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RHYTHM

FOUNDATIONS FOR ACTING:

I am always a little bit suspicious that we are not taking certain foundations when we begin our rehearsals. When I try to explain certain things about the character or situation or atmosphere, etc., I always expect the foundation to be taken. If it is not, then this is a very interesting and dangerous thing. Imagine that we have no method, and all these things the director will tell you are nothing, and we are only relying on accidents and the same things which we see in the usual theatres; then we are helpless. But if the director gives some suggestions, and if he really appeals to the imagination, it is quite different. The first case is an intellectual one, and the second case is an artistic one; and the whole difference lies not in words of the director, but in the reception of the actor.

When the actor receives the directions and instructions with inner action, it is quite different, and the director is able to describe things which will never be turned into dry intellectual content. If these things are taken by the means of imagination, it makes a great difference and we are in a different world - it becomes psychological. Please do not forget this, because these two things are so close together that the danger is too great. Sometimes I feel during our rehearsals that the danger is too near.

We will do the following exercises: I will describe certain scenes and characters, and I will stop and ask you what grounds you have taken. First, take everything with your imagination - forever and ever - and try to find as quickly as possible certain things in our Method which will help you when you are entering the stage.

Exercise: Two ladies are sitting in the drawing room and speaking about things which are very interesting for both of them, but it seems that they are interested in the thing itself; they are interested in the process of thinking and speaking, and this makes them happy.

IMAGINATION:

Imagination is the language which the director and actors speak to each other. Instead of intellectual understanding - imagination. This is absolutely necessary, not only for speaking but for creating. The objective actually is not something which must be put into words. If the imagination is strong enough, and if it has a real touch of the inner life, then, of course, the imagination can be taken as a ground itself.

THE OBJECTIVE:

With full activity try to find the objective in this scene: A very dark space, and far away in this dark space we see a small light moving and flickering. We do not know whether we are standing on the roadway or in a field, whether there are rocks or sea around us. A strange noise like wind or sea or thunder - very strange sounds, and we do not know

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what they are. The flickering light comes nearer and nearer. Finally we remember the words, "Come, come quickly," addressed to this light.

For this sentence, what will you do? What could you find for the sentence after it was broken inside? Could you find the objective?

Change of atmosphere and the objective; find some way out of this situation. The light may be my way of release. I was taking atmosphere principally and changes of atmosphere. This way out - I want to be free of this uncertainty.

When the objective is felt, it is felt much deeper than the words are expressed, and this is very important to know. For instance, I will take this inner experience, "The light is there," wordlessly, as an objective. It is sometimes enough. I feel it is an objective; I take it as an objective. This is a very characteristic case, and Mrs. Elmhirst could find many words to describe it; but the objective is already there without words, which is very possible and very good. However, ^{if} we do not know that it is possible to have the objective, then we could be lost.

Now, quite a different example, and I will give you the task: Will you, as quickly as possible, find the objective in this scene. A bookshop with a very nice young lady who is trying to choose a book, and a young clerk who is very much attracted to this young lady. When he hands her the book, his hand shakes and the book falls. He is very ashamed, and as he tries to pick it up bumps his head, which, of course, increases

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his confusion and he makes apologies. The girl laughs at him quietly. In final desperation he calls someone else to complete the sale, meanwhile sticking his finger in his eye, and then he begins to cry.

What are the objectives for this? The condition being that the young clerk becomes more and more emotional, and the objective coming from it that he wants to be clear of this ever widening circle.

I take this very difficult example to illustrate my point, as the objective seems to be changed each moment. You can try to find objectives for the whole, or start with one objective, or a certain moment. Then try to find more and more the objective which will embarrass everyone. Or divide the thing into two parts. Everything is possible. There are no special rules, as this case I have given you is especially difficult: (1) I want to appear before her in the most attractive form, with the condition that everything I do is turned against me. (2) I want to bask in this warm light, to open myself in this light, with the condition that everything I do I lose more each time.

It is important to know that I can take an inner experience in a wordless way, and it is sometimes nothing. You may feel it as an objective and take it as an objective, even without being able to describe it. The objective has already been experienced without words, and this is very possible and very good.

It is very interesting that there are actually two things to do. To find the objective without any words, but the ability to have the objective. The other thing is to elaborate the objective and make it clearer, and for this we may use pictures and so come to the clear form of the objective, which is expressed in words. By trying to find this clearer form, we are at the same time elaborating our objective, because if I am choosing the right word, I am doing it somewhere inside, and the objective is getting clearer and clearer.

THE ARCHETYPAL PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

Try once the whole situation in the form of a psychological gesture. It is right, of course, that the gesture is not at once quite clear, because we know that on principle all gestures must be discovered, as all art has to be discovered. Therefore some gestures will come only at the end of a long period of work; and in this case I think it is very difficult to find the gesture. One thing, it must not be descriptive. I am a little afraid that the gestures are too complicated.

In a psychological gesture the outer form may be quite similar to another gesture, but the inner experience, the qualities, may make it absolutely different for you. Our aim is to get the most archetypal gesture.

Psychological gesture is archetypal, just as rhythm is archetypal. All these things are one. Therefore, there is no real difference between them. Very often we speak of them as being different doors leading into the same room.

It is very important to understand that all these things are one thing. Different doors to enter the same room, although the doors all are completely different.

Psychological gestures are not symbols - they are absolutely concrete things - as concrete as the floor. One of the big mistakes is that we do not do the gesture with the whole being, the full being. If with the whole being we do the psychological gesture, then it is not a symbol - it is a concrete fact.

I have noticed that the gesture you have done now was not done fully. It must be done with the whole being. It is possible for the actor to understand inwardly the meaning of the gesture, and there is no need to stop the rehearsal and rehearse the gesture. The actor can do this gesture inside, perhaps half-consciously, and this may be quite enough. Half-consciously the actor has understood and accepted with his imagination the meaning of the gesture, and that may be enough; but, on the other hand, in another case it might be necessary to work for days and weeks on a certain gesture. It is quite different, and we must always feel we are flexible enough to know to what extent we have to concentrate on this or that point of the Method and not to always take them too pedantically.

EURYTHMY AND THE ARCHETYPAL GESTURE

Eurythmy gestures are the most archetypal, the most beautiful, the most full, the most right. Therefore, if we take the eurythmy gesture as a ground for some part of the play, it

is the ideal case; but I have never mentioned this because until we are very familiar with these gestures, it is better not to take them. Eurythmy is such a high thing that it can inspire a person for his whole creative lifework. It is the ideal case. It is objective. Eurythmy gestures are ^{not} the same as psychological gestures. Eurythmy is something which exists objectively in the world; psychological gesture is something we create for a particular purpose. On the principle it is the same; but the psychological gesture is not so objective or profound. It is not cosmic.

Eurythmy incorporates gestures which always exist in the whole world: (a) The sun rises, the spring comes, the bud opens. All these things are expressed in a gesture of "Ah!" To a certain extent it is descriptive because it is every kind of opening, but it is not always so descriptive.

How descriptive the eurythmy gesture is is not important, because all the gestures in eurythmy are absolutely archetypal, and this is more or less exceptional where the bud is opening itself. When the sun rises, I am astonished and I admire something. In each special case it is more or less descriptive. In eurythmy there is no danger of the gestures being descriptive; but in our case, as we are going to create our own gesture, it is better to be as far as possible removed from this world of description, because it is an action for which we are trying to find the world of the archetype.

We are not always compelled to do the psychological gesture physically, but if we are doing the gesture inwardly only,

then it must be done with the whole being as well. There is no rule whether we have to do it outwardly or inwardly - it is quite free - but the rule is that we must do it with our whole being and never do it weakly. When the director gives a suggestion and says "gesture," we must always be able to turn it at once into a more or less clear form.

RHYTHM:

Small exercises on rhythm: Alan and Peter will start to improvise by saying, "How are you?" "Thank you, I am well. How are you?" "I am very well, thank you." Conduct this musical pattern and we have to see whether it corresponds.

There are different moments which are perhaps complete in this, but the connection between different moments is not established. Now today we shall try to do this. Will you please speak the whole thing with the feeling of the whole, which will embrace us.

An opening phrase, and answering phrase. Will you please from this point of view try to speak, for I notice you have found it. I was longing for this thing which embraces the whole thing. The whole thing must be started and finished with necessity.

Now, we are doing around this exercise many things which can lead us to good results. You are the orchestra. Imagine fantastic instruments which help you. You have to make noises. The conductor will suggest things, and you will follow him and make beautiful noises in symphony. This exercise requires real concentration through contact.