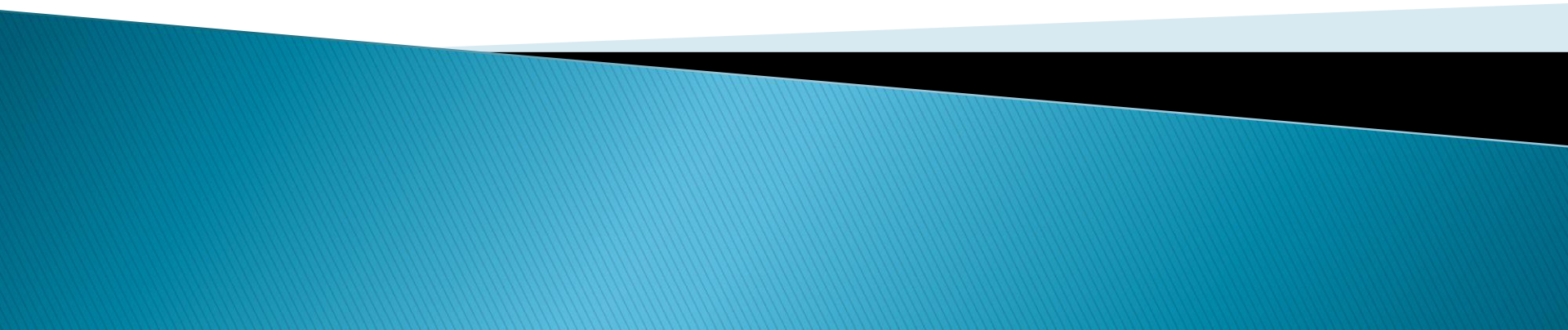


The Arsenal of the Oppressed

Structure of the Actor's Work



This Session:

- »» The Primacy of Emotion
Will/Counter-Will
Dangers of Mechanised Body
Dynamising the Senses

Terms

- ▶ **Arsenal:** an array of resources available for a particular purpose – the actor training exercises linked de-mechanisation and dynamising the senses
- ▶ **Exercises:** activity to develop acting skills
- ▶ **Games:** an activity designed for fun and social interaction
- ▶ **Gamercise:** combination – a game designed for fun which develops a specific acting skill and/or serves a social purpose in the preparation of spect-actors before participating in Theatre of the Oppressed

The Primacy of Emotion

- ▶ How can emotions freely manifest themselves in actor's body in ways that suit the character and engage the audience?
- ▶ Often our bodies are, the actor's instrument, is mechanised into certain methods of completing particular actions
 - Our body is “automated in its muscle structures and insensible to 70% of its possibilities” (Boal, 29)
 - New emotions of a character become ‘petrified’ – stuck in one form of expression based on the mechanisation of the actor's body.



Gamercise Designed to De- Mechanise the Body

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De-Mechanisation

- ▶ Mechanisation is caused by repetition and categorisation
 - The eye sees colour and all shades of green are referred to as green
- ▶ When confronted with similar situations we react and respond in the same way
- ▶ **De-mechanisation** is the returning, the de-tuning of the actor so that they can *take on the mechanisations of the character* rather than the actor.



Exercises for De-Mechanisation

- ▶ Before de-tuning, we must firstly be ware of how our bodies are mechanised in the first place.
- ▶ Muscular Exercises
 - Awareness of how the muscles respond and behave when completing even simple actions
- ▶ Sensory Exercises
 - Awareness of what senses are evoked when performing actions – e.g. tasting honey as opposed to vinegar – mime the physical responses to this
- ▶ Memory Exercises
 - Remembering details, often done in groups when remembering details of events and seeing what differences arise and discussing why



Will & Counter-Will

- ▶ **Will:**
 - the main objective and desire of the character
- ▶ **Counter-will:**
 - competing interests of the character
- ▶ **Together these make a dynamic and engaging character**
 - E.g. *Hamlet wants only one thing, to avenge his father – but on the other hand he doesn't want to kill his uncle. He wants to be and not to be.*

The Will

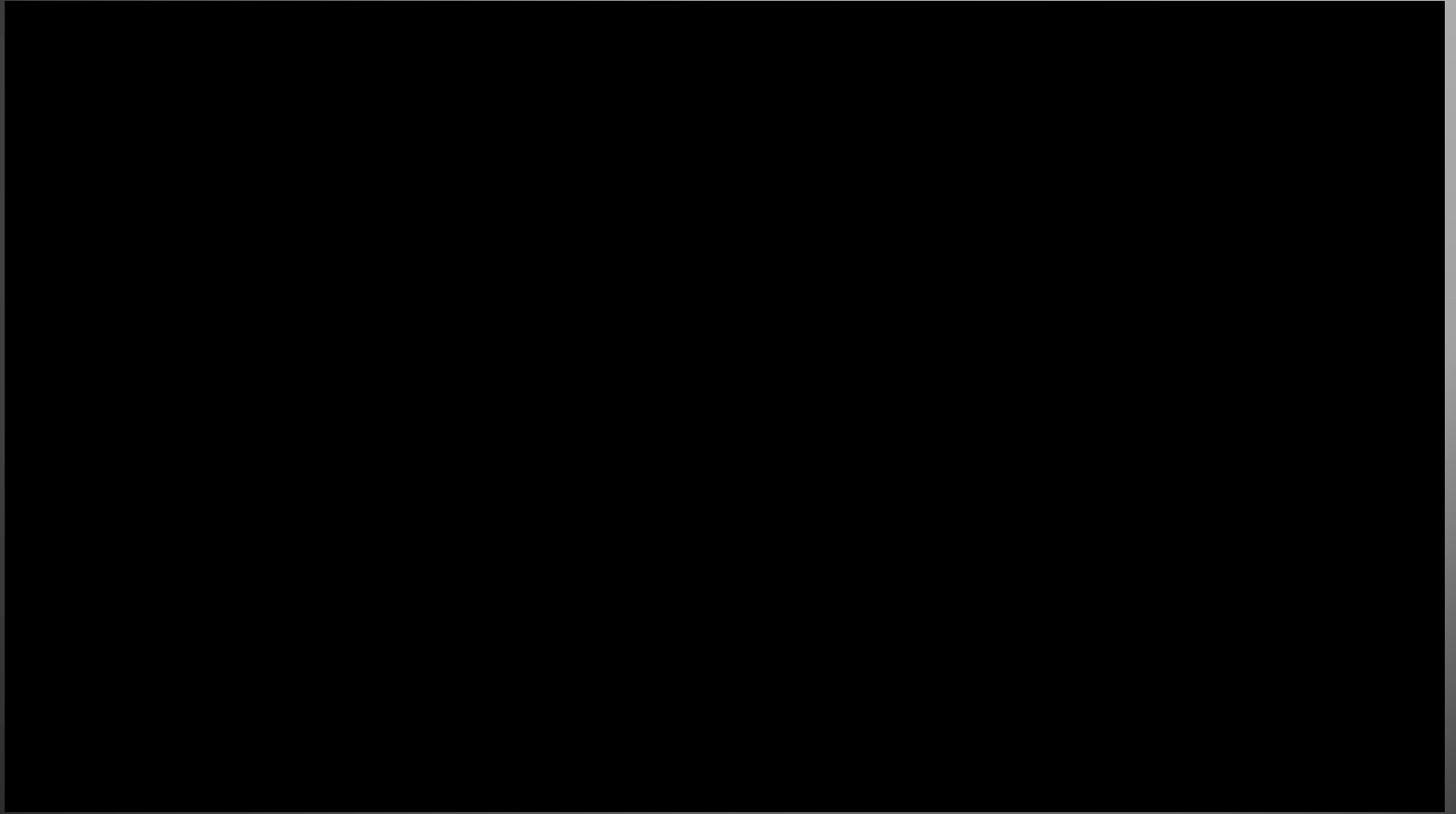
- ▶ The fundamental concept for the actor is not the ‘being’ of the character, but the ‘will’.
 - Stanislavskian links to units of action, objectives, counter-objectives and super objectives
- ▶ Who is this?
 - Leads to stale and one dimensional characters and emotions
- ▶ What do they want?
 - Leads to a dynamic, dialectical, conflicting, engaging and highly theatrical character
 - Character has a desire that they then attempt to fulfil

The Counter-Will

- ▶ No emotion is pure or constant in quantity or quality – we have a mix of emotions which are always bubbling away at different levels
 - We want and we don't want, we love and we don't love, we're brave and we're not...
- ▶ For the actor to truly live on stage they must find this counter-will
 - It enables effective conflict to be developed which allows focus and tension to be developed
 - Counter-will must be USED at all times even if not visible to the audience



Hamlet – Confused Man



The Dominant Will

▶ $W + CW = DW$

◦ Will + Counter Will = Dominant Will

- “From the interior conflict between the will and the counter-will there always emerges, on the exterior, a dominant will, which is the manifestation of the will in conflict with other characters” (Boal, p.45)
- “In different versions of the same play, each character’s dominant will naturally depends on the central idea imposed on the particular version” (p.45)
→ The Directorial Concept will affect the wills of the characters and, therefore, the manifestation / expression of the wills.

Quantitative and Qualitative Variation

▶ Quantitative

- actions and events that add to the character's will or counter-will

▶ Qualitative

- Actions or events that alter the will of the character

Dangers of a Mechanised Body

- ▶ “Emotion took precedence over all else and should be given a free rein to shape the final form of the actor’s interpretation of the role” (Boal, p.29)
 - A mechanised body means actors have automated expression of emotion
 - By de-mechanising the body a much vaster array of characters can be performed because actors have more control and ability to manipulate their bodies in different ways

Dynamising the Senses

- ▶ Goal intended for the actors to be able to dynamise the senses
 - Make use of all their senses in order to effectively express character
 - This relies on the de-mechanised body in order to seek new and meaningful ways to utilise the senses
 - **Feeling What We Touch** (the cross and the circle, Colombian hypnosis, pushing against each other, trust circle)
 - **Listening To What We Hear** (a round of rhythm movement, the machine of rhythms, the Peruvian Ball Game)
 - **Seeing What We Look At** (mirrors – everyone joins hands, modelling – sculptor with 5 or more models, string puppet, fear and protector, building character relations, complete the image)

Where You Should Be...



• Finish up to p.21

- Primacy of Emotion and De-Mechanisation of the Body
- The Will/Counter-Will
- Dynamising the Senses
- Read the book – taylorlhs.weebly.com