

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

European and North American cultures have sustained a long history of actor apprenticeship, but not the systematic training traditions of Eastern performance cultures, such as those of Japanese Noh theatre, Chinese Beijing Opera and Indian Kathakali. The first system of actor training in Europe and North America emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century after the Russian actor and director Konstantin Stanislavsky perceived the need to harness the actor's creativity, inspiration, and talent through the introduction of disciplined techniques. In 1906, feeling that his acting had become stale, 'he hid away in a darkened room, smoked endlessly and surrounded himself with twenty years of notebooks, ... He began a complicated and soul-searching attempt to organize formally a practical acting "system" (Merlin, 2003:19). In the light of the work of Stanislavsky and of those that followed, actor training came to be central to theatrical innovation in the twentieth century, with many of its key practitioners also being responsible for landmark productions in North American and European theatre.

This chapter begins with the exploration of Stanislavsky's system as the background or bedrock for actor training in Europe. The chapter also goes on to present an overview of two actor training techniques Lessac model (21st century) and Lee Strasberg's Method acting (20th century). The chapter would consider their theories, exercises and contributions. In addition, the chapter would also pay close attention to the differences between both techniques.

3.1 STANISLAVSKY'S SYSTEM: PATHWAYS FOR THE ACTOR

Stanislavsky's name has become omnipresent in the Western theatrical discourse because of his life-long, obsessive passion to turn the practice of acting into a system. "I believe that all masters of the arts need to write", he said "to try and systematize their art" (Filippov, 1977: 58). Stanislavsky's effort to 'systematize' his art in writing was far from easy. Acting, like riding a bicycle, is easier to do than to explain. No wonder acting is more effectively taught in classrooms than through textbooks. In order to surmount this difficulty, Stanislavsky chose to write his manuals as if they were 'the System in a novel' (Stanislavskii, 1999: 99). He thus creates a fictional classroom to portray, rather than explain, the process of acting. He introduces characters who struggle to act well and their teacher who struggles to help them. Stanislavsky puts his

characters into changing contexts which continually challenge their ideas about what it means to act. In endless Socratic dialogue, they explore the mysteries of acting, they argue their various points of view and they sometimes break through to clear understandings of their intractable art. Taken together, Stanislavsky's books and manuscripts encode a coherent and remarkably consistent set of assumptions about acting. All his exercises, techniques and interest partake of these essential ideas.

The first, most pervasive of these is Stanislavsky's holistic belief that mind, body and spirit represents a psychophysical continuum. He rejects the Western conception that divides mind from body, taking his cue from French psychologist Theodule Ribot, who believed that emotion never exists without physical consequence. Echoing Ribot's assertion that 'a disembodied emotion is a non-existent one' (Ribot, 1897: 95), Stanislavsky insists that: "in every physical action, there is something psychological, and in the psychological, something physical" (Stanislavskii, 1989: 258). In his holistic system, Stanislavsky also links spirit to the human psyche by embracing Yoga, which views the physical as a threshold into the spiritual. The 'organic connection of body and soul' is so strong, he insists, that artificial respiration revives not only flesh, but also 'the life of the spirit' (Stanislavskii, 1989: 349). For Stanislavsky, the mental and the spiritual are always imbued in physical and vice versa (Carnicke, 2008: 162). Following from the first assumption, Stanislavsky posits that physical tension is creativity's greatest enemy, not only paralyzing and distorting the beauty of the body, but also interfering with the ability to concentrate and fantasize. Performance demands a state of physical relaxation, in which the actor uses only enough muscular tension to accomplish what is necessary.

The second major assumption behind the System involves Stanislavsky's belief that successful acting places the creative act itself in the laps of the audience. By insisting on the immediacy of the performance and the presence of the actor, Stanislavsky argues against the nineteenth-century traditions, which taught actors to represent characters from the stage through carefully crafted intonations and gestures. However well-rehearsed, Stanislavskian actors remain essentially dynamic and improvisatory during performances. Stanislavsky calls such acting (which 'is cultivated in our theatre and mastered here in our school') 'experiencing' (stanislavskii, 1989: 59). Stanislavsky relates 'experiencing' to states of mind that seem more familiar: 'inspiration', 'creative moods', the activation of the 'subconscious'. He compares it to

sensation of existing fully within the immediate moment- what is referred to as ‘moment-to-moment’ work. He describes the state as ‘happy’, but ‘rare’, when the actor is ‘seized’ by the role (Stanislavskii, 1993: 363). Following from the second assumption, Stanislavsky designs the whole System to foster ‘experiencing’. From a practical point of view, the system suggests specific techniques that help actors develop a state of mind and body that encourages ‘experiencing’. Stanislavsky believes that this ‘sense of self’ (as he calls it) provides the ‘soil’ (stanislavskii, 1989: 95, 265) from which the role can grow.

In conclusion, throughout his career, Stanislavsky believed that there are three basic drivers behind creativity: ‘mind’ (for analysis and understanding), ‘will’ (for control) and ‘feeling’ (which foster passionate and zestful relationships with the characters we create). At various times, both in classrooms and rehearsal halls, he focused on one or another of these drivers. The successful actor, by whatever path, arrives always at the same place, where mind, will and feeling together produce a satisfying performance. ‘How astounding a creation is our nature!’ he writes. ‘How everything in it is bound together, blended, and interdependent!’ like a ‘harmonious’ musical cord, in which one false note creates disharmony, all elements of the system work together (Stanislavskii, 1991: 314).

The System’s technique suggests various pathways for actors to follow as they strive towards successful performances. In choosing a path, each actor reinvents and personalizes the System. This reinterpretation and adaptation is exactly what Stanislavsky hoped to inspire in actors. He hated the dogmatic teachers who insist on a single correct way. Thus, in his last years he advised his students that:

The System is a guide. Open and read. The System is a handbook, not a philosophy.

The moment when the System begins to become a philosophy is its end. Examine the System at home, but forget about it when on stage. You can’t play the System.

There is no System. There is only nature. My lifelong concern has been how to get ever closer to the nature of creativity (Stanislavskii, 1990: 371)

The history of actor training from the twentieth- century onwards can be seen as a series of explorations, inspired by Stanislavsky’s guide, and each probing a different pathway into the actor’s unique creativity as a performer.

3.2 LEE STRASBERG: 'THE METHOD'

It has been established that Stanislavsky's 'System' brought about a change in western acting, however, many acting teachers used the System as a foundation to build their techniques. One of such people is Lee Strasberg.

Lee Strasberg (1901- 1982) was an actor, director and of course an acting teacher. He dropped out of high school, worked in a shop that made hairpieces, drifted into the theatre via a settlement house company and his life shaping revelation when Stanislavsky brought his Moscow Art theatre to the United States in 1923. Strasberg had seen good acting before, of course, but never an ensemble like this with actors completely surrendering their egos to work. "He observed, first of all, that all the actors, whether they were playing leads or small parts, worked with the same commitment and intensity. No actors idled about posing and preening (or thinking about where they might dine after the performance). More important, every actor seemed to project some sort of unspoken, yet palpable, inner life for his or her character. This was acting of a sort that one rarely saw on the American Stage... where there was little stress on the psychology of the characters or their interactions... Strasberg was galvanized. He knew that his on future as an actor- he was a slight and unhandsome man- was limited. But he soon perceived that as a theoretician and teacher of this new 'System' it might become a major force in the American theatre". Strasberg began to study with students of Stanislavsky at the American Laboratory Theatre. His focus was on Affective Memory- the idea that an actor could live the emotions of a character by tapping into their own memories and channeling a similar emotion. In 1931, Strasberg along with Harold Clurman and Cheryl Crawford, co-founded the Group Theatre (Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner joined Group theatre). In 1951, Strasberg became the director of the non-profit Actor's Studio in New York- considered the "nation's most prestigious acting school". In 1969, he founded the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in New York. Strasberg trained some very well know actors like: Dustin Hoffman, James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Paul Newman, Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro and Elia Kazan.

3.3 METHOD ACTING

Method Acting began in the United States at the American Laboratory Theatre around 1923 to 1926. The group was committed to a theatre that stressed social protest, moral and ethical

concerns and political activism. Hence, 'method acting' emerged as a technique that drew from Stanislavsky's emphasis on the craft of acting, and accentuated working on a role that called upon the actor to build from his or personal life and political ideals. According to Harold Clurman, the 'method' as it is commonly called is 'an abbreviation of the term "Stanislavsky Method"'. The 'Method' itself, Clurman adds, is a 'means of training actors as well as a technique for the use of actors in their work on parts' (1994: 369). Like Stanislavsky's System, Method acting codifies acting exercises, rehearsal techniques and working procedures, with the intention of helping actors achieve greater persuasiveness, feeling and depth. The Method combines Stanislavsky's techniques and the work of his pupil Eugene Vakhtangov for the purpose of understanding and effectively performing a role. The 'Method' like Stanislavsky's System, wanted to see both human beings as having depth, and the actor as a complex psychological being who generated layers of meaning in performance which lie beyond easy comprehension.

Method acting evolved from the ensemble techniques and the collective rehearsal procedures developed by group actors, providing the company with a practical and theoretical grounding that differed considerably from the acting systems in the American theatre at that time. Stanislavsky's and Vakhtangov's work on the actor's 'inner life' was part of the group's working procedures. Instead of the star system, ensemble work was emphasized; instead of rely on inspiration alone, group actors were trained to evoke specific emotions and actions; instead of mannerisms, group actor developed an unassuming natural stage presence; and instead of grandiose theatricality, group actors stressed real behavior in performance. Robert Lewis explains that real behavior on stage must be

'really experienced, but artistically controlled, and correctly used for the particular character portrayed, the complete circumstances of the scene, and the chosen style of the author and the play being performed' (1958:99).

For the group, 'indicating' emotions and feelings were replaced by actual 'felt' experiences; inspiration and craft 'were not mutually exclusive' (Smith, 1990: 38); and actors would experience their roles by observing and living the lives of their characters. Stella Adler explained, the 'group theatre contributed a standard of acting that transformed the American theatre' (1976: 512).

According to Hodge quoting Krasner, method acting has ten basic principles:

1. The actor must justify every word, action and relationship on stage. The actor moves and speaks spontaneously, but everything is thought out during rehearsals to ensure the maximum emphasis on *motivation*.
2. In finding the character's motivation, actors search for *objectives*, *actions* and *intentions*. Actors discover the character's *super-objective*, or 'spine', that motivates all the actions on stage.
3. The character's super-objective must have *urgency*: every action and objective must have immediacy ('how badly you want the objective, and what consequences will occur if you do not attain it?'). This includes creating *obstacles* that prevent easy access to achieving the objective. The work on urgency must emerge from *relaxation*, *concentration* and the *creative selection* (choices) of objectives.
4. To support the objective, the actor creates *subtext* or thought processes that motivate the character's actions. Every word in a play has underlying, non-verbal base which informs and supports the playwright's written word. The playwright's words serve as a surface blueprint; the subtext supplies the role's interior definition.
5. In finding the subtext of the role, the actor rejects generalization, emphasizing instead the specific *given circumstances* of the play, everything from period style and social fashion to the way a character behaves lives and relates with other characters and situations.
6. In defining the given circumstances, actors behave as if they are living in the situation of the play. In doing so, the actor must bring his or her *imagination* into focus, *particularizing* creative choices that will enhance the text and flesh out compelling ideas that lurk beneath the words.
7. An emphasis on *truthful behavior*; feelings must never be 'indicated'. Rather, the actor works from his or passions or emotions, which is often referred to in Method acting as working from the 'inside out'. Method acting director and former member of the Group theatre, Elia Kazan, building on Vakhtangov's theories, wrote that for method actors, experience on stage 'must be actual not suggested by external imitation; the actor must be going through what the character is playing is going through; the emotion must be real, not pretended; it must be happening not indicated' (1988: 143).
8. To accomplish the experience of real feelings, the actor works *moment-to-moment* on *impulse*, talking and listening as if the events on stage are actually happening in the

immediate present. In Method acting, characterization is not fixed, but a fluid and spontaneous response to events on stage. Strasberg explains that:

The actor has to know what he is going to do when he goes on the stage, and yet has to permit himself to do it so that it seems to happen for the first time. This means that the body, the voice, every facet of expression, must follow the natural changes in impulse; even though the actor repeats, the strength of the impulses may very well change from day to day (1965: 167).

9. Rehearsals require *improvising* on the dramatic text- gibberish, paraphrasing or repetition exercises- encouraging the actor's personal interpretation and investment, thereby freeing the actor from a dependency on words.
10. Finally, the actor *personalizes* the role, i.e. draws from self, from his or her emotional, psychological or imaginative reality, bringing into view aspects of one's memories, life experiences and observations that correlate with the role.

Lee Strasberg developed a number of approaches to acting, but three aspects of his work stand out: relaxation, concentration and affective memory. For Strasberg, the fundamental effect of the actor must be directed towards the 'training of his internal skills' through a process of 'relaxation and concentration' (1987: 116). This dual process of relaxation and concentration leads performers to personalization, what Strasberg's student Kim Stanley explains as finding 'things in yourself that you can use' (quoted in Gussow 1982). Strasberg's theory of the Method is predicated on 'procedure, not a series of rules to be applied specifically' (Hull, 1985: 18). For Strasberg, there is no one way into a role; each presents its own problems to be studied and solved. But above all, Strasberg described an actor as 'one who can create out of himself' (1965: 81). To do this, the performer must 'appeal to the unconscious and the subconscious'. Arriving at the state of creativity requires the 'presence of something that stirs the actor subconsciously' (1965: 82). Strasberg defines the main feature of his teaching:

Let's say the actor learns to relax and concentrate. He learns to arouse his imagination, which is his belief in the reality and logic of what he is doing; but then we find that the actor's expression of these things is weak. Often we see things going on inside that we can't come out – the face contracts, the eyes contract – the emotion isn't let through. The actor feels at times like crying but he can't cry he can't uncurl the muscles to permit tears to flow. Such strong conditioning has been created against the expression of

emotion. I would say that I have experimented with the whole problem of freeing the expression of the actor (1968: 123).

For Strasberg, freeing the expression begins with relaxation and concentration. David Garfield observes that to facilitate relaxation, 'Strasberg has the actor sit in a chair and proceed to find a position in which, if he had to, he could fall asleep' (1980:169). The actor must relax before the audience, something not easy to do. Of particular importance is the relaxation of the jaw. As feelings of relaxation increase and emotions stir, Garfield explains that the actor 'opens his throat and permits a sound from deep in the chest to come out, to make sure the emotion is not blocked' (1980: 168). The actor continues to emit sounds that help release tension and free creative expression.

In developing concentration, Strasberg emphasizes a series of sense-memory exercises. Sense memory is the stimulation of senses (tactile, taste, olfactory, auditory and visual). The actor recalls important events in their life, and then tries to remember only the sensual facets; touch, taste, sight, etc. The ability to recall senses stimulates the body rather than the mind, giving the actor greater visceral awareness and experience. In sense-memory exercises, the actor begins by handling imaginary objects. Actors recreate drinking coffee, shaving or other daily activities. The point is not merely to mime the activity, but to find the psychological motivation, underlying the experience. Garfield is clear on this: 'the ultimate range of imaginary objects that a performer must create on stage is enormous. It may include physical objects, overall sensations, mental or fantasy objects, situations, events, relationships and other characters'. If the actor is to fulfill the obligations of the role, Garfield asserts, 'he must be well grounded in the simplest sense-memory work' (1980: 170). By 'grounded' Garfield means that the actor does not merely create an object, but invests in the object a personal history.

In Strasberg's private moment, the actor lives out their 'private moment' before a class audience. Private is the literal performance of an activity that one does in private. According to Doug Moston, it was developed by Strasberg in 1956 and 1957 'to aid actor in creating the ability to behave in a truly private fashion while being observed by an audience' (1993:93). In being private in public, the actor frees inhibitions. Foster Hirsch explains that because private moment is an exercise rather than a performance, it 'releases the actor from any obligation to a text or to an audience' (1984: 136). Working from private experience, the actor is free, as Strasberg puts it,

‘to sit before us, to smell an aroma, not to do anything physical, but to focus only to what you’re doing with your concentration’ (quoted in Hirsch 1984: 137).

Strasberg’s most controversial exercise is affective memory, developed by combining Stanislavsky’s early work on Pavlovian training, Vakhtangov’s work on performative emotions, and the work of psychologist Theodule Ribot. Its purpose is to release emotions on stage. Strasberg states:

The basic idea of affective memory is not emotional recall but the actor’s emotion on stage should never be really real. It always should be only *remembered* emotions. An emotion that happens right now spontaneously is out of control- you don’t know what’s going to happen from it, and the actor can’t always maintain or repeat it. Remembered emotion is something that the actor can create or repeat: without that the thing is hectic (1994: 132).

For Strasberg, affective memory ‘is the basic element of actor’s reality (1964: 131). In particular, it draws out the emotions from the past that are ingrained in one’s mind and body, rather than what Strasberg identifies as the merely ‘literal’ or indicated, interpretation from the text (1964: 131; 1965: 112). Edward Easty explains that by

Having a ‘repertoire’ of emotional experiences, the actor can call forth, at the proper time, the desires one needed for the character. The broader his ‘repertoire’, the greater the resources for creativeness and the greater the number of roles he will be able to act (1981: 456).

Although it usually begins as an attempt to evoke emotions appropriate to the circumstances of the play, the emotion might appear in a somewhat different fashion, since, as Strasberg explains, ‘the emotional value of the experience may have changed’. However, by attempting a lot of affective memories, the actor would gradually obtain a stock of memories that are permanent and become easier to invoke as he continues to use them’ (1965: 111). In affective memory, the actor is completely relaxed. Then the performer tries to recall, as Lewis describes it, ‘some events in your past which you think might stir up some feeling usable for the problem in your scene, preferably from the distant past’ (1980: 126). The operative word here is ‘problem’, since the performer is having difficulty in coming to terms with feelings required for the scene. The actor

is not trying to force emotions; rather, they recall the event by remembering all the sensations that occurred at the time: smells, tastes, sounds, sights and tactile sensations. The actor relies on memories to trigger the emotion.

Wendy Smith provides a detailed explanation of affective memory. The actor concentrates on an incident from their own life that produced the desired emotion. However:

The actor [does not] try to recall the feeling directly, but rather to re-experience the sensory impressions surrounding it; the size of the room it happened in, the colour of the walls, the fabric on the furniture, the time of the day, how the people there were dressed, what they looked like, and so on. Then the actor went over the exact sequence on the events, concentrating on recreating as precisely as possible the physical reality of the moment. When done properly with a strong situation, the exercise almost invariably brought the emotion flooding back to the present. The actor could then play the scene with the appropriate feeling (1990: 38).

Strasberg explains 'that an actor who masters the technique of using affective memory begins to be more alive in the present' (quoted in Hirsch 1984: 141). Affective memory is simply one way of calling up the passions that help the actor play a role. It is not as Collin Counsell would have it, effective merely for 'sad' or unhappy events (1996: 58). Rather, it is one way to evoke *all feelings* correlative to the events in the scene. Strasberg pursued a stage reality that brought forth feelings from the actor. Critics of affective memory seldom understand its purpose: it is an exercise to be used in practice and rehearsal. In other words, it is a *rehearsal technique* that allows the actor to find the emotional triggers that set off appropriate feelings. Strasberg sums up the exercise's purpose in the following:

Affective memory is the basic material for reliving on the stage, and therefore for the creation of a real experience on stage. What the actor repeats in performance after performance are not just the words and movements he practiced in rehearsal, but the memory of emotion. He reaches this emotion through the memory of thought and sensation (1987: 113).

Strasberg never denied the importance of voice, physicality or script analysis. But for him, the actor must purge the sense of 'performing and find believability'. The emphasis on emotion and credible behavior was, for Strasberg, a process of required actor training.

3.4 ARTHUR LESSAC: 'KINESENSIC TRAINING'

Another prominent American who gave a new definition to actor training is Arthur Lessac (1909-2011). Since the early 1930's, Arthur Lessac has been investigating how the human body and voice function naturally and instinctively. As a scholarship student of voice at the Eastman school of music (1932- 36) and voice and speech education at New York University (B.A., '41), his awareness began of the shortcomings of traditional voice training and he began experimenting with new techniques for what he called "organic instruction". He incorporated his explorations into his private teaching and applied them to his work as a vocal coach and dialogue director for several New York productions, beginning with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Unions' Production of Pins and Needles in 1937, a production that had 1,108 performances and became the longest-running Broadway musical at that time. In 1945, he founded and directed the National Academy of Vocal Arts (NAVA) employing a staff of twenty-one teachers until he left to pursue private teaching in 1950. NAVA provided a valuable laboratory for the further development of the ideas that would become Lessac Kinesensic Training. In 1951, he became the voice and speech teacher at the Stella Adler theatre studio and began teaching at the Jewish Theological seminary, an association which would last for twenty years. In 1952 he enrolled in NYU, received his Masters of Science degree the next year in voice- speech clinical therapy, and continued his doctoral work throughout the rest of the decade. In addition to further study in speech and voice education, he investigated clinical therapy extensively, in such subjects as speech pathology, physiology, and psychology. He studied anatomy and neurology at Bellevue Hospital and did a clinical internship at St. Vincent's Hospital, as well as studied at a psychoanalytical institute for one year. Lessac found that his ideas were beginning to form a unified and systematic method of training. He gained insight into the use of the voice and the body, a philosophy of total communication that grew naturally out of his concept of speech and voice as an inner physical action. In order to explore the implications of his work, he established the Lessac institute for Voice and Speech in 1965 and began writing his ideas for a teaching text. In 1960, Lessac privately published the first edition of *The Use and*

Training of the Human Voice I a printing of 600 for the use of his students. Within ten years the Lessac Kinesensic Training had been adopted in over sixty universities and colleges in the United States and abroad. In 1978, his second book Body Wisdom was published. This book completes a full statement of Lessac's research, training and development. Lessac had given so many lectures on many important events; he had also received numerous awards for his outstanding researches and works. In his final years, he was an acting member in the Voice and Speech Trainer's Association; Association for Theatre in Higher Education; Speech Communication Association; American Speech and Hearing Association; American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; and Association of Theatre Movement Educators. His main focus included research in extending and expanding the open-ended nature of this body of training into three body NRGs: Love, Spirit and Soul. He hopes these three NRGs would help people find peace, health and wellness within themselves, their communities and the world.

3.5 KINESENSIC TRAINING

Lessac's work relies on what he calls muscular flexibility of the cheeks, and consonants contract as they resonate against her bones. Lessac states that his training "is based on recognition and consequent control of physical behavior patterns naturally produced when the body as a whole is functioning most efficiently". (1969: 119). Lessac coined the term "Kinesensic" for his practice and defines it as "an intrinsic sensing process in which energy qualities are physically felt and perceived, then tuned and used for creative expression" (1996: 3). When asked how he created the word "Kinesensic", Lessac revealed his process:

I always knew that there were words within words. I see that I had been working with kinesthetic, kinesics, kinetics- and they are all "kine". So, "kine" means motion. Everything I was doing was motion, even of the speech and voice. To get the very essence of our work means to feel it and to feel it differently than others think they've accomplished in feeling. In fact, many people think they are feeling when they are it through the thought process. I see "essence", which means to get the very bottom of it. Then you've got the word "sense" [which] means "feeling"! So I've got something that uses nothing but motion and something that gets to the very essence and

core. So, there is “Kinesensic” and “sic” means to get back to it as often as possible. So, “Kinesensic”! (9 March 2008).

Kinesensic training involves ongoing discovery of the significant core of sensation of the voice and body as they synergize. The body determines meaning from these perceptions and the actor develops her voice and movement with them and not by copying someone else (Hurt, 2014: 2).

The kinesensic awareness otherwise called the “feeling process” combines movement, feeling, the very depth of feelings and a continuous process of learning towards the discovery and rediscovery of impulses and reactions (Hurt, 2014: 2). According to Lessac, feeling good with one’s self starts from the inside; an actor should never depend on his external environment to make him feel good. Lessac advises the actor to allow the body teach him what it knows. An actor should not allow the problems of his external environment to poison his inner mind; instead he should rely on his body because his body knows what it needs. By listening to his body and answering his needs, he begins to feel better about himself. It is this state of internal being that shows in his physical expressions (Hurt, 2014: 3).

Lessac’s voice and speech work consists of three energies felt in the oral cavity: consonants, tone and structural vowels. Consonant energy “sharpens the perception and expression of the individual qualities of the consonants by an association of the physical sensations of each one with a different instrument of the orchestra” (1969: 120). The actor develops the quality of her consonants by feeling the inherent musicality of them that she discovers within, thus, investing her creative spirit in her skill acquisition. Lessac brings the actor to feel the musicality of her speech by incorporating a musical metaphor for the consonants in which he names each consonant sound with a musical instrument (Hurt, 2014: 2). Master teacher Deborah Kinghorn explains,

“The musical metaphor gives us a point of reference for the differences between consonants: not all drums sound alike, strings have different qualities. Our exploration is to find those nuances and distinctions within ourselves, first by connecting with the musicality, then developing that musicality within ourselves” (20 May 2013).

Tonal energy “is the physical perception and control of sound waves through vibratory sensation rather than through the manipulation of the breath stream” (Lessac, 1969: 120). The actor develops her vocal tone through experimenting with the quality of vocal vibration and sensation on the bony surfaces of her oral cavity, namely the upper gum ridge and the hard palate, and beyond into the forehead and cranium. Lessac teaches “they could be felt as vibrations transmitted through the hard palate, the nasal bone, the sinuses, and the forehead” (Lessac, 1969: 120). Structural energy “is the perception of certain muscle sensations and the kinesthetic memories of these sensations to establish a flexible, yet specific, form of oral cavity, which is the vocal sound box” (Lessac, 1969: 119). The actor attunes with the movement of her cheek muscles and, with the soft palate, they create what Lessac calls the “reverse megaphone”. Structural energy creates eleven diluted vowel and vowel diphthongs that have a specific lip opening shape and /or size. (Hurt, 2014: 3)

Lessac’s explorations involve what he calls “intrinsic active meditation” through which the actor maintains ongoing awareness of their inner happenings of a voice, speech, or movement explorations. The actor becomes aware of her body’s tactile and kinesthetic sensations while psychologically learning how to enrich vocal tone, resonance and articulation with optimal breathing, posture and attention of the body’s inherent rhythms for movement (Hurt, 2014: 3).

In Lessac training, an actor employs the feeling process to trust in natural uses of the body and voice, as opposed to imitating an imagined standard:

The artist must have the knowing and the feeling of how the body’s systems work and how its creative instrumentalities function. He or she can have the technical knowledge of [the] fundamentals [of inner intelligence and experience] but can understand them organically and vitally only by physically experiencing the feeling while at the very same time behaviorally feeling the experience (1996: 1).

Lessac’s concept of “organic” means that the actor has discovered her body’s functioning based on a standard established by the teacher that the actor would try to imitate. Instead, the trainer teaches the markers of the voice, speech, and the body discipline and bears witness to the actor’s self-discovery so the actor eventually self- teaches by identifying the qualities of the work and recreating them afresh. The actor finds herself involved through her tactile and kinesthetic senses

when she experiences the feeling of her voice, speech, and body in movement. Her tactile sense awakens her to the quality of what she feels and where she feels it. Her kinesthetic sense attunes her to the balance and rhythm of vocal and physical movements. This felt sense of rhythm brings the actor to accomplishing musicality in her speaking. Moreover, the actor becomes more self-aware and grounded throughout her training because of her continual focus on how she feels what she does. (Hurt, 2014: 6)

Lessac goes further to explain how the body works and how the actor moves from the “comfortable natural zone” to the “natural zone”. “Comfortable natural zone” occurs from habit patterned conditionings while the “natural zone” occurs when the body-response is not subject to habit-patterned functioning. (Benson, Speech and rhetorical arts note: 2014/2015 session). According to Hurt (2014: 13), “at the heart of actor training, the actor must get to know herself on a psychological level and bridge the imaginary gap popularly taught to her between body and mind”. There is a deep need for an actor or a performer to understand how her body works and this understanding leads to the control of the operation of his voice and speech. This helps in exploring the organs of the actor’s body in effective communication, without losing the intended message, sounds and meaning she hopes to pass across to her audience. Every actor must be able to speak in a distinct manner. Lessac explains these four concepts as integral to ‘vocal life’ actor training:

1. Body esthetics
 2. Inner harmonic sensing
 3. Organic instruction
 4. The “familiar event” principle
- Body esthetics is the study of the nature of sensation. Anything that promotes sensitivity and induces awareness of a sensation is an esthetic (a body esthetic), and anything that deadens sensitivity and deadens awareness or perception of sensation is anesthetic (a body anesthetic). Heaviness, floppiness, tightness, strain, flabbiness etc. are called Anesthetic. The counterpart of all these for effective communication are balance, comportment, feeling inner rhythm, vibration and body flexibility.
 - Inner harmonic sensing according to the vocal technique, the human sensing system functions in more than hearing, sighting, touching, tasting and smelling; which are the basic five functions of fundamental sensing. The sixth one is through the inner harmonic sensing. Just as musical instruments produce inner harmony, so does the five senses

produce harmonic off-spring. This outer fundamental registers it internally thereby transmitting and creating new dynamics, essences, intelligence, producing its individual resonance, reflection, vibration, images and movement through innate kinesensic feeling process.

- Organic instruction is more of consciously perceiving the body's movement from inside out. It is a physicalized experience. It is a more of self- teaching method. A non-organic instruction is throw your voice to the farthest roll in the theatre as Lessac said; you cannot throw your voice out of your own body, your voice can only resonate and vibrate within the body.
- Familiar events prompt organic instruction. Through familiar events, one can achieve organic instruction. Since this process is an individual one, the actors train themselves in relation to a familiar occurrence (Benson, Speech and rhetorical arts note, 2014/ 2015 session).

Lessac's kinesensic identifies simple but efficient natural behaviors of the body (familiar events) which become very good organic instructions for creating improvements in voice, or physical abilities resulting in a more healthy and enjoyable life. He identified four body energies (NRG'S) types which can be found in our inner environment and they include; Potency, Radiancy, Buoyancy and inter-involvement. Energy here according to Lessac can be described as the invisible current that connects the actor to the audience. It is internal, intangible and not related to muscular energy. It is the reason behind all movements and actions (1969:121)

1. Buoyancy NRG is the type of energy state which deals with fluidity, ease, grace and flexibility. In this energy state, we feel as if we are weightless and then floating.
Buoyancy is the energy state in which we experience the absence of weight, as if the body was filled up with oxygen and was lighter than air. It feels like an active relaxation different to the type of relaxation in which we feel the body as heavy and sluggish (Oliveira, 2006: 413).
2. Radiancy is another energy state characterized by alertness, excitement, spontaneity and anticipation. This is a state commonly found in children. It usually starts as a vibration in one part of the body which then spreads gradually to the other parts in a subtle or

sophisticated way. It is electrifying. Radiancy NRG awakens the muscles and ‘gives life to muscular activity’ thereby ‘eliminating the feeling of indolence and lack of motivation’ (Oliveira, 2006: 14).

3. Potency is the ‘energy that produces the sensation of muscular power’ (Oliveira, 2006:415). This energy state gives new life and awakens the body from a state of inactivity. It gives us strength and power. A familiar event for this is the “extension of the arms and legs with a yawn that revitalizes the body, extending and relaxing the muscles” (Oliveira, 2006: 415).
4. Inter-involvement is defined as ‘the mutual exchange of energy between living entities’ (Lessac and Kinghorn, 2014: 100). This energy state combines the other energies discussed above in a bid to communicate with the external environment ‘without being conscious of the use he makes of his energy states’:

Inter-involvement could be compared to involvement of an actor with the given circumstances that define the situation of his character and influence or justify his behavior, or with the way the actor shares his playing with his colleagues and the audience (Oliveira, 2006: 418).

It is important to note that all the different energy (NRG) qualities are rarely used to the exclusion of others. They cannot be used in isolation either during real or performance situations. They are inter-woven in nature.

3.6 A COMPARISON BETWEEN BOTH ACTOR TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Method acting by Lee Strasberg relies on inspiration alone because the actors are trained to evoke specific emotions and actions instead of a feeling process which Lessac technique provides. For Strasberg, the fundamental effect of the actor must be directed towards the training of his internal skills through a process of relaxation, concentration and imagination. Strasberg develops this through his exercises which help in the “stimulation of the senses” as he calls it (Hodge, 2013: 147). Lessac on the other hand does not just focus on the training of the actor through the mind or to evoke any emotional feelings of any kind; instead the Kinesensic training relies on what he calls the “the feeling process” (Hurt, 2014: 2). This kinesensic feeling process is an intrinsic sensing process. It is a neuro-physical sensing process which helps actors to understand their body, voice, speech emotions and how to process performances.

One striking similarity between both actors training technique is that there are no series of rules applied specifically. Method acting is predicated on procedure rather than a series of rules. For Strasberg, there is no one way into a role, each presents its own problems to be studied and solved (Hull, 1985: 18). For Lessac however, the actor is fully aware and in control of the movements of all the body muscles, signals and impulses that are naturally produced when the body as a whole is functioning most efficiently (Hurt, 2014: 2). This implies that there are no rules applied to this technique it only requires total dedication from the actor. An actor can achieve effective results of the kinesensic awareness through constant practice and commitment to the process.

Method acting focuses more on the training and development of the mind of the actor for effective character realization. This Strasberg achieved through the help of his exercises such as sense memory which is the stimulation of the senses; private moment which is the literal performance of an activity that one does in private and affective memory which is the basic element of the actor's reality (Strasberg, 1964: 131). All these have to do with mostly the training of the mind and emotions. Lessac kinesensic however encompasses all aspects of the actors life i.e. it covers the actor's voice, speech, body work etc. it is a tasting, sensing and feeling process. It is a comprehensive and creative approach to developing the voice and the body in a holistic way, resulting in a greater flexibility and power and improved expressiveness and communication (Hurt, 2014:2). This implies that the kinesensic process isn't just limited to one aspect of actor training instead; it is an all-round actor training technique.

Both actor training techniques aim at avoiding cliché acting and performances. For method acting, one of the essential principles of Method acting states that:

The actor personalizes the role, i.e. draws from the self, from his or her emotional, psychological or imaginative reality, bringing into view aspects of one's memories, life experiences and observations that correlate with the role (Hodge, 2013: 146).

This means that the actor's character development and realization is personal i.e. his motivation comes from his own personal life experience. It also implies that the actor channels his past emotions into a similar situation of the character he or she is playing. This therefore makes it

difficult for any two actors to have the same response or reaction to the same character portrayal or given situation. Strasberg's affective memory was introduced to solve this problem. Affective memory 'is the basic element of the actor's reality' (Strasberg, 1964: 131). In particular it draws out the emotions from the past that are ingrained in one's mind and body, rather than what Strasberg identifies as the merely 'literal', or indicated, interpretation from the text (Strasberg, 1963, 131). Also since Lessac's Kinesensic training is based on the 'notion of self-knowledge', it is almost impossible for two actors to have the same character portrayal. Lessac work requires a living body; the presence of that individual is needed since such actor needs to go through the experience. It also privileges quality over quantity of experience derived from curiosity, motivation and total commitment towards the learning process. This quality of experience avoids the actor's use of 'mechanistic understanding of human actions' i.e. avoiding the usual way of doing things. The actor is unable to rely on his intelligence or his techniques but rather on his intuitions (Oliveira, 2006: 411-412). This also means that the actor through the help of Lessac's Kinesensic training becomes aware of his body and its needs rather than drawing up past emotions and feelings like the method actors do. However, both techniques try to strike out and avoid cliché acting and stock mannerisms

For versatility, Lessac's Kinesensic training helps actors to remain extremely versatile as no two characters can be the same. Lessac's introduction of the four body NRGs i.e. buoyancy, radiancy, potency and inter-involvement helps efficiently for an actor to switch personalities almost immediately as long as he or she listens and adheres to the instructions of the body (organic instruction). Method acting on the other hand, actor find it difficult to switch with immediacy from one role to another because it takes the actors longer time to move from one state to another. This is because these actors exert so much energy into drawing up emotions from their mind's repertoire in order to portray a given role. In other words, Lessac's technique gives more room for versatility than method acting does. 'The idea of method acting is that an actor could live the emotions of a character by tapping into his own memories and channeling a similar emotion' (Hodge, 2013: 147). Critics have however questioned the efficacy of method acting in a situation whereby the actor cannot find a similar memory that he could channel to the given situation or the role he is playing; what exactly would happen to the actor and the performance? This proves the credibility of Lessac's Kinesensic process.

Strasberg's Method acting exercises focuses more on the imagination i.e. the mind of the actor and it is his mind that prompts his actions or motivates him thus however leads to the neglecting of other aspects of the training. Lessac's Kinesensic awareness on the other hand explores exercises that are more rounded which aims at developing all aspects of actor training process.