

THE DIRECTOR'S OBSESSION
THEME OF GOOD & EVIL
SPEECH

Keyerhold

Criticisms: Ballarina Rehearsal:

The director has made one great mistake - she has spoken too much with her actors, and that makes them less and less actors and more and more clever people - scientific people, not doing people. At the moment the actor begins to think about his part, he is no longer an actor. Humanity is all mental at our present stage of development, and if you appeal to our mental part we are happy and things are easy for us. But for the actor it is as if a violinist with a beautiful instrument spoke to us about his performance, instead of playing to us. Imagine that while the violinist is talking the instrument is dying, and when he comes to play on it he finds it lifeless and distorted. We as actors must do instead of speaking. Therefore, every question the director asks, without doing, is killing his cast. When the actor begins to work he begins to suffer, but we must live through suffering, and not die with pleasure.

Remember the whole rehearsal, and realize what you could have turned into action instead of conversation. For example, when Deirdre spoke about the likeness between King Lear and the Mother it was clever, but meant nothing for us. She must show us what she has seen in her imagination. Each point must be turned into an action. Remember what we said yesterday about "bluish-red flowers"? That is all that your actors have

brought you today.

Imagine such a tragedy, such clear characters - the performance is like a thunder-storm - and your actors have only found flowers! You must ask yourself whether they have really prepared the task you have set for them, whether it was a real preparation for your performance, and you will see that they have nothing to do with the future performance. It was so weak, so small, and so un-tragic in style.

You must lead your actors and not allow them to do what they want. Because they are lazy. At this moment in the world's history everyone is lazy - the only action they know is how to kill - Mussolini is lazy because he does nothing; he only orders with his will. Therefore, we are lazy, not because we are to blame for it but because our whole culture, this moment that we are going through as human beings is in the mind, therefore we must be lazy. But we must get through this laziness because we are actors, and our name means action, action, action! Therefore, the directors must lead in our theatre, and must be more despotic. You must tell your cast today that they have brought you nothing and tell them what you have expected from them. By reading *Macbeth* and by speaking in cathedrals - these are magnificent things, but your actors have brought you only bluish-red flowers. Alan's desire to sing in the cathedral was perhaps the only right thing.

THE DIRECTOR'S DESPOTISM:

Reference must also be made of a dictator in his rehearsals of the Tolson Trial. The Director has his idea and

he must incorporate it even if he has to become a Meyerhold.¹ Meyerhold would be a great Director for us if he had two things - a warm heart, and an idea of the Method. He is a genius, but his heart is cold, and he does not know what he has done. He has no method, and does not know what to do when the inspiration has gone. If the director has a method, and the despotic^{power} of Meyerhold - then he will be the right kind of despot.

From now on our directors must be more despotic, because they are too weak. If you have a method, and know what you are doing, then you have the right to be despotic. Let your cast be tired - don't pay attention to it. You have the right to call the attention of everyone to one point. Be despotic but warm. Meyerhold commands his cast to stand on their heads, and they must do it, and then he goes away and forgets all about them! But something is right in this kind of work - the cast does what he commands. By knowing our Method and preparing our rehearsals we will never leave our cast standing on their heads. But this kind of temperament and despotic power we must have, and when we go through it we will find the freedom we have to give our actors. Now it is not freedom - it is weakness.

The actors must be led - the time must not be lost. Don't permit questions - the director will tell his cast when he is ready. Don't permit yourself to be disturbed. With Meyerhold nobody knows what will happen tomorrow, but that is the right kind of despotism. The directors will find their way,

but for this they must prepare their rehearsals more and more by means of our method.

The director must not tell his actors how to do the psychological gesture, but show them. You have the right to make as many mistakes as your actors, absolutely, because this is the way to develop. The director develops himself as an actor, therefore, if you have shown the wrong gesture it is not a mistake. You have the same right to explore as your actors, but under the condition that you must be despotic.

THEME OF GOOD & EVIL:

Perhaps I am mistaken about Balladina, but I think your work has reached such a stage that you have to look at the whole play from a higher and higher point of view. For instance, by trying to find the characters, you must now ask yourself how you must compose them together for expressing the idea. You must take, for instance, a contemporary idea and on the basis of this try to find the characters and their situations and the settings, etc.

You feel today that the idea of the play is the fight between two worlds. It is a fight, but who is fighting? Kostin represents all the evil world, and this figure grows in significance. The mother represents some wrath which lives deeply inside. The Saint perhaps is the good will. The mother has no will. What is Kostin as evil? Is he giving evil or taking good? This is absolutely important for the interpretation of

the character. Is he suggesting bad things, or does he make Calladina sleepy. His mission must be understood, and then the character will grow. What is Gralon? Perhaps he is another power which comes under the guise of a funny or strange person, but the whole gesture of Calladina is the deeper and deeper spiral, less air, less width, less movement, everything is trying to become a stone. She will die when she is praying, and will fall down like a stone. Gralon is someone who brings freedom, air, etc. He is the voice of Birker. He begins by talking and laughing in the big wide halls, and he comes into the darkness. Humorous and stupid, he can mean fresh air and life.

And then begins the fight between Kostrin and Gralon, and this is one of the themes - how they are together, how they speak to each other, the contact between them, how Kostrin tries to kill Gralon. Kostrin's objective is to get this eternal pause which is the quiet of death. This is the fight between the two, and you will find the characterization. From this you will find a series of objectives, the right connection, the necessity to radiate, and how this balloon dies gradually. This is the long process which will give you so many nuances in your movements, settings, lights, etc. And in this pause we must hear the voice of the mother who is speaking from somewhere, and she is crazy. But Kostrin's hand is over everything.

As the director, you must look at the play from a higher place. The actors cannot do this because they are too

busy with themselves. Therefore the director is necessary for the production, and from this higher point of view you will see the settings, the costumes, the colors, the music, etc. The reason for saying it is a metal performance, and how this metal will speak more and more through the voice of this strange person, and why Vestrin must be like a noble priest although he is a murderer. If you act him as an evil person there is nothing to develop. But if you will start from another place, the audience will feel that he has a noble face, that he is an ascetic. He begins to work as a powerful Jesuit, and we see how strange is the radiation - something in his eyes, then something in his gesture, nothing more. With such things you will discover and show gradually the real power which lives in him.

You have to place each person in his own place, and then you will be able to combine colors, shapes, costumes, etc. That is why the rehearsal today was so wrong. You must try to see some things from another level and interplay the characters from this point of view, and the next day you will be able to look at it from another level.

SPEECH WORK:

One thing must not be allowed - the director must not ask his actors to speak well - he must order them to do so. Miss Crowther can annihilate everything we have here, and do what she wishes. It is not right for us to impose on her our gestures and ideas. She must be absolutely free, and we must not stop her with our means. After the two freedoms we must

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find a third. Miss Crowther will, of course, give us what we need, but we must let her start from her point of view. By hearing all our mistakes and our helplessness in speaking, she will be able to help us.

Our directors must use all the means of the Method in a much wider sense. Miss Crowther, for example, has so many possibilities - you appeal to the actor's sense of justification - colors, objectives, ensemble, everything must be touched, not only one way. The director has shown Miss Crowther what the gestures are in alignment, but the actors must not impose the gestures on Miss Crowther. The director gives the work into Miss Crowther's hands, and she can discard or not as she wishes.