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CRITICISM OF STUDENTS' SCENES  
 CHARACTERIZATION  
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CRITICISM OF STUDENTS' SCENES:

I got the impression that the work has been based on the Method. It was not floundering, and that makes me very happy. It could be better, but it was not floundering. There is quite a different spirit in this new group. They are much freer, and in a very right way. They seem to have had a better teacher! I am astonished that you can get in this short time such good results from my special point of view.

All the sketches had feeling of form. Objectives were sometimes there and sometimes not, but when not there they were absent in such a way that they could be put there. One thing which is very good. All of us are serious, perhaps even over-serious, about our profession. We are consciously serious because only through this approach can I give what I hope to give. This seriousness which I have seen on the stage was like a present because it penetrated into the acting. It is something which I have not seen in other schools, in which the approach has always been somewhat superficial and cheap. Here the seriousness was to be seen on the stage. It is again a very good sign. There were so many pauses, and almost all of them were filled with radiation and presence.

Criticism: Deyna, yours is a case where we must

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distinguish between the author's success and the actor's success. This is a very dangerous thing. For instance, when the audience laughs at the words, and the actor thinks they laugh at his acting, it is a very dangerous thing because it spoils the actor's taste. This was a little bit the case in your scene. You have humor, and you can do more than you did. It was a little bit like a puppet - too much outer performance. You should have dug deeper into the funny psychology which you meant to have. If you understand this, you will take a step forward. Ask yourself whether it was you who was really funny or the author. You took this from the actor's point of view.

CHARACTERIZATION;

There is no characterization which is straight. Each characterization can be elaborated in a many-sided way. It should have been more varied but in the same line, in the same characterization and speech. It comes with experience, but the desire to find many facets of the same characterization must be there. Although the characterization may be there, we must accept variations of the same characterization. The way to get this is to really imagine this character, rehearse it, imagine it, rehearse it; then you will come to the moment when you will see the character doing it with all its variations. Go on working on this part - don't stop at this

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stage. Elaborate all the facets and possibilities which lie in this characterization, which is a funny one and a good one.

#### EXPRESSIVENESS:

Barbara's scene was almost without variation. This is something which we, as actors, must decide - we will never act without variations because it is something which makes us puppet-like on the stage. Bridges and transitions are not enough - you must find the means to express them in different ways, and you must not only express them but express them clearly. When looking at you, I asked myself whether you have it inside - I got the feeling that you had, but you did not express it. We have these means of expression in life, but it is not enough for the stage.

On the stage the life must be increased and not the reverse, which is often the case. It must be an increased "I Am" presence on the stage, but now you must apply it to the work. The activity and the presence is there, and the serious attitude to the work is there. Now find the channels through which it will start to move and to show your abilities as instruments for conveying to the audience. There are two things required - the inner activity and the usage of this activity in the sense of expressiveness.

You have this expressiveness, you have the capacity in you, but you do not use it. Expressiveness always means

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variety. Every part requires variety. Deyna's case is that she has too early borne the child, so immediately came over-acting and the child ran before it could walk. In Barbara's case the child is already crying to be free, and she won't let it go.

Hamlet was very original and persuasive, strong shape - brave. Pauses were there and strange transitions - very intriguing. I suggest now that you put this scene into the play because it is somehow not in the composition of scenes which were before and which will follow - it is somehow too separated. You can show what went before and how it came to this state and what will follow. This can be done by imagining the previous scenes - you would enter with quite a different experience as Hamlet.

If the Queen imagines how she leaves the throne<sup>room</sup> and how long she has been waiting there, she would find some other colors. It would give a more profound approach. If the imagination is properly used, it has a certain quality. You imagine the scene for weeks or months, and then comes the moment when something happens and the imagination comes of itself, and you have only to be the onlooker. When this happens, you have only to absorb it. In this way you will get many suggestions from your own imagination.

The scene was strong and solid and based on something in your creative souls. It was not accidental, it was

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based on something, not because you are experienced but something deeper, more profound and more charming. It is not experience but something which God gave you. Therefore, it is very precious, and it is worthwhile to develop it.

In the scene from Richard III there was a good feeling of form and radiation. If you are able to radiate subconsciously on the stage, then you know it is worthwhile to work on it in the school. You have not yet elaborated the outward characteristics of Richard, although inwardly I hear it. Some positions were out of character with what you have inside you. Atmosphere was there, as presence. It was not ready, but it was good. It was not lying or stupid.

In the scene from The Three Sisters, I was astonished at Helen. It was a big step forward. When you will lose the fear, and feel sure that you have certain powers and rights, then you will know your limits and will begin to swim.

Margaret did not know why she made the confession - it was a confession in general. That was a psychological mistake. It lies perhaps in your lack of expressiveness.

I would be happier in your scene, Karen, if I could see the character. You have fulfilled your task, but who you were I do not understand. Try to find the character through your imagination. Such psychological moments are expressive enough to show the character. Inwardly we must feel what kind of a character she is - typical inner characterization.

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For exercise, observe the life around and understand what characterization each person is. How would you act John, or Carl, or Joe? Take them as parts, and then you will get the ability to catch the inner characterization immediately.

Observe the living persons around you as if they are parts which you have to play. It is not imitative - act the person, then you will get the person more and more as a characterization. Explore the character of Olga in this way - imagine her.

In the second Three Sisters scene, Helen should radiate more. She is causing something dangerous around him and her. This tremendous radiation should be there. Jim was somehow alone, and yet this is the scene in which they are closer together than at any other time. The state in which Tuzenbach is somehow uplifted. He is near the end, and he feels that the end is near. Some people feel when death approaches. Tuzenbach hears somebody approaching. You express it, but you made the mistake of losing the simplicity which must be in these plays. You began to sing a little. Anticipation in such a character must not change him as a character at all - he must remain when you merge yourself. Into this then we lose Tuzenbach, and we have only anticipation in the abstract sense. This gives a reciting note, and the character becomes a different one, and not a very true one. The everyday life, covered with this strange atmosphere,

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makes the art in this play. You have sacrificed the character to the atmosphere, and you have somehow disappeared.

In The Rivals, Carl used his bodily expression too much. If you can give it in a less obvious way, we would get the impulse to desire this quality. You have overdone it.

#### MEANS OF EXPRESSION - THE HANDS:

For everyone except Doyna; you know how expressive the things should be. Hands can sometimes express more than any other part of the body, but your hands are not elaborated; they are not yet expressive. Very often your hands take contrary positions - you forget them. Hands are always noticed, even in everyday life you judge a person by his hands. On the stage the hands are like music - like eyes. Be more careful of them - they must be a means of expression. Your feet are sometimes wrong - not only because of the feeling of beauty, but for expressiveness.

When you will get the Method, you will be glad because you will develop your means of expression. You will know more about the life, you will have something inside of you, and you will feel that you must act because you have to tell people so many heart or superhuman qualities. But only if you will develop yourselves. All of us as human beings are rich and royal beings, but if we don't develop ourselves, we never know it. On the stage the knowledge must be increased - you must have many eyes and hearts for the life - heart experiences

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and absorbing everything from everywhere, and then the experiences from life will merge with your imagination.

OUR METHOD:

All these powers in you will be waiting to be freed, like the princess in the tower with her long hair, waiting for someone to come. The Method is not my invention or my theory - it has real grounds which are much deeper than I can think of. I am simply bringing to you something - I call it my Method because I got to this source, and I bring it to you. It is not mine, therefore, take the Method and believe in it, and the powers which are in it, and you will feel richer and richer.