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IMPROVISATION,
AWAKENED IMAGINATION

IMPROVISATION: The Deluge

The Deluge:

The inner line of the second scene: After a day and a half, the night has passed and these people have experienced everything from fear to ecstasy, despair, loss of everything - this has happened many times to each one of them. It is the middle of the night. They have drunk very much, and have become sober, and have become drunk again. They are absolutely in ecstasy. This ecstasy becomes the objective: "I want to know more about everything." Not ecstasy as ecstasy, but ecstasy as business - to know everything about everything, small and large - a psychological stage of ecstasy. O'Neill is the person who leads them with his emotions and his being - with everything. He has been waiting his whole life for this ecstasy of humanity. He believes that humanity will solve its problems in this way. At last he has found a group of people in such a state. This moment is his everything, his religion, his fulfillment. To lead them himself, to incorporate his ideal - it is life or death for him. If this ecstasy leads to nothing, he will commit suicide because he will no longer believe in life. It is for him a psychological and philosophical problem.

The sound from the outer world breaks the state of ecstasy, and the crowd becomes suspicious of one another, ene-

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mies again trying to escape, thinking O'Neill is lying to them. For him it is a moment of tragedy. Then he makes an effort to bring them back to the state of ecstasy on the basis of united individuals - not a crowd or mob feeling. Thus the group comes to a higher level of unity than before. Each sentence must be something which brings them to the final point, which is unity through the awakening of "I am" - through the power of O'Neill. Try to take the problem in connection with the theme, which is a deep one. The theme is the reservoir from which we take our objectives, feeling of truth, atmosphere, etc.

Criticism:

O'Neill must be the leader, the center, the support for the crowd. When he absents himself, the crowd is lost. He must find this state of leadership. You must fight with yourselves and get some results by taking some points in the Method. Don't leave one point until you have fulfilled it to its entirety. To do a thing weakly is wrong, and this kind of half-and-half will lead us to many difficulties. Mistakes are not dangerous. But to do things by halves, this is the danger. Mistakes can be very helpful because we learn very much from them. Repeat the exercise again.

AWAKENED IMAGINATION: Criticism:

This time you became quite hysterical, by taking your nerves and winding them up. This is quite wrong. And secondly,

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your imagination is not awakened. It is not giving you artistic pictures. When you take your character, your imagination is sleeping, so you take it out of your nerves. The same with your objective. When your imagination is sleeping, you take it out of your nerves. Your activity is in your nerves. In this scene you had no control over yourselves because you were hysterical persons, not artistic beings. When an artist throws a chair across the room, he knows where he is throwing it because he is free; but when he is hysterical, he no longer has control over himself and is almost crazy. Today you were in danger of hurting each other with chairs and physical movements. This hysteria will awaken the animal in you.

Why did this happen? Because your imaginations are still sleepy. The artist in you is sleepy. Why? Because your private lives are wrong. You are too intellectual in your private lives. If you do not get your artistic awakening, then my work is in vain, and so is yours. Do you really see the leaves on the trees? Do you see that is is autumn and that everything dies? Do you feel the poetry in it? Are you aware that one thing tastes different to another? Everything must be awakened. You must become awakened physically and in every way. In your daily contacts you must feel things more concretely. We are blind in our everyday life - blind to all the little details, and deaf. Therefore we have nothing to bring on the stage. When you try to awaken your will, you get only

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animal feelings, not artistic ones. Your private lives must become more awakened if you wish to show something more than hysterical things on the stage.

Believe me when I say that I am not trying to push my hand into your private lives; but an artist must be an artist in his private life, otherwise he will never develop. Where will you get your imagination from if you do not try to develop it in your life outside of the school? You will suffer from this for your whole life. It is not possible to be an actor with a sleepy imagination, any more than it is possible to live without food. It is my duty to tell you this. Even an actor who drinks and poses in his private life, even such a stupid person is better than an actor who is too cool and collected. This kills us as actors. To do something bad is better than not to do anything - to be cool. To dare something in life - not to live such a quiet life which kills all our efforts.