

CRITICISM OF NEW STUDENTS' SCENES

The Miracle of St. AnthonyThe StrongerThe DelugeThe PossessedThe Taming of the ShrewMerry Wives of WindsorHamlet

CRITICISM OF NEW STUDENTS' SCENES:

The Miracle of St. Anthony: You have all made great improvement, but you still have to acquire many things. You did not get bridges and transitions in this scene, and it was very obvious at the moment when the dead lady awoke - it was very weak at this moment, and none of the points of the Method were sufficiently expressed or understood. For instance, the feeling of truth was not strong enough, radiation was weak, all the points were weak and bridges and transitions were not there much of the time. If you will take all the points of the Method, you will see that they were all weak.

The director can be a genius, but if the actors cannot justify the direction, then the actor cannot help. The director and the author are one thing, but without the actor there is no performance. You must rely on the director entirely, but you must also do everything you can to help. When the director is able to rely on you, then the ideal theatre will be born.

The Stronger: Karen has made great progress, but it is not enough. Your main mistake was that everything

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should have been justified and made as profound as possible. It is clear what you meant and what your director meant, but it was not profound enough. You must sacrifice your personality for the part. You, as it were, described what it should be and we understood, but it is not enough - we should see you as a human being. Your "I Am" was not there - you were telling us how the thing could be and should be, but it was not yet there on the stage. You relied very much on your voice, instead of searching for things inside of yourself. So you must work for the presence, the "I Am" on the stage.

The same is true of Helen in this sketch. Because you were the silent figure does not matter - the pauses must count, and they can be much more important than words. In this sketch particularly, the silence is much more important than the words. You took this silence too superficially, as if it were only a silence, but it is not; it is a long speech full of cries and laughter but without sound. You must take it much more profoundly and rely much more on the imagination. The same is true of Hamlet, for instance - the imagination. I don't want to see your cleverness on the stage, I want to see you moving and acting with your soul and heart. Therefore, you must imagine and again re-imagine and again and again, until your soul - the imagination, the feeling and the soul - you must imagine as long until your nature is inflamed. The whole meaning of the imagination is to awaken and inflame

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the inner life. Your imagination has not yet reached the point which it must reach - to awaken your inner life. You cannot order yourself to laugh or to hate, but you can coax the laughter and hatred through the imagination. It is the way to awaken the feelings.

The Deluge: You did not take the conditions fully which were given in the play - two persons are going to die in a few minutes - but I don't get this feeling. Because they are going to die, therefore, their hearts have opened. Without this the whole scene becomes banal. Imagine these days when the soldiers in Europe are dying - can you imagine them dying in a banal way? You should have found the psychology of a person who is going to die immediately, and this would have helped you to overcome this banality. Your mistake was that you didn't make use of all these conditions. You made your work too easy for yourselves. Always try to find the most original, complicated, and unexpected things, rather than to sleep quietly where everything is banal.

The Possessed: Here Barbara was half and half - half true and present, and sometimes you were just telling us what you thought of Martha. About Jim [as Stavrogin]: I would be more happy to see you make a big psychological gesture, starting with fiery expectation - seeking, touching, groping into the other world and then through bridges and transitions come to the world of the devilish influence of Verkhovenski.

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It was too weak. Either it was your imagination which was too weak, or you were too timid. It was too even. You had the opportunity to show two concretely extreme worlds - that of the brain and the evil brain, and that of the other world, the fairy tale world.

The Taming of the Shrew: Helen, if you want to develop yourself as an actress, I would suggest that you do not drop this part. You have not yet discovered the thing or broken the barriers which hold you. If you could break through, it could lead you to the feelings for this scene. Try to go on with it, and try to find in yourself this tremendous fire and tremendous opening ability to send out. You will meet many difficulties, but if you want to develop yourself, work upon it every day. Your scheme was without bridges and transitions. You must find them and develop them strongly, and the means of expression must be strong and violent. Without this kind of experiment I cannot tell you anything more about it.

In Karen's interpretation of the Shrew, she showed certain development, but she did not have the feeling of style. It does not lie in the text or the mise en scène, but purely in the psychology of the actor. The scene is so short that the beginning and the end must be very clear.

Merry Wives of Windsor: Doyna was better because she tried to find her way into the scene in a very right way.

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in the sense of the situation and the plot and everything. It was right. But there are certain things in you which disturb you. There are some things upon which you rely, and there are some things which you overlook in yourself. This self-understanding on your part is wrong. You think certain things are very expressive, and they are not, while others are and you don't know it.

Hamlet: Your mistake was just the same as in The Deluge. You did not imagine this tremendous turmoil in the court and how Hamlet runs through the courtiers and how he hates the king. If you had realized all these things, you would not be able to be so calm. In Hamlet there is a revolution. Without this it becomes too low, too commonplace.

You show the ability to develop yourselves, and this is so important, even more important than whether you are very talented or not. It is the first step to the future theatre. There are talented people in the world, but whether they will create a new theatre or not is the question. But if people have the desire for the future theatre, then these are the pioneers with whom I want to work. If you are trying to get the Method, it is much more important to me than if you are geniuses.

But you lack imagination! Your imaginations are not yet strong enough to inflame or inspire you. Until you get this imagination you will have no lever which can release

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your fire. You must go through tremendous work so that some-time your imagination will be stronger than real life, then you will know what it means to be blessed by your imagination. When you can see your character with such strong and clear feelings that you cannot get away from it, then you will see what the imagination is and what it can give you, and you will see that nothing can substitute for the creative imagination.

Exercise:

Imagine something and when it is ready discard it, and then re-imagine the thing much more complicated, much more profound. Try another one. Through this fight which you must continue until you have found that the second image is better than the first, you will develop this muscle. Don't be content with the first image, you must be able to say 'no' to the first, second, and third, and by this torture you will become sure that you can imagine. This is our Method.