

ATMOSPHERE - THE SOUL - THE FEELINGS
THE SPIRIT OF THE PERFORMANCE
THE BODY OF THE PERFORMANCE
THE SOUL OF THE PERFORMANCE
CHARACTERISTICS OF ATMOSPHERE

ATMOSPHERE - THE SOUL - THE FEELINGS:

We must explore this new concept of atmosphere. We all know what this means in our everyday sense, but in our sense, atmosphere is the following thing. Visualize that you are attending a performance in a theatre. What are your impressions? First of all, you must understand the content of the play. You have to understand who is who, and what are the connections between them. That means you have to understand the play. Then you have to see and to hear the play, colors, costumes, lights, voices, music, etc.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PERFORMANCE:

If we have to choose a name for that which we have to understand, we might call it the spirit of the performance, or the idea of the performance - the idea has a special meaning for us.

THE BODY OF THE PERFORMANCE:

All that we can see and hear is not the spirit of the performance, but the body. Everything that we perceive with our eyes and ears we can call the body of the performance. So we have the spirit, or the idea of the performance, and the body of the performance.

THE SOUL OF THE PERFORMANCE:

But is this all that we have to receive? We must receive the third part of the performance, the part which is not always on the stage. It is that which is between the spirit and the body of the performance - the atmosphere, or soul of the performance. The atmosphere is what we, as the audience, have to feel. If you attend a performance which does not touch your soul or feeling, that performance is dead. Our theatre will be very responsible for the soul of the performance.

As actors who wish to create a new theatre, we must revive the soul in humanity. If you imagine a theatre which is only operating in spirit and body, you will see that the nearer we are to a machine thing. The theatre in olden times was entirely permeated with feeling, but since the soul has died the theatre has become more and more mechanical. If we try to understand the world of mechanical or technical life, we will see that it becomes more and more intellectual. Human beings become more and more machine-like, while machines are becoming more and more human. In the future the machine will begin to think. The more this process will be developed, the less a human being will be feeling. That is the price we have to pay for our development. To be like a machine means the death of human culture. If we create a theatre without a soul, we will be helping this condition.

How can we protest against this coming death? Only by reviving the soul, or the world of the feelings. This is the most important chapter of our work. We must fight this coming of the machine. We have to pay much attention, and give much power to developing and reviving in the theatre the soul, or atmosphere, or feelings.

What must the actor understand by atmosphere? For example, each human being has feelings, and we know what they are. Whether we try to hide our feelings until we lose them entirely, or we try to be too free in our feelings, we know what it means to have feelings. This is a personal, subjective thing, but it is not atmosphere.

Atmosphere is a feeling which does not belong to anybody. It is a feeling which is independent of anyone - the feeling which lives in the space in the room and belongs to no one; this is atmosphere. For instance, if you enter a hospital, you will at once feel the atmosphere. This atmosphere belongs to no one. It is atmosphere.

This is a great wonder of our profession that we are able to create on the stage an atmosphere. It is or it is not there. If it is not there, the performance is dead. If it is there, the performance has a soul, a life, a spirit which fills the whole theatre. We must see the body - all that we hear and see and the idea of the performance - its spirit, covered and permeated with the soul, which gives the life and beauty to the performance.

For example, the old castle which has been empty for centuries, who creates the atmosphere that is there? Or take another example: we are going through the street, and we feel that something is wrong. We feel that we are plunged into an atmosphere on the street, although we do not know what has happened, but we feel it in the air. Then we see that it is a disaster, and as we get nearer and nearer, the feeling of fear grows. The atmosphere does not belong to the people who are in the street. The policeman and the person who is hurt have their own moods, but in spite of the different emotions, the atmosphere covers everything and everyone. The wonder of the atmosphere, or the soul, is that it belongs to no one and to everyone. It can exist without our participation.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ATMOSPHERE:

What are the characteristics of this atmosphere?

1. It is objective; 2. You are changed by it. Atmosphere has the power to inspire a person who is going through it. Every word and every movement, every intonation, will be inspired by the atmosphere if the person does not oppose it. But on the stage the actor must be influenced by it. That is the greatest achievement that we can wish for. We must train ourselves to be influenced by atmosphere. This will be the secret of the future theatre. Different playwrights have different atmospheres, but the actor of today acts without

any knowledge of atmosphere. He takes the text of any playwright, without enquiring about the atmosphere, and he speaks the lines all the same. The atmosphere has to influence and inspire every actor.

Who or what creates the atmosphere? Everything, every person is able to create an atmosphere, but what is very important and very strange is that not only living beings create atmosphere, but things create atmospheres, too. This is very important for us.

1. Atmosphere exists always.
2. Each mood of a person must be taken, must be covered by this atmosphere. We must get atmosphere from everywhere.
3. How to manage this atmosphere which we can steal or create from everywhere? What we need for this work is energy. The only way to be creative is to be energetic; to be young, beautiful and energetic. Without these "gymnastics" we cannot steal or create atmosphere. The atmosphere is a very independent being. If you are not worthy of it, it will not come to you. If you are not strong enough to turn your personal mood into an atmosphere around you, then you are compelled to be a person with your personal moods. That is all you can have, but that is so small.

If we wish to be actors, we must change our moods into atmosphere. How can we do this? By concentrating our will on the object and sending it out. To send out, to spread,

to spread. That is our profession. Not speaking the text, which is what is done in our theatre today. Only cold, intellectual speaking. But to be an actor means to create an atmosphere and to keep it with our will. It means to be inspired by the atmosphere and having this inspiration, to interpret the play. If we take the text and try to interpret it first from the words, it is mechanical. We must find the atmosphere of the play, and it must inspire us.

4. The atmospheres can be enlarged. We can let them grow, or we can kill them. One atmosphere can fight another, and one will have to die. The atmosphere of a crowd can fight with the atmosphere of a place, and kill it. If two atmospheres are in opposition, they cannot live together. Knowing this law, we must create very tense moments on the stage. If we can create an atmosphere on the stage, and we have to show another atmosphere, the atmospheres will fight and one of them must be defeated. One must triumph over the other, and this is what the audience really wants to see. When there will be a theatre which can show atmospheres, that will be the moment when all the present trivial acting on the stage today will disappear - it will be at once a caricature.

We can kill an atmosphere in two ways: 1. When we allow two atmospheres to fight. That is what we need on the stage. That is acting with atmospheres. 2. The other way - which is a bad kind of destruction of the atmosphere - is by

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lying. The atmosphere cannot exist among a group - which is able to keep and create and enlarge the atmosphere - unless we are truthful inside. The moment we are lying, the atmosphere disappears.

Atmosphere is a being which is undoubtedly higher than we are. For example, listen to a noise - really listen. Then try to force the listening. The atmosphere will immediately disappear. When we are able to create an atmosphere, we will know immediately whether we are lying because if so, the atmosphere will be gone. The closer we come to the machine art, the further away we are from the atmosphere. The more we appeal to the human quality with all its noble abilities, the nearer we will feel that atmosphere is coming to us. We will grow, but only under the influence of atmosphere. It is like light and water and air for plants. The artist is not able to live and remain an artist without atmosphere.

Let us exercise the juggler psychology with the chair, veil, stick, and ball exercises.