

SKETCHES & SCENES - FAIRY TALE THEMES  
PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE  
ADVICE FOR REHEARSING SKETCHES

King Lear  
Don Quixote

The Clown Sketch:

The two clowns must create everything - the text, the idea, the form, everything.

Each group, with its director, must find the possibility to work alone. The sketches will be shown in the rehearsal room from time to time, then the group must continue to work alone again. But you must really work between the times when we meet together, because if you come to the rehearsals without having worked in between, then we have nothing to do.

FAIRY TALE THEMES:

The Fairy Tale Sketch:

In all fairy tales of a certain kind you will find a figure which appears before us as a king. This king can represent definite things, definite powers. There are often old kings in fairy tales who speak about many things which we will not touch on now. But there is one thing we have to take from the image of this old king - that the old king represents very often the changing of the life. In him is condensed everything that was before. He is the last point of something that has gone before, therefore, he almost always has a young son who wishes to live after the crucial moment which is shown in the figure of the old king. In our fairy tale this old king will represent the power which changes everything.

There is another image in the world of the fairy tale. When the old king changes something he gives freedom to somebody, and this freedom or power which issues from the old king very often turns against him and kills him. This is one of the structures of the fairy tale - the old life comes to a climax and makes certain powers free which the old king has kept down before, and this new power kills the old king. For instance, King Lear has this same theme. The old king in our sketch walks about and tries to penetrate into the lives of his people. He finds a young person and causes him to fall asleep, to be transported to the palace, and to be dressed in new clothes. When he wakes he finds himself in beautiful surroundings, with the king as his servant. This young person must find himself in these new conditions as a king. He possesses the power which the king gives him. There is a whole scale of feelings which this person (who is always young) must go through and express before he will find himself in this new condition of being a king, and having so much power. Going through all these stages, the young man finds himself standing before two possibilities - to use this new power which he has for good, or for bad. In our sketch we take the way to the bad side. During the time when this person is gradually trying to find his way, he becomes a real king with more and more power. He becomes very mighty, and he turns against the old king and kills him or offends him.

We will start with the moment when he, the poor boy,

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is brought to the palace, changes his garments, and awakens. We must act all the beautiful possibilities existing for the young man who changes from his poor state to that of a king.

All the sketches must be done as short as possible - as condensed as possible, but do not lose the necessary steps which lead to different things. The author should find the most necessary words, and if possible very few of them. This will be the way to appreciate words, because now in the theatre it seems the more words the better the part, but just the opposite is true. The less words the more significance they have. Few words but well spoken.

Peer Gynt:

Asa's death scene. The director will read the scene, but will take all the words which Ibsen has written as an indication only, not as the real text, because that will bring us back to the old way. For us Ibsen's text only indicates the way we have to work. Our psychology is the same - nothing is wrong - nothing exists in a vacuum. We must start from the very beginning. By reading the words of Ibsen we must imagine the scene, and only what we have imagined will be something. The written play is composed of words which are good from a literary point of view, but are nothing for the actors. The actors must re-create the words. You will never understand how to speak from the text - "what" to speak must be born again from your imagination. If you will take this into your consciousness you will find what it means to act a

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play. Your artistic conscience will tell you what you have the right to act.

You must not try to produce your feelings through your voice - you must do something. That is why we have psychological gestures. If you try to speak your feelings it will be artificial, small and personal. But if you are doing something - radiating atmosphere, for instance, you will speak through the atmosphere and in producing the atmosphere you will be speaking more objectively. You must never try to speak or demonstrate your feelings. If the feeling is there it will change your voice, or your face, by itself. The moment you try to force your feelings they will die. To be inspired means to lose your individuality and become bigger than the individual. The moment we try to demonstrate our feelings we lose the connection with the universal.

Balladina:

This is a Polish legend. Such real deep works as Don Quixote, real folk tales and legends and great masterpieces like King Lear, live somewhere in the world of ideas, and we can feel that all such great works have one source. This fairy tale of the two sisters and the old mother is very near to this big source. The symbol of the two sisters is a very important one. It is always given as one being, one soul, with two possibilities. These two sisters are the two possibilities in microcosm and macrocosm. One sister goes one way and the other goes another way, but they both start

from one point, and that point is that somebody comes into their lives. A Count comes suddenly into the poor, small hut in which the mother and the sisters live. Again the mother, like the old king, gives birth to the crucial moment from which something starts. This old mother is the crucial moment. She is the past, and the two sisters are the future, and the future is going either to the right or to the left. The Count appears suddenly before the two sisters, then we have the mother and the two sisters and someone who can love. This composition leads us to the source for right creative work. In this small hut Balladina and Alina live. From the moment when love comes to the two sisters, the one getting this love goes to the left and the other to the right. It is a very strong idea to have the love used for bad and for good.

When both girls are walking in the forest, this is the moment when their psychology begins to develop. Love awakens evil powers and good powers in the hearts of the two sisters. More and more evil feelings grow in Balladina, while good feelings possess Alina. While they are walking in the forest Balladina's evil will grows so strong that she kills Alina. At the moment when she kills her she feels twinges of conscience, and her life begins to be a fight with her conscience. The twinges of conscience give her the possibility to change her mind and to go back to the right way, but instead she goes deeper to the left. The important thing in this scene is that one sister goes more to the left and

the other more to the right. The nymph Goplana condemns Balladina in this scene.

In the second scene Balladina has become the wife of the Count and she has everything she wants, but she is fighting more and more with her conscience. She is unkind to her old mother. She comes into the room where the ikons are. Fighting with her conscience, she begins to speak to the Saint, and she asks him to cure her soul. The symbol of the spot on her forehead is a very important one. After she has spoken to the Saint in a very involved state of her psychology, the Saint moves and speaks to her, (here it must be presented so that there is a feeling of illusion and fact at the same time). At the end of the scene she begins to threaten him, and gives him money to be silent.

Kostrin, the evil knight, has seen and understood everything. He realizes that he has everything in his power. Together, he and Balladina kill others and the power of evil grows. Balladina regains her consciousness, but is not able to understand who has spoken or what has happened, although she understands that she is lost. She must take Kostrin into her life, because he knows the secret of her sinful past. Then Gralon enters; he is a very picturesque figure, and in a strange way he begins to tell Balladina that her husband was hunting in the forest when his horse stopped by a dead body. Balladina and Kostrin realize that they must kill Gralon. They kill him, and this second step takes them again to love,

and deeper into the abyss. At the moment when they have killed Gralon they understand that they are now bound together with powers that are more than human powers. To kill together a man means that they are bound with a higher power.

Here we touch on the mystical quality of the play. As a result of this black step, the old mother becomes a little crazed, and she goes to Balladina, after they have covered the body, and she asks for food. Balladina begins to torture her mother and sends her out into the storm. Balladina and Kostrin are not able to understand who she is, and they cast her away. The last moment is the hopeless, dark world which has come to Balladina.

You must understand clearly and forever that the word, with its intellectual content, is nothing for an actor. Whether it is a text from Shakespeare or from an unknown author, it is the same. The dry intellectual content is really nothing for the actor. As literature you can understand it, but it is nothing for the actor who must create many things around it. The word must be in the middle like a charm, and around the word must be an aura. Therefore, take these words around which you must build the world of Kostrin and Balladina.

#### Carnival Sketch:

The scene is a small street in a town somewhere in the south - nobody knows which country. A small, poor, dirty street - a street on which we see a poor old beggar with a

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child. The beggar is playing a mouth organ or violin, very simply and very nice. The director must find the possibility of suggesting to the audience that the two have been standing like that for days and days, for months and months, for an eternity. Sometimes perhaps they get a little money, a small piece of money, and God knows why they are living still without any home or anything. It is something hopeless, but which is always going on. Something which is as if half alive - half here, half somewhere else.

The two images are standing with enormous patience, for an eternity. Gradually we hear some sounds, gay voices - noise quite opposite to that which we have heard from in the two figures. A carnival is coming near, and this gay, happy, singing, dancing, flying world grows more and more near until many people and many flowers and colors come onto the stage, and the scene reaches its climax. The beggar and the child are forgotten, and nobody sees them. From this climax the carnival diminishes and gradually disappears, and again the same sense of eternity, without hope, and the scene of simple music and the hopeless old man with his child. Nobody has given them anything, and they are standing there in eternity as before.

#### Work Sketch:

On the stage there appear some figures of boys. They begin as if to do some laborious work with imaginary machines and engines. This work becomes more heavy, dangerous,



tragic and depressing in its quality, and more unhappy for the workers. At the end the illusion of having some machinery is given by the fact that the scene has become more and more stone-like, so that there are some pieces of stone moving, and some wheels, and the stage is full of these things which are pushing down the human bodies. Another element comes in the exclamations, in which are expressed the tragedy of the mechanical world. Out of these exclamations words are born, which are a condemnation of the work and the whole situation. The climax is reached when this material work makes the bodies of the people almost immovable. Then the moment comes when the human beings are defeated by matter, and everything stops stone-like.

Gradually there appears another kind of people - girls - and they gradually come into the situation in which the boys are working, under the weight of matter. They join groups. The girls come into the tragedy of the scene and then they begin to influence the boys so that they gradually become alive. As this life begins to triumph, the material is moved more and more, and the qualities of ease and happiness grow. The imaginary engines get another quality - they are now serving man not dominating him. All the imaginary machinery disappears. It becomes almost a dance. The spirit, the light and the happiness has defeated the machinery, and words of blessing are said by the group.

The Meeting Sketch:

This sketch must be something which expresses what it means to act on the stage without any text. We must act the full scene. It is a generalization, universal, fundamental, basic or primary kind of a meeting. A meeting in general. Who is speaking? Nobody knows. How are they speaking? In what way? Everybody wants to influence the small group of "somebodies" sitting in the middle. The room is very small, and nobody knows what the meeting is for. All the speakers begin to fight. Nobody knows the original idea of the meeting. When the climax comes the "somebodies" get up and everything else disappears.

We must create words and exclamations but without logical sentences and content. It is very interesting to see how they speak without saying anything - an exclamation, ~~...a group of words without any sense.~~ We must omit the logical sense in this exercise.

If you want to speak well, you must imagine well, you must move your body well. If you wish to imagine well, the same is true. It is like a piano, we must know each note to bring about a harmony.

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

The psychological gesture is the most beautiful thing in our profession. By doing a gesture I can really

express what I am going to do as an actor - the idea, the interpretation, the action, the text, everything. These gestures lie under the text, the feelings, the atmosphere, everything.

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#### ADVICE FOR REHEARSING SKETCHES:

1. Follow the director with your imagination only.
2. The feelings can be awakened through action, atmosphere and imagination.
3. You need not use the result of some of your work at once. Perhaps you will need it tomorrow or the next day.
4. Repeat each exercise, each moment many times until a good result has been reached. Meditate on it each time, and do it again.
5. It is wrong to ask actors to act at once. They will only lie. Begin to discover what it means to be listening, and why, and what you are doing - without acting.
6. The actor's approach is with the body, the eyes, the feelings - not with the intellect.
7. Ask your body to find this connection to the moment - each muscle must tell you something. It will bring a result.
8. Try to take the most important points in the sketch. Find the spine of the sketch.
9. Always jot things down or draw them, because they will add to your material. In later stages of your work you will be very happy to have these because they will be your first impression and they will inspire you.
10. When you discover that your body can speak to you, you will be greatly enriched as an actor, because it will speak to you and will inspire you. Your body will not be an enemy as it is on the stage at the present time. Your body can be very expressive or it can be very silent.

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Our aim as actors is to help humanity. At the present time we are weak, but our aim is to grow so strong that

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we can help society.

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In exercising the feeling of beauty we must develop  
a feeling of aesthetic consciousness.

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