

Michael Chekhov

(afternoon), March 16, 1937

FLOUNDERING - NOT TO BE READY
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Twelfth Night
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Criticism of March 8th sketches:

Follow all suggestions with your imagination, not your intellect - Follow with your actor's imagination. Advice to directors should be written down, and followed when elaborating the sketches in the future. The idea of criticism is to give practical advice for carrying our work further - that is our aim - not theories.

First you must concentrate and imagine - imagine that we have started our sketches from a vacuum, and then imagine what we have really shown at our performance on the 8th. Then you will be able to appreciate your work which is so precious, not from the ideal point of view but from the practical point of view. Starting from nothing, we have shown twelve sketches. This must be appreciated. Be aware of this feeling of growing up, like a plant grows. We are growing. On the 8th we, as it were, showed our first few leaves in the beginning of spring. It is good to have this point of view on our work.

FLOUNDERING - NOT TO BE READY:

I have noticed two different types of "not to be

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ready." One type is right and another is wrong, very wrong. Let us define them both clearly, and from this moment on we must refuse one and accept the other. One kind of "not to be ready" is because you have no grounds and no aims. You are "swimming", which means you do not know what to do the next moment - you are "floundering".

The director must give the aim. If the actor knows his aim he will serve you better. But if the director does not know his aim he must experiment. When the director knows his aim he has not the right to hide it. On March 8th it was shown that both directors and players were not sure of their aim at all times and, therefore, they floundered. This is a negative form of "not to be ready" which the directors must realize very clearly and never allow again. It is very destructive for the actor's soul - it is a very bad power and is counter-educative.

Another way of "not to be ready" is that my soul is not yet ripe enough to incorporate my ideas, and to use the means I have got from the school, and from my director. I am only exercising but I have not yet reached the aim, with the right means which I have. If I am asked by my director what I am doing, I am able to tell him that I am exercising this, or this, or this, in order to reach the aim which he has given me. In this case the actor has the right not to be ready. He has to grow. This is very simple but very important.

These two things are seldom clear or easy to see. They are usually together and something has a ground and a little bit of an aim, and then it has no ground and no aim. Therefore the director's eyes must be very sharp in order to find out which point is groundless and which has a ground. He must always give the aim if he is ready to do so. If not he must, of course, experiment and work until it is absolutely clear for him. Let us take some examples:

Balladina:

Alina's run onto stage. It was not yet ready, but why? Her only ground was her psychological gesture, but she had no objective - she didn't know why she should jump through the space. We have two things at the same time .. there is a ground and there is not, there is an aim and there is not. If the director had given her an objective it would have been formed at once, but it was "not yet ready".

Therefore, the director must analyze the results of his work. With time it will occur instinctively, but in the beginning you must work with sensitivity. Take the "scheme" pedantically for some time, and then you will be more free. It is not possible to really divide the psychological gesture and the objective, etc. In the real work they will fuse together because they are all members of the one family.

In the scene when Balladina was killing Alina, the ground was the psychological gesture. This was a very full

moment - full impression of the performance - the ground was there, etc. From the point of view of the "not yet ready" performance, it had both ground and aim. This kind of "not to be ready" is not only allowed, it is desirable. Compare the two scenes and you will see that while both scenes are "not yet ready," one has a ground and the other only half a ground. Through this feeling the director will, in the future, get the real approach to his actors.

At the moment when Alina and Balladina were speaking, before the death, it was groundless - no psychological gesture or objective to be heard in the speech - simply speaking the words. Compare the three moments and draw some conclusions. There is a great illusion on the part of some directors that the part will grow of itself. The part and the actor will grow only if the director will give the necessary food.

GROUNDS AND GROUNDLESSNESS:

Groundless moments must be looked at as dead moments. They must not be allowed to stay too long because they will decay, and the whole part will die in time if the director leaves these wrong moments with the hope that they will grow with time. They will never become more and more developed and the happy moments of the play which have good ground and aim will in time become tired. Instinctively the actor will become unhappy because of the many dead points in the organism. An ill person is sometimes blind towards his own ailment and

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cannot cure it, only the director can cure it, and this must be a very particular problem for the director.

Before you begin to work on your sketches again, you must analyze your work and give an account of what has happened to your sketch, how many dead points there are, and how you can give them life. Only after such analysis must you approach your sketches again.

Let us take another example: that of Goplana. Her movements were based on a certain ground - psychological gesture or images. Let us say that the ground was movement. Then try to remember the movements and the speech, and you will see how absolutely inharmonious they were. Because for the speech there was no ground given, or if it was given it was not used. And so there was disharmony between the speech which was without ground, and the movements which had some ground.

Amateur groups work without any ground, and therefore they are unable to develop themselves. Of course, by working as an amateur for many years the actor will develop some habits. The aims of such groups are another thing, and while it is a very precious work that they do, from our point of view it is groundless work. Therefore, we must try to escape this amateur approach to our work. I am not blaming them, and am only using them as an example. We can call the groundless parts of our work amateur. So from this point of view Goplana's speech was amateur, while her movements - although

"not yet ready" - were professionally grounded.

Balladina II:

This is another kind of "falling into nothing". If you will remember the psychological gestures which were explored, you will see that there was no result of this beautiful approach which had been started. Where were the gestures? To start the right approach and then to forget it, or not to take sufficient time to let it grow and develop, this is another kind of falling into nothing. It was jumping into an improvisation which was groundless.

Imagine Balladina's presence on the stage, she moves towards the light and begins to speak - everything was done with ground, and then at once it breaks and everything has gone. What is the reason? The ground is not there. It is very simple for the director to ask himself, has the actor a ground? What ground shall I give him? To find the ground for today's rehearsal is enough - it does not need to be a revelation about the play. If the director will get the technique of understanding why his actor is "limping", he will get the answer.

In the scene between Galan and the old mother. Neither is yet ready, but I see the aim. For instance, the mother's entrance. She is too young, it is not yet an old lady, but this does not worry me because the ground is there. She must ripen. Being young, she is old. But her exit was

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absolutely empty. The only thing she tried to do was to be dignified, which is what the director had given her. But this is not right. How can she be dignified? It is a feeling. This is not the right way to appeal to the actor. The director must give her a gesture and an objective. He must appeal to her imagination but not say to her, exit with dignity. The result was absolutely nothing - it was floundering.

Work Sketch:

What did the director think about the inner line in which the human soul begins to approach the machine, and the powerful human soul must die before our eyes? I would like to see this sketch as the tragedy of the living soul of a man, not that of a body. The healthy soul and the collision with machinery, and then the power of the machines, and how they die and how they break down. This must be a whole long process which you have shown in one moment. We must not anticipate the tragedy. We must see a healthy man, and then a devil, and the human being is not able to fight such things. It is like a danger in a dream which approaches nearer and nearer, and you have no power to fight it. That is the tragedy of the machine. Then the madonnas, the women, must bring the feeling that there is something more - the power is going and the complete human being is able to overcome this devil, and to be alive again.

This is another instance of not having the ground,

because your cast has done everything quite right, they knew what they were doing and everything was done in the right time. But the real ground was not there because you forgot the line of the spiritual death and reviving.

The Fairy Tale:

In this case we saw another instance of "not to be ready." It was very clear what the two figures of the girls were doing, and what Paul, as the King, was doing, but what was weak was that there was no composition of these figures. Paul's *mise en scène* and that of the girls are not yet *mise en scène* - they are on the stage somehow and somewhere. The *mise en scène* is absolutely groundless, therefore the king has no connection, in the *mise en scène*, with what is going on around him. The idea of the *mise en scène* has not grown in reason and in aim. This is not a good kind of "not to be ready."

Esme and the two girls showed a good kind of "not to be ready," because they were not yet in their parts, and their parts were not yet in them, but they have grounds for their parts. The time will come when they will understand with the whole being what they are doing. They are doing it only mechanically now, but the ground is already there. The timbre of the voices was wrong because it was groundless. It was something which was not justified, it was imposed, and it was not clear to us what they were aiming at.

It was very superficial and without ground.

In the case of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in the other scene, the voices were also wrong but there is a difference because we could feel the direction in which they were going, and therefore it is possible to give some suggestions. But in the case of the two girls in The Fairy Tale, it is only possible to tell them not to use such voices because they are superficial.

The Fishing Scene:

This is another example of something which is very characteristic. The scene seems to flow from beginning to end as a whole thing, and there is something of this whole in it but somehow it is always falling into something, and then into nothing, even in the smallest things. For instance, the beginning is very good and Eleanor's movement with her back to the audience is good, then she turns and there is nothing. Such things are like a temperature - it is very difficult to say when the thing falls into nothing and then it stops.

The atmosphere was there the whole time, and that is a great achievement, but if you will remember different figures and how they moved you will see, for instance, that when Beatrice moved forward it was something, but then somebody moved behind her and it was nothing. Why? The director must know. You are acting the sea from the beginning to the end. The whole preparatory work which was done with the

invisible powers, if this had been carried through we would never have such movements which are limited to this spot or this room. The whole preparatory work was in connection with this power which was not here but all around.

The psychological gestures were right, but they disappeared partially, and when these psychological gestures which were not sufficiently exercised disappeared, at once a whole groundless space appeared, in spite of the atmosphere. In this atmosphere something must be done, something very right. And what is this right thing in this case? It is the power which they have either to fight or bow before - definite reactions towards this power, but never any connection with it.

This power is the rhythmical idea of this play. From an intellectual approach you have nothing to say with these movements which are not in connection with the sea. The figures can move in any way if they are taken from an intellectual approach. But from a rhythmical approach it is at once clear that there is a stream from somewhere, from wherever John goes. But these *mise en scène* have nothing to do with each other, and this is another instance of groundlessness when the streams between the two scenes are cut. The director must really meditate on this sketch, because it is not so easy to grasp all these small things which are breaking this connection with the main power, which we are going to perform.

If you will meditate on the performance you gave on March 8th, you will see that all the movements forward are very expressive, but the movements to the side are not because they are not full of meaning. This example will lead us to the understanding of the *mise en scène*. It is not enough to find the real, naturalistic, clever *mise en scène*. It must be speaking about the main idea, and not every movement on the stage. Then everything will be a whole, without any groundless points.

Joan of Arc:

Let us remember the first entrance of Paul. The impression is that he knows what he speaks and what he must do, but it is empty and groundless. What is the reason? The reason is because he does not have in his spirit the idea that he will be awakened in a few moments. He acts these moments as an actor, forgetting that he falls down to come up. This is a very fine thing - it is one of the finest things we have on the stage and must be observed with great care, because the actor is always in a certain way a prophet, and this is the absolutely intangible power.

If I am going to act King Lear, for instance, and I know that at the end of the play I will be absolutely nothing and my spirit will be king, I have to know this. If it is in my body, in my psychological gesture, and in my first appearance as the king, I must show myself as king in my body but not

yet born in my spirit, because that will be a prophecy for the future. This image of an empty king's body will never disappear from the mind of the audience. Then I must make the metamorphosis to bear my soul and be king, without the smallest sign of being king in my body. I must not only know the end of my part, I must act the beginning period, showing the end in an opposite direction.

This was lacking in Paul's appearance, but this is the question of a very fine composition in the soul of the actor, and the director's task is to combine the elements of the beginning, so that they will be absolutely opposite to the end. The psychological gesture of the end must be done, as well as the psychological gesture of the beginning.

Let us take another case, when Beatrice, as Joan has received the inspiration. The young actor is not always able to hide his or her personal things which are not quite right for the moment. For example, when Joan was awakening she began to smile - this made her weak. When she is not sure of herself and what she is doing, she begins to smile, but this smile is like a red light which tells the director she needs help. It is not easy to say just what she is lacking but she is lacking. It is another example of groundlessness.

Another example of groundlessness was the moment of Peter's song. The groundlessness was not in the voice, but in singing the song, the gesture, the objective, were lost.

To sing on the stage one needs the same technique as to act.

Peer Gynt:

This is almost the same case as The Fishing Scene. Very good atmosphere, and good lighting effects - the best lighting. Then gradually something went more and more wrong, until suddenly a moment came which explained everything that was groundless. In connection with the main idea, the key for the whole scene was Asa's death. A beautiful transition to the death, and it was so fascinating not to know whether the person was alive or dead. In the actor's soul is the process of dying. In the process of dying, the audience is also doing this. The whole scene is nothing but dying - a beautiful picture of dying - how a person can die. Mrs. Elm-hirst has shown how it must be done, perhaps consciously or subconsciously. The whole scene is the transition from this world to another world.

At the beginning, when Peer says, "Good evening," he comes into this world, to go out of this world with the mother. At the moment when he comes in, it is right - when he comes nearer, it is right - when they embrace each other, it is right - and then everything stops. Peer is here and nothing is going on. He is not coming into this world, and he is not yet going out of this world. Such stopping in this scene is groundlessness. This scene is written for the process of transition - for the process of dying. The whole situation

is moving from here to there. The smallest stopping is an unnatural thing for this scene. Therefore, in this case the groundlessness lies in stopping.

There is no rule for groundlessness, but you must awaken your feeling for it. This is the ingenuity of the director, to find out all these things and to give the ground and aim. Without knowing why it is groundless, the director can do much harm to his actors by saying to them, "You are not keeping the tone," or "Act, act, act." If the director does not know what is wrong he will only torture his actors. It is the director's duty to know what is wrong, and to help his actors. If he does not know, he would be better not to touch this point until he knows what the groundlessness is. In this scene there must come a moment when both Peer and his mother have left the stage, and are speaking on some other sphere. The dropping of the stick can be something which will bring Peer back.

The Cave of Salamanca:

Let us take the scene where the two lovers are coming to the girls. The groundlessness here was that the objective was not done. Both actors have felt that in a certain way they were helpless. The director should stop them and help them by giving them the objective. The director gave the objective and the actors tried to do it, but it did not help. Then the director must diminish the objective and

just say "hello." Out of this "hello" the objective will grow.

The actors have done one wrong thing which is very characteristic. Instead of stopping you, the director has let you go on. In such a case the actors have the right to stop. If the actors feel they are floundering, they must stop and ask for help. Instead of stopping, the actors tried to lie further and further, hoping to find something, somewhere. The actors were as if drunk and didn't want to see their mistakes. Actors must be brave enough to stop if they feel they are groundless:

In the scene with Deirdre and the husband. It was not ready. It was very childish, but it had ground. If I were the director I would leave Deirdre to repeat this scene many times because she has a ground, and she needs to develop the scene on this ground. Her childish performance must be repeated many times until the ground is exhausted. She can develop this scene more and more.

The two lovers need just the opposite. They must be stopped because they were only lying. Henry's case is a different one. He was trying to find how to fulfil his objective and with time he will understand how to fulfil it organically. He must not shuffle his feet, because this is like a chain on his psychology. He tries to create the image of this old man, but it is groundless. We have a technique for creating a character - through the psychological gesture, the imagination

of another body, displacement of the center, etc.

The director must help in this case by being absolutely exact in using the method of finding the character. For instance, the director can say: "Now please be busy with the scene. See in your imagination your character's hands, neck, etc., and try to incorporate them." This is like a mosaic, and the director must help the actors to incorporate and create his image, not in a hurry because then it is always groundless.

The director must be much more clever than the actor. Henry has not used the Method in creating his character, but has tried to jump into the image, and it is only an illusion that he is jumping into the character. Don't jump, but gradually try to create the hands, the gestures, etc. Your nature will define the time you will need for this. Henry was lying from the beginning to the end by trying to jump into an image which does not exist. The sign for the director is when the actor is ashamed of what he is doing - this is again a case of helplessness. For instance, Terence knows what he is doing as a character. I can see another body because he knows his image and incorporates it.

There was another moment of groundlessness in the scene when Alan brings out the devils. The objective was not quite clear, and this was an instance of trying to fill the groundlessness with feeling. If an actor tries to feel without having a ground, he will sooner or later encounter difficulty, because we must have the ground, the roots, the stem before

we have the flower. You can use your feelings as you like, provided you have your objective, or your psychological gesture, and tomorrow your feelings will be more alive because they have underneath them the objective, or the psychological gesture. The objective requires the full concentration, and then it will bear the feelings, etc. In general the feelings are such a strange realm in the actor's life that it is better not to touch them - let them come and go and only prepare the ground.

Meeting Scene:

The whole sketch has lost the ground. One of the reasons is that the director has prepared some psychological gestures for the sketch, but has given directions which were not quite in connection with the gestures. Therefore the whole sketch lost its ground, because the preparatory work was not used.

This is a very characteristic case. If the director has new ideas, he must give the necessary ground for them. The nearer you come to the performance the more inspiration you will get. You have the right to change, but you must prepare the ground. I would suggest that you finish with this form of the sketch, and give your actors another idea. Make it a meeting of actors - they are in a modern play - the types are the same and the dialogue is the same. Then take a political meeting, and a street orator's meeting. Each time give

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your cast another idea and another ground. Through this long walk you will really be able to change the form. You are free to do as you like, but first make this long journey.

Don Quixote:

As concerns the ground, the beginning of this sketch was very good - it was almost a finished work. And it is very characteristic that when the work has a ground, it gives the director at once the feeling of many fine things which must be done. The scene was so fine that it was necessary for everything to act with you - for instance, the jug which Eleanor was carrying. The more ground you will give to the scene, the finer the pattern you can draw on it. Because the ground is there, you can create fine things, and you will get the feeling that you are a musician on the stage.

There was another example of groundlessness in the characters. Henry tried to jump into the character which was not yet ready. Terence tried to go into the image carefully. Felicity took something on her body without having the right to do so, because she is not yet ready inside to have such a thing. If she adds things superficially they will only reveal her helplessness. It is a wrong idea to think that by putting something on your body you will help yourself - you will only underline what is wrong. Do not hope that the costume or the wig will help you, if you are not yet inside the character. As Don Quixote, John has pathos but it is the

wrong pathos. The whole character of Don Quixote is pathos, but it must be the right pathos. How can the director help in this case? First of all he can give objectives - this wrong and empty pathos comes because the actor has nothing to do. What is he doing on the stage? John made another mistake with his voice - it is not yet ready.

Carnival:

This is another case of groundlessness when the mise en scène is speaking about nothing. It was pure chaos. The mise en scène was clearly given, but it was chaos. Why? Because the director does not yet know the gesture of the whole scene. The mise en scène must do a gesture, just as everything must. You can distribute your actors perfectly, but it will be chaos if the whole has no gesture. The same is true in The Fishing Scene - they are moving without carrying through one gesture. In Balladina the idea of the spiral is good, because this one gesture will always lead the whole scene.

In Carnival some very interesting figures are lost because they do not have the spine, or gesture, on which they should be shown. The beggar and child are lost in this chaos, but they are the line. They must be the beginning, and must disappear again as the line of hope. The mistake was that they really did disappear in the middle part, because of the chaos and absence of the gesture.

METAMORPHOSIS:

Each part has to go through a metamorphosis. Nothing on the stage which is leading the play can be without metamorphosis. Everything must change. The two beggars have assumed very well the gesture of contraction which has prepared their psychology. It can be seen in each movement and in their faces. It is the ground, but it must be developed. It is not enough to be contracted for the whole performance.

The director must find something to give them a metamorphosis - a development for the beginning and the end. The beginning and the end are, in a certain way, always opposite to each other. If you will repeat the beginning and the end, nothing will have happened. The audience needs to start with something and to end with something opposite, and this is what the two figures of the beggars lack, and perhaps this makes their being on the stage groundless.

Joan of Arc:

Let us remember the psychological gesture exercises - they were so strong and so impressive, but in performance it was very weak. It is again another form of losing the ground. The director gave a beautiful ground, but did not carry it through. This often happens - it is in the actor's nature to forget everything that he has understood the day before. It is the period when everything is disappearing into the subconscious region, and the actor is not really able to do any-

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thing but wait until it reappears and can be recreated. At such points the director must work with objectives or gestures, nothing more. This is the only way to help the actor approach "as if" emptiness - it is not emptiness, it is the subconscious work which will take its own time.

To overcome groundlessness, be brave enough to go back to the very beginning of things - the psychological gesture. You will never really repeat the beginning again because you are already on a certain level above the vacuum, and by repeating the same things you will be already higher.

MISE EN SCENE:

As costumes, as levels on the stage, as furniture, as make-up, as settings, etc., we must create on the ground of the psychological gesture - everything must be doing the psychological gesture, and each thing is a composition of the psychological gestures. The perfect performance in our sense is the perfect composition of psychological gestures which everything is doing - the table and the actor, the actor's voice and the author's idea - everything must be a harmonious chorus of psychological gestures.

The setting is such an important shouting gesture for the audience, therefore the more we are responsible for the setting, the more we have the audience in our hands in the best sense of the word. Just as we must know our a, b, c, in order to be able to write, the same is true with the mise

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en scene - we must know something before we will be able to write our ideas and words by means of the settings.

SPACE - PSYCHOLOGICAL-PHYSICAL:

One very simple a,b,c, can be used with full freedom, and you will get gradually the feeling that you have the settings in your hands. We know that in our physical space there are three dimensions - height, width and depth. These three dimensions for the physical space are our a,b,c, and each thing which we are showing as setting on our stage is in a certain connection to these three dimensions.

Now let us imagine that you have to put something on the stage in these three dimensions. For example, in a certain stage space a certain object is put - remember the cross in Joan of Arc. We must try to find out where it should be. Its height, its width, etc. - we must feel the point from which the thing, or the person, or the spot of light is speaking. It is not the same thing whether it is deeper or higher or wider; whether it is to the right or to the left; all these points are speaking of different things. Of what are they speaking? We know that we use these three dimensions in our physical space, but for the artist it is another matter. Each dimension is for us a psychological event and not a physical one. Like our body and our soul or spirit - we can concentrate on our body and be very happy in the knowledge that we are a being which eats, sleeps, and drinks, but we can also be a person who feels.

For the artist, for the actor, the three dimensions

are three psychological dimensions. What is the height for us, and what is the depth? These are two psychological worlds which we have to learn to feel as psychological things. We have some feeling of this after doing our psychological gestures, but now I want you to understand only these three dimensions, and nothing more.

To be up high on the stage means to be psychologically high. If in Joan of Arc the cross is standing high on the heath, it means that the psychological effect on the audience is high. But don't confuse it with the physical height. Now try to put the cross deeper and deeper in your imagination, and try to feel it from a psychological point of view, being psychologically deeper. In this case you have to awaken the soul of the space. You have to awaken the feeling for what the psychology for this or that point on the stage is - not the architectural or naturalistic composition - these are other things, but what is the psychology of that point on the stage? If we speak of a high tension we are doing the same thing. It does not mean that the high tension is there, but it is there, to a certain extent. When we are trying to create a stage setting, and the hero must speak a soliloquy in high tension, perhaps we will find the possibility to bring him to a high place on the stage because the tension is there. But you will never escape the fact that the height is psychological height - the depth a psychological depth, etc.

If you try to give your hero high tension from a place on the ground, it will be low tension, not high tension. You will grow to love this psychological a, b, c, and the space on the stage will speak to you like a book. When we speak of "highbrow" it is the same thing in another sense. A is a, B is b, and high is high. The Silver Steed is a very interesting example of height, and the beginning of The Golden Steed is a very interesting example of the low. For instance, height has many tensions, but it is something in connection with the spirit which is the most remote from the earth. "Highbrow" means losing the ground, and high tension means to lose the ground. But you can experience this height in different variations. The depth can be very profound. For instance, a prayer can be very low but you will find that if you are speaking of a low prayer, it must be a very strange composition. If you will listen to this part of the dimension, you will find that the prayer coming from the earth is something from the earth, with profound power from the earth. High and low - you can understand and experience them in different ways but to a certain extent they are always distinct. These are our a, b, c. - they are psychological points in the closest connection with the physical. They make it possible for us to express our psychological values through our physical means. This is our power to incorporate our plays, not only through our voices and bodies, but through chairs and tables and objects which are standing here or there. This is the language - the

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psychological language - of the space, and the beauty of it is that the physical expression of the space is the other side of the same thing. We can feel our space and we can make space from our feelings. We must awaken in our soul this beauty of penetrating the space, by giving it psychological significance or meaning.

RIGHT AND LEFT:

Right or left? Again you must experience what it means. In each hand you have a very strange thing. For moral things we use the word "right". In the right corner of the stage is always something which is right, and in the left is something which is wrong. You will always find that the audience agrees with the things which are going on in the right, and is less in accord with things which are going on in the left side - that is from the audience's left or right and not from the actor's left or right.

This is not a mechanical thing, but it is part of our a,b,c, and it is better to know this and use it rather than to make some mistakes. This is the mystery of the right hand side, and the left hand side. These are only some hints, but this is the region in which each of us must meditate and find his own experience. I have told you this because you will not be able to escape this law - right is right and left is left - from the audience's side, because we are acting for them.

PSYCHOLOGICAL-PHYSICAL SPACE I:Depth:

Being deep, a person or a thing becomes more significant for the general world. If you are standing back on the stage and speaking a soliloquy, you will have the impression of being important for everything around you. Speaking the same soliloquy at the front of the stage, it will not have the same significance. The actor's significance will grow as he moves back on the stage, and if he wishes to be even more significant he will climb a little, and to the right. These compositions must be understood. Dr. Steiner has spoken about the intimacy existing at the front of the stage. These are only guiding ideas and you must use them in a free way, but if you will pay attention to them in your sketches, you will feel how all this psychological-physical space will lead you, and will respond to your attention to it.

Referring again to the Right and left - a point also given by Dr. Steiner - the human eyes are built so strangely that they take the impressions of the world in an absolutely different way. Not the physical difference is meant by this, but the psychological difference. Your left eye is interested in the world - with your left eye you pick up everything that is interesting to you. With your right eye you understand the things which you are looking at. Imagine the audience sitting here facing the stage - the left eye belongs to the left side of the stage and the right eye to the right side. We must never forget that if we want to awaken the interest

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of our audience, we must move a little to the left, while if we wish the audience to understand we must move a little to the right, because by moving to the right the audience uses its right eye more. If you concentrate on this you will see how differently you are using your eyes.

Knowing this very fine and strange law, we must use this knowledge. Imagine the appearance of the two brothers in The Golden Steed. Try to imagine what this is - something very earthy, very interesting and yet not quite right. If we add to this forms, shapes and voices, we will get such a power of expression on the stage. These are the strings on the violin of our art - our art is very fine. We must learn these fine things, and this placing on the stage at the right moment and the right place is the finest thing which appeals to the depth of the audience. We speak to the audience by such things. Remember the moment when Antin is lying on the ground - it is another depth. The audience will understand Antin - this is not a thing which we must find with our brain, we must feel it.

When we feel all the impressions and desires, then we can ask ourselves what is right and what is left, and perhaps we will gradually get the instinct for these things. We must add to our art everything like space. We must not be afraid that there are too many things. We hope to create a new theatre, a real new theatre - not like Meyerhold's settings - but a new psychology, a new approach, new dimensions,

new admiration for the theatre. Therefore do not be afraid. But we need time to digest all these things, and when you have digested you will see that it is very nourishing material.

About Dr. Rudolf Steiner. I do not know whether you know who he is. We will take some time and speak about him because he plays such an important part in our work, and I give you at times things which I got from him.

INGENUITY AND ORIGINALITY:

Try to find the difference between ingenuity and originality. Take the sketch of the Oxford student: a young undergraduate comes into the room with two books. He picks up his hat and coat in a great hurry, in order to rush out and join his companions who are demonstrating outside. Be very conscious about this exercise. Be aware when you are repeating that you are repeating.

You must have only two points of view - originality and ingenuity. You will reach a stage when you feel that you cannot do any more - your well of ideas has been exhausted, but you must make a special effort to get through this "death" and you will find the result. You must make a special effort to find new ways and this is part of your development and growth. When you reach the point where you are exhausted, then you will begin to grow. The feeling of truth must be there, but it is not the most important thing in this exercise, so don't criticize from this point of view. Don't criticize coldly,

but with warmth, then you will really criticize yourself. Take account of what you have seen, or what has happened, and concentrate on the two points of view.

SETTINGS: THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE - GESTURE:

After having the first idea of three-dimensional space - which is psychological space for us as actors - we must look at some settings from this point of view. Follow with your imagination: Balladina - The Spiral. You must answer your questions with your hands and feet rather than with your head. We must create a setting by creating it with movement - not by collective minds or intellects. Is the spiral going up or down? There is a radical difference. Try to experience with your limbs the spiral going up and the spiral going down. They are two absolutely different interpretations.

How important it is to crystalize the setting after long meditation and movement and long rehearsals. The setting must be the result after a long period of crystalization.

Now imagine a situation where some settings are ordered from a famous designer, and at the last moment the lorries bring the settings and the actors have to move among them without knowing why. I had an example of this when I prepared Twelfth Night. I ordered the settings but they were designed for an entirely different play. Three hours before the performance, the designer sent the settings. This was my final moment with the old theatre!

Out of this principle about the settings many things will happen. For instance, if we have something on the stage like the tree in Balladina, it must not only be included in the psychological gesture, but it must be used by the director. If you have something on the stage which is not used for acting, it will be more and more disturbing. Like a ghost which is present it disturbs and we are not able to find the right contact with it. An unused part of the setting will be like a ghost. But on the other hand, if you find everything out of the psychological gesture, everything will be necessary for you, because if it is in the psychological gesture it is already action.

In Balladina I, the tree was absolutely strange. It was not part of the gesture, and no one used it in the proper way. Goplana could have stood on the ground. The gesture must be found which will show why this movement was necessary. In time, by finding that the tree must do this gesture, and by rehearsing more and more, the director will feel the fine difference in the movement. Therefore, the creating of the setting is not a thing which can be created somewhere else and then be brought to the theatre. Also it cannot be done before it can be done. It must be born like a child - if it comes before nine months it is to a certain extent a disaster.

The same is true of a characterization - it must be born, not forced. But when the right time is must be a very individual thing, not like a child. It is natural with each

actor, each artist, and the director must be careful with this question, and must know which of his actors is bearing his "child" early and which later, and it depends very much on this for the director to know how to help.

Stanislavsky was very careful with the actors in this respect, although in other ways he could be very rude sometimes, but this is another question.¹ In this particular way he was very helpful. He knew with his tremendous intuition the time when the child must be born. Our directors must develop this feeling very consciously, and not force parts, settings and texts. The whole performance is the question of the director, who is in this case the father.

In Balladina II, the setting is much clearer than in Balladina I. By looking at this spiral, by feeling this setting, by doing this setting, I get some uncomfortable feeling in my limbs. Is the spiral, with the figure in the middle, pressing down or not? It was not clear, but it must be clear. The director will get his answer from the characters. By having a fine feeling for his actors he will make some changes in the setting. Of course not at once, because neither of the two actors playing Balladina have developed an absolutely obvious character, but some things are already to be seen and the time will come when the director will feel perhaps that the form in Gretel's case must be different to Paula's, which is like waves, for instance.

What about the walls in the chapel? We must see this

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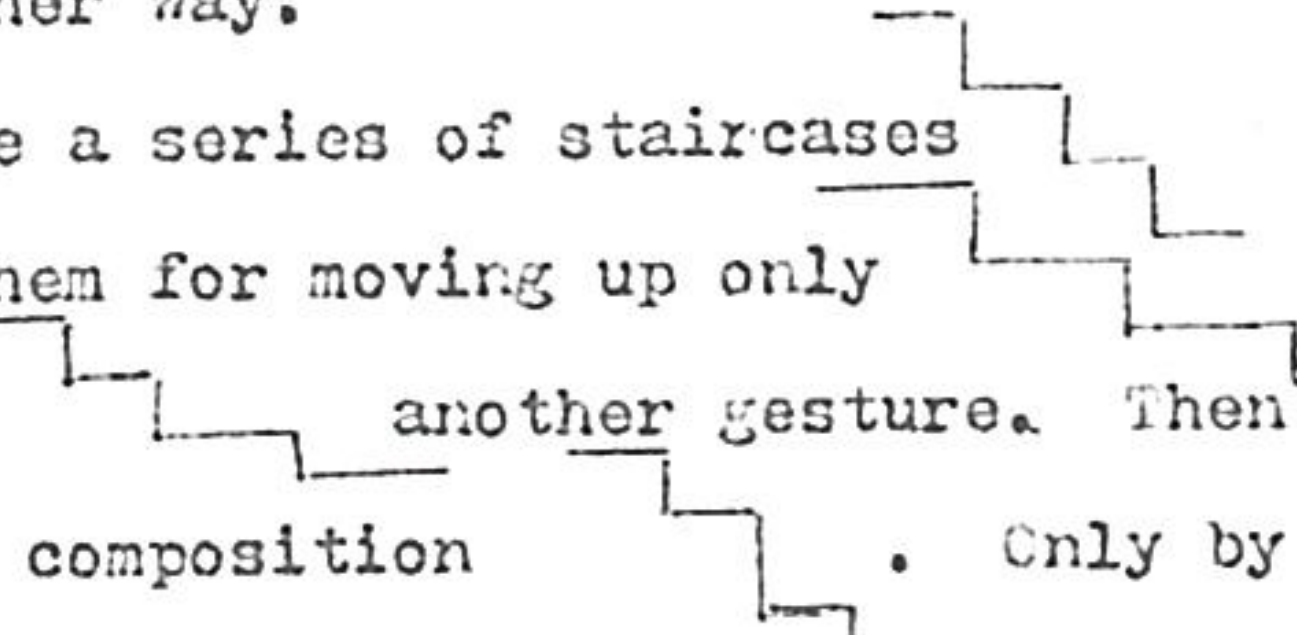
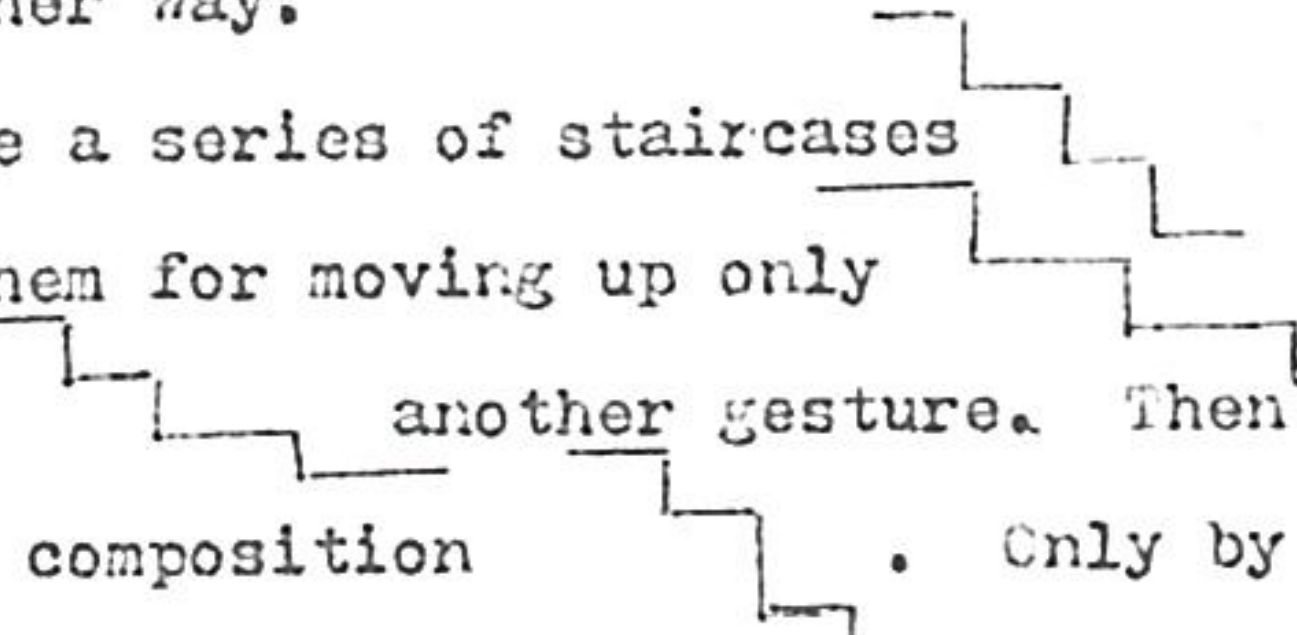
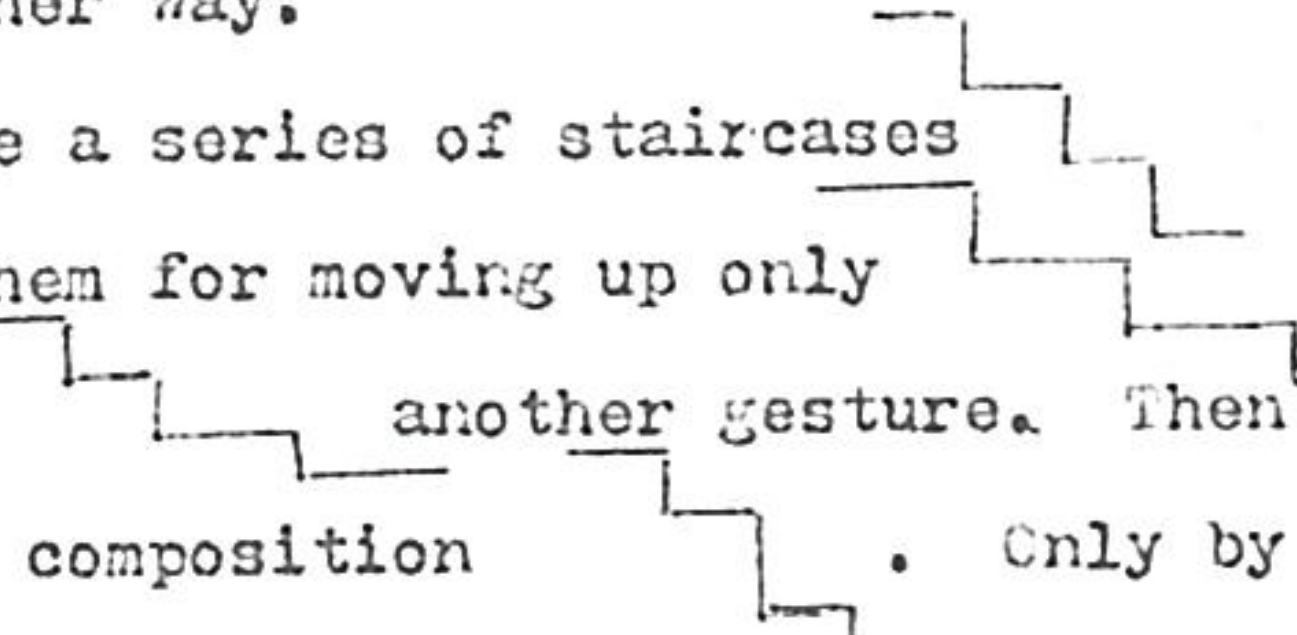
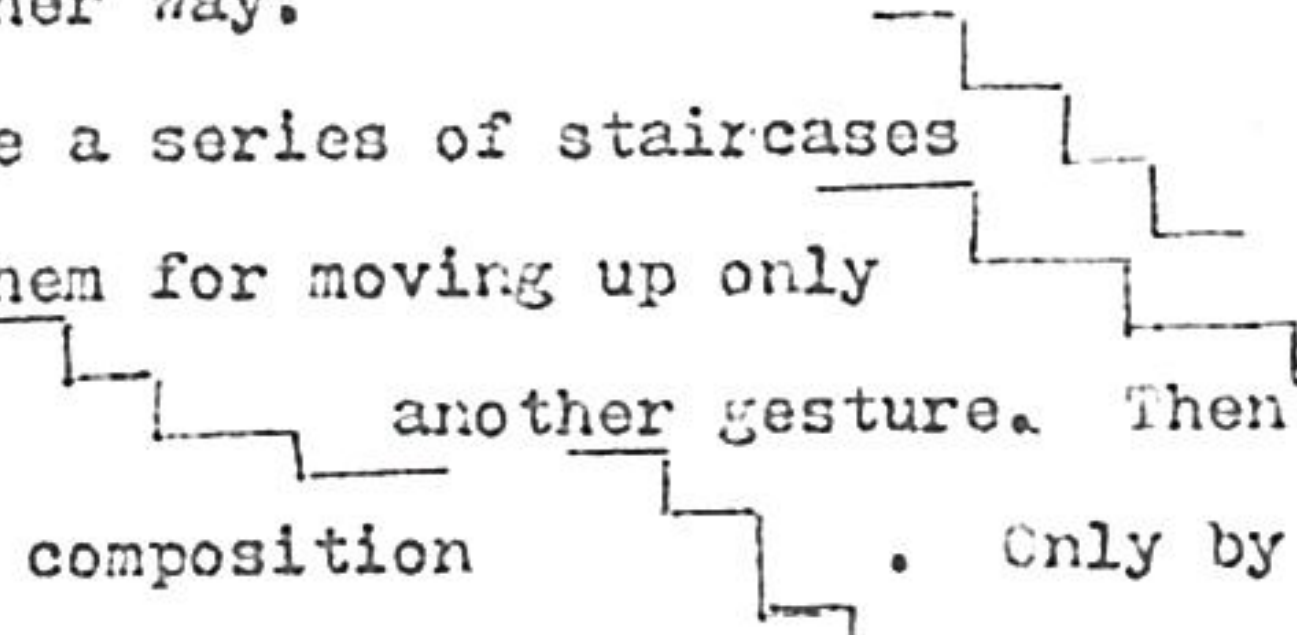
in our imagination. Have they windows, or are they absolutely closed. Between the open and closed stage is a whole gamut of openings. This is a very important factor in stage space. By looking at the figure of John, as the Saint, again the same necessity arises in your director's feeling. What is his gesture? What shall the director do with him? Is he streaming up or is he streaming down? These are two different things, and so important. This figure of the Saint, when the curtain is up, must move me, but in which direction? To him and up, or down and from him? Must I be placed with him in the middle of the room, lonely, or must I be the figure who dominates, or am I lost in this small chapel?

These are absolutely different gestures which must be answered by the designer and director, and through them by the actors. And the Saint must know what gestures he produces, and from knowing and expressing them he will speak in another manner, and move his hands in another manner. Whether he is filling the room, or whether he is alone, is entirely different. Through the three dimensions you will more easily find the questions and answers, because all these questions - spiral, saint, etc., - are absolutely in these three dimensions, and they will give you the answer if you will meditate on them.

The Fairy Tale:

The gesture of the throne coming up is absolutely clear, but I am not able to feel the throne going down. You

have two kings, one of which is descending and the other ascending. How to build such a throne which will do two things at the same time? It must not be absolutely obvious, but it must be found in another way.

Imagine a series of staircases  imagine that we want to use them for moving up only  this means another gesture,  another gesture. Then imagine that you have another composition . Only by experimenting with these forms alone - without placing them in a certain space - only with these things can you reach some gestures which will be much more complicated than the usual thing. With even steps or uneven steps, for instance.

This is a very primitive thing, but you cannot escape this quality of the steps. If the point of view is that it is more important for the king to come up, then you will not use the above suggestion, but will concentrate only on the "up". You will use it in accordance with the idea you have to interpret.

The Fishing Scene:

Again the same problem. What is the gesture of the setting which Gretel gave us? It seems to me that she gave us a setting without gesture or idea - it is frozen, or dead. It is not movable. I feel only one part of the gesture. Behind this cliff I can feel a gesture, going out, but it is wrong because the whole setting must have a gesture.

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The important part of The Fishing Scene is that you are acting the power of the sea, and the connection of people to this power. Gretel's setting has no connection with this power. It must stream to the sea, or out of the sea. This is speaking primitively, but if you will do this primitive thing - either towards or away - it will already be a very great thing. If you recall all the psychological gestures which have been done it will help you. It is very bad to imagine the sea out in the audience. It must be more to the right or left, but never out into the audience. This can be done only in special cases, such as comedies sometimes. It is disturbing to the audience, because the audience does not want to be caught with the hands, it wants to be drawn unconsciously. The audience wants to discover the performance for itself, but if the actor is acting towards the audience, the audience will draw back. Therefore, it is necessary to leave the audience as free as possible, and then it will go with you better.

Joan of Arc:

Imagine the scene of the green grass, the cross and the hill which Terence designed. The sketch has a gesture which is unhappy, but the boxes, the structures, which have been used for the setting are absolutely happy and straight. It is only an illusion that the boxes are doing what the designer has drawn. The gesture of the setting must be really

incorporated on the stage. Therefore you must experiment with the boxes and try to reach the same effect, the same gesture, which you reached in your designs. Merely copying the sketch on the stage will give nothing.

If you will look at the setting which you have constructed on the stage, you will see that it has nothing to do with the setting you have drawn. The boxes, the structures, have their own voices, and you must listen to them, and if you do you will find something on the stage which will incorporate what you have wanted to give in your sketch - this means that the real setting and the sketch for it are two different things.

Imagine why the cross cannot be moved, or why only part of the cross can be seen. If you will experiment with such moving you will see how entirely different it is. Try to listen to such experiments and you will find that not only the impression is different, but the interpretation of the whole play is changed. Imagine the significance of the setting for the interpretation of the play, for the idea of the play. Imagine that the cross will be seen more on the left-hand side of the stage, and that it is a little bit broken - then imagine the whole sketch. How much more tragic is the fate of Joan because of this cross, which will speak continuously to the audience. By looking at the setting, the audience will be touched in its subconscious region. You must never forget this law.

Let us recall the tree in Balladina I as another example. Therefore, the director and designer must be responsible for the movements of their settings. Now put the cross in the place where the designer had it, and you will see that the figure of Joan is an entirely different one.

These are very fine things and we must meditate on them, and then we will hear the voices of the various parts of the settings. Now try to put the cross higher so that only the lower part of it can be seen, and we will get an entirely different effect. Now try to flatten the hill - another quality is felt. From this we will see how responsible the director and designer must be for each part of the setting, if we wish to create a new kind of theatre.

Peer Gynt:

The setting is a very expressive one. I don't know why, and I don't want to know why, but it was very expressive. Ask yourselves why it is good, meditate on this setting. There is one question: is the mother down, or is Peer up? If the mother is down, then you must find something to express it more. You must be free to change something at the last moment - you have the right to do this because it is there.

The setting should be made to reach the same effect from the whole auditorium. There are two things which we must try to reach; 1. The complete composition on the stage, and the completeness of the stage settings, will make its impression

on the audience. 2. In creating the settings, the designer is obliged to go through the theatre, and from each place in the theatre he must get some suggestions from which he will find the best solution.

The designer must do the two things - by doing a complete work on the stage, and by trying to reach a conclusion from different parts of the theatre. On principle it is not necessary to have things on the stage which are not necessary. There is always the possibility of finding the nearest thing to what the designer and director want. For instance, perhaps it is right that the gesture for the whole play of The Cave of Salamanca is like a champagne glass. If you have this as a gesture at the same time, it can be turned to a gesture, and the setting can be as champagne. This is another instance in which we can find the gesture through some image or association.

Don Quixote:

In this scene you have tried to bring him from a blue world into a darker one. Imagine where the table is placed, and Don Quixote appears from above. The idea is that the spirit cannot find the connection to the material, and the whole tragedy of Don Quixote is that he is blind to the earth, and his eyes are too wide open for the spirit. The earth and all material things are opposing him. This can be the gesture of all material things - to oppose Don Quixote.

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Remember the psychological gesture of Don Quixote running up the steps and being pushed back, without knowing it? You have not used this, but you must return to such happy foundations. From this gesture, which was so happy, you will find the gesture for all things on the stage. For instance, when Don Quixote is coming down the steps, is the table straight or is it placed across the space? Which is more opposing? The audience will feel the difference absolutely.

If you go from one room to another, you will feel the difference in the various rooms. As audience you will take it at once. It is somehow speaking to you and you are answering it. The audience will never understand the significance of the table being straight or across the space, and it is not necessary - the more subconscious it is the better. But as actors we must know that the impression of the table in one way or another will help us or not. Then imagine another change in the table, and you will see that it is again another action. Then imagine changing the table so that one part is thick and the other part is thin, and so on. The designer must do this with everything on the stage, and then he will be able to create such things that they will be like music for the audience.

Naturally the actor will be fed by these things, and will feel his figure in another composition towards the things on the stage. It is very necessary for the actor not to be

in a surrounding which speaks nothing to him. The very important part of this scenery technique is the preparations and the shape as well.

Now, imagine that the Don Quixote setting is much wider, and you will see that it will be much better to have a big stage for this play. But imagine a big stage for Les Eux, and you will see that it would be dreadful. These ideas of preparation of stage space must be meditated on with the same care as colors, costumes, etc. It is necessary to feel the space, to be responsible for each point on the stage. When the director and designer walk around to each point of the theatre they will know what is the best thing which can be reached from each point. All theatres and audiences are suffering from the fact that the settings are done so carelessly. We must be responsible for each point where the eye of the audience can penetrate.

Balladina II:

You must take all these suggestions in a very practical way. For instance, the gesture in connection with the settings. In this scene it must be decided whether the entrance is the way down, or the way up. There was a light. It must be decided whether it is from light to darkness, or from the opposite. This must be made clear by the director in the form of movement - the audience must be able to say, "Do you remember those steps leading down?", or, "Remember those beautiful

steps leading up?" This must be obvious. Then the golden casket must also speak. It is a very complicated thing - it is part of Kirkor and it makes Calladira happy, or unhappy, or frightened. It must speak and Calladira's connection to it must be in accordance with the thing itself.

For example, let us take a movement like the mother's movement. She is going down, and it makes a certain impression - the audience has done this movement with the mother. Now imagine the whole scene is going on. The mother is going down - this is the beginning of the melody, and it must be resolved. It must go on until a certain thing has been reached. Continue the movement in your imagination - see the whole scene. Now we are nearer and nearer to the end, to the conclusion of the movement which began by going down. Now we see the mother come back the same way, climbing up. Something is wrong. It is not the resolution for this scene. There is something wrong in this gesture, and this is another example of how we must meditate on each small thing. How to finish it? You will find that it is not possible to let the mother go out again in that way - perhaps another door leading deeper, and then a voice from somewhere, and this voice must be included in the whole gesture.

It would be wrong if we were to think that the gesture made by the rise on scene must be continued only by rise on scene. You must start the gesture with the rise on scene, and continue the same gesture with the speech, with lights,

with costumes, etc. All the means we have must be used to continue the same gesture. Therefore, it is not necessary to think that a voice is a voice, and a walk is a walk. The walk is a continuation of the voice, etc.

The Fairy Tale:

Let us return to the mise en scène which was so inharmonious. The director will find all the mise en scène when he knows that he is going to perform. In this case the director is not quite sure what his fairy tale is going to be - he is still seeking and searching for the idea. Without this idea it is not possible to find the right mise en scène, etc.

This fairy tale is a good example of the director not yet being ready, but this form of not being ready is not an amateur one - the director anticipates something in the fairy tale, but he is not yet ready to show it. There is something which leads him in a certain direction, because everything John does is very sure, not always knowing what he does. But we have seen a certain chaos in the scene, because the director does not yet know what he is going to perform. This is not the case with Balladina or Leer Lyul - the directors know what they intend to do. Try to compare the psychology of these directors - they are different cases, but in all of them there is some chaos on the stage, for different reasons.

Recall the scene in which Anna is dying, and Leer begins to move around the bed. You will get the impression

that the movements are right from a naturalistic point of view - they are justified, but they have nothing to do with the gesture of the setting and the idea of the play. Now imagine the moment when he kneels before the bed. It is in connection with the idea, and this movement down is right because it is expressing the whole idea. Now recall the next moment when Iser gets up and turns quickly. It is a very naturalistic movement and very right psychologically, but it has nothing to do with the idea of the play, or the plan of dying in this setting.

Again try to compare the distinct qualities in the two gestures. The next moment Iser is bending over the cat on the chair. This is a sort of repetition of the kneeling before the mother, and it is very inharmonious. The two movements are from different sources, and the movement with the cat has no connection with the gesture of the whole play. The next moment, when he is sitting on the bed, is again inharmonious.

Now look at the chair before Iser came into the room, and look at the same chair when Iser is sitting there playing horse with it. Two different chairs! The chair in the first moment was not necessary - it was something which was disturbing. This is one of the problems which the director has to solve. He has to hide the chair or to show it so that it will be in composition with the bed. Such small things must not be done on the stage without meaning.

This is another example of how fine you can elaborate everything if you have a gesture which will lead you. Let us imagine the bed of Asa - it was standing there and we got the impression that it was very heavy and pressed into the ground. The bed had a dynamic, but the board at the back of it destroyed it. The director must look many times at the bed and decide whether it must be heavy or low or wide or small. Try to imagine different compositions with the body lying on the bed and you will see that the quality of the bed is very important.

Then you must imagine Asa moving on the bed, and Asa lying dead - what will be the composition in these two cases? Then you will feel what the color or texture of the bedclothes must be. The naturalistic point of view will dictate a poor covering, but that is not all - this texture is on the bed of Asa and the bed expresses the process of dying.

If you have had the experience in your life of looking at a person who dies, you will remember how important is each fold which is around this dying person - we feel at once whether they are heavy or light. At the end, the bed and its covering lose all meaning for us, but while the person is fighting with death we are instinctively trying to lift the covers or smooth them. All these movements, which really do not help the person who is dying, are so natural for us, because we are doing this mysterious gesture in losing the person. This must be considered, because the audience is doing the same gesture, and therefore for the audience it will not

to the same what texture is around the body on the bed.

I speak about Asa's death in such detail because the play is so fine, so intimate, and each small thing around her and around Peer are speaking more than the whole series of costumes in Carnival, for instance. The whole quality of the play demands great care with all details. The space around is absolutely insignificant, and therefore the chair was so disturbing at the beginning. It was so very important to underline the details which were nearer to Asa, and the smallest detail is invisible - the moment when she leaves her body. From the dimension of space we come to that of time, and we are plunging into this time problem when we are with Asa and are not able to see the movement, but only able to do. The details around come to the detail of the death. In this small sketch it is necessary.

TIME, SPACE, ACTIVITY AND QUALITY: Carnival:

Now imagine the scene. You will get another inspiration for details - the less details the better. The dimensions of time, space, activity and quality are entirely another thing. Can you imagine this difference? Different approaches to the gestures, according to the different type of play. Everything is possible, but how, that is the question. The interpretations are different "whats" and you can interpret them as you like, but you are obliged to show this through your "how". It must be persuasive.

In Act IV, at the moment when Leon climbs up the steps backwards, there is something in connection with the mother, very good and very painful, but something is not yet ready. The director must meditate on this moment and show something more complete.

COLOR AND LIGHT:

Now that we have seen that each setting is doing a gesture, and each rise on scene, each speech is a gesture, and we know that the movement on scene can continue its gesture in a wall, in a window, in a door, in a table, it means that the actor's psychological movement and speech are connected with the window, for instance, and that the window continues to act. And in this flowing from one means of expression to another, color plays such an important part.