

THE ACTOR'S RELATIONSHIP TO SPACE
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King Lear

THE ACTOR'S RELATIONSHIP TO SPACE:

Exercise:

A new variation with groupings on the platforms. To the music, one by one move to the platform and continue to move during the duration of the music. We must feel the construction [of the platforms] because the construction is one of the inspirers of our exercise. We will change these inspirers to the music, to the idea, and other parts of the exercise. The aim of the exercise is to get a new feeling of space, of harmony, of things which are in this space. You must master the space with the music and with your body.

Some laws which are operating in the creation of things will never operate if you do not observe the law of the threshold. It is very important to have the whole body working. You must feel the same thing in each part of your body. We must be careful that this does not become dance. There is a point where we are doing almost the same thing as dancers but not for the same aim - not from the same point.

This exercise must remain as pure or as abstract as possible. The construction is the reason for action for the actor. He must awaken in his artistic soul the feeling for pure artistic elements - to move in some spaces with a feeling

of relationship to them. This is enough for an actor in this exercise.

If you are an artist and you wish to act an old man, you must know what it means to be "old" in general - in a big, big idea. A poor actor feels only his own part of an old gentleman, but for the type of actor we must be, in order to act an old man, we must feel the "old" in general - old earth, old trees, old animals, old human figures, old thoughts. When I have the feeling to be old in general, then I am able to act one old person after another, and I will always be able to give to the audience more than just one old gentleman.

HARMONY WITH ALL THE ELEMENTS:

This is the idea of the exercise with the platforms. This is not a special character or a special part. It is movement in this world of the platforms, the constructions. This is what we need so much as actors. You must feel each movement construction itself. The figure which is uncertain is not in as complete and as formed as the harmony with the construction. You must not only see each other, but feel each other in these surroundings.

It is possible to find art and harmony in the naturalistic theatre. For instance, a small room in which a child lies dying. We must have the feeling of harmony in our bodies, in the costume, in the lines. We must have the feeling for composition. If you have to act a scene of a political meeting, for instance, nothing can be more naturalistic, but you must do this with a feeling of harmony.

THE ACTOR'S INTUITIVE CREATIVE FEELINGS:

The first step towards this harmony is to find one's relationship to the platforms, to the construction. The problem is as deep as calculus - in our art it is the same problem. If we try to understand this, we are lost. We can only find the solution through the awakening of our artistic intuition and creative feelings. We must be aware not only of the space but the relationship we can have with it. We must visualize each exercise as the germ from which something wonderful will grow. These exercises are only the seeds of the plant which will appear with time. We must have the picture of the plant, of the flower, always before us. We must visualize this exercise we have done today. Try to see it at its highest point. We must have the feeling that it is a wonder.

The Golden Steed:

We must discover the line of the White Old Man. At the point where he is reviving Antin and the two brothers have appeared as part of Antin. The idea is that the human being is created in a certain way, and the more a person understands what is going on in himself, the more he is able to approach the very important moment in his life as if "inside-out." This is the moment when many people become ill and sometimes crazy. The asylums are full of such people. Medicine is not yet aware of the fact that such a person is not yet ready to see himself because it is a frightful experience.

This scene between the White Old Man and Antin and his brothers is a very slight picture of this. The actors must know this, although the audience will never know it. For example, the congregation will never know as much as the priest, who understands fully his celebrations. If you will know and understand such things, you will be so powerful as an actor. You must know some things which cannot be preached but which must be known and acted.

The mission of the White Old Man is to rescue Antin from becoming mad. Without him he would be mad because he is already beginning this madness when he sees his brothers. In his speech to Antin, "Do not listen to their gossip," the White Old Man first gets Antin concentrated and then encourages him and lifts him up to his real purpose - the mountain. Don't be afraid that the audience will not pay attention to small, subtle details. If we do these fine things, the audience will be uplifted and that is enough.

You must first overdo your gestures - make them too big and too strong. After this, you will know how to do the same thing easily, lightly, and quickly. One of the worst habits which have come to us from the naturalistic theatre, is the idea that we cannot understand the psychology of a certain part. We must be able to understand every emotion, small things and big mysteries - that is the profession of an actor.

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A good technical rehearsal is always something more than just the technique.

THE PRELUDE AND CODA - COMPOSITION OF THE PLAY.

By flying over the play we can see two moments which are very closely connected to one another - the prelude and the coda. This is not yet action - not yet the play - the prelude and then we start, and the coda when we finish. The prelude is the moment in The Golden Stead when the crowd is moving in a mass on the ground, and the coda is after, "Joy, joy," when the crowd is advancing towards Antin and the Princess. A good conductor or director feels the relationship between these two points, and we must feel this. When we are on the ground, we must have somewhere in our imagination the moment when we will advance toward Antin and the Princess. They are in a certain sense the same thing - it is the frame for the whole play.

In King Lear, before Lear appears in his throne speech, Gloucester and others are speaking. This is the introduction, and the whole play must be started with the feeling that someone will come; and then there is the noise of trumpets, and the play starts. At the end of the play King Lear dies, and the same thing happens - the feeling that someone has gone - the same thing but opposite. The others are speaking, but King Lear has gone.

It is, therefore, so important for actors who start

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the play and for the producer as well to feel these two things. And when you are able to feel these two things, this will give you the feeling, "Now," in the play. It is absolutely important to feel the beginning and the end as prelude or introduction and coda. It is like the frame of a picture - it is a psychological frame when an actor is able to feel these two things.

We must remember from time to time the introduction and coda in The Golden Steed. Without this it will be always a little indefinite. This will give you much power to act. For instance, if I wish to put the pencil on the table, and I approach the table knowing that I have to do this, my walk to the table will have meaning.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The right characterization must come as the result of the changed psychology, and the second result will be to be original. This must be or it will only be flat and common, or it will give the illusion that you are portraying a new character.

When you try to find characters in voice, speech, make-up, and costumes, always ask yourself if it is common or ordinary. Then you must find something original. You must ask yourself whether you have really changed your psychology. The first mistake would be to change the voice with the idea that it will change the psychology of the character. The

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second mistake would be to use your own ordinary voice without finding something original.