

Julian Beck - 21st July 1967

Living Theatre

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.. [ The next thing that you have to do in this regard is to try to set things up so that your life is not constantly devoted to the process of making money, because as long as the object of your work is financial remuneration the work itself becomes cursed and the sanctification of the deed, the sacred act, the sanctification of the moment is totally aborted, when the object of the work done is no longer the work itself, it's no longer the passion, the creation of the product, but the object is the money. So you forget about the money and you put that aside and that becomes a sort of side issue, and you learn various ways actually of getting along with less of it and less of it, and this is very, very important. And I think that then you can begin creating things, in the theatre anyway, that are not made with the idea that they're eventually going to be financially remunerative and you can begin to work mererefreely. ] The problem which I think on the ... No, I'll come back to that.

R/W

So we then carry on this object of the collectivity beyond the surface structure of the basic economy, because as I say [ to divide money and lives as a collectivity economically in a way is only part of the very desperate need that men have, that people have to live creatively in collectivity. To establish a situation in which the individual is not sacrificed to the collective nor the collective to the individual. So then it becomes necessary to carry the aspect of collectivity into the work itself. ] So that we have tried in our particular sphere, small as it is, but merely as a matter of working out our own personal lives towards salvation, to destroy as much as possible the aegis of authority; to get rid of myself, that is I have to wither away as kind of the founder and director, and the pursuit became: How do you make a play,

R/W

really, without the authoritarian domain of the Director, the Designer, the Author - I should perhaps have said Author first - the Leading Actor; and how do you establish a situation in which the singularity of the individual as someone who dominates a group, even in guiding them, can be done away with. And our inreads here have been very serious and I think profound. I would not say that they have been total because [we have so far worked on three plays, two of which have been totally created by a group of approximately 25-30 people working from the very basis of "What shall we do, how shall we do it, what constitutes the creative event and how can we make this creative event happen?" And then everyone has participated to - from each according to his ability, whatever he has to contribute to the mise-en-scene, to the performances, to the degree to which each actor can participate. We've done this with a thing called "Mysteries" and a thing called "Frankenstein". And the mise-en-scene, the direction for "Antigone" was again something which was created out of the work and the fruit of impassioned discussions and psychodelic improvisations made by 30 people.) In both cases we - towards the end we found ourselves harassed by time in conjunction with money, that is there came a certain point where we were holding out as long as we could to see the collective experiment through, we found ourselves harassed still by time and money and a few of us kind of gathered together the forces to defeat, if we could, a very strident Mammen. That's why I said that we maybe haven't totally yet had a chance to work through our experiment thoroughly. [But we are still in the state of struggling to create that space and that time and that situation around ourselves when we will be able to say that this particular work of theatre art has started from a collective, nourished itself on the individual contributions

Rjw.

Rjw.

of members of the collective and flowered as a thoroughly collective vision. The end of all this as we knew it now of course is only a part of a continuous cycle. When we have reached that stage we don't know where and how we go on, and how it widens. Once we have experienced the thorough joy of the totally collective creation, then we will know perhaps whether we want to stay there or whether we want to continue widening the sphere somehow. I imagine it will probably be more concerned with making what we are creating simply more profound.)

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{ in which you find yourself liberated enough so that you can work and create cooperatively with another person. It is necessary in a certain sense to surrender your identity and to take on the identity of someone else. And also it is necessary to surrender your identity to someone else, and in the group one begins to find very ~~strange~~ strange things: you begin to find yourself speaking through other people, you find other people speaking through yourself. You find a form of communication that you had not previously experienced. And you also reach that point in discussion and work and improvisation when you find that a poetry more vaulting than your own begins to emerge from other parts and other sections and carries you along, and the joy of becoming part of that, the feeling that it is part of you and you part of it is almost excessive.) And I speak now almost in a sort of missionary fashion, because I have had the pleasure of this particular kind of anguish, and I simply say to the 50 people that are here right now that if there is opportunity for you in your own time and your own work to begin to - perhaps some of you have already much deeper experiences in this particular area than I, but perhaps also what I say can encourage, a little bit, to go further in the precreative joys of the cooperative.

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I don't know at the moment, but we did talk about it, and we talked about it in these terms. We talked about it mostly on the basis of the responsibility to the person that you love or have loved. And we talked about it on the basis of the amount of things that one does in this world that kill a person a little bit. We've been talking about this recently. And I use for an example - I'll try to be very brief about it - a very simple thing, which is: we did a scene in which a person's body was taken by the rest of the group, and the rest of the group did anything they wanted to this person's body. That is, they could twist the head off, they could bend its back... the person in half, do anything that they wanted to this person. It was a ritual act that we performed, and we found that it is something that we probably will - may use in this thing that we're working on. And at the end of about - I don't know the timing of it - 35 or 40 minutes of this ritual, the 25 people were in a state ~~xxx~~ of real exhaustion they had really run out of their inventiveness and everything that they knew to do to this other person, to bring this person out of a state of - well if I don't know quite how to describe the state the person himself must go into in order to transcend this. I've done it myself, it's a very far out, a very flipped out experience. It was one of the most astonishing physical things that ever ~~xxx~~ happened to me. The spectators etc. really didn't think that I was going to survive, or that this girl was going to survive - we did this thing with a girl. But we both did and we both felt that we had survived, that at the end of it we were totally strong and fresh and we had no problem; ~~xxxx~~ because there was a physical relationship, we'd maintained a particular breathing pattern which was essential, we

established an identity by the repetition of a sound which -  
both of us these different sounds - went into a state  
of total passive resistance; but we felt completely at one  
with all of these who were working on us and doing things to  
us. I felt that when I came out of that experience, that  
I had gained a year of life, that my body, my organs, things  
had been awakened in me, I had been entered, I had expanded  
- it was a very glorious thing. That evening, walking  
through the streets of Rome, some cars driving past in a  
car as I was stepping off a curb, came very close to me  
very deliberately, honked their horns, made a very wild  
~~xxxxxxx~~ sound, and I jumped back onto the curb and was totally  
shock up by it. And I realized that at that moment my body  
had gone through - that the blood vessels had contracted,  
the nerves had extended themselves, the adrenalin had flown,  
my stomach had tightened.

Ginger- ... chap arguing about organisation. Too much echo -  
might be usable, but prefer not to.

Then, a long section that sounds unusable.

(Man who complained about us shooting)  
....I have the impression that these seminars, these little groups,  
are the life of the Congress, as well as the mornings, and we don't  
want too many meetings like this because we can't talk to one  
another. May I make two other points, since I've got this bloody  
thing, which is such a horrible thing, A, we've space on Thursday  
evening (and he continues in this vein) secondly, the thing we  
haven't had in this Congress is a bit of music - is there any place  
for any music ..... CUT

(good quality)  
Ginger ....if the circle was in the centre here, what would be the  
distribution of speakers? Here there are 15 speakers, everybody's  
speaking, the density of speakers is enormous here (everybody breaks  
in to say something) CUT

??? thing on organisation, but bad quality.

Ginsberg offering to do chanting and singing

Girl next to Ginsberg: ~~I thought people were so violent towards each  
other, I thought they were funny.~~

BECK (living theatre)  
.....now in exile in Europe has just arrived, and we're going to start  
our seminar about the relevance of a new kind of theatre to the things  
we've been discussing since the beginning of this congress - this  
seminar will start now, in the annex. CUT

BECK (Living theatre man) : ... in this area, the practical work that  
one can do at the moment is evasive, but perhaps it begins with the  
general assault on all of the culture, so that we begin to weaken the  
fabric, to weaken the ties and the lines that keep us constantly  
enthralled by the need for money. If one can begin to break down  
in the consciousness of man those things which make him believe in  
the need for it, that perhaps is the first step. when one begins to

show or other the notion that ~~XXX~~ a potential renewal of  
is necessary...(mike sound) CUT

...money is, I think, the thing which, like authority, puts the  
lie in the mouth. I think that one finds for instance that in the  
business world that lives really on credit, which is a lie, and it  
puts into the mouths of daily speakers constant destruction of the  
whole glory of the word because it constantly is making people ~~M~~  
lie. One never tells the truth in business, because one is ~~XXX~~  
always trying to get more money, and if you are always trying to  
get more money there are certain things which must be kept secret.  
The secret, the dark areas of the world, these mysteries have to  
be exploded, the light has to be brought there. When we speak  
the truth I think it always puts a little light in these secret  
places, and sometimes I think that the importance of some of the work  
that we do on the stage is to try and say on the stage something that  
is true and something that we know is true. And if we really have a  
belief in this, and we are really trying to do .... what we are saying  
on the stage, then we have a right to say it on the stage, and if we  
say it on the stage, we have a right to do it in life, that again is  
a part of that destruction of separation between work and life that I  
spoke of earlier. But I speak of this particular battle against money  
because I think that the time dictates to us that now we have to begin  
to talk about this, we have to begin to talk aloud, so that people know  
that when we talk of a total assault on culture and when we talk of a  
society that is free, that this must be what is really meant, and  
that this is really very much of the substance of what it is about.

CUT

Ginsberg at phone: (chanting) telephone system doesn't even work -  
breakdown of all machinery - (dialling) (talking about his proofs)

Living theatre man walking around and testing acoustics (sound good)