

ADVICE TO DIRECTORS  
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Each director and designer must begin to make a list of the sound effects, scenic effects, music, etc. Some special things will be needed for the performance of the sketches, and you must begin to write this down. In our Method we must aim at the best production in the shortest time. The director must keep this always in mind. We must spend time to reach the best results, and the Method will give you this possibility once you have grasped it. As a director, you must have the personal feeling that you are going towards the performance with tremendous speed, and then you will apply the Method with this feeling. Directors must not assume the psychology of the teacher which is to be slow. The director's aim is towards another goal.

THRESHOLD:

The threshold is much more important than it seems. If you start with a cast which is out of tune, you will have great difficulty. The cast must be like a well-tuned instrument, and the director must remind them of this every time before he starts. Only the harmony among them will give you the real cast which you need for your work. However, if the director tells his cast very mechanically that they

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must remember the threshold and the pause, without really getting the result from them, it will be nothing. Sometimes you need more time to bring your cast into harmony by imagining, by trying to awaken some ideas, etc. But you must really make sure that you have got your cast in harmony so that you are able to work with it. You will get better results by tuning your cast before you start - such time is never lost, and you will get it back many times over.

The director must know whether his cast is really creating the atmosphere or not. There are two types of directors - one type is full of ideas, gives the problem to his cast and waits until he gets the result. That is the right type. The other type gives the problem, and is satisfied with that, then goes on to give the second, third and fourth steps. In such a case the cast is somewhere behind and the director is in front. If the director gives problems without getting results he will lose his cast - they will be behind him, accidentally doing something, but he will not have any power over them. In giving the problem the director must help to get the results.

The threshold is always there, in small as well as in big things - it is a very important climax in each moment of life. The threshold must be sensed, but if this is done subconsciously, or not consciously enough, it will spoil the coming event. Therefore, we are trying to be very conscious about things in our profession - things of which other actors

are not conscious - and one of the most important points is the threshold. The person who crosses the threshold consciously does two things very strongly: 1. He loves something above himself and refuses to do things which can be disturbing. 2. In crossing the threshold he is taking and receiving something.

The idea of the threshold, which was very important in past centuries, was one of the most important moments if someone wished to go forward. Anyone who goes forward cannot escape the threshold. We can find many examples in which we can see that if a person does not cross the threshold, with full consciousness, he is really falling down without consciousness before the threshold. For instance, when we try to rehearse without making this conscious step over the threshold, we are working half-consciously; we are half-conscious people. That is why I am so persistent about this point.

If you know anything about the path of initiation in the occult way, the question of the threshold is much clearer. When a person goes through the school of occult development and reaches the moment when he receives initiation, then he meets the threshold very concretely. It is a very important experience to cross the threshold from this world into the world to which he is initiated. There are many things which he must leave behind, and many things which he must receive. This crossing of the threshold is a most important and sometimes a tragic moment, and it is one which many contemporary

human beings are falling before and are not able to cross.

It gives power or takes it away.

CONSTRUCTION OR STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY:

The Golden Steed:

We have reached the moment where the three main climaxes are given on our scheme. Let us say that these three climaxes have been found in the right way. It is always possible that the director will find in time that the climaxes are not right, and he then has the right to change them. But let us say that we are able to find these climaxes and perform them. Our next step is to explore the way which lies between the climaxes. It is not the same as exploring the play in general. When we have climaxes we must ask ourselves what is the way between these climaxes. We will try to understand the way from the Copper climax to the Silver climax.

If you will imagine the play and reach the moment when the images given in the play become alive, they begin to perform before you without your will. Let us say we have reached this moment in our play, and the director is only observing and enjoying the play and the character, etc. At this moment the director will notice that the construction of the play begins to reveal itself before his artistic eye, not before his intellect. If we try to do this experiment and ask the characters what can we discover? What construction? We need to know the construction and composition of the play - we want to find its inward shape. The following is what I

have seen as the construction of the play. Follow me in your

imagination:

COMPOSITION - CLIMAXES - REPETITION OR ECHOING:

At the moment when the passionate crowd is climbing up and cries, "Look! Look!" - there is a climax, a big climax. Then comes the falling down - the one big gesture up and down and then Antin appears, running around the mountain and coming nearer and nearer. He meets the Old White Man, the guard, the crowd and his brothers. Everything is concentrated on the boy and he is trampled on and depressed. What does this mean? It is the continuation of the falling down - it is a beautiful repetition of everything that has happened before. This repetition, or echoing, is the most beautiful thing in a composition. From the dark, gloomy silence the crowd has climbed up and fallen down. The theme is one of climbing up and falling down. This is the repetition of the climbing up and falling down at the same time.

Now we come to another beautiful moment. Why is it necessary to repeat the whole theme, from climbing up, reaching some climax and falling down? Because, until Antin's appearance, we have had no individual on the stage. Antin repeats the same theme but as an individual. For the first time the audience is concentrated on an individual, and therefore it is so interesting to have this artistic gesture of up and down. It is the same theme, but it is a solo as it were.

When we discover this composition then we see at

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once that we have understood the main theme in this symphony - the silver moment is the same theme in another key, and the golden moment is the same thing. It is the Parsifal theme - the fool theme. When it stops somewhere, it gives a special musical composition, and this means that if the theme is broken, the person who is receiving the theme must create it to the end, in his own imagination or in the deeper levels of his being, and this will be much more beautiful than if it had been played to the end, because it coaxes some deeper powers in the audience itself. In the Golden moment the theme breaks, and we only go up without going down. The theme arises in the spectator's soul, and is so clarified that we have to say that we would not be able to act this third coming down as beautifully as the audience will do it for themselves. The first climbing up is a very passionate one, the second one is full of light, and the third is solid, beautiful and right.

We have found the main theme - this up and down gesture which is shown by the crowd and then by the individual, Antin, who has the same theme. The way is from the vagueness under the earth, to the individual lives. In the play we are trying to find each person as an individual. Antin appears as the first individual.

Mise en scene:

This individual form must be hidden as much as

possible. We must show Antin only at certain moments. We must reveal him gradually, therefore he is first seen at the back of the stage and he appears and disappears many times. The crowd must hide him to a certain extent, as in the scene with the guard and the brothers, when they push him back again. This is how the mise en scène describes the same theme. Finally he must be thrown down, alone. At this moment Antin is very much an individual - he has been part of the crowd and then, for a moment, he is alone. This pattern again shows the growing of the individual, by the same theme.

We started from below the earth and have come up to this moment, and now we have to climb higher. The construction of the play allows us to do this in the most expressive way. This means we must go down as far as possible in order to climb up this great way. These contrasts - the more it is down, the more it will be up - this is another rule in composition. Therefore we must push Antin into a corner - alone, down - and make him as far as possible a lonely, poor, low being without wings, in order to give him wings, three or four minutes later. It is going down in order to climb up at the next moment.

Why cannot Antin go straight on? Because he represents the main idea of the play, which is nothing other than will. The whole play is not thinking or feeling, but it is will which is striving for a certain moment. And to express

the will, the best way is to show it by movement round and round - everything which is curved or circular. It gives the impression of power. Therefore Antin must go around before he falls down.

There is another theme which disturbs Antin in climbing up - the theme of the brothers, the guard, etc. In connection with the composition it is another accent, and the repetition of the same theme by Antin. It is a repetition or echo. It is the last point for Antin, after which he climbs up - after the White Old Man says, "Away! Away!" and Antin says, "I hear! I hear!" After Antin has left the brothers there is a repetition of the silence. What comes out of the silence is, "Well done, old man." These are the main lines of the composition at this time.

What does it mean if we have really seen this composition? It means that the director has in his hands the rules for leading the play forward in harmony, without doing things which will disturb the impression of the audience. If the director has discovered that this is, for instance, the repetition of the first theme, then he knows that Antin must really repeat the "Look! Look!", and that he must find the climaxes, that he must fall down as the crowd has done, etc. If we have the repetition of the silence, then we know how the brothers must act. That is why it is so wrong to shout at this moment - the brothers are the development of the "Well done, old man." theme, and if the brothers develop it

they will never be able to shout. That is why the brothers get behind the crowd and say, "Hold them!".

It is necessary for the whole play to reach these subterranean regions and then, if everything is there under the earth, we are able to act the climbing up in the most effective way. The director must find Antin's way in relation to the main crowd theme. It will give the direction how to act.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

The psychological gesture must be as far from acting as possible. It must be archetypal. It must not be near acting. It must be in the most simple form, otherwise it becomes too close to acting. We must decide the purpose for each psychological gesture. The psychological gestures in The Meeting scene were very good, because they were pure psychological gestures. From such gestures you will get many important things. If gestures are not archetypal they can become characteristics of the character.

Whether we are preparing the play or one of the sketches, or a scene, or only one word your character can be helped by means of the psychological gesture. We must try to find a gesture which will be platonic or archetypal for this particular aim. The director must tell his cast what his particular aim is for the gesture, then the cast must find the corresponding psychological gesture. Felicity

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tried to find the natural development of the psychological gesture. This is wrong, because each psychological gesture can give one or many directions. The director must define these.

One must always have an action in mind when doing a psychological gesture. The ideal is the performance, and not the gesture as gesture. The gesture is only interesting for us if it is the ground, the way, for the real performance.

The psychological gesture must come out of your imagination, and the image and action will, in turn, grow out of this.

There is a beautiful thing in art which is difficult to exercise. For instance, if you know some musical rules such as metre, the ideal would be to keep strict time. But in art you must commit some sin and deviate and not be slavish to the rule or become mechanical. Let us take the example of a tree - the slight distortion or deviation in its form is what we often call "charm" in a person or a picture.

#### THRESHOLD:

The question might be asked, why are you doing such complicated work with each play? Your art should be simple for everybody. If such a question should be put before us the answer would be, the more complicated our work is the more simple it will be for everybody else. On the other hand when directors and actors are working with a very simple understanding of the play, and other quick approaches, it

means that there will be such chaos that it will not be understood by audiences with the most simple psychologies. There are two points of view - the more complicated the psychology of the artist is, the more elaborate are the means with which he tries to delve into his work, and the more simple will be the result. On the other hand, the more simply the artist approaches his work, the more complicated will be the result.

Balladina: (Director's exercise:)

For mise en scène and movement: the scene in the woods when Balladina discovers Alina and finds that her jug is full of berries. She laughs and says, "Go and be a lady." The second moment is when Alina tells Balladina that she loves Kirkov. The third moment is when Balladina and Alina fall apart and Balladina takes out a knife. Psychological gesture: In the first moment Balladina encloses herself with her arms, and Alina extends her arms in an open gesture towards her sister, and in the third moment Alina sways, uncertain as though her strength is going down, while Balladina's movement is to press down with all her forces.

Criticism:

In giving the mise en scène the director must tell her actors whether it is for action, and if so she must give them objectives or ask them to incorporate what they have seen. Laughter is not action - it is the result of the action,

and you must give the action which will cause the laughter or the tears, etc. The psychological gesture must answer the question, "What am I doing?"

The Meeting:

Try to compare the Joan of Arc rehearsal with this rehearsal of The Meeting. In Joan everything has shape and form and awakens something. In The Meeting the gestures are not clear, they are shapeless. The director has given gestures which are too vague for his cast, so that they do not know what they are to do, and the director will not get the results he has been waiting for. The gestures were too vague, and there was no exploration today. It was acting and very bad acting - as is always the case when the cast begins to act without any grounds. The results are as primitive as puppets. The director must compare this with the other approach we have seen today, in which nobody tried to act, and the result was touching.

CLICHÉS:

Some images are interesting and some are not, but the characters are so primitive - they are born with the head, which is so inartistic. The gestures are so abused, they have been acted many times. We must forget these things and develop our taste so that all these obvious things will be forgotten and discarded. This was not artistic work, it was very shallow. The director must require more from his cast. Cliches are the worst thing an actor can do.

As a director you must be able to guess the fresh intention on the part of your actors. You can help by leading questions, for instance, you can ask them to show their images in this situation and in that situation, etc. But if you accept these clichés the actor will never be able to develop because the form and shape is set and finished. The cliché is a coffin for everything on the stage. Because this sketch is intended to be funny, some of the actors have tried to be funny, and they have failed. When you see your actors trying to be funny you must stop them. It will be painful for the moment but they will thank you later on. Clichés and attempts to be funny must be taken forcibly away from the actor. They are coffins.

The way of the psychological gesture is the right way. It is the way to get the humor. The director must show where the source of the humor is in the psychological gesture. All clown tricks are funny if they have a sound psychological background. One clown can be funny and the other not, because one understands the psychology of the tricks. The psychological gesture is the thing which gives us the real approach to humor as to all things. If the director feels that under the guise of a cliché there may be something to develop, then he must help the actor to find the psychological truth. But clichés must be killed in the young actor, because they develop bad taste and kill good instincts in the actor, and they will have a poor appreciation of art in other ways. Their

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feelings will be spoiled, therefore we must be very firm and do away with clichés.

The actor can never be empty because everyone has an imagination. Each one of us has this precious thing in our hands, and we must use it. The imagination is the beginning of everything. The actor must add to the psychological gesture which the director gives him. It is necessary for the actor to change an impression or make mistakes with the psychological gesture.