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BRIDGES AND TRANSITIONS  
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Shakespeare  
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## BRIDGES AND TRANSITIONS:

Bridges and transitions are actually the acting.  
 If we will take one of Shakespeare's plays, like Hamlet, which seems to be very complicated, we will see that we have an idea about the complicated psychology which is just as abstract as the idea of tempo in general. It means nothing if there is nothing there to be in tempo.

If we take Romeo and Juliet - there is something in Shakespeare which makes us devoted and this is the complicated, strange, powerful psychology or the brilliant bridges and transitions expressed in the words, sentences, etc. Take the plot - the boy wants to love, he is young, his blood is boiling, and he is looking for a girl - it is very flat, common, and banal. He meets the girl, and they love each other, but the parents are against it - they kill themselves. Is it a plot? It is an old fashioned, earthy, senseless, banal plot. Where lies Shakespeare? Not in the plot - not in visible, tangible, banal things - only in the bridges and transitions which lie in Shakespeare's brilliant heart and will. King Lear - how banal - an old egotist wants to have peace - he

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calls his daughters to him and sends one of them to hell. Two of his daughters and a group of scoundrels push the old man down. He finds out that he was wrong and dies. Again an old fashioned plot, but it is something unique in the world because of the bridges and transitions.

Just so in acting. We can take a very complicated plot, like Sherlock Holmes, which is full of bridges and transitions in the plot, but not so much in the spirit. Imagine the actor who has not developed a love for bridges and transitions. He will take this complicated plot and act it just as flat as a chattering tea party. So the plot cannot help if the actor has not developed the love for bridges and transitions. On the other hand, the plot, even if it is banal, cannot spoil the acting if the actor has bridges and transitions. King Lear, - this old man was enough to develop a world famous thing.

There is an old saying that there are no bad parts, only bad actors. This is very true. We can prove it in our school - you make exercises sometimes, very simple, primitive exercises, and these simple things seem sometimes like a marvelous performances because there is something going on inside you. Very often we have taken complicated themes for improvisations, and it was nothing because nothing was there in you. I want to awaken in you the desire to get this ability - to awaken the love of "hows" and not the "whats." This "how"

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makes everything interesting and "what" means nothing. The girl loves the boy and dies - that means nothing, but "how" she dies is what matters. This "how" is always bridges and transitions, and the "what" is always the plot and means nothing. Therefore, we do these bridges and transitions.

From where do these bridges and transitions come? From nowhere. No one can give you these bridges and transitions. This is the individual, the creative spirit - to be able to call upon these bridges and transitions from oneself. This bell which you can try to ring inside yourself, that is the way to find the bridges and transitions. It can be exercised and that is the only way. Every point of the Method tries to awaken the actor, and one of the exercises is to call upon oneself and to ask which bridges and transitions can I create at the moment. Therefore, pay attention to bridges and transitions and exercise them especially.

Exercise:

Make a bridge between the following things - purely psychologically and inwardly. You say to someone, very happily, "Yes," and the other extreme is when you say a very sad, "No." Find a true way to fill this gap with your own creative way. When you have found the bridges and transitions, you must each time start with the belief that you will get something more - more sparks, more beauty, more depth. Don't

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repeat anything, but what you already know use as a basis under your feet and try to get something more.

Without this we will always be primitive actors who only speak the author's words. You can do it, and you must see it for yourself, then you will get it. In the exercise you have done, what does it mean when the pause comes? There comes the author or the director who decides that it must be so until it becomes so - when the pole of "Yes" and the pole of "No" are almost together. Does it mean that bridges and transitions are somehow killed in part? No, that is the secret of human creative psychology. The person who has no bridges and transitions has no creative ability - the less creative the person, the less bridges and transitions he has. The same is true in any art - it is fundamental.

In everyday life one can go on with certain "what's" without anything under them, but on the stage we cannot jump from one "what" to another, otherwise we would see immediately the naked plot. What happens when these two poles are coming nearer? It means that part of the bridges and transitions go down into the subconscious, but it is there. The full amount of the bridges and transitions given by God to every artist are working there. It is essentially important to know this because if we know that bridges and transitions are there we will believe in them, and will rely on them, and they will

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respond. If we don't know this or don't pay attention to it, the subconscious cannot act with us or come into our art, and will only display themselves in our dreams. But as creative persons we must rely not on our dreams, but on our clear consciousness. That is the point where we must get all these subconscious things and not wait for dreams. Even when it comes very near, it is still there, and even when there is no pause at all the two poles become one and still the full amount of bridges and transitions is there, and it comes forth like radiation.

#### THE ACTOR'S TREMENDOUS SUBCONSCIOUS BACKGROUND:

Even now, when the church has become lower and the priests have lost their mission - although there are still many good priests - I have seen the same mass, the same movements, everything; but one priest is almost like a magician, how he speaks and moves. It is something which is powerful - a message - something which comes from him because his subconscious is working. Other priests are working, speaking with a very sensitive voice, trying to persuade everyone about what is going on, and nothing is going on!

Just the same with us as actors - we can do such things, and there will be nothing as a result, and we can do very little - having a great background - and we will become priests of the first type. If they are real priests, they have just the same inner technique - either they are instruments

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through which certain inspirations and wisdom comes, or they are puppets through which actually nothing comes - they are there but they are dead - it is just the same with us on the stage.

TRUE IMAGINATION:

How to get this subconscious background? What is the real priest? Say the old Egyptian priests - what was their development? It was the development from a tremendous amount of imagination and concentration and exercises connected with the higher world, with higher beings - it was a life devoted to certain investigations into other worlds and that is what gave them the power to move, to speak, to celebrate in the way which was a kind of magic. Now we, as actors, have to do the same but in a simplified and confined way. What is this? It is the right and true imagination - our imagination is a source from which we can fill, as it were, this subconscious region with the content which will radiate even if there is no pause, and which will act very much if there is space for it.

Our subconscious is a thing which works continuously and tremendously - everyone has a fire inside him, whether he knows it or wishes it. Even having tremendous human fire in the subconscious, often education prevents the person from knowing it. If such a person would try to act, he would not be able to, in spite of his natural resources. It is not enough

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to be born with abilities, it is necessary to develop them in a certain, definite way. The priest must meditate on one thing. Therefore, although two persons may have the same gift, one cannot use it as an artist, whereas the other can use it if he develops his imagination. So, having the gift, we have to work upon it with our imagination, then the flame will come out in this form or that.

Having this in mind, we will again create the bridges and transitions between two poles - the gay "yes," and the sad "no," but make the pause shorter. Try to explore particularly what we have discussed. The short pause does not kill the background - something is there which is like a flame, like a magic power which the actor should send out.

If you get this ability to have this background always with you, you will make a very strange impression on the audience. When the actor with such background appears on the stage, before he speaks, before he moves, before we know who he is, we begin to laugh with our whole being, or immediately to cry! and we don't know why - this is the magic of the actor's art. This tremendous anticipation which arises in the audience when the actor appears with this tremendous background. It is enough to move the audience and to stir it to laughter or tears.

Chaliapin had this ability. He was a genius as an actor. When he appeared on the stage, something happened in

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each person's soul because he had this tremendous background. In his everyday life he was not a very fine man, although he was a god as an artist. On the stage it was one revelation after another, but in everyday life he was not always fine. How different is the creator in us! In comparison with the tremendous knowledge which his soul had when he was on the stage, he was almost commonplace in everyday life. Once he asked me to explain what it meant to have a method in art, waiting for the answer with a little irony because he had everything. I tried to explain Stanislavsky's method to him. Then he asked me how could he, a huge man, become an insect? In an instant he became one! With the slightest gesture he, in one second, became the insect. He relied only on his genius, and as such he is one of the persons whom we study. When, through fear, he lost his confidence in his ability, then he became as other bad actors and singers.

**TEMPO:**

If you will get this background, it will act for you - that is the most pleasant and the most happy moment in the actor's life, when something is acting for us and not we who are dragging something heavy behind us. And from this point you will understand tempo in the right sense. Almost everyone suffers under the dictates of the tempo because we hurry, but this hurry is a sign that we don't allow the background to be there. Don't overact as if in an effort to help



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this subconscious creative background to radiate and speak its own language. Don't stress, don't help, don't substitute the real creative voice with the small voice which we, as actors, know - these are not to be compared with the real creative thing.

If you will rely upon the bridges and transitions and its language, you don't need to stress, to exaggerate, or to overact. It is not necessary. This "as-if" helping kills the real expressiveness. It is a volcano if you rely on it, and it is only business if we overact and exaggerate and try to show our audience that we are afraid, or happy, or sad. Having this feeling for the background, you must have the courage to make the step towards this real thing, you must not substitute for it the unreal and cheap. Have the courage to say to yourself, "I rely on my creative spirit," and it will react immediately. But if you will be cowardly towards this main thing, you will only lose, you will not be victorious. It requires courage - take the risk. If you do not make this step, you will never become friends with your subconscious. Try to make this step here in our school, where no one requires anything of you except to follow certain rules.

Exercise:

In King Lear, remember the moment when Lear puts the question to Cordelia and she answers, "Nothing, my lord."

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Lear: "Nothing?" Cordelia: "Nothing." from the moment when Cordelia says, "Nothing, my lord;" the bridges and transitions start. Make it as long as possible.

#### SOURCES OF CREATION:

If you are preparing such a part, you imagine and imagine it until you will get such a rich background. The first thing which the actor must get is the ability to dig from these intangible sources of creation on the condition that you will feed your subconscious. It, the source, is the open door to the subconscious; it can be for one minute every day, or ten minutes, or half an hour. The source is really intangible. Believe in it, then you will open the way to it. By exercising in this way, you will get the ability to do this in one second, but still with the background. In one instant we can give the impression that an eternity has passed, or we can act five minutes in vaudeville and give the impression that it is only one moment. At the moment we find the contact with our subconscious, we get immediately a different feeling of time.

To change the tempo means to change the content. Everyone can pretend on the stage, but to have contact with a spirit of your own, that is the only thing we try to get in our school, that is why our school is different. In other schools they are preparing little scenes and sketches with the teachers. They are not at all penetrating into the

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sources of creation so they can do twenty or two hundred sketches, but they will lead only to the fact that the students will accumulate many habits and a certain shamelessness on the stage. In one month I can teach you all the tricks, but I will not do it. Therefore, we have a three-year course. That is the point at which we are aiming. If not all of us will reach the goal, some of us will in time be appreciated, and our group will be a new creative source for the human culture. It is a very serious matter.