

FEELING OF BEAUTY - AESTHETIC CONSCIENCE
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Goethe

FEELING OF BEAUTY - AESTHETIC CONSCIENCE:

We must find our aesthetic conscience - psychological beauty - not physical beauty. This psychological beauty will penetrate, with time, not only our bodies, which we must show from the stage, but they will become more beautiful from the inside, not from the outside. Always knock at the door of this artistic conscience. This always gives real pleasure. In each human being and in each human body there sits the most fine music. To awaken this music there are so many means, and humanity needs so many beautiful means. One of them is to appeal to this aesthetic conscience.

To find the processes which are going on in our being, and for an actor or a singer it is absolutely important not only to be in connection with the music as it is in our cultural life, not only to know the meter and rhythm in the song - we may know it - but it is important to have the music in each part of our body. That is what we need most - to find the approach to everything, to music, to dance, to singing, to our art, etc.

CONCENTRATION:

Such simple exercises as walking across the room will

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teach you very much, if you understand the importance of these simple exercises in concentration. For example let us concentrate on the number one sign on the chair. There are two approaches: we may desire to be concentrated on more interesting things, but this is wrong. At the moment when you try to make the problem more complicated than simply to concentrate, you will lose a number of steps, and jump to another level, but you will never get back this lost time. You must start at the very beginning. In concentrating, what is the most important thing? The answer is to concentrate on things which are not at all interesting. If you try to concentrate on things which interest and attract you, will you succeed at once? Not at all, it is quite useless because you will only be concentrating on something you like. But if you will try to concentrate on number one on the chair many times, until you feel it might be better to commit suicide than to continue, and then to continue with this uninteresting thing, this is the real beginning of concentration. The same is true with such a simple thing as walking across the floor to exercise the feeling of beauty.

The exercise must be taken in such a simple form, but as if it were the most complicated psychological and physical task - only then will we get the right result. We have many complicated things in our profession but we must always come back to the most simple ones. The awakening of the music which lies hidden in our bodies is what we must exercise, by

repeating the walk across the room.

We have read that Goethe has given the impression that he was himself a piece of art. What does this mean? It means that his aesthetic conscience was awakened to the fullest extent, so that in each of his smallest movements he was producing, as it were, this aesthetic conscience. Therefore, everyone has written that he was himself like a piece of art. But we actors, singers and dancers must be pieces of art at least to a certain extent, if not then we are only usual people walking on the street.

FEELING OF THE WHOLE:

But this feeling of aesthetic conscience is not everything - there are other things around it which are like brothers and sisters, and one of these things is the ability we have to develop, the ability to take, to anticipate, to foresee, to experience everything which we are going to do psychologically or physically, as a whole thing. A complete whole thing.

Repeat the exercise of knocking at the door of your aesthetic conscience, with the feeling that the process of getting up is a whole complete thing. We must feel that everything, even the smallest things are great things, then we will be able to do bigger things. Start with small things and elaborate them as if they were great, and then we will keep and develop this ability to create big things. Sit down with the feeling that this is a complete, great, important work - a

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creative thing.

You must listen to the pleasure which streams out of your body. You have to drink in this aesthetic pleasure, because that feeds your actor's soul. To do everything with pleasure, that means to go the artistic way - the artistic way is full of suffering, but it is also full of pleasure and enjoyment. You must take this psychological food of pleasure by doing the exercises. It must not be the aim, of course, but the pleasure which lives there must be taken into our work, and that will feed us. We are born with this feeling of the complete whole, but we must become conscious of it, we must develop it.

Every actor in the whole world has instinctively this feeling of the whole, and if you will try to remember performances which you have watched, you will see that the actor's nature is striving for the possibility to apply this feeling of the whole, sometimes good and sometimes stupid. The necessity to satisfy this feeling of the whole will dictate many things for the actor. I know one actor who was always full of great temperament, for no reason, but he had a beautiful feeling for the whole - something complete - sometimes very stupid.

Repeat the exercise of getting up and walking through both rooms, turn and go back and sit down and take the whole process as a whole complete thing, on the basis of the aesthetic conscience. This is one unbroken line of which you are the creator.

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FEELING OF EASE:

These two brothers, the aesthetic conscience and the feeling of the whole, have a third brother which is the feeling of being easy, not to be bound at all. I want you to do the same exercises by adding a feeling of ease. You must get up with the aesthetic conscience, the feeling of the whole, and with ease. The feeling of ease awakens many things which are necessary for our profession, and one of these is that it gives the important possibility to use different tempos, which for the human being is sometimes very difficult.

TEMPO:

Human nature inclines towards two different things - either to become slower and slower - which is lack of activity or life - or senseless increasing of the tempo. These are two dangers - to get quicker without any necessity, or to go slower in spite of the necessity. But the real use of tempo is only possible when we are free in all the means we have to apply. Real freedom and ease, these are important things which we will develop. When we are easy we are able to find the different tempos - tempo is not only time, it is also quality.

Repeat again the exercise of walking through the rooms and having the satisfaction of feeling that it is a whole accomplished thing. Repeat it with very slow tempo.

FEELING OF FORM:

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The fourth brother is the feeling of form. You must exercise this feeling of form, not only by having some forms in your hands, or by touching a thing; you have to exercise this in your body as a form. We forget that our body is a form, but this is so important for us. Yehudi Menuhin loves his violin and he loves the form of it. This is his life, his instrument. We have the same thing in our profession - we have our body, but we are not quite conscious of the form we have as our body. We must awaken this feeling of our body's form.

Then we have to experience psychological forms which are quite invisible. For instance, let us say that I have spoken an angry word. I must be able to experience this invisible form which I have uttered - the form of invisible things and inaudible things as well. For us as actors, everything must be a form. Try to experience your own body as a form. If the result is primitive and rude at the beginning it does not matter. By repeating this exercise, you will come to the understanding which some great artists have had - what beauty is in the human body. We wonder what is so beautiful about it, but we must understand this real beauty through the feeling of form.

We have been told that the human body is music from the sense of this inaudible thing, form. We must experience the archetype of the human body, then we will get the beauty of it. Each thing can be experienced as a form, psychologically,

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or physically. Let us exercise by getting up with the experience of getting up as a molding or modelling of form. Have the feeling that this is a movable, living form.

SPEECH AND MOVEMENT: Old Students:

When you are doing your improvisations, there are two things which are lacking - the words are lost, and the quality of your movements is lost. During improvisations I feel that your movements are of a very low standard, as if you have never had any experience with our lessons. There is still a thick wall between the school and your acting. This wall must be broken with time. It must be broken so that our school must be in our theatre, and our theatre in our school. All our exercises must be one thing - now they are still very far away. Therefore, we must spend some time again on very simple movements - molding, floating, flying, radiating movements.

You must improvise better and better, and then the next step will be to have some rhythmical pattern to do. This is the next stage, and in it we have to use different things. This is the way to rhythm in our work, but we started our exercises in this too early.

ARCHETYPAL MOVEMENT:

We must have poetry in our exercises, then we will have prose on the stage. We must have poetry in our exercises, and in our acting on the stage, and if we are not able to define these two things we will only have amateurs on the stage.

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Movement as such must be archetypal. There are two different things on the stage - acting and dance, and what we are doing lies in between. It is not dance, it is not acting, it is pure use of the qualities of our bodies - qualities which penetrate the whole body. We can fill our bodies with the quality of heaviness, or floating, or radiating, etc., just by standing still.

The archetype expresses the meaning of everything in this exercise. Dance is not archetypal because it expresses some personal emotions. The same movement as a quality which you want to express is quite different, because it is archetypal. It is not necessary to have a feeling of truth in this exercise, it is only the idea of something heavy. You must take it absolutely abstractly - something heavy, nothing more. From where must I take this quality? It must not be taken the same as concrete things, but a certain kind of activity must fill each part. What kind of quality lies in our body? As actors we must be able to fill our body with different kinds of qualities. The body is a vessel which we must fill with this or that feeling, this or that quality.

Your faces sometimes steal your power from you. The face is always inclined to steal power, that is why I suggest that you forget your faces sometimes. Don't allow your faces to steal the activity of your bodies. The eyes have always the right to radiate and speak, but the face must be transparent -

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not that you are doing something with it, but if it happens of itself. In the films the actor must be transparent and truthful, because the camera is so quick to pick up things. In our profession it is the same - it must be sparking and radiating...

Let us continue with the feelings of form, ease, the whole, etc. We do not have to be afraid of nervousness on the stage if we are performing, but the moment we are really nervous then art flies away. All these qualities such as natural grace, for instance, what does it mean? It means that all these psychological qualities are in the person. We are able to exercise all these things psychologically through wanting to get them. I knew one young actor who was awkward, but he got the desire to be graceful and easy, and after some years of exercises he was a very graceful young man, only because he wanted it so much.

Improvisation:

The continuation of the scene between the mother and the son. After the mother leaves the room, another man appears like a devil before the son. This other man knows his destiny and he is ready to do anything. He is very surprised that the son has quite changed everything about himself, and he becomes like a cringing dog. The son does not believe in this, but he wants to understand what lies behind this guise. The other person kills the son and disappears. The son is killed while

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he sits, and we must not know that he is dead - he just falls down. The ground for the improvisation is the objectives; one to escape, and the other to control and destroy.