

isolated word while listening, so I do not fasten my eyes to a partner without letting go in order to really receive him while I'm talking. Looking, as well as listening, hinges on needs. Seeing is also balanced against expectations, immediate needs, and your past knowledge of the object.

I sometimes laugh when an actor fixes his partner endlessly during the scene and claims he is working for "eye contact." Try telling someone about an event that just happened to you, and force yourself to keep looking at him while talking. Probably, halfway through your first sentence you will want to look away—not because you don't want to see him, but because while really seeing him you lost contact with the inner objects you were talking about, and so you will forget what you are saying.

Actually, while we talk we look intermittently at the person to whom we're talking in order to see how they react to what we're saying, to see if we have their attention, to see if they get the point, etc. What we see in them at these moments conditions how we continue our tale. In between these moments of eye contact, we contact the inner objects we are dealing with, and our outer, secondary focus is on something inconsequential in the place. Listening and looking are certainly not mechanical processes, but are linked to the center of our psychological and physical being. Simulated looking and listening must produce bad acting.

Because of the enormous importance of the five senses, there should be continuous work on heightening and sharpening them. Anything dormant which you might awaken through daily concentrated attention to your senses will add to your growth as an actor. Unclutter yourselves. Open yourselves up to your fullest capacity—to give meaning to what you *receive* when you see, when you hear, when you taste, when you smell, when you touch.

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THINKING

YOU ENTER, stop to flick on the lights, take two steps into the room, and *then* the lights come up. The audience bursts into laughter. Such disasters have happened to us all. If you attempt to verbalize all of the things you *thought* about in the seconds that it took from the flick of the switch to the laughter of the audience, it would probably take you half an hour. Thought moves with such lightning rapidity that any attempt to slow it down is inaccurate, and so must bring about false behavior on stage.

I have often seen an actor sitting on stage, strangely knotted with tension, making faces—frowning his brow, then smiling, then making a pensive expression. When I ask, "What were you doing?" he answers, "I was thinking." Feeling obligated to illustrate thought, bodily or facially, comes from the mistaken notion that the character's thoughts manifest themselves in an organized progression like dialogue, complete with stage directions like a script. Sometimes the diligent actor mistakenly goes so far as to write out his character's thoughts as if they *were* indeed dialogue. *Real thinking precedes, is accompanied by, and follows action.* Real thinking is active.

I sit down, not in order to think, but to rest. I rise to get a glass of water, and walk to my desk to pick up a letter. *While* I sit, rise or walk, I am thinking.

If I put on my coat before going to market, I am not thinking only of my coat unless it is giving me a problem. I am mentally dealing with my grocery list, or with the laundry man, or with a friend who's coming to dinner tonight. My thoughts spring from the contact with these *inner objects* (things or people not present in the room only as images in the mind), and bring about an inner action. Inwardly contacting the grocery list may produce thought about a can of imported French beans and the shelf on which it rests at the supermarket. The beans may lead me to consider how often they are sold out and a possible argument with the manager of the store, or weighing the idea of going to a more expensive store where these beans are more readily available. Contacting the laundryman can produce a remembered event about my last argument with him over the strength of the bleach, and consideration of how I will deal with him today. The friend who is coming to dinner may produce speculation about the new playwright he is bringing with him this evening. In other words, by contacting these inner objects—not present in the room—my thoughts flow forward quickly. Meanwhile the physical task of putting on my coat is completed, having been inadvertently influenced by my thoughts. (I may have yanked at a button when my inner attention went to the laundryman.)

I never ask, "What were you thinking?" Instead, I ask, "What were your inner objects?" so that you will get out of the habit of even verbally analyzing your thought process.

I can accept deliberate thinking only from a philosopher who organizes and arranges the otherwise chaotic and subjective process of human thought into an objective viewpoint of life. He is taking himself out of the action—we actors are

involved in it. To act is to do, not to think. The actor's thinking depends on the subjective process of weighing the course of action by a contact with inner and outer objects.

Thoughts and objects which intrude on the concentration on your stage life, those which make for unwanted distractions, most often come from the havoc of your daily private life. (A desire for success can move in on you. Who's out front? An agent? Someone you love? A critic? A rival? Vanity!) All such destructive distractions should be dumped at the stage door before you enter your dressing room. The fight against these intrusions on true thought can be conquered only by strengthening and enlarging the circle of inner objects belonging to the play, and by using them to produce the character's "thinking" in a true life-style.

It must be clear to you now that if any inner object in the play is not real to you, it will have no consequence in producing genuine thought. It will be a dead-end object. Obviously, the thinking process which accompanies the immediate give-and-take with another character on stage, or the thoughts connected to direct action of the play, are easily triggered by the partner, the event itself, and by your sensory awareness. The thoughts are anchored to the events and to the other characters. Not only must these people and events and the things which tangibly surround you be clothed in reality for you by particularization and substitution, but everything that has happened, what you expect to happen, and what is happening connected with the surrounding circumstances as well. The larger your selection of inner objects within these areas, the more food you will have for forward-moving thought and action. Your objects will channel your attention into the private circle of your character's life. You cannot dictate the order of your thoughts or attempt to pigeonhole them in compartments. You must keep them fluid for your character's needs.