

The Concept of Acting School in the German-Speaking Sphere in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Asuka Yamazaki

Abstract

During the first half of the nineteenth century in the German-speaking sphere, theater gradually intensified its function as a moral institution in civil society and contributed to strengthening the national identity of the German people. The actors' role in national enlightenment was also intensified. This paper deals with the concept of an acting school advocated by influential figures like Edward Devrient (1801-1877), Karl Gutzkow (1811-1878), and Heinrich Theodor Röscher (1803-1871). From the viewpoint of theater history and contemporary artistic discussions, it investigates the idea and function of such acting schools by focusing on the image of actors educated by the academic system to become ideal models for the nation. The concept of acting school was connected to the school system and to school politics in Germany, because the establishment and reorganization of public education had progressed especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, and national education became one of the primary purposes of the state. The concept of theater school contributed not only to the progressively changing awareness of actors as artists, but also functioned to structuralize actors into a new national theater system, in order to evoke the national emotion and identity of audiences and to unify the people nationally through actors' superior acting methods.

Introduction

Denis Diderot, the French philosopher of the second half of the eighteenth century, described contemporary actors in his essay *The Paradox of Acting* (*Paradoxe sur le comédien*, written 1773-1777, publication in 1830) which thematized the performance methods of actors:

Why is that they can now wear clogs or buskins? Lack of education, poverty, and debauchery. The theater is a resource, not a choice. Never had they made themselves comedians for the taste for virtue, for the desire to be useful in society and to serve their country or their family, for any honest reasons that may cause a right spirit, a warm heart, a sensitive soul to such a fine profession.

(Qu'est-ce qui leur chausse le socque ou le cothurne? Le défaut d'éducation, la misère et le libertinage. Le théâtre est une ressource, jamais un choix. Jamais on ne se fit comédien par goût pour la vertu, par le désir d'être utile dans la société et de servir son pays ou sa famille, par aucun des motifs honnêtes qui pourraient entraîner un esprit droit, un cœur chaud, une

âme sensible vers une aussi belle profession. 1992, 138)¹

Diderot sees actors and actresses as immoral and debaucherous outsiders. Since the beginning of the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth century, French theater was incorporated into governmental cultural policy and functioned to both deify sovereignty and enlighten the people. Under the advanced theater policies of the Baroque Period in France, the social standing of actor troupes, which consisted of lower classes, such as vagabonds, was gradually increasing; however, in the modern age of Diderot, they were still subject to discrimination and looked down upon by the people as uncivil and emotional, and their professional status as artists was still low, unlike other artists such as musicians or painters.

In Germany, people followed the theater situation in France and established national theaters in the larger cities, including Hamburg, although the situation for actors was the same. It is well known that Goethe, who was manager and director of the Weimar Royal Court Theater, wrote a guidebook called *Rules for Actors* (*Regeln für Schauspieler*, 1803), which taught actors not only proper social conduct, but also the ideal way of being as public person who assimilates into civil society. Goethe says, “The actor should also consider in everyday life, that he will be seen as a public art show” (Der Schauspieler soll auch im gemeinen Leben bedenken, daß er öffentlich zur Kunstschau stehen werde. Goethe 1998, 879). Especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, during the expansion of the theatrical population, the theater reform movement rose up because of the leadership of the educated class. Theater steadily intensified its function as a moral institution in civil society, and contributed to strengthening the national identity of the people. In this close relation between theater and society, while actors’ role in national enlightenment was intensified, their social standing and influence on the people also increased. Under such an institutionalization of theater and the expansion of actors’ influence, important people in the theatrical circles advocated the founding of an acting school or academy as part of their concept of German theater reform: for example, the writer and journalist Moritz Gottlieb Saphir (1840); the actor and manager of the Royal Court Theater of Karlsruhe, Eduard (Phillip) Devrient (1840); the writer and dramatist Carl Gutzkow (1846); and the drama critic Heinrich Theodor Röttscher (1848). The opera composer Richard Wagner (1872) also proposed a concept for an acting school.

Considering this modernization of the theater system in the German-speaking sphere in the first half of the nineteenth century, this paper deals with each concept of an acting school and academy advocated by those major persons in Devrient, Gutzkow, and Röttscher. From the viewpoint of theater history and contemporary artistic discussions, it investigates the idea and function of such acting schools by focusing on the image of actors educated by the academic system to become ideal models for the nation. Also, the concept of acting school in connection with the school system in Germany at that time will be examined, because the establishment and reorganization of public education progressed especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, and national education became the purpose of the state. Then, it will take into consideration how the theatrical concepts of these three men affected the founding of acting schools and later explain

the necessity of establishing acting schools from different viewpoints, since what the above authors advocated for depended on their respective social positions as an actor, playwright, and drama critic.

The Idea and Necessity of Acting School

The concepts of acting schools advocated by Devrient, Gutzkow, and Röttscher were written at a time in the first half of the nineteenth century when German theater reform was widely progressing. In this reform, the idea of a national theater was advanced to insulate from the influence of the court and to be transparently managed at public expense under the administration of the state. The theater was meant to have a democratic and public character with references to public opinion. While this theatrical reorganization was intensified after the revolution of March 1848, not only did the function of theater as a national educational institution develop, but also were more and more sophisticated actors engaged in national enlightenment required. In the context of this trend throughout the theatrical world, Devrient wrote his essay *On Acting School. A Communication to the Theater Audience. (Ueber Theaterschule. Eine Mittheilung an das Theaterpublikum)*. As a reason for why it was necessary to establish an acting school, Devrient emphasizes that the actor then received affirmative social recognition due to the expansion of theater culture in the preceding fifty years in Germany:

The greatest minds have shared their interest, their stage activity, all circles of society are open to actors, and the suspicions that were in moral and religious relationship to the once marginal stage, the people still hearing them only from a few isolated circuits.

(Die größten Geister haben ihren Antheil, ihre Thätigkeit der Bühne zugewandtet, den Schauspielern sind alle Kreise der Gesellschaft geöffnet und die Verdächtigungen, welche in sittlicher und religiöser Beziehung gegen die Bühne ehemals im Schwanze waren, vernimmt man nur noch aus wenigen isolierten Kreisen. *DT*, 8)

According to Schmitt (1990, 34 and 37), the number of institutions specified as theaters in Germany in 1838 was 50, and dramatically increased to 140 by 1846, and to 180 by 1861. Moreover, since the middle of the eighteenth century, theaters were recognized not as places for amusement but as moral institutions like churches or schools, educating the people. For that purpose, actors and actresses were in demand as models of educated people in personal and professional arenas, and like other civil occupation groups, their professional standing was gradually confirmed. Concerning this, we can refer to the philosopher G.W.F. Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics (Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik, 1835)*, in which he considers actors' industry, intellect, and patience as connected to a modernistic labor principle. He praises the high order spiritualism of actors and recognizes them as artists. Hegel says:

Today, people call actors artists and pay them all the honor of an artistic profession; to be an

actor today is in our feeling neither a moral nor social defect.

(Man heißt jetzt die Schauspieler Künstler und zollt ihnen die ganze Ehre eines künstlerischen Berufs; ein Schauspieler zu sein ist unserer heutigen Gesinnung nach weder ein moralischer noch ein gesellschaftlicher Makel. 1986, 515)

In the age of Diderot, actors' immorality and non-citizenship were seen as a part of their talent and character. However, in the first half of the nineteenth century, such negative evaluations of actors were changing by degrees to a new evaluation, as Hegel recognized. Devrient himself came from a family line that produced a large number of prominent stage actors in Berlin and Dresden, and so he led a civil life as an educated person (Richter 1957, Michel 2008, Yamazaki 2013). According to his privileged family environment, in his *On an Acting School*, he emphasizes that the person who engages in theater needs culture: "The theater needs the educated personnel who is in agreement with the most perfect socialization" (Das Theater bedarf der vollkommensten Vergesellschaftung übereinstimmend gebildeter Kräfte. *DT*, 12). From his position, Devrient, who earned reputation as a court actor, recognizes the actor as an independent artist, and emphasizes the necessity of special educational institutions for this purpose. Actors have to develop their genius and personality with a consistent training system, and to correct their own faults and improve their performance techniques to meet a standard level. This is because actors normally have the following task:

This is the great task which is given to the actor, that he must create his art object out of his own person, so that he is also creator, material, and artwork.

(Das ist die große Aufgabe, welche dem Schauspieler gestellt ist, daß er sein Kunstobject aus seiner eignen Person erschaffen muß, daß er also zugleich Bildner, Material und Kunstwerk ist. *DT*, 14f.)

Here, a double function is given to the actor: one is the actor as "creator" of art (Bildner), and the other is the body of the actor as an art object, a "material" (Material), or "artwork" (Kunstwerk). The same consideration appears in Goethe, already quoted from his *Rules for Actors*, in which he emphasizes that actors should be conscious of being a "public art show" (Kunstschau, 1998, 879). We can also see here the actor's double existence in art, as both the professional artist and an art object. Devrient specified the actors' body as an artwork with holiness and beauty, so he clearly distinguished it not only from ordinary people but other artists. Regarding this point, we can refer to his argument in his essay *The National Theatre of the New Germany. A Reform Writing* (*Das Nationaltheater des neuen Deutschland. Eine Reformschrift*), which was written in 1849 as a proposal for theater reform. According to his explanation, performance technique is an art that generalizes all of the performing arts, so he admires actors for their use of this art:

In accordance with the inner nature of the stage, acting technique determining high things,

in all nations, the stage was the recipient of original worship.

(Ihrer (d.h. Bühne) inneren Natur nach, die Schauspielkunst zu hohen Dingen bestimmt, bei allen Völkern war sie die Trägerin des ursprünglichen Gottesdienstes. 1849, 24)

Here, it is suggested that the actor is a priest whose performance is a worship service or ritual for the people, and regarded as a person who realizes both religious and aesthetic events. In connection with the tendency to worship art in the nineteenth century, Devrient develops his argument from the standpoint of an actor and manager to generalize onstage art phenomena and to direct the theater, so he emphasizes that the recognition of the actor's social position must be improved. For these important two characteristics of actors—i.e. as a religious figure carrying out artistic and cultural events supported by the state, and as a physical presence whose body is an art object—it is necessary for actors not only to have learned a high standard of performance technique and knowledge, but also to be objectively recognized through a public acting school.

Concerning this point, Carl Gutzkow presents in his essay *On Acting Schools* (*Ueber Theaterschulen*) the same viewpoints. In this essay, two fictitious actors intricately develop their argument in a negative dialectic, in which they discuss the advantages and demerits of the introduction of a public theater academy, while they also praise the conventional, individual apprenticeship for actor training. According to Gutzkow's argument, a theater culture centering on opera rose in prosperity after the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815, while there was also demand for an acting culture and improvements in performance techniques, to which an acting school could contribute. In the following quotation, two seasoned actors, Freihart and Reinhold, argue over a certain new actor, Neumann, who visited the acting school in Berlin for six weeks, and examine the changes in this newcomer:

Send Neumann to Berlin, let him there go to the royal theater school for six weeks, and you will see that he comes back and tells me of the open rehearsal, "I would be a bad naturalist, without objectivity, without scientific consciousness, I would not know what would be by speaking the arsis, not the thesis."

(Schicken Sie den Neumann nach Berlin, lassen Sie ihn da sechs Wochen in die königl. Theaterschule gehen und Sie sollen sehen, daß er zurückkommt und mir auf offner Probe sagt, ich wäre ein schlechter Naturalist, ohne Objektivität, ohne wissenschaftliches Bewußtsein, ich wüßte nicht was beim Sprechen die Arfis wäre und nicht was die Thesis. *GT*, 143)

As Gutzkow says, while there was a view spreading among actors and actresses that the actual stage is the best acting school, such methods for developing an actor's genius, influenced by contingency, could not always facilitate acquisition of the abovementioned objectivity or scientific knowledge. Rather than actors developing naturally, depending only on their genius and natural talent, Gutzkow values actors who receive performing arts education, since it is in accordance with the disciplinary education system of modern civil society and supported by

scientific knowledge. Thus, he thinks, the image of actors who once wandered from city to city as a symptom of “social poverty” (Pauperismus, *GT*, 143) and led theatrical lives as “vagabond [s]” (Vagabonden, *GT*, 143) would change through systematic education for actors. According to Gutzkow, the actor already behaved like a “public servant” (Beamten, *GT*, 146) or a “national government employee” (Staatsdiener, *GT*, 146) at the court theater. If the position of “theater minister” was prepared for the government and an acting school built under its jurisdiction, Gutzkow supposes, the actor already of high status may become an “inviolable sacred person” (unverletzliche heilige Persone, *GT*, 146). Here, we can see that the progression of the protective national policy for theater strengthened the cult of personality and idolization of actors and actresses. Gutzkow regards the acting school not only as an institution wherein the actor improves his professional technique, but also strengthens his official position as a privileged person. Furthermore, Gutzkow explains the necessity of acting school as follows:

When the pupils are instructed to also form clear scientific terms for aesthetic facts, when one transfers them to an antique room and gives them the beauty of plastic formations, tasteful positions and attitudes, when one announces them the laws of the metric, the subtleties of linguistic structure and especially things with traditional rules of natural declamation, so I recognize in it the basis of a tasteful actor’s education.

(Wenn die Zöglinge angeleitet werden, sich über ästhetische Thatsachen auch klare wissenschaftliche Begriffe zu bilden, wenn man sie in einen Antikensaal führt und ihnen über die Schönheit plastischer Gebilde, über geschmackvolle Stellungen und Haltungen Aufschlüsse giebt, wenn man sie mit den Gesetzen der Metrik, mit den Feinheiten des Sprachbaus und vor allem Dingen mit den überlieferten Regeln einer natürlichen Deklamation bekannt macht, so erkenn’ ich darin die eigentliche erste Grundlage einer geschmackvollen Schauspielerbildung. *GT*, 152)

According to Wagner (2013, 136), Gutzkow regards not only new occurrences in the aesthetic dimension of national theater as an important matter, but as a literary and artistic director he also connects the idea of theater as a public institution to contemporary dramatic literature. Theater received a cultural stimulus in the people and spirit of the age of literature, and was brought to life, while actors realized a high art that depended on the same newfound contemporaneity of literature. This is described in Gutzkow’s essay, wherein the fictitious actor Freihart speaks the words:

I suspect that we will become ourselves perfect more and more with the help of the poet [...] (Ich ahne, daß wir mit Hülfe der Dichter uns immer mehr verkommenen werden, [...]. *GT*, 150)

Within the larger context of theater reform, such as the institutionalization of theater and the contemporization of literature, Gutzkow considers actors to compete to become high cultured

individuals with literary knowledge and aesthetic sense. In his essay *For the Stage Reform* (*Zur Bühnenreform*, 1850), Gutzkow proposes concrete reform programs for a bounty system for theater, a new plan for organization, etc., and advocated the systematization of educational and directional organization for actors. According to Gutzkow (1850, 138f.), actors need to change their relation with the stage so that their concern with being on it is not selfish and individual, but collective and associated with the whole. Through this awareness of the change in actors, people began to treat their profession with “earnestness and eagerness” (*Ernst und Eifer*) and to regard acting technique as “solemn and dignified” (*Weihe und Würde*). We can see here how Gutzkow places significance on the reform of an instructive organization for actors and on the implementation of refined education for them: they who acquire knowledge and acting methods through continuing education have the function of responding to the demands of contemporary audiences and protecting the dignity of theater.

Following Devrient’s and Gutzkow’s concepts of an acting school, Heinrich Theodor Rötischer published, in 1848, his *Plan for Establishment of an Acting School for Performing Artists* (*Plan zur Errichtung einer Theaterschule für darstellende Künstler*), which he wrote on commission from the Prussian Ministry. As Klein (1911, 71f.) emphasizes, Rötischer’s concept of the acting school as a royal institution almost inherited the concept of Devrient. However, Rötischer, as a Hegelian, discussed it from a contemporary philosophical and aesthetic viewpoint, and some points are therefore different from Devrient’s, such as the introduction of “reading rehearsal” (*Leseprobe*) and the proposal for the position of a principal of the acting school, who would not be an actor but an intellectual. In the following quote, Rötischer discusses the idea and necessity of acting school from different viewpoints:

This is connected with the changed social position of the actors and the current implement and form of the narrowest criticism.

(Es hängt dies mit der veränderten gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Schauspieler und der jetzigen Handhabung und Gestalt der Kritik auf das engste zusammen. *RT*, 3)

Here, he primarily provides an explanation of the necessity of the school for the improvement of actors’ social standing. Due to this phenomenon, actors lost the poetic stimulus that had once been the inexhaustible fountainhead of imaginative power in a free life. Rötischer argues the second reason was the loss of critical power in theater circles: since the previously shrewd criticism of the intellectual came to accommodate the taste of the public, actors took no notice of the weakened criticism that had once influenced them. Unlike Devrient and Gutzkow, Rötischer found a decline in actors’ spirits creating theater, resulting from the improvement in their social standing: they gained characteristics of regular citizens. It is also interesting that he connects the weakening of criticism against training actors in the performing arts with the necessity of a royal acting institution as an educational facility, in order to maintain the quality of actors’ performance techniques. We can see here, despite founding an acting school, that he has no intention of improving the negative image of actors. Rather, his interest is in the loss of actors’

sensitivity due to their acceptance by civil society and their assimilation into ordinary life. In his proposal for an acting institute, Rötischer is conscious of the recovery of a firm identity for actors as artists.

Concerning this, Rötischer already had extensive influence and high rank in the world of drama criticism, thanks to his severe critical eye, and was called “the best critic since Lessing” and “Olympus” (Schröder 1889, 381; Klein 1911, 62). He confronted, through criticism supported by his academic knowledge, the commercialistic media that increasingly dominated the theater world throughout the nineteenth century. According to Klein (1911, 77), his objective and strict criticism of playwrights and actors occasionally made them feel repulsed and increased opposition against him. However, such sharp criticism cultivated actors and actresses, and meant the protection of dignity for the whole of theater. Unifying the objective judgments of such strict criticism, actors had to elevate their souls to universality. In relation to the education of acting schools, Rötischer describes an issue that actors should bear, as follows:

The school wherein their true gravity lies can breathe into the actors of the future such a **moral earnestness**, that the same as a force of habit, so to speak.

(Die Schule vermag, und hierin ruht ihre eigentliche Schwerkraft, den künftigen Darstellern einen solchen **sittlichen Ernst** einzuhauchen, daß derselbe gleichsam zu einer Macht der Gewohnheit wird. *RT*, 5)

The morality here referred to by Rötischer’s words “the moral earnestness” originates in Hegel. “Morality” in this philosopher’s sense means not the behavior of people in usual life, but a universal principle for unifying the subjective individual, divided by civil society, with the community of the objective whole. Rötischer connects this ethical concept, “morality,” to the actor’s turning over of the self to overall concern (*RT*, 5). The actor realizes the universality of art through self-moderation of the individual and arbitrary interpretation or secular desire. If the actor is completely autonomous, the poet’s poetical power will become sensible through the actor’s individual character and acting technique, and the idea of the work will finally be embodied. Unlike the other authors, Rötischer regards actors and actresses as public people who are already intermediaries between theater and audience, and who crystallize the community soul. It is appropriate for the improvement of such a public soul that actors sufficiently study the performance of drama, as Rötischer recognizes in the following sentence:

However, in the meantime, the actor is shown to the public, so it seems appropriate to represent the drama that is rehearsed well from time to time and certainly performed even in front of a selected and for this purpose invited circle.

(Da indessen der Schauspieler an die Öffentlichkeit gewiesen ist, so scheint es zweckmäßig, von Zeit zu Zeit gut einstudierte und mit Sicherheit gespielte Dramen auch vor einem gewählten, zu diesem Zwecke eingeladenen Kreise darzustellen. *RT*, 18)

In the background, to answer why Röttscher emphasizes the actor's public character and mental subject, we can point out a parallel relationship between this concept and his theater reform project. Röttscher wrote in his 1843 essay *Theater and Drama Poesy in its Relation to the State* (*Theater und dramatische Poesie in ihrem Verhältnisse zum Staate*) that he considered theater not only an important moving force both in the world and the people's lives, but also as a mighty element of popular culture with significance for the organization of morality (1843, 395). He expected that theater would separate from the conventional royal system and, through the new cultural policy, be renewed under the system of "national theater." The theater should freely provide the public with an idea of excellent works from within and without the country, and become a principle that enriches the soul and life of national peoples. In the theater, an institution of moral enlightenment that serves as an ideal and objective universal model for civil society, actors and actresses should not only unify audiences in a national and cultural direction, but also involve them as the embodiment of an aesthetic ideal.

As in Röttscher's explanation of the necessity of theater education for actors in his essay, actors must undergo a process of mental and aesthetic education and physical training in order to perform their artistic activities for public spaces in the future. Indeed, their professional status would change by sharing in the honor of being responsible for educating the national people. In this way, Röttscher concludes that the founding of an acting institution was in demand by society, since it would have granted actors "a complete emancipation and equality with the other artists" (eine völlige Emanzipation und Gleichstellung mit den übrigen Künstlern, *RT*, 408).

The Universal Human Education of the Actor: Order and Morality in the Lesson

According to the concepts of the above mentioned three authors, an acting school should be managed with public funds and have an ideal training system for actors. Referring to Devrient's concept, this section discusses the practical side of acting school, such as admission criteria, target students, and subjects offered in connection with school politics and the school system in nineteenth-century Germany. Then, these points will be compared with the concepts of each author, and it will argue how these authors aimed to build and complete the actors and actresses of the future through their concepts of an acting school, and how they would change the conventional image of the actor.

In the 1840s, when Devrient wrote the essay *On Acting School*, there were only private tutoring acting schools, supported by private management, in the big cities like Hamburg, Stuttgart, or Frankfurt am Main. Or, aspiring actors and actresses had to find the opportunity to learn and polish performance methods through apprenticeship, looking for individual guidance from the actors of performance troops directly. Under these circumstances of private and unsystematic actor education, Devrient's concept of a public acting school offered some workable and practical plans and ideas. According to his concept (*DT*, 27), admission to a school would be permitted for pupils of 16-years old for males and 14 for females. They would have to have finished elementary school education and acquired basic knowledge; however, it would have been possible

for a talented student to enter the school earlier than these ages. We can confirm here that Devrient aimed to implement an early, professional, and elite actor education for youth. Since an actor's performance technique was highly specialized, it was necessary to develop their talent though early education in an acting school, just as the young students of other arts took early artist training. Due to the advances in transportation throughout the nineteenth century, there were already some actors who had contracts with the theaters of different cities, so they were required to have qualified and universal acting methods throughout the broader theater community.

According to Devrient's concept, acting school would involve a three-year curriculum and offer various subjects. Lessons in recitation, music, piano, singing, and body language would be required for actors and designated as priority subjects (*DT*, 29-33). Moreover, physical exercises, such as dance and fencing, would also be included in the basic subjects. The dance lesson especially is regarded as important for training in the flexible physical strength required of stage performance and for mastering human movement of all kinds (*DT*, 33f.). Indeed, Devrient emphasizes the need to master linguistic knowledge, such as German grammar and rhythm, as well as the grammar and rhythm of foreign languages spoken in mainstream culture (*DT*, 36-38). He also attaches importance to spiritual education for training actors' ability to interpret literary works by oneself. For this purpose, lessons in literature and theater history are recommended, not in the lecture form of the university but in dialog form, in order to provide pupils stimuli (*DT*, 38-42). For the lesson in dramatic expression, students should at first deal with scenes extracted from various works, such as comedy or civic drama, and then shift to a dress rehearsal. In this system for practical lessons with a small number of students, one teacher takes charge of eight students. The school curriculum is designed to provide career formation for students who will play an active part on the big stage in the future.

Gutzkow called Devrient's acting school for the early cultivation of actors a "theater gymnasium" (*Theatergymnasium*, *DT*, 152). According to Jeismann (1987, 152-158), the importance of high school was growing within the social structure of nineteenth-century Germany. The number of gymnasiums was 91 in the 1820s, and increased to 145 in 1864. In connection with Humboldt's idea of "universal human education," the head of section for Culture and Education in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, who developed German education reform, reorganized the gymnasium to give education and offer various subjects. For example, except for the obligatory subjects, such as mathematics, philosophy, and history, students learned natural science and foreign languages, or could choose between music, painting, singing, and gymnastics (Jeismann 1987, 172f.). Here, we can understand how Devrient fundamentally adopted the curriculum of the gymnasium in his concept of the acting school, in order to realize "national education" for actors who should be sophisticated persons enlightening the people with their knowledge and cultured personality.

Moreover, it has been pointed out that Devrient considers the morality and order of actors' and actresses' behavior. These elements are needed for them to industriously carry out daily lessons and to master performance methods. The acting school should produce a number of actors as

public people who may play an active part in the future. We can see Devrient's viewpoint in the following quotation:

Further, for admission into the school and to remain there, a moral behavior is required that the teacher has to strictly control, so that parents and guardians can take confidence in the institution, and the stages are brought by the school to artistic youth whose respect for morality and order is inculcated.

(Ferner ist zur Aufnahme in die Schule und zum Verbleiben daselbst ein sittliches Verhalten erforderlich, welches die Lehrer streng zu überwachen haben, damit Eltern und Vormünder Vertrauen zu dem Institut fassen können, und den Bühnen durch die Schule Kunstjünger zugeführt werden, denen Achtung für Sitte und Ordnung eingeprägt ist. *DT*, 28f.)

Devrient emphasizes students' moral behavior in order to establish the actors' social occupation as an artist. On the stage, actors had to express the peoples of various classes, so they needed moderation and self-control in their own character or behavior according to a civil norm. Such a moral spirit and civil order in nineteenth-century Germany is also reflected in Hegel's consideration of actors, as he regards them as industrious and moral artists. Devrient himself presupposes in his essay *National Theater of New Germany* that there was a spreading tendency in public opinion to consider the immoral behavior of actors' in connection with their artistic creativity. Such an ambivalent view reflects actors being "regarded as an exclusive pirate in civil life." (Er gilt als ein privilegierter Freibeuter im bürgerlichen Leben. Devrient 1849, 90f.) Moreover, in his book *History of a German Performance Technique* (*Geschichte der deutschen Schauspielkunst*, 1848-74), he described how in the 1830s, intellectuals like Schlegel promoted the image of actors' as the "idol[s] of spectators," and how such cults of gifted actors strongly affirmed their immorality, while actors who lived morally and ordinarily became a focus of criticism due to the reduction in their creative talents (Devrient 1991, 380f.).

Throughout the entirety of theater reform, including the nationalization of theater and the founding of acting schools, Devrient tried to change the social prejudice against actors. In accordance with the humanistic "national education" of the government, he thought public acting education should be guaranteed to actors in order for them to become cultured and acquire morality. For which, he considers, actors receive not only social standing equivalent to other occupations in civil society, but are also separated from the selfish performance methods of virtuosos, depending on the effect. The actor as an intermediary elevates the soul of a text into universality, so he can become the "true model of moral dignity and great character" (wahre Muster an sittlicher Würde und Charaktergröße, Devrient 1849, 89). As Devrient intended for the actor's education to finally be "the most flourishing of humanity" (zur höchsten Blüthe der Humanität), he eventually proposed moving it in such a direction. The acting school was meant to be a place that gave actors a human education, since, as future public figures, they were responsible for the national education of the people.

There are not major differences between the practical side of the acting school that Devrient

conceived of and Gutzkow's concept in *On Acting Schools*, regarding such points as the admission criteria, the curriculum system, or subjects. It is characteristic of Gutzkow to imaginarily describe the appearance and transformation of the fictitious actor Neumann, who went to an acting school, and how he now stands in front of two experienced actors. This newcomer, who finished the curriculum and has composure and pride, appears in a certain bar one day. He seems an affected fine young man in high-quality dress and is portrayed as an actor of refined appearance with such a description as "he floated like a modern Adonis." (Er schwebte wie ein moderner Adonis. *GT*, 156). Here, the actor's image, once seen as rude and an outlaw, has completely disappeared. Moreover, this fictitious new actor, Neumann, talks with a pure sound, and is further described, "He seems public servant from the city" (Es scheinen Beamte aus der Stadt zu sein. *GT*, 157). He is compared with people of high-class occupations and admired for his good looks. As Gutzkow's concept shows, the acting school was designed as a place that not only lectures actors on performance method, but brings them up as faultless people with impeccable social standing, in order for them to completely assimilate into civil society.

However, according to Gutzkow, this new actor lacked "nature" despite his etiquette-suited behavior, since the actor with "nature" (Natur, *GT*, 157) is regarded as a "natural existence" (ein natürliches Wesen, *GT*, 160) with a rich feeling of expression and depth in personality. In order to acquire "naturalness" for stage performance, the acting school needs to evoke "dramatic individuality" (schauspielerische Individuum, *GT*, 160) in each student, and to introduce "improvisation" (Improvisation) in lessons:

Finally, under the condition that people primarily receive in the practical lessons only the principle of improvisation, the principle of Extempore.

(Endlich unter der Bedingung, daß man in den praktischen Unterricht vorzugsweise nur das Princip der Improvisation, das Princip des Extempore aufnimmt. *GT*, 164)

According to Gutzkow, students learn performance methods not by rote learning, but through free improvisational practice, in order to acquire natural stage performance. For the background in which Gutzkow considered "natural" acting techniques in this way, we can consider the acting method of naturalism that had been dominant in the German-speaking sphere since the second half of the eighteenth century, and has been taken up by different studies in psychology, anthropology, and physiognomy (Košenina 1995, 1-28). This natural mimesis laid weight on a character's realistic state of mind and body motion, and was widely accepted throughout the nineteenth century. The representative national actor August Wilhelm Iffland (1759-1814) and Johann Jakob Engel (1741-1802), a famous theorist who created an original acting method, belonged to this theatrical trend.

In his essay *For the Stage Reform*, Gutzkow insists that already in the middle of the nineteenth century, theater was "protected by the most rich middle classes from the fate of obscurity" (durch die Menge wohlhabender Mittelstände vor dem Schicksal bewahrt. 1850, 128). For this reason, so Gutzkow explains, there was a need to convert the royal theater into a people-driven

national theater, into a theater organization for the whole of Germany. Based on the changing of the social stratum of theater culture from aristocrats to citizens, in this modernistic performance Gutzkow found a method for cultivating personality and expressing natural, rich feeling, distinct from the aristocrat and exaggerated methods of the Baroque Period, and modified it for the lifestyles of civil society. Through gradual education in acting school, Gutzkow expected that the actor would be taken into the modern theater system, not only in order to master rudimentary knowledge and performance techniques required for the modern stage, but to become a professional artist supporting theater culture as one of the constituents of civil society.

In comparison with those authors, Röttscher's idea of an acting institution is quite similar to Devrient's concept in the admission criteria, subjects offered, and so on. However, he has some characteristic points, as he regards "discipline" (Discipline, *RT*, 7) as an important element to teach actors:

From this purpose, the **disciplines** resulted, due to which an institution has to teach for the formation of dramatic artists, as the internal context in which they stand with each other, with necessity.

(Aus diesem Zweck ergeben sich die **Disciplinen**, welche ein Institut zur Bildung dramatischer Künstler zu lehren hat, wie der innere Zusammenhang, in welchem sie untereinander stehen, mit Nothwendigkeit. *RT*, 7)

This "discipline" is needed at all points, as in the dance lessons for bodily control, the lessons in art mythology for practicing the sensuous expression of beauty of the classic Greek world, or in voice training. Röttscher emphasizes that actors and actresses have to maintain this discipline in particular, as he also says in his *The Art of Dramatic Performance* (*Die Kunst der dramatischen Darstellung*, 1841-46) —which explains that voice training is necessary for actors, since it creates discipline—that "A thorough teaching of our art will therefore make an essential **discipline** from the pronunciation,[...]" (Ein gründlicher Unterricht unserer Kunst wird daher aus der Aussprache eine wesentliche **Disziplin** machen,[...] 1919, 90) According to Herrmann (1993, 181-234), since the end of the eighteenth century, while schools were politicized in Germany for the purpose of national illumination, there was also progress in disciplining and mobilizing citizens. Discipline was an important pedagogical element of the citizen's individual and public development, since they had to have a cultured personality and to become a constituent of public civil society. Röttscher strictly connects this pedagogical concept of discipline with his concept of educational training systems for actors, in order to build them up as obedient and industrious model people to the citizens.

Furthermore, based on such a dominant social and cultural viewpoint, Röttscher characteristically emphasizes the actors' acquisition of fine articulation ability in acting school:

Except for the form, the tone is the material through which the actor sensualized his views. Therefore, the tone must be spiritualized like the form, and made capable to reflect the

poetic content back in a corresponding way. This requires a discipline whose purpose is the formation of the sound.

(Außer der Gestalt ist der Ton das Material, durch welchen der Darsteller seine Anschauungen versinnlicht. Der Ton muß daher, wie die Gestalt, begeistert und fähig gemacht werden, den poetischen Gehalt auf eine entsprechende Weise zurück zu spiegeln. Dies bedingt die Disciplin, deren Zweck die Bildung des Tones ist. *RT*, 10)

Rötscher considers actors' sound to be a "material" for stage expression, the same as their body. For voice training, various lessons were included, such as refinement of articulation, poetry and drama recitation, study of rhythm, and close reading. The reason why Rötscher especially values sound is because he considered actors who had a pure sound, without dialect, to speak standard German and to influence the audience and the formation of their national identity. Therefore, according to his concept, an applicant with a strong dialect would not be allowed to enroll in acting school (*RT*, 5).

Considering this tendency in Rötscher, we can refer to his *The Art of Dramatic Performance*, in which he proposes the ideal state of the actor as an artist who should acquire a pure sound with no dialect, in order to embody the national soul (1919, 76-94). Moreover, according to the studies of Weithase (1961, 334ff), Gardt (1999, 159f and 169-171), Stukenbrock (2005, 157-170 and 241-305), and Kremer (2007, 25-75), in the middle of the nineteenth century in Germany, a linguistic nationalism—a movement for the formation of a standard German language—was on the rise and led by the intellectual class. Moreover, a radical and exclusive language purism was expanding, and insistent on the elimination of the influence of foreign languages on German (Kirkness 1998, 293-298). Not only under such expanded nationalism and patriotism, but also the new humanistic tendency of the nineteenth century, did German language education turn to the enlightenment of the modern public, and develop a strengthened system for the legal maintenance of the school system. According to Martina G. Lücke (2007, 39-81), in the educational reform of the Prussian government, based on Humboldt's new humanistic educational idea, the adoption of German language as a school subject was promoted. In connection with this idea, reading lessons with German poems and compositions also began to be established in elementary school and gymnasiums (Meyer-Kalkus 2001, 226)

In this educational situation, developing under humanism and national enlightenment, the acquisition of a standard language and a pure sound was required for people to intensify their national identity. In the theater, as a new moral and educational institution for the people, actors and actresses who learned beautiful articulation without dialect were in wide demand. In the context of this educational and linguistic social situation, Rötscher conceived of an acting school system under which actors acquire qualified sound. Thereby, a tendency for actors' to speak with a nationalized and homogenous articulation was accelerated and used as a model for the people. By the end of the nineteenth century, theater had become a model and show place for a national pronunciation, and the actor had come to play an educational new role.

Conclusion

The three proponents wrote their concepts of acting school at a time when theater had expanded social and cultural influence. In parallel with this expansion of theater culture in the first half of the nineteenth century in German society, both character building and culture development were demanded of citizens, according to a new humanistic ideal. The actor who was gradually assimilated and became a member of civil society also needed to respond to such social demands. Therefore, these concepts of theater school actually resulted in the foundation of The Vienna Conservatorium in Austria in 1874, the first acting school in the German-speaking sphere. This acting school had a two-year curriculum, and in September 1874, fifty applicants took its first entrance examination (G. von G. 1876, 9). In these candidates, we can recognize an increase in actors' asking for more advanced performance methods and cultured and sophisticated personalities. It should be taken into consideration that the theater schools advocated by influential figures like Devrient, Gutzkow, and Rötischer contributed not only to the gradually changing awareness of actors as artists, like musicians or painters. It also functioned to structuralize actors into a new national theater system, in order to evoke the national emotion and identity of audiences and to nationally unify the people through their superior acting technique.

¹ All English translations from German and French primary sources are mine.

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