

OBJECTIVE
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THE CENTER
IMPROVISATION
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THE FEELINGS - TRANSPARENCY

IMPROVISATION: Old Students:

Let us take a scene between a man and wife; both are obstinate. Neither will pick up a piece of paper on the floor. Finally the wife gives in, picks up the paper and bursts into tears. Do the exercise on the ground of the psychological gesture; find as simple a gesture as possible.

Always do things under the guise of something else; it is much more artistic. In clown tricks, for instance, there is always something serious. Grock is absolutely funny, but there is great tragedy inside.

In working with the new students on their sketches, you must continue this work and be very insistent that if you give an exercise on concentration, for example, you must get something from them. You must not be lenient with them. After the first term they will decide whether they want to stay with us or not.

Exercise:

Let us do an exercise in order to try to discover the difference between doing something as ourselves, and doing it in this impersonal way with power streaming through us. Place a chair in the middle of the room; pick up the chair and

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say to the crowd, "I hate you all - you are devils!" Do this with as little of the personal element as possible. If you perspire a great deal when doing exercises or on the stage, then you should not be on the stage. That sort of physical effort should not be made on the stage. Toscanini never shows any result or feels any result from the physical effort he must make. This is not always possible on the stage, and you must accept the fact that there will always be some result from a muscular effort, but we must work for as little of it as possible.

OBJECTIVE:

Let us continue with the work on the small sketches. The theme is that of a very hot day in summer, a father is leaving his family in the country, and he is sent to the city with many messages to do. We will perform the moment when he enters the music shop to buy some music. He wants to buy some music but something has happened to him, and he is unable to remember the name of the piece which he must buy. He tries to remember, and the shopkeeper tries to help him, but to no avail. then the father recalls that his train is leaving. At the end of the sketch something happens which enables him to remember the name of the piece of music, and he disappears with it in a very, very happy mood.

Concentrate on the objective this time. There are

three objectives for the father: 1. To buy the music as soon as possible and to catch the train. 2. To remember. 3. To buy the music as soon as possible, and to catch the train. The difference between the first and the last objective is the tempo. The objective for the shopkeeper is: 1. To be as polite and as helpful as possible. 2. To help the father to find the name of the music. 3. To serve, and to draw the father's attention to his wares. Be sure to take all the objectives into your bodies, and then do it.

Criticize yourselves; be conscious of the purpose of the exercise, and ask yourselves whether you could improve on what you have done, and in which way. Was the objective strong enough? Were the second and third objectives different enough, or was it all one thing? Have you used the opportunity to change the objective as often as possible? This gives the actor and the audience much pleasure, because as audience we must do the objective inside.

Now we will take a small part of the exercise. Everyone will be the father, and the objective will be to buy some music as soon as possible, and then catch the train. We will take the scene up to the moment when the father forgets. Try to elaborate it; are your arms and hands full of this desire? Your hands and arms must be your brain; your whole body must be full of this desire, this objective. As an actor you must be full of this kind of activity.

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How important it is to exercise separately all the qualities which an actor must have. In time you may be able to get everything at once, and then you will be absolutely free and rich in your creative activity, because the objective belongs to your actor's nature, imagination, incorporation, concentration - everything becomes your nature in time. This is the real way to the actor's freedom. You must not only know what our profession is like, but after this knowing you will gradually get it, and then you will understand what it means to be an actor who is absolutely free, and who is able to create before the audience without any hesitation, and the intellect will get its part in the work; then and not before. If before, it will close all the doors around you, and will be like a tyrant who seizes everything, and will not permit it to awaken in our actor's soul. We are actors, and this is a special kind of human being, to be an actor.

ACTOR'S MARCH: THE CENTER:

Make an effort to take these things as if for the first time, and it will give you an important result. In our chests we have a center which is powerful, which keeps our whole body, which holds it. It is able to move and it leads us forward or backward, or up and down - everything comes from the center. Around this center, as it were, we have our body, our shoulders, necks, everything is in connection with the center, legs and feet, torso, everything. Now lift your hands as

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if the impulse is issuing from the center in your chests. Be sure that the movement comes from the center. Appeal to your center as to a point from which you have the power to move. Lie down, only because your center leads you down; get up because your center lifts you. Therefore your figure is quite harmonious. Realize: "My body is healthy and my body is strong. I am able to radiate myself from the center which is in my chest. My body is beautifully built. In walking, my body experiences great pleasure. From this center I am able to give different qualities to my body. It can be very heavy if I need it as an actor, or very light."

Please try to radiate this quality of lightness, and then move your arms as lightly as possible; they are absolutely light, almost without weight. An actor must be able to do everything with the body relaxed. Now raise your arms up and down; without weight, without body; keep this ease and lightness. Your body is so obedient that you do not need to feel it if you do now want to. Now walk about with the feeling that your center leads you, and that you have no body. Increase the feeling of being light. Now jump to the side, then again walk and build a circle, still with the feeling of ease; then lie down on your back without any noise, without any feeling of weight. Light and relaxed; get up without body. You must be sure that you are able to master and govern your body in any way you like. Then get up and down in a quicker tempo; without noise, without weight.

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OBJECTIVE:

Take the objective, a psychological one, with your whole body. Your objective is to persuade Mr. Paters to leave the room, because it will be much better for him if he does. It is possible that if he does not leave the room, something very tragic will happen to him. ~~Your objective is to persuade~~ him to leave the room, but you must fulfill it only by approaching him and taking his hands and covering them with yours, and through your eyes and hands fulfill the objective, without a word. The new element is that I have given you a definite condition and the means of fulfilling it. Take the objective and direct it to a certain aim, and remember that a psychological objective must always be taken with the body.

IMPROVISATION: Old Students:

On the basis of atmosphere; the theme is that it is evening; a drama consisting of a family of a mother, and a son who is an undergraduate. Tomorrow the son is to have his final exams, and the whole family hopes that he will pass happily through this. The whole question of his existence is involved, and he has worked and worked. A friend has called to see him; his sister and everyone is very happy. They are sitting very comfortably in the room and everyone is with him, helping him. The father is a small businessman, and they live on his earnings. Twice a year the father has a period of drinking which amounts to an illness. He suffers tremendously from this ill-

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ness, during which he spends all the money, and the family must live badly. These two weeks are always the most difficult in their lives.

At the beginning of the scene the father is not at home, but when he enters the family sees that the illness comes. People for whom drink is a disease must drink very much before they are drunk, but those who know the person notice the smallest change in the position or the face or some trace in the voice - such very fine things. The members of the family look with horror as he enters the room, and they guess that something is already there. It kills everyone psychologically. The son loses his will power, and it is clear that tomorrow he may not be able to pass the exam. The father suffers enormously, and tries to control himself, but he sees that they know, and nobody speaks about it.

The ground of the improvisation is atmosphere; the first atmosphere is warm and comfortable and happy. At the moment when the father appears this is changed by suspicion, and then the atmosphere falls down, down into a very dramatic one. At the end of the sketch the friend of the son goes away, the son breaks out into hysteria and blames his father. There are three main atmospheres - hopeful, suspicion, and disaster. Take it not as a tragedy, but as drama - not as melodrama. It was very good as drama, and the scene was well done.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

So let us try another improvisation, a psychological one based on the psychological gesture. Two persons are standing opposite to each other, proud and grim. They are very much in love with one another, but something has happened between them which separates them. It is a tragedy. The sketch begins with a long pause out of which must be spoken one word or one sentence, from either side, first the man and then the girl. Out of this long tragic pause must be created two sentences. After the two sentences comes another very long pause which is the opposite to the other; from the first pause we create something, and in the second pause we radiate the result of the first pause. Between these two very big and very long pauses there are two sentences. The whole psychological improvisation must be inside of you, without any movement; pause, sentence, pause. A very true and complicated psychological way, on the ground of the psychological gesture which is given - that of slowly crossing the arms.

THE PAUSE:

You must never allow yourself to act primitive or rough things. Compare yourself with what you have done a year ago - these are jewels which you have done today. The pause is always the moment of the strongest radiation. Think of what you have seen, and try to decide whether the first pause foretells the second pause, and the second pause tells of something

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which has happened.

The Fishing Scene:

Let us do a moment from this sketch for the purpose of awakening the feelings. Allow the feelings to stream through you. Very consciously go through the objectives, the psychological gestures, the atmospheres and everything you know, and prepare yourself for giving the performance. The exercise is to send the feelings through you, and in this way you will get them. As you did it now you were not transparent enough - something was stopping you.

Peer Gynt:

Trust to the powers that are around and above you, and let them stream through. By speaking, by being silent, by moving, by sitting still, be absolutely transparent and the feelings will come to you. To be dead on the stage means to act death with full energy. The words must always be clear in all situations. It is the same as with the imagination. You are able to imagine anything you like. Just so, you are able to ask; send me, please, a feeling of this or that, and it will be sent at once. It is the most powerful thing. After you will get this feeling of transparency, then you must ask and what you need will be sent to you. With time you will be sent so many things that you can vary everything. Each day your acting will be a new thing. For instance, when you enter

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the stage today you may want your Hamlet to cry, and you ask; send me, please, tears and your Hamlet will cry. It is an absolutely free way, and nothing can bar you from it, if you have the contact. This is the most beautiful thing to get, that of being able to take everything you like from your surroundings, and to let it pass through.