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Expressionism in the drama

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"What are the noblest objects of the stage?
To represent the manners of the age,
Each passions character and strength express,
And train the mind to shun its wild excess;
In act displayed, each virtuous trait proclaim,
And point the path that leads to generous fame,
The sad results of crimes and vices show,
And all the ills, that from injustice flow:
Fair honor's form with radiant light invest,
And plant integrity in every breast!"

---J.P. Tansur.

In this quotation is shown the essential something in drama which the new critical term 'expressionism" tends to liberate through intellectual form,- the medium of an idea. It implies an ideal conception of the relation between audience and play, by new methods of widening the art of the stage out of the representative into a "presentative medium."

The foundation of all drama was religion. And the evolution of art from the Egyptians down to our own days indicates more or less intellectualized changes from the religious to the more worldly spirit. The Egyptian elevated himself to his God, divinizing himself after death; the Greeks lowered their God to themselves, lending him their vices.

In the spiritualistic school of the Egyptians was found the source and reason for all art,- religion, which influenced all Europe with its dogmatic inspiration.

As a result of the Renaissance, art passed slowly from the communal aspect to individualism and from its mystical spirit to realism. The quarrel of the new movement is with realism, to which we will return after a brief discussion of several kindred currents, which have served to muddy the stream of modern art inside and outside the playhouse. These are romanticism, mysticism, and symbolism.

Romanticism takes the spectator too far away from life into a world of sentimental and-venture, of glamour and hero-worship. Mysticism has tired us with its mere dimness, hiding the heart of life. Yet, we need it, if, as in the "Bat", it pierces behind the veil that leads us into the petty world as it "accidentally" is.

Nor will symbolism serve us when it delights in baiting the spectators mind with a double meaning, or with placing on one concept to suggest the other.

And realism, as it is generally regarded, is too much occupied with commonplace things, with the outward, rather than with the deeper meaning and the emotional content. All of these forces which have spent their day, were on the material or realistic plane.

Delacroix is called the initiator of the impressionist school, because he carried realism to its farthest point, introducing the scientific analysis of its elements of representation.

Sheldon Cheney claims that one of the ways out of our present obsession with the obvious and the imitative, lies in the development of the drama on varying planes of consciousness.

There is a plane of outward relationship, relieved by the more obvious emotions, of what we, ordinarily, do and say, conventionally.

There is a plane of what we think; of our mental habit; of perception, with flashes of intuition, where the real self is revealed despite inhibitions of training, environment and fear.

There is the plane of the gods we have created, and endowed with a little better than human attributes.

And there is a plane of pure spirit of which we have many intimations but no material knowledge, where God himself is unrevealed.

One can only guess at how many times such a series of planes cross in the life of any one of us in a single day.

The realist practically limits himself to the first plane. But, if a sudden flash of one of the other planes were intuitively thrown in, it would be, probably, the most revealing and the most dramatic moment in a realist play. Then we should wisely widen the range of our drama to project freely any, or all of these planes so far as they serve to intensify the emotion.

For, it is when the work of art corresponds in meaning to the feelings and emotions, which the public is conscious of, that it finds a response in the public.

There is a trace of a parallel in certain phases of modern painting, Cubism, Futurism; to imagined or remembered planes. And art is adapting particular forms to particular conceptions.

The latest manifestation of art begins with Cèzanne, who initiated the movement for analysis of form in the plastic organism.

His genius is shown by his method of expression of the subject of a picture as a whole and not as so many objects with their parts or features separate one from the other, such as they are ordinarily seen. Each and all became elements of an experience and felt as one form, through which, space is seen composed of light-tones and color hues.

He transferred his impressions directly to the canvas, and substituted for the old imitative effects, abstracts, pictorial elements.

"Cèzanne clearly pronounced the principle, a means of realizing more intensely the complexity and harmony of nature." His reduction of form to simple geometrical varieties, his color to contrasts of hues, and his light to gradations of tone, make his pictures excite intense pleasure or feeling which some compare with the effect of

"symphonic music."

The first thing that strikes us in this new movement, is the way in which Cezanne, Van, Gogh, Matisse, Degas, Monet, Piccaso, Manet and several others, took the elements of expression from the forms and colors of nature and used them not to represent objects, but to produce an organism, which contains in terms of art what a given subject means to them in terms of sensation.

Closely coupled with the Cubists were the Futurists, who boldly denounced the binding methods of the old technique of the drama, and who tried to do away with the old conventional forms of the back-drops and wings or illusionist setting.

The follow~~ing~~ers of this new movement were laughed at, called freaks, anarchists of the brush and were misunderstood, in general. They refused to be bound by the conventional laws of imitation; they tried to express concrete thoughts and emotions through the abstract significance of form, and looked at life which they presented.

From the manifesto, "The Futurist Synthetic Theatre", issued in 1915, Isaac Goldburg, in an interpretation and a translation of the theories and plays of the futurist movement, shows that there lies hidden in it evidences of healthful rebellion against surface-realism.

Marionetti emphasizes, in his short plays, "simultaneity" and "compenetration" which give rise to "synthesis" in the Futurist Synthetic Theatre. He presents two or three places simultaneously on the stage with the nearness of people and actions, whose only relationship seems spiritual.

In his play ~~"On The Moonlit Night"~~ let "On a Moonlit Night", simultaneity of action is lacking, but the quality of "compenetration" is carried by the presence of an unseen and symbolic gentleman during a live scene. Though too

short to be effectively acted, we perceive a single and complete impression.

This new movement, enlarged, and including revolt in every variety was called by the Germans "Expressionismus."

One can better understand expressionism by contrasting it with impressionism. In impressionism the artist endeavors to reproduce in color, on canvas the impression which nature produces on him. When we look at a field of golden-rods or clover as painted by an impressionist, we are unable to discern individual flowers. We note a blurred and indistinct splash of paint, of an untrained observer, and are moved to laughter. But, the impressionist painter insists that this blurred and indistinct canvas corresponds exactly to the impression which we receive from a real field of golden-rods or clover.

Expressionism is the antithesis of impressionism. The expressionist causes the canvas or the setting to produce the feelings or the mood of the artist, whose mental condition determines the figures to be expressed on the canvas or on the stage setting. Let the artist depict an intoxicated man, then the houses and the street in the stage setting will seem double and each person he meets will appear as two. If a man is a murderer and is haunted by his conscience, the stage-setting may be made up of hideous empty masks. The forms which these objects on the stage assume are rarely like natural ones. We know that the doors and walls, as such, do not have any sentiment. Yet, if the door is the entrance to the victim's room, the expressionist will contrive to represent the door in such a form that it will be readily seen as the entrance to a chamber of horrors.

In impressionism an external object produces in the artist's

mind an image, and he then seeks to reproduce that image on canvas or in the setting. In expressionism the artist starts with his own emotion and he then projects that emotion into the setting, forcing the setting to express the emotions of the actor or of the artist.

Kenneth Macgowan says that in impressionism the artist paints the impression that the object makes on him emotionally, rather than the literal reality of the object. "In expressionism he may still paint a natural object, though often the picture is merely an arrangement of planes, masses of lines of color; but he tries to express through the object of the abstract shapes, an emotion which he feels in himself. He tries to express his own emotion, not an outside reality, and this emotion may be aroused by the object he pictures or by something altogether apart. The expressionist attempts to express his emotion through pictorial means, independent of the physical reality of the pictured." In other words, "expressionism is the effort to make a natural object or an abstract shape express a sensation which is not felt or suggested through the object or shape, but is present in the artist's mind."

The first attempt to use expressionism on the stage was made in Moscow, at the Kamerny theatre, in 1914. The scenery,- the drops, the wings and the walls were painted in the form of distorted planes and masses, and gradually expressionism applied to three dimensions rather than two.

The following year, the next experiment in the expressionistic production came to America, in 1915, under the auspices of the Philadelphia Stage Society, in the Little Theatre. The drama used was "Three Women" by R. J. Beamish, with an expressionistic view show-

ing life in the Spanish city, Seville. Two years later a second attempt was made in Philadelphia. The students of the Academy produced the annual artists' masque, with an expressionistic background, designed by the late Lyman Sayen.

The principles of expression given us in the Ballets Russes, have been pushed to the last degree of completion by Sergei Diagileff. Perhaps the most striking of their production has been Picasso's designs for the costumes and figures of "Parade." "Some of the characters are represented by a strange towering agglomeration of cylinders, pipes and machine-like appendages.

Russian influence, in expression on the stage is very powerfully felt in its forward trend. In the Boston Sunday Post and Sunday Herald of March 18, 1923, the present bill-board reads:-

> "F. Ray Comstock and Morris Gest have the great honor of announcing the first and only visit in Boston of The Moscow Art Theatre. Stanislavsky and Dantchenko-Directors; Majestic Theatre, beginning, week of May 7, 1923. Two weeks only. With entire first line of the company of The World's Foremost Playhouse, direct from Moscow, Berlin, Paris, and New York.
>
> TSAR FYODOR IVANOVITCH-- Spectaculor historical drama by A. Count Tolstoy.
>
> THE LOWER DEPTHS ---- Maxim Gorky's masterpiece.
>
> THE CHERRY ORCHARD ---- Comedy of four acts by Anton Tchekhoff.
>
> THE THREE SISTERS ---- by Anton Tchekhoff.
>
> Matinees Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays, 2 P. M. Evenings, 8 P. M., sharp.
>
> No admittance, only at the end of first intermission. No applause until end of performance, Moscow custom.
>
> Seats on sale April 25, 1923. Prices: $5.00, $3.50, $3.00, $2.00, and $1.50. War Tax."

All of the above plays admit the test of resemblance, and give a more or less literal picture of people and happenings and to

that extent belong to realism. Yes, they go beyond realism in a study of the unconscious mind, choosing quickly and fearlessly the "inner truth."

A brief analysis of each will show that there is in evidence two kinds of realism, the larger and the smaller.

The "Tsar Fyodor Ivanovitch" is human and pathetic. It was translated from verse to prose. The task, of restoring to life the pageantry of a picturesque and bygone age, has been still farther perfected by the Moscow Theatre's mastery of make-up and psychological realism.

In "The Lower Depths," it is said more than in any other single play throughout its history, the Moscow Art Theatre concentrates its dramatic ideals and methods, and its aesthetic theory and practice. And through the production of this play, it most emphatically justifies its artistic faith in spiritual or psychological realism as a dramatic medium of expression.

The plays, "The Three Sisters" and "Cherry Orchard," of Anton Tchekhoff, serve the same end,- that of larger realism.

Macgowan shows, by his analysis of the "Cherry Orchard" that he witnessed at the Moscow Theatre, that it is both sharp with actuality and mystic with life's intensity, as the Russian players act it.

"It is a <u>genre</u> study almost without plot; decayed aristocrats, old servants, newly rich peasants and the incident of the sale for debt of an ancestral property. It is played with an almost utter perfection of realistic detail, complete impersonation, and rounded ensemble." He says that it carries us through life onto the other side, and we are drenched with the mystic sense of existence.

At the end of the play, he recounts how the rare and ancient servant, who had been in the household for two generations, is tottering through a dim room, mumbling as he tumbles on the sofa, and dies. Then a distinct, ominous sound is heard, as if from heaven, fading away in the gloomy distance.

He compares the realistic acting, in the production, to that of Belasco's. And its naturalness, to that of Hopkin's, but, by the greater ability on the part of the players and director, mellowed by time, and secured by deliberate direction, there is a general design, fused into something beyond realism through its union with a play distinctly expressionistic in certain qualities.

The inclusion of what is virtually a soliloquy carries us also far beyond the realm of realism, into the new movement, expressionism. A group of artists, known as "Der Sturm", brought expressionism into evidence in Berlin, during the summer of 1920.

These artists were favored by having expressionistic plays to which they might apply their new principles.

Two of the writers of this new type of plays are Kokoschka and Hasenclever. In general, we may say that expressionist drama rejects most of the technique of the realistic theater. While apparently, in advance of the old technique, it, in reality, in many ways, reverts to a technique that is today regarded as obsolete. One or two examples of this reversion are the frank use of the soliloquy and the employment of music to heighten the effect of the dialogue. The limits of the past and the accepted are constantly being set forward, and we see that the men who were thought to break most with tradition have only enriched it.

A study of Hasenclever's play "The Son" shows a reversion back

to the old five-act form of the Elizabethan Age, an occasional use of rhymed verse, and an intentional use of the soliloquy. At the beginning of the play when the son wishes to be left alone, his instructor asks, "What are you going to do now?" The son answers, "Probably engage in a soliloquy. I must have a talk with myself." At the end of act four there is another self-conscious soliloquy in which the speaker tries to justify his employment of this device. He says, "Soliloquies before death are frequent."

You will find Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones" employing five of the eight scenes in a new strain of rhymned beauty in his long soliloquies. The Emperor's strong and natural speeches seem the best way to unfold his subconscious racial fears. There is genuine imagination both in the material and the structure of the drama. Another feature of reversion, and of true untheatrical power, is the denouement with its off-stage death.

In his play "The Hairy Ape" is a realistic speech, developed in idea, intensity and length of utterance, which reveals the "inner truth" of "The Hairy Ape" and carries him directly away from the humdrum figures in his daily occupation.

Expressionism in the drama has shown itself, within the last quarter of a century, in the advance in scenic art.

Most managers scoff at the new setting. They still cling to their old hills and wrinkled skies, and minute non-essentials, trying to reproduce, rather than to suggest, the facts of nature.

Some of the modern-type artists have different standards, but they are agreed in expressing their disdain for the old, bald, superficial, dramatic shams.

One group attempts to give us "moods" in scenery. Another is

content to give us beauty.

We are told that we should not look on stage scenes as background only. They are to be complements of plays, and should never distract the ear or eye from spoken words or from dramatic action. They should suit the author's "mood" and "atmosphere."

The germ of this reform in stage setting is found as far back as 1808, in August Wilhelm Schlegel's lecture on drama. Schlegel introduced many of the new things with which Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig, George Fuchs and Max Reinhardt have recently been credited.

In 1899, Appia published "Die Musik und Die Inscenierung," which is an elaborate study of the art of the theater as related to Wagner's operas.

He is the first, not Craig, constructive theorist and practitioner in the new art movement. He is more than a mere painter like Bakst and other Russians, who thought of the stage in terms of an easel. He was not inclined, with Craig, to banish everything from the stage except the actor, as marionettes.

He set forth in "Die Musik", the theory which Craig advances: "Do not look first at nature; look in the play of the poet." His work introduced the doctrine of Fuchs who claims that the actor is the all important factor in a production. Appia differs from Fuchs in that he adopts the universally accepted theory, that the stage is a three dimensional space, and that the plastic quality of the actors and the setting should be emphasized. By skillful lighting, and simple scenery, he proposed to create "atmosphere" for this plastic quality. He not only affirms that the scenic illusion lies in the living presence of the actor, but, also, that the soul of the play is light.

Where Appia was not much hampered by the Wagner tradition his theories have exerted influence, even though, to a far less degree than those of Craig's.

Gordon Craig is called the "ultra-modernist." He is impatient with the attention which producers pay to the accidental rather than to the essential; and he is positive in his objections to false perspective. He will have nothing to do with the great work that Bakst and other Russians have done in perspective, declaring that he finds in it nothing of "noble artificiality."

As Appia would have co-ordination by light; Craig would get it mainly by design, backed by color.

He would eliminate the actor, because emotion possesses him and causes accidental rather than deliberate intention. He would "set man on the stage and pull him by wires to make him dance to the tune of theatricality." In other words, we may call this inanimate figure, the über-marionette, "a degenerate form of a god," which no adult quite naïvely relishes.

The popular impression, regarding Craig's settings, is that they are made up almost entirely of curtains and screens. Craig spent about three years devising a system of screens for the production of "Hamlet," in 1910, at the Moscow Art Theater as produced by Stanislavsky. In Act I, scene IV, of "Hamlet" as produced at the Moscow Art Theater, the stage consisted merely of low steps, with gigantic curtains in many folds falling back towards the open sky which just can be discerned between the crack left by the converging curtains. This simple design in vertical lines carried the eye upward into space. The steps formed horizontal lines which contrasted with and accentuated the vertical

lines of the curtains. Craig says that he planned, by this setting, to create the idea of "a lonely soul in a dark place." Although there was some adverse criticism his Moscow influence has reached other places.

Craig stresses the effectiveness of suggestion in his settings. He says that by suggestion we may bring upon the stage a sense of all things,- the sun, the wind, the rain, the hail, the snow, the intense heat.

Macgowan says that Craig's is a well rounded and complete emotional interpretation of a play in the terms of human actors in stage atmosphere, in movements, lights, color, line, costume and background.

Craig is an idealist, but not a destructive one. In a beautiful passage embodying his dream of the coming drama, he says: "There shall spring so great an art and one so universally beloved that I prophesy that a new religion will be found contained in it. That religion will preach no more, but it will reveal. It will not show us the definite images which the sculpture and the printer show. It will unveil, though to our eyes silently,- by movements, in visions."

Although some hum and haw at his perversities, Gordon Craig seeks the expression of great things by simple means.

Max Reinhardt is the man of vision, who chiefly represents the new German scenery in the eyes of the world. He differs from Craig in that he represents the practical theater man rather than the theorist.

Moderwell says, "He did not so much bring art bodily to the theater as make the theater develop itself into an art."

In his remodeled circus building, Reinhardt's productions ranged from "Oedipus" of Greek tragedy to Shakespeare's "Hamlet"; Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen", and down to Hauptmann. In spite of the vastness of the building and the great number of actors in his spectaculor performances, there is an extraordinary degree of intimacy between actors and audience. The fundamental law of this theater is the utmost simplicity of form and strong, severe lines. Emphasis is laid upon the actor and the actor's voice. Lighting becomes the real source of decoration. The great eternal elemental passions and problems of humanity are expressed, and the simple and primitive emotions of the spectators become great and powerful, because of a spiritual intimacy established by the new relation of actors and audience.

It is interesting to know how he has such wonderful success, in such widely divergent kind of plays. His Shakespeare performances are not only models in Germany, but for the world. Unlike Craig who ignores the modern comedy, Reinhardt produces with equal success comedy, history, and tragedy. His production of the pantomine "Sumurum" was notably fine.

Reinhardt gets an "inner and initial conception of his task." He gets, as it were, a vision of the play's soul, its inner music, and the intensity of the play's own interpretation of nature.

As a result of his brooding over "A Midsummer Night's Dream", it came to him that this piece was a forest poem.. He saw the poem in its changing moods; he saw the creatures of the play blend with or detach themselves from the trees and glades. He heard the forest music. He saw and created a vision of the forest- Shakespeare's and his own. The spectators were persuaded to yield

imaginatively to the vision.

His intention was never a realistic production, he sought the symbolical detail that blended with and interpreted his real vision. In working with "Othello" he found that the rhythm of color which his imaginative grasp of the Venice of 1500 had awakened in him was almost the same as that used by Carpaccio. So the whole play was cast in a scale of tints.

A few other men are prominent in trying to reproduce "atmosphere" and not "locality" in the new movement, to wit: Harald Andrè of the royal opera in Stockholm, Sweden, has had great success in expressionistic settings.

Joseph Urban has, probably, a more distinctive and fixed style than any other scenic designer of America, but his sensuous art is not as spiritual as that of Robert E. Jones.

With far less straining after sensuous charm, the work of R. E. Jones is more suggestive, and, as a part of drama, more legitimate. In Jones we have the antithesis of Urban who seeks pictorial effects. Yet, both rank high as modern artists. "I know no artist who can put more 'mood' and character into a scene than Robert E. Jones," says one critic.

Only two examples of the German expressionist stage have found their way to this country and both of these are in the form of motion pictures. One of these bears the name "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari;" the other, a Mediaeval Legend, is entitled "The Golem."

In "Caligari" expressionism is applied to painted flats; the houses in these flats seem about to topple into the street. The scenery reinforces the fantastic mystery of this story of a madhouse.

In "The Golem" expressionism is applied to objects of three dimensions. Plastic forms are bent and distorted so as to wring from them strange emotions. The arbitrarily twisted forms of houses convey a sense of strange decrepitude.

Mechanical means form a large share in reforms for producing this or that effect in scenery. Under this head come the Revolving Stage, the Wagon Stage, the Sliding Stage, the Sunken Stage, Screens and a number of other devices.

The Wagon Stage is the simplest, most important and the most useful of all the modern German stage devices. The extraordinary effectiveness of the plan and the great effects which can be produced by this invention make it favorable in aiding in the production of "atmosphere". The changes of scene are made with almost startling speed. It can be used in any play.

Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" was brought out in Germany with but three of these wagons with extra curtains for the tent scene and a few simple properties for the battle scene. On the whole, the flexibility and general usefulness of the wagon stage make it invaluable to the modern producer.

Gordon Craig makes a series of flexible folding screens which can be used to suggest all the "atmosphere" demanded in the advanced scenic art.

In order to have expressionism in the drama come into its own,, it must have a theater better suited to this method of production than are the theaters built for the old type of play. We need a theater worthy to house the drama that brings us close to a sense of the great mysteries of the human soul.

A brief insight into the "organism of the theater" will aid

in clarifying our thought about how the plane of pure spirit may be obtained.

For instance, in the author and producer, we have the "originative element." The action of these two upon a "receptive and executive" group, the actors, gives rise, in the enacted play to a number of pictures similar to a train of conscious thought in the mind.

With a "theater-person," therefore, we may regard the stage as the head, the actors as the "braincells," and the enacted play as the functioning of the "conscious or objective faculties." Moreover these "conscious faculties" are a synthetic product, arising from the action of an originative element upon a "receptive and executive" element, just as they appear to be in the individual.

To complete our personality there is a "subjective material" upon which the concepts coming from the "originative" member may be recorded. The place of the subjective material is supplied by the audience, that only responds in accordance with some suggestion conveyed to it. The response of the audience reacts upon the actors, just as the response of the subjective being reacts upon the "conscious faculities" of the individual and improves or depresses their action.

It is the quality of this emotional "give-and-take" process, that determines the life and duration of any particular personality.

Thus it is that a theater, large or small, elaborate or simple, with a play in progress is a living organism, whose body has hundreds of living cells, and whose life-processes consist of the interaction taking place among its component parts.

The expressionist has become the psychologist of the mass,

whose feeling heart is to be touched, elevated and refined through fixed or concentrated attention on striking incidents.

It is a fact, the artist-producer says, that "an audience will not think." During a performance, an audience is in a slight hypnotic condition, and all he can do is to receive and respond to impressions.

The author and producer working with the actor should be able to bring about in the "subjective member" of the "theater-person" all those physical readjustments and supernormal conditions which the individual may provoke in himself by auto-suggestion, or which may be induced in the subject, by the spoken word.

If there is not sympathy between actor and spectator, the author's true meaning cannot be conveyed to the audience.

The "theater-person" is subject to the same law of becoming. For if a play convey destructive and depressing suggestion to its "subjective member", the audience is ill-at-ease. The play,- say Ibsen's "The Doll's House",- is then said to lack popular appeal. The particular "theater-person" built up about the play begins to show signs of depression, and finally goes to pieces at the close of the play. The audience is unmoral, though lack of reasoning, so that, if at the start, its sympathy is once drawn to a character,- say, Nora, in "The Doll's House",- there it is likely to stay. In addition, the audience is partisan, and wants its favored character to win, and demands a happy ending. The ending of "The Doll's House" is often changed. Nora returns for the sake of her children.

If, however, a play convey constructive suggestion to its "subjective member", the audience leaves the theater stimulated with a deep sense of joy. The play,- say, "The Merchant of Venice"

or "Hamlet",- is then said to have popular appeal, and the "theater-person" built up about the play enters upon an indefinite period of healthy existence at the withdrawal of the play.

The constructive or destructive suggestion lies in the "originative member" of the "theater-personality" itself. So we must not look to the technique of the play, its cleverness of line, its theme, or its dramatic values, but to the point of view of the author. For, if his point of view be positive, dealing with disasters will have no effect on the basic concept of his play. If, however, his point of view be negative, all the ugliness and shortcomings of life will constitute the basic concept of his play. It is the basic concept impressed upon the "subjective member" which determines the nature of its becoming, causing either joy or sorrow.

Now, if the nature of the basic concept be borne in mind, expressionism in the drama will meet the present-day demands in the theatrical world.

It was Shakespeare who said that "The play is the thing", but that is not accepted in the new scheme, unless the play can be expressive of the moods of the authors. It is the basic concept involved in the play that is the main thing. We have mentioned that Eugene O'Neill and George Kaiser write purely expressionsitic plays, yet, the supply has not kept pace with expressionistic stagecraft. So, while other playwrights are writing and experimenting for the purest effects in their plays, the artist-directors are using the dramas of the past,- of Sophocles, of Shakespeare, of Goethe, of Molière and others, and are making them the starting point for the greatness and success of the present.

The attitude of the public has appreciably broadened from

its narrower aspect concerning earlier plays, for this seems to be demonstrated in the thought of the couplet:

"The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
And those that live to please must please to live."

Since we agreed that the mental "stimulation" or "depression" produced by a play lies primarily in the nature of the basic concept, then we ask for the type of play that will create in the minds of the audience the maximum amount of stimulation. From our study of personality, we have found that the greatest bodily "readjustment" and the highest mental powers appears as the "positive concept," which gives rise to them. Then, the dramatic author should take as the "basic concept" of his play the "immanence and actuality of the Universal, and view and present life as set against a background of Being."

In our "play-personality," we try to penetrate more deeply into human consciousness, and show a kind of beauty more abstract and more spiritual than the old dramas had. Stephen F. Austin rightly asserts that evolution begins not in the organic but in the inorganic world, and this aids us in the clarity of our "play-personality." For the "subjective relation" of the environment to the developing character, is of prime importance.

This means that the environment not only accepts, but accurately responds to any suggestion from the "originative" character, and presents an exact correspondence with his "inner" mental states.

The correspondence between the character's conscious thought and his environment holds the same during the earlier portions of the "negative" scenes, when it is simply responding blindly to some "negative" ideas. The reverse is true, when the environment is

playing the part of the "originative element" in the "play-personality"; and the character, the part of the "subjective psychic member."

The exact correspondence between the character's mental states and his environment must be kept during the "positive" and "negative" scenes, alike, with the exception that during the "positive" moments the "originative element," in the "play-personality," is in the developing character, while during the "negative" moments the character himself finds it in his own environment. And the people by whom the character is surrounded will respond to "basic concepts," or "complexes" working in his own mind, while the relations to him and to each other, and the conditions to which they give rise, will represent precisely his states of consciousness.

For instance, the humor of an audience has an enormous effect upon the performances of a player. An audience that is cold and unresponsive will lessen the enthusiasm of any performance, and usually, a player who is not susceptible to this influence may be called a mere machine.

And further, upon the basis of a strict correspondence between the conscious thought of the central figure and his environment, the environment may be made to reproduce externally, and to change with the development that is taking place within the mental depths of the character himself. More than any other circumstance this makes it possible for real expressionism in drama, for it admits the most internal processes to be revealed or expressed. Here is s substitution of character, and the spiritual nature of life, in place of the merely human action of "dramatic incident." During the progress of the play, we see that the positive concept dominates

as those readjustments between positive and negative operating in the character's mind find their counterpart in readjustments, taking place between the positive and the negative groups in his environment.

Although individual artists will have to solve how the "positive concept" shall prevail at the expense of the "negative concept", Austin suggests one of three ways:- (a) You may change environmental conditions, by adding a character to the "positive group", and give a "positive concept" to the developing character; (b) Or you may substract a character from the "negative" group, and vanish the corresponding concept; (c) Or finally, the leading character may change his attitude towards the idea for which he stands, or towards another character, which will be equivalent to both the adding and subtracting of the concepts, while the character passes from the positive to the negative group and is presented in an entirely "new light".

The emphasis is not so much upon the struggle between the "positive and negative elements" as upon the fact of "readjustment" between them. The more frequent and clear-cut these "readjustments", the more powerful will be the suggestion of the play. The author will find it necessary, perhaps to quicken these environmental "readjustments", and, also, the character's movements between states of relative depression and stimulation.

Here the expressionist author is justified in not being hampered in technique by laws of nineteenth century realism. He will find it impossible, if he adhere to photographic methods, to quicken the "readjustments between positive and negative" in the environment as rapidly as they can be quickened in the developing character himself. The reason is, that in the environment, he is

dealing with physical objects, conditioned by "space and time"; in the mind of the developing character, he is dealing with mental images, not so conditioned. Yet, the correspondence between the inside and the outside should be maintained when actual results warrant it.

Where the primary conditions of "time and space" do not obtain, and where the figures of the environment can be handled with the greatest amount of ease, there, in the "psychic realm", the expressionist insists on shifting the action of his play. When such a shift of action is made, the audience must know that during the "positive" scenes when both the character and the environment are in states of relative stimulation, differences in "time and space" are likely to occur. The moment that a state of stimulation supervenes, the audience will expect new laws to apply. When this condition is fixed, the author may, during the scenes of stimulation make his characters conform to the laws governing mental images. Their coming and going may be made more nearly spontaneous, and readjustment more rapid. When the "negative" concept becomes dominant in the mind of the leading character, the author will return to such laws of realism as are suitable to the relative negativity of the scene.

The typical scenes, for our expressionistic drama where the elimination of "time and space" is to be brought about, are now to be considered.

It is said that immediately after a character acquires a positive concept at the close of any scene, it begins to grow, and the characters of his environment undergo a corresponding "readjustment" in their relations to him, and to one another.

In the next scene, because of his structure of "negative concepts", the character expresses a certain fear, and, immediately grants the "originative part", in the "play-personality", to his environment, and the character, corresponding to the "negative concept", that has given rise to the fear, conveys to him some "negative" suggestion. As this becomes dominant the character grows depressed, and the emphasis of the play shifts to some member of the positive group, who takes up the thread of the dramatic action. This condition continues until the character begins to fight for "readjustment", and until the scene becomes "positive" in nature.

At last, a point is reached where the stinulation is of the same degree that it was when the "negative concept" began to work, and where the concept was destroyed. Then sudden growth begins and the environment undergoes a corresponding change, by the cutting off of the corresponding character. Here a second "positive scene" begins, by a return of the play's theme, perhaps, and throughout its course progressive degrees of stimulation occurs. Then "time and space" begin here to be eliminated.

The main thing about the new movement is that it insists on suggestion, which may be turned by playwrights to constructive purpose, if they maintain a strict correspondence between the character's conscious thought and his immediate environment, and link these changes in the relation of effect and to cause.

Then as there are repeated generalizations of "positive concept", a growing personality must be indicated in the back-

ground, until the very "atmosphere" of the theater becomes alive with an unseen, but a definitely responsive, presence.

This is to show human life on the stage, and not to "concoct" something by the name of "a well-made-play."

The expressionistic play will serve the dramatic intention involved, for the art of the theater is plastic and infinitely expressive, it arises from a hunger, and addresses itself to a need, of the soul of man.

The great movement which began with painting, has spread to sculpture and to the drama. The so-called minor arts are affected in every branch; and the days of the realists that flow on under the "sleepy rule" of custom are doomed.

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