of a fictive (irreal) world were not based in the ability to really feel and truly experience these worlds.

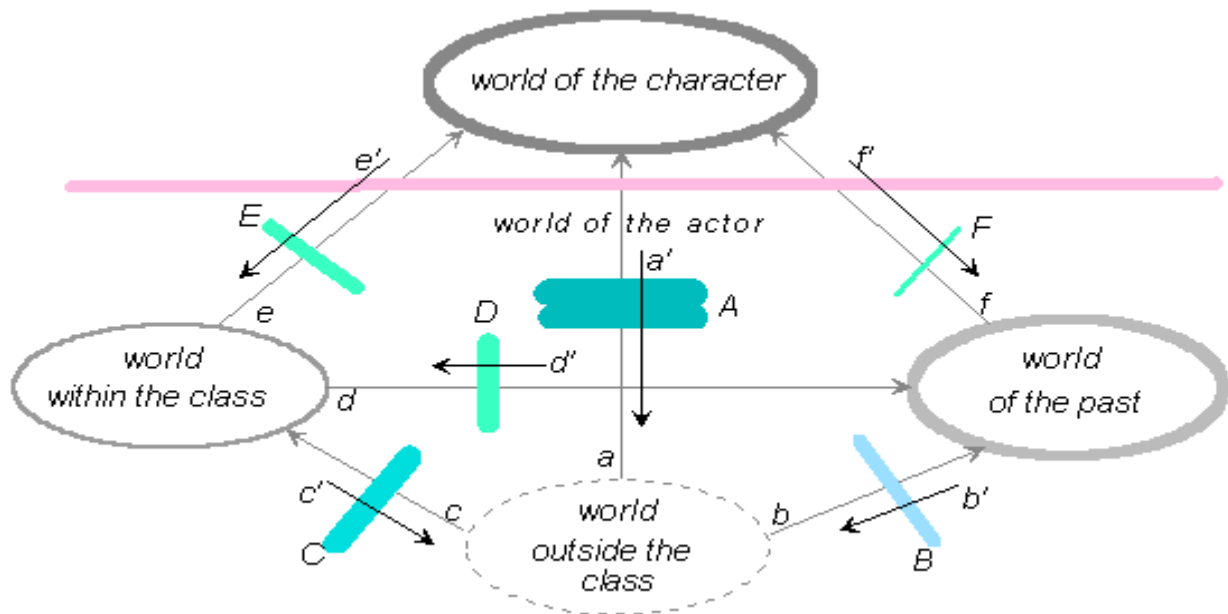
D. BOUNDARIES AND MOVEMENTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLDS

In this section I will analyze how actors move between different worlds and what kind of difficulties they encounter. The assumption is that the more difficult it is to move into a world, i.e. to construct its meaning and significance, the actors will have to do more "work." If the barriers are too great and an actor cannot overcome them, the world (region) in question simply cannot become fully meaningful and will have little significance for her/him, and, consequently, for the audience.

Our data and analysis reveal that different worlds have different degrees of accessibility, i.e. their boundaries can be more or less permeable. Moreover, the direction in which an actor moves from one

world to another also determinates permeability of a world's boundaries. Boundaries between some of these worlds are more permeable in one direction than in the other.

Picture 1



<u>The Legend:</u>	
<i>Ovals:</i>	<i>different worlds</i>
<i>Line around ovals:</i>	<i>openness/closeness of a world</i>
<i>Long arrows (a-f):</i>	<i>paths from the world outside to the world of the character</i>
<i>Short arrows (a'-f):</i>	<i>paths back</i>
<i>Shaded cross lines (A-F):</i>	<i>barriers and points of specific action</i>
<i>Long line across:</i>	<i>separates the world of the actor from the world of the character</i>

In order to see the boundaries of each world more clearly, we can look at various paths an actor may take from the world outside to the world of the character, and notice those points along the paths which require special, additional efforts to cross to another world. Picture 1 depicts some of the movements and barriers that lie between different regions. Long arrows (marked from a to f) represent

movements toward the world of the character, and thick, shaded bars (marked from A to F) represent barriers. Short arrows (marked from a' to f') pointing in opposite directions of the long ones indicate reverse movements: from the world of the character to the world outside. Thickness of the lines around different worlds indicates how open or close is a particular world.⁹ It should be noted that several arrows begin at the world outside indicating different strategies one can choose to reach the world of the character. Each path, however, leads to different barriers and different actions have to be taken to surmount it. In this section each of these paths and the corresponding barriers will be discussed.

I. DIRECTLY FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE TO THE WORLD OF THE CHARACTER

We meet various fictive characters daily: when we read stories and watch plays and movies. However, we meet them as we would any other person: as somebody else, not us. While we read or watch a play/movie, our own everyday worlds are "on hold" and we do not normally undertake any actions in either one of these worlds. In other words, although we may "visit" different fictive worlds, we tend to keep them separate from our own world. The barriers to crossing directly into the world of a character are--normally--too high to cross directly. These are the barriers marked by "A" in Picture 1. Here the term "normally" has to be taken quite seriously. In our everyday lives, most of the time we are bound by culturally determined situations and rules which govern them: from the ways we dress and the food we eat, to various other things we do and roles we play. Obviously, the more the world of the character is similar to our everyday world, the barriers will be easier to cross. What is even more important, it will be easier to take some aspects of the character and of her/his world back into our everyday world.¹⁰

There are many things that prevent us from entering the world of the character directly, i.e. to behave, think and feel as if we were the character in our everyday life. Some of these barriers have to do with our individual ability to imagine this world and our knowledge about relevant details in the world of

the character. Others have to do with social norms of communication: we are expected to follow certain rules of communication applicable to our everyday relationships. These norms are so strong that people who for any reason appear not to be "in the reality," i.e. who appear to be in "another world," are in danger of being proclaimed anything from "weird" to "mad" by the society. It is therefore, inappropriate to be "a character" in the world outside.

In fact, this crossing over into the world of a character is usually marked or framed in some way signaling others that the following is somehow different from the "reality" and that it is play (Bateson, 1951). But framing of the world of the character is already a switch in the strategy, i.e. it is not anymore the direct route to the world of the character. In Picture 1, this would mean instead of taking the a-arrow, one will be taking the c and e arrows: by creating a "world within" for herself and others and then from the world within, the world of the character.

As mentioned above, some barriers to entering the world of the character lie in the easiness with which we can imagine this world and our knowledge of its relevant features. It also may be necessary to be in a certain mood, to have certain feelings in order to be able to cross over into the world of the character. Then, instead of taking the direct path (the a-arrow) first we have to remember some of our past experiences, thoughts and feelings. In other words, we have to take an indirect path through the world of the past--the b and f arrows in Picture 1.

In fact, these two strategies, creating the "world inside" for the participants and recreating the "world of the past" for the individual actor, almost always exist together. One having to do with the communicative and social aspects of the transition into the world of the character, and the other with the psychological motions necessary to experience the world of the character. Both strategies, each in its own way and taken in conjunction, enrich the process of creating a character by giving it special meaning and dimensions.

II. FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE TO THE WORLD WITHIN

To create a world within means to invite others to share a different set of rules of relating to each other and oneself. As described above, the world within the class is special: one is allowed to show one's feelings and thoughts more freely and one's explicit task is to take off on a journey of exploring oneself and one's relationships with others. There is a degree of closeness, even intimacy in the world inside. It is a world of camaraderie based in tolerance even toward those who are disliked in the world outside.

The world within is a special region, different from the rest of the ongoing life space. It is created each time an invitation to play is extended to someone. This can take different forms and all sorts of degrees: from the enrollment in an acting class where one goes to a special place at a special time (institutionalized play time), to daily creation of intimacy through a wink of the eye or a child's invitation: "let's play."

Since creating the world within means creating close, intimate relationships, there may be barriers which define who can and who cannot enter this world. These barriers are always socially defined. If the social status between people is very different and if this difference has to be rigidly maintained, the barriers are stronger. For instance it would be very difficult to imagine prisoners and prison guards participating in the same world within. It is always more difficult to create the world within between people whose relationships are close and asymmetric than between people with loose, undefined and more symmetric relationships. Thus, barriers to create a world within are stronger between parents and children, teachers and pupils, management of a company and its workers, high ranking clergy and ordinary members of a congregation, high officers and ordinary soldiers, etc. . . .

Another kind of social barriers lies not in the social status, but in the personal relationship between people. There are people one does not want to let in the world within because of the personal

animosity one has for them: adversaries and enemies of all sorts. Letting them into the world within, agreeing to play with them could be interpreted as admitting to have lost the personal war, or as forgiving them for whatever caused the animosity in the first place. Personal barriers are as strong and at time even stronger than those originating from status differences.

Creating the world within is one of the two strategies in creating the world of a character as mentioned above. The other strategy has to do with the psychological readiness to create feelings of the character and the character's way of relating to her world (people, places, things). This is achieved mainly through recreating one's own past experiences, i.e. through entering the world of one's own past.

III. FROM THE WORLDS OF PRESENT TO THE WORLD OF THE PAST

The world of past experiences is a part of our ongoing present lives, yet it is not completely and not always accessible. As much as our past experiences contribute to who we are now and how we behave in the everyday world, at the same time they are not there any more and can be accessed only by a complicated process of remembering. Remembering, however, is not a straightforward and automatic process. It is dependent on various factors which have to do as much with the present as they have to do with the past.

In this part we will explore some aspects of the processes involved in remembering, namely those that are connected to arousing feelings. Recreating the world of past experiences in acting is used as a technique (and a strategy) in creating the world of the character. It is used for one purpose only: to arouse particular feelings of the actor and make the feelings available to the character. This, however is not a direct process! Although one can "remember" what emotions were involved in the experience, this is still far from feeling these emotions now. In other words, I can remember how angry I was at a

particular point of time and yet be completely calm now. Recreating the world of the past means reliving it so that we don't merely remember it, but are there now and feel what we felt then.

Emotions cannot be summoned at will, rather they are reactions to events, people and things. To bring these emotions back and step into the world of the past, actors learn to "walk through their experiences," recreating particular aspects of the world of the past through sensory memory and details of the event they are reliving. In the first part of the article, we have described this process of "walking through the experience." One tries to remember physical characteristics of the place where the past event happened describing to oneself various sensory aspects--colors, temperature, smells, tastes, sounds. . . . One also remembers details about the self and other people in the event: their clothes, the color of their hair, their movements. . . . One describes in detail the social situation: who is who, what is it all about, what are one's intentions, plans and expectations. . . .

This is not an easy process and has to be learned and practiced. It happens largely without any support from the world of the present. In fact, most of the time the worlds of the present interfere with recreating the world of the past. Imagination of an actor has to overcome actual physical and social aspects of the world of the present. Many acting students look for a secluded spot in the classroom where the interference of the classroom activity would be minimal. Often they close their eyes and ears to shut the present world out. This was described in the previous section as "preparation."

Another difficulty (barrier) in recreating the world of the past is the actors' ability to deal with certain emotions and freely express them. Each one of us has difficulties with allowing oneself to feel some emotions or allowing oneself to express them freely. This may be both a cultural and an individual barrier. Our cultural norms determine whether we are supposed to feel or to express certain emotions in certain situations. Our personal histories have given us different opportunities to feel and express

particular emotions. All of this may interfere with recreating the world of the past to the point of arousing particular emotions: our cultural and individual habits may be in the way.

For instance, one of the students in the class had great difficulty recreating certain experience when she was extremely happy. She remembered intellectually every detail of the experience, and she would start to "walk herself through it." But every time she began to feel happiness, it would fade away, something would stop her. Later in an interview she told me that her religion made her feel guilty about feeling happy, and that was the barrier to that particular "world of the past." She tried many times and finally succeeded, but it took her several months. Another student had problems allowing himself to be angry. The particular experience he tried to reconstruct involved his father. He remembered clearly how angry he was at his father at that time, but had great difficulty becoming angry again. Instead, he would suddenly grin and look silly. He tried many times and only once did he succeed, but he could not repeat it.

The world within the class and the world of the past are places along the way to create the world of a character. Dynamically they may be understood as instruments (tools) for creating the world of a character. In the following section we will analyze ways in which these instruments are used and barriers to the world of the character they themselves helped to create.

IV. FROM THE WORLD WITHIN AND THE WORLD OF THE PAST TO THE WORLD OF THE CHARACTER

To have established the world within and the world of the past does not automatically mean that the world of the character will be there. The world of the character is a product of at least three components: the negotiated meaning (or vision) created by the world within the class, the reconstructed feelings from the world of the past and the script or the text of the play. And, of course, when the play

reaches the stadium of the actual public performance, then the world outside the class also becomes a determining component.

The world within the class is not only a place where one is allowed to experiment with different feelings and relationships and is tolerated for doing so. It is also a place where one negotiates the overall meaning of the play, of the world of the character. Depending on who participates in the world within and what are they bringing into it, the world of the character can take different shapes. An actor depends on the world within in creating the world of the character. The world of the character has to be significant and meaningful at least to those in the world within.

The world of the past experience is the background against which the world of the character is created. The actor recreates it in order to start up certain feelings, but at the same time s/he has to be able to take these feelings into another world. In other worlds, s/he must be able to brake out of the world of her own past and transform it into something else, the world of the character.

Finally, the text of the play, the "lines" the character utters, as written by a playwright, are a blueprint for the world of character. Sometimes the "lines" may be changed, yet they guide the creation of the world of the character as much as the world of the past and the world within the class. Characters have defined functions in the overall play, they appear, behave in certain ways and say particular "lines" because they serve a purpose within the play. The world of a character, therefore depends on this overall purpose and meaning of the play.¹¹

These three components: the world within, the world of the past and the "lines" of the character are inseparable. They always work together, very often through subtly influencing and changing one another while creating the world of the character. Anything that disrupts this process may become a barrier to the creation of the world of the character.

V. GOING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLDS

Actors at work are almost never entirely and completely in one of these worlds. They constantly cross back and forth between the world within the class, the world of the past experience and the world of the character. And of course, they cross into the world outside. Giffin studied movements between different worlds (or "frames" in her terms) in children's make believe play (Giffin, 1984). She analyzed both verbal and nonverbal means of communication looking for their point of origin: both within play frame as well as out of it. Although her analyses differentiate between only two worlds: the play frame (corresponding here to the world of the character) and the reality frame (closest to the world within in our analysis), she presented a very interesting description of different degrees of being in the world of the character or out of it. Of course, children's spontaneous make-believe play differs from acting classes on many points, the most important being the fact that children are not just playing a script, rather they are creating it at the same time. That is why many of the categories of metacommunication¹² described by Giffin either do not exist in the adult's acting or they have a different form. While children play with each other to experience some actions and relations with each other, acting classes are more focused on individual's performance, i.e. they are more focused on how an action (monologue, dialogue, event) is performed, than on what is performed. And while children adhere to very generalized scripts filling in details as they play, actors adhere to much more detailed scripts and they are not trying to invent details and solutions at the moment of acting. Therefore, where children have to metacommunicate about the play at the same time as they are playing, for the adult actors, this task is largely accomplished before acting begins.

There are, however, different problems actors have to metacommunicate about. One of them is a "technical" problem of forgetting the "lines" and having to ask for help,¹³ while maintaining the world of the character. This is usually done by saying: "Line!" but keeping the tone of voice and the nonverbal

part of behavior "in the frame" (Giffin's term), i.e. by staying in the world of the character. In that case, an actor, from within the "frame" requests an action in the world outside the "frame."

Another problem which arises in adult acting is the maintenance of the world of past experiences simultaneously with the world of the character, and both of them against the physical presence of the world within the class. It was not rare that a student had to reinforce her/his experience by verbalizing actual utterances of her/his past experience instead of continuing with the "lines" of the character. In other words, the actor would constantly go back to the past experience to get the emotional "charge" necessary for the character. In one example, a student was uttering "My love!" after every utterance of the character. This, "My love!" was directed to a person in his experience! It was a tool he used to sustain a particular relationship of his character to another one in the play. Gradually, the inserted utterance "My love!" became less audible and finally he didn't have to actually say it--it became a "subtext"--an unspoken but implicit meaning of the character's behavior.

E. CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING BETWEEN DIFFERENT WORLDS

As the actors cross into new worlds, they bring along aspects or parts of the world they are coming from. We have already analyzed paths and processes which lead toward the world of the character. We have seen how this world and its meaning and significance are constructed through creating special relationships (in the world within) and special emotions (from the world of the past) to forge a life for the character's "blueprint" given in the script. But creation of meaning works in both directions: our past experiences may get new meanings after they have been used for the world of the character, our relationships with other people may be transformed after the special world within has been used for a joint construction of a play, our understanding of The World in which we live ("reality") may forever be changed after living in the world of the character for a while.

In this section I will analyze construction of meaning when moving from the world of the character back toward the everyday world of the actor.

There are two kinds of processes by which the world of the character may affect and transform the meaning of the world of the actor. We will call them immediate and indirect influences in this analysis. Immediate influences have to do with a process of learning which takes place in constructing the world of the character. Indirect influences lie in the "message" which the world of the character carries for the world of the actor.

I. IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE WORLD OF THE CHARACTER IN THE WORLD OF THE ACTOR

Building the world of the character always involves learning. From learning the facts about the character and the cultural historical period in which the character lives, to learning more intimate ways the character relates to people and situations. This may at times entail a whole study of the period in question to various degrees of detail.

But even more important is learning of the ways the character may behave and relate to others in different situations. Occasionally, maybe even often, things learned in the world of the character, may be transposed to the world of the actor if the circumstances in her/his world are sufficiently similar to those in the world of the character. Vygotsky (1978) has extensively written about this process in his analysis of the "zone of proximal development." According to Vygotsky, zone of proximal development is a period in which developmental processes are still forming and, more significantly, in which they are influenced through social relationships. Play is a medium of the zone of proximal development because it is "rule-based," i.e. because "rules" or guiding principles are what makes play situations. As Vygotsky writes: "What passes unnoticed by the child in real life becomes a rule of behavior in play" (Vygotsky, 1978:95). In other words, what we take for a given in the everyday life, seldom paying any attention to

it, must become analyzed behavior with a particular meaning in order to become a part of play.

Construction of the world of the character is an ongoing process of making conscious decisions based on "rules of behavior." In other words, every action of the character is analyzed and the actor knows why his/her character does something (even while the character may not be aware of it!). Taking control of the life of the character, is based in being able to take control of one's own life: first within the zone of proximal development, i.e. within the play, but gradually also in the "real" life of the actor.

Creating a character, therefore, may and almost always does affect the way an actor relates to his/her own past experiences and ongoing life situations.

The effect of the imagined on the real is not something that happens only through the very special activities like play and acting. Hofstadter (1980) described what he called the "fantasy rule" in propositional logic. "Fantasy rule" allows conclusions reached at the level of fantasy to be taken for true in reality. For instance, one of the simplest theorems in propositional calculus is "If p then q." This is then followed by: "P is true" therefore "Q is true." As soon as we have uttered "If . . ." we have "pushed into the fantasy" (Hofstadter), i.e. we have constructed an irreality level. Thus, the theorem "If p then q" exists, so to speak, at the level of "fantasy." It is coined in the irreality domain. But, it has an effect in the reality when circumstances in the reality match the circumstances in the irreality. Therefore, construction of the irreality or fantasy level is a necessary condition of propositional logic. It enables triangulation, reaching conclusions about phenomena which are not directly and immediately accessible.

Our everyday behavior and feelings are rarely completely accessible to conscious analysis and control. We find it particularly difficult to change the way we feel toward and react to certain situations and/or people. Play and acting are processes of constructing "fantasy rules," which can help us understand and take control of actual feelings and behavior at the "fantasy level" first and then at the "reality" level.

II. INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE WORLD OF THE CHARACTER IN THE WORLD OF THE ACTOR

The other way the world of the actor can be affected is through the metaphoric meaning of the play and the world of the character (Marjanovic-Shane, 1989). Plays are written and played because they carry certain messages about reality. This is what is usually known as the "moral of the story." Once the world of the character (the play) becomes a common knowledge, or at least known to a group of people, it can be used to make various metaphoric comments in "real life." For instance, saying that somebody is an Othello or a Hamlet, or saying that somebody is a Cinderella, is a metaphoric way of referring to particular characteristics of that person which are embodied in those characters. As mentioned before, O'Toole claims that the "fictional context is . . . a model"(1992:14), a selection of situations and characters which brings certain characteristics or aspects of human relationships to the foreground in a particularly clear way. These properties of the world of the character are especially important for the metaphoric use of the fictive world to make a comment about the reality. In metaphoric commenting we can invoke the whole world of the character with all its complex characteristics by referring to a model which is already constructed. Moreover, metaphoric reference affects not only intellectual understanding but it also produces emotional responses.

III. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to develop a nonvaluative psychological analysis of the phenomena usually described as "reality" and "fiction" ("irreality," "fantasy," etc.). "Reality" and "fiction" are descriptions given to different worlds or regions within the life space of an individual and/or a group. For the individual (or group) these terms carry the value of being either "true or untrue," "objective or subjective." However, it is more useful to explore what the functions of the "real" and the "fictive"

worlds are in the life space, the similarities and differences in their construction, movements in and out of these regions and the interaction between them, in a socio-psychological analysis .

Summarizing the main effects of the analysis of the processes of creating different worlds, we can begin to glimpse relationships between them:

- Three pairs of complementary regions (worlds) were described: (a) the worlds outside and inside [the class]; (b) the worlds of the present and of the past experiences; and (c) the worlds of the actor and of the character. Although other authors (O'Toole, Bretherton) tend to see these as nested frames, I have tried to avoid this assumption leaving the relationships between these three dimension more open. This was done because even this initial analysis shows that these dimensions of the life space are related in more than one way, inclusion ("nestedness") being only one among them.
- It is very important to note that the very condition under which construction of the world of the character ("fiction") is possible, is social by its nature. The statement "This is play" in Bateson's terms frames the play situation and tells others how to interpret events within it. Bateson, however, described just the cognitive aspect of the play frame. In contrast, I have tried to show the social, or communicative aspect of it, too. The first dimension distinguished between the world outside and the world inside (the class). The "world within the class" is a concept which describes a tacit agreement between the parties to create a region in the life space in which play can take place. Socially, an invitation to play represents an invitation to be closer to each other, and to share experiences. Construction of the world within, therefore, represents not merely another cognitive sphere, but a beginning of social bonding.
- The second important condition for building the world of the character is the actors' reliving of their past experiences. The world of past experiences has to be reconstructed in order to awaken

feelings an actor wants to lend to the character. Feelings cannot be summoned at will, just because we wish to feel in a certain way. They are always a response to an event, a situation, a relationship. Therefore, actors have to bring themselves into a state in which they are actually feeling that which they want their character to feel. Reconstructing the world of past experiences, and rekindling feelings is a very subtle and a very complex process. In a way it is akin to creating the "fictional" world: after all, the past is not present, it does not exist any more. In reconstructing the past, one may discover aspects of it that were previously never thought of, or even feelings that were not given a chance to be felt. Moreover, because this reconstruction is undertaken for the purpose of creating the character, there is a completely new perspective which puts past experiences in a new light. Thus, it could be said, that instead of the reconstruction of the actual past as it was, and was remembered in the ordinary life, it is rather a process of the construction of the past experiences as a new region (world) of the life space .

- The world of the character is a construction with a special origin and a special destination. The world of the character originates from, on one hand, the socially "agreed upon" meaning¹⁴ this character has to fulfill in play and, on the other hand, from an actor's world of past experiences. In other words a character is created jointly by the author of the script, the group within (the class) and the actor. Thus, the fictive world of a character is essentially a social construction. It is always a result of collective experiences and collective interpretations. Ultimately, the world of a character is a cultural phenomenon.
- O'Toole spoke of drama as a model for interpreting reality. The world of a character exists only within this function of a dramatic play: a character has to abide by the overall "rules" of a play. Therefore, the "rules" of a play are not only inner laws of the construction of the world of the character, but also, they are the interpreting devices drama as a model imposes on reality outside

its frame. In other words, the logic of building the world of a character has implications for understanding the world outside, i.e. "reality." The actor creates the world of a character by lending it parts of her/his own life. But by doing so s/he transforms private experiences into a symbolic form which communicates significant messages about life to a wider audience.

If we were to summarize the main difference between "reality" and "fiction" in socio-psychological terms, we could say that "reality" is a set of socio-psychological fields or regions in which an individual and her group live by default and which they believe to be given and true. "Fiction," on the other hand, is a set of fields or regions which an individual and her group deliberately construct on a temporary basis and for different reasons. Although the individual and her group believe the fiction is NOT TRUE, it may have a great impact on the "reality" and even change it. Therefore it may be said that "fictive" worlds are special tools cultures construct for socio-psychological analysis. If science is an activity people undertake to understand the laws of nature, construction of fictive worlds is an activity people undertake to discover and understand socio-psychological laws. Fictive worlds, therefore, are a form of cultural self-awareness.

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APPENDIX

Example 1.

Walking through an experience

Remembering one's past experiences is just a beginning for an actor who learns to reconstruct those experiences almost as fully as if they were happening to her/him right now. The skill of vivid reconstruction is first learned with help from a teacher or another fellow student. This is called "walking through" an experience. The general instruction a novice student gets is to try to remember as best s/he can various sensory details of the experience. The teacher asks:

"Is there anything we should know before you start remembering?" This provides a general setting (context) for the actual experience the student will reconstruct.

Then the student is instructed to close her/his eyes and to begin remembering. The teacher (facilitator) asks various questions:

"Where are you now? Describe the place. What is the time of the year? Is it cold, warm? What time of a day it is? What does the light look like? What do you smell? What do you hear, taste? What do you touch with your hands? Let yourself walk a bit through this place and let yourself feel the air, feel the smells, the tastes, hear the sounds."

"How old are you? How are you dressed? Feel your clothes again."

"Who is with you? Describe the people: who are they? What do they have on? How do they look, sound, smell? What is your relationship to them?"

All these questions help the student reconstruct various aspects of the setting of her/his experience. At some point the teacher asks:

"Are you more there than here?"

If the answer is negative, the teacher continues with questions about the sensory details: sight, sound, taste, smell, people. . . . Remembering the setting of the experience facilitates remembering the actual event. It is a task-oriented, non-threatening activity. Usually for the purpose of acting, one remembers quite dramatic and potentially threatening experiences. Or they may be potentially embarrassing to tell others. Yet, the telling is a necessary stage in learning how to reconstruct an experience.

Asking "Are you more there than here now?" lets both the teacher and the student orient themselves and find out whether the reconstruction of the experience has begun. Once the student feels to be more "there" than "here," more in the setting of her/his experience than in the acting class, the teacher begins asking questions about the actual experience. These questions depend on what the student is describing, but by this time it is supposed that the experience has already become so vivid that it takes over. At that point the teacher may instruct the student to start talking to the people in his/her experience as if they were present.

Finally, when it becomes evident that the student is reliving her/his experience the teacher instructs her/him to use the "lines" of the character instead of her/his own words to say what s/he actually wants to say.

Example 2.

Personalization

Suppose my character is required to behave toward another character with sarcasm and despise him/her in a scene. I have to find, in my life, a person to whom I relate or have related in a similar way. I remember Mark (name is changed here), a student at my undergraduate University. He was what I called at the time a "fake intellectual." He used to speak in complicated words that really meant nothing. But he couldn't understand human relationships. He used to write letters to me in which he accused me of being irresponsible, childish and impossible person. But his premises were all wrong. When I pointed out to him why I thought he was wrong, he would only get angry. He was not able to give me convincing arguments or examples of my alleged mistakes. I despised him and would never have been his "friend." I think he was secretly in love with me in spite of my provocative rudeness (in his words) because he kept calling me and writing letters to me. I can best describe my relationship to him by saying that he was the rare person I had a strong desire to pinch all the time.

For the purpose of the scene I am to play, I superimpose the image of Mark on the fellow student actor and relate to him as I would to Mark.

Example 3.

The Four Walls Exercise

Each wall in a room is assigned one of the four emotions: sad, mad, glad and fear. Students stand facing a wall and try to "get into" an experience which would make them feel the emotion associated with this wall. To help them get the emotion flowing they also perform certain gestures and utter formulaic expressions associated with the emotion (see below). After a while they turn to the next wall and repeat the process with another experience and gestures for another emotion which is associated to the wall they are facing. They keep turning to different walls and repeating the same process. This goes quicker and quicker. In the beginning one needs more time to "get the emotion," but if the walls are

consistently associated with the same emotions from class to class, after a while this process can become easier and turning to a particular wall can catalyze arousal of a particular emotion.

Gestures and formulaic utterances for each of the four basic emotions:

-- for sad: Arms are stretched up, face looks up. "Come here!," "Take me!" and similar expressions are repeated. Gestures and utterances resemble a little child crying to her parents to pick her up and comfort her.

-- for mad: Gestures of grabbing something and "I take!," "It's mine!" in a loud voice. Also gestures with shoulders like trying to get somebody's hand off your shoulder and "Get off!" or "Get off my back!" It is also possible to utter curses and make appropriate gestures for cursing.

-- for glad: Arms are stretched outwards and open widely as one utters: "I give!" "I am yours!" "I love you!" "I give you everything!"

-- for fear: Arms are stretched in front like a shield, pushing something away. One utters: "Go away!," "Don't touch me!" and similar exclamations of fear and horror.

Example 4.

The Feedback Loop--which didn't work

Sam and Jean are discussing a scene they just did and are about to repeat.

Sam: "What I need is for you to help me be really mad with you! I have a problem expressing anger anyway, and when on top of that I see you sitting there like a poor ugly duckling, I instantly forget being angry and feel sympathy. You really need to help me be mad! I have to have your permission to be mad and I have to have a good reason to be mad. So make me mad!"

Jean: "I know! I want to do that, but somehow, the more I am sulky, the more you get sympathetic. So what do I have to do? I am supposed to be just scared of you and just wait it out, to go on with what I intend to be doing anyway. I am trying not to provoke you! I mean my character is trying not to provoke your character. So now you tell me to provoke you. How shall I do it, and yet look like I am trying not to do that? Is there anything in particular I can do that makes you really mad?"

Sam: "I don't know. Maybe you should laugh in my face when I try to explain to you how you hurt me"

Jean: "All right, let's try it that way."

They start the scene again, but when Jean laughs, Sam breaks out with the laughter also. Obviously, the feedback loop didn't work and it threw Sam out of his experience right away.

Example 5.

Lines:

An Excerpt from Lily's Monologue from "Smaller Heartaches" by Frank Pike (prepared for neutral)

The Legend:

Ovals:	different worlds
Line around ovals:	openness/closeness of a world
Long arrows (a-f):	paths from the world outside to the world of the character
Short arrows (a'-f'):	paths back
Shaded cross lines (A-F):	barriers and points of specific action
Long line across:	separates the world of the actor from the world of the character

NOTES

1. Valuative concepts are "classifications of . . . processes according to the value of their products, instead of according to the nature of the psychological processes involved" (Lewin, 1935:3).

2. ". . . for different individuals and for the same person at different moments of time the degree of differentiation of the life space into levels of different degrees of reality varies" (quoted in Maibaum, 1990, p. 132).

3. The concept of a "field" is Lewin's concept which describes an area or a part of the life space. In this paper, I will use the concept of a "world" in a similar way. Yet, the "world" will be used with an intention to convey an immense complexity of an area in the life space. A "world" itself consist of more than one filed.

4. It also was the main tool of Stanislavsky's "system" and Strasberg's "method."

5. Vygotsky claimed that any fictional or imaginary situation or play is based on rules. See discussion about this later.

6. This, of course has to be understood as relative to the individual or a group. Their perception is of a direct and a given experience of reality. It is the world as they perceive to be and believe to truly exist as such.

7. Notice the OBJECTIVE dimension in this use of the concept of being "real."

8. Notice the SUBJECTIVE dimension of this here use of the concept of being "real."

9. See discussion bellow. The openness of a world relates to its direct interaction with other worlds.

10. The importance of "taking things back" from a fictional world into the everyday life has to be stressed here. In Picture 1 this is represented by short arrows marked a'-f'. See discussion below on the zone of proximal development, recursiveness and the "fantasy rule" in the propositional calculus.

11. See Vygotsky's "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" in *The Psychology of Art*, 1971

12. Metacommunication is "communicating about communication" (Bateson, 1951). Giffin defines metacommunication as "communication that indicates to others how to interpret and how to respond to events. Metacommunication refers to and explicates the "psychological frame" of an interaction. (Giffin, 1984:74).

13. Someone in the class who is not "working" usually keeps the text of the play and is ready to read aloud a word or line an actor has a trouble remembering.

14. At this point I want to make clear, that the meaning of the world of the character does not have to be explicit, i.e., defined in rational terms. To say that it is a socially agreed upon meaning, implies just the fact that the character has to "make sense." But this "making sense" is multidimensional and can be interpreted in various ways by different members of the group. What matters is that the character fulfills its role in the play.