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The Comedia as Playscript

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The *Comedia* as Playscript

The relationship between literary text and theatrical performance is the subject of intense discussion and occasional animosity between those who believe that performance is only the faithful translation of the text from one medium to another and those for whom a playscript is only a starting point or a secondary element to performance.¹ We do know, however, that the *comedias* were written to be performed, that there are performance signs imbedded in the texts themselves, and that if we ignore performance altogether we end up teaching the literary texts as though they were novels or poems. The problem that this essay hopes to address is the manner in which one can adequately and meaningfully approach the *comedia* as theater as well as drama.

The most traditional and accessible way of looking at the *comedia* in terms of performance is historical, and we are fortunate to have excellent and easily assimilable background studies on *comedia* performances, both in earlier studies by Rennert and Cotarelo, and in important recent investigations by Shergold, Varey, and Allen. In these works one can discover important technical details regarding the physical space of the theater (both *corral* and palace), acting styles, theatrical conventions such as soliloquies and asides, stage directions, costumes, the different types of theaters and their changes over time, the influence of the *commedia dell'arte*, Valencian drama, the *autos*, and the performance history of individual plays.

The study of performance history falls far short of our goal of looking at the *comedia* in terms of real-time live performance. The "traditional" or "classical" approach to the relationship between text and performance views the *comedia* only as a historical artifact, tends to assume a one-to-one correspondence between the text and the performance, and disregards those aspects that can only occur in a theatrical setting (time, space, audience, etc.).² A common term used

in this approach is "fidelity," usually taken in a general or selective sense; rarely does one really mean actual fidelity under original conditions (Hornby 4; Stroud). While faithful reproduction usually is strong on details, it can be very weak on an overall system that makes for good theater in practice (Hornby 24).

The principal trouble with the "fidelity" approach to the study of performance is the extrinsic nature of the criticism. The search for historical authority is not an invalid endeavor, but we do not need to abandon the text in order to discuss performance. The most important figure in performance theory in this century was Constantin Stanislavski, whose basically structuralist approach considered a close, even microscopic, reading and interpretation of the text to be the basis of performance. In this regard, actors, directors, and literary critics all share common activities in our functional relationship with the text, our attempts to interpret, and the avoidance of oversimplified, externally validated, or "privileged" interpretations.³ According to Stanislavski, there is little in the way of literary activity that is not also germane to the preparation that an actor and director must undertake to prepare a role or a performance, and there is a pervasive insistence on thorough analysis of ideas, language, *enredos*, plot development, subplots, genre, and even concerns regarding textual editions, variations, and punctuation.⁴ While it is usually only the directors and actors who work first-hand with both script and performance (Hodge 273; Schechner 43-44, 51-52), there are important and useful performance techniques and activities that can be successfully implemented in a literature classroom.

Stanislavski urged every actor to be his or her own director (*Creating* 133), and we should encourage our students to think along the same lines from the very first reading. In general, my students tend to read through a text once before class, almost never reread the text, and give very little thought to what they are reading. They tend to read playscripts as readers, uninterested spectators, or worse, while we should be trying to get them to read as directors or actors. Underlying their lack of engagement with the text is a preconception that they are only reading for "content;" they do not seem to consider how these very words can or will be transferred to the live stage, or that the ideas of a play and their manifestation in performance are both part of a unified whole. No performer could get away with such a casual acquaintance with the text (*Creating* 115, 163). We in literature should be no less exigent, but, in fact, we usually spend three class

hours on a play in a survey covering one *comedia* per week. The first adjustment that must be made to bring performance concepts into the literature classroom, then, is to reduce the number of plays read in favor of a much more intense and closer reading. By insisting on rereading the text, we can point out the difference between first impressions and later readings (cf. *Creating* 112-113, 121; Hodge 16; Gross 161-164).

Most literature classes include in a discussion of character such questions as character density, type, strengths and weaknesses, reactions to obstacles, values, and the like, but we can go further and justify the character and his or her actions. Justification embodies one of Stanislavski's primary concepts, that of coherent unity of all parts of both playscript and performance, with the text providing the basis of the unity (*Actor* 43, 121-122; *Creating* 176, 263). Unity functions both diachronically and synchronically. The sequence of actions provides a seamless plot progression, so that it is important to ask both what actions are there and what actions aren't (and why or why not); why they are in the sequence they are; what is the importance of each fact and what happens if you remove each one from the sequence (*Creating* 174-185); and what things or circumstances, events or experiences are absolutely necessary to the existence of the play.⁵ In many respects, the establishment of the "through line of action" corresponds to Parker's emphasis on causality, but without the moral overtones.

The mechanisms for justifying a character are two: microscopic analysis of the text, which is common to the other literary approaches of this volume, and deduction from the text of both physical action and emotional motivation (Stanislavski, *Actor* 43; *Creating* 172, 261-263; cf. Gross 164-168). The common basis of both activities is the acting unit. In Chapter 7 of *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski proposes breaking down the actions of a play into large, physical units, then smaller units, and smaller ones still until one arrives at what might be called minimal units.⁶ A new unit is begun every time there is a shift in the line of talk or dominant focus on a character (Hodge 33; Glenn 49). To illustrate with a well-known example, we can see the difference between scenes and units in *El médico de su honra*, in the scene in which Gutierre discovers Mencía writing a letter to Enrique (3:410-459). In this one scene containing only a few lines there are four units: Gutierre's appearance and aside, Mencía's reaction to Gutierre, Gutierre's reading the letter and writing his message, Mencía's reading

what Gutierre wrote and reacting to it.

Once the units have been determined, the next step is to ascertain the objectives of each one. At this point we must continually ask ourselves "For what purpose?" because the purpose of the objectives will determine the rest of the analysis of the play.⁷ A character's objective should be stated as an active desire or wish, "I want to . . .," that carries in itself the germ of action that will, of course, provoke further action (*Actor* 116; Hornby 42-43; Glenn 65). In the Calderonian scene just mentioned, what are the objectives of the letter-writing scene, that is, what do Gutierre and Mencía want? In the first unit, Gutierre wants to see what Mencía is doing, to read her letter, and thus to invade her privacy. The verb to sum up his objective is the same one we used to describe the action, "to spy." Mencía's objective of the second unit is much less obvious, because her only words are, "¡Ay Dios! Válgame el cielo!" (3:412). Mencía wants to hide what she is doing; Gutierre's discovery means she has failed in her attempt at secrecy. The shock causes her faint, but in a sense her swoon is another attempt to hide from Gutierre, at least on the conscious level. Mencía's objective is her desire to hide. In the third unit, Gutierre has a number of desires. He wants to read what Mencía wrote, he wants to kill Mencía, he wants to keep her death a secret, and he wants to give Mencía the opportunity to confess so as not to lose her soul. Gutierre's desires are clearly contradictory, creating a problem in establishing the objective, but also allowing for the necessary complexity that gives interest to his character. His desire here is not only to kill her but also to save her soul. To take revenge is thus not an apt objective, because revenge is not usually so charitable. In Gutierre's own mind at least, he wants to act righteously by eliminating the source of his dishonor in a Christian way, even if it means killing his wife. We, of course, are free to disagree with Gutierre's logic, but the objective must reflect the character's actions and state of mind. Finally, Mencía wants to get help, to escape, and, in short, to protect herself.

As proof of the connection between dramatic unity and individual action, we note the coherency and close relationship between Gutierre's and Mencía's objectives. Gutierre's suspicions are aroused in part precisely because Mencía wants to keep her activities secret. His curiosity is piqued in proportion to the intensity of her desire for privacy. On the other hand, Mencía faints primarily because she fears Gutierre, the same reason she keeps things secret in the first place. She

knows her husband, and her secrecy is intended primarily to protect herself. Gutierre interprets all these signs as bad for Mencía because he is suspicious to begin with. For him, Mencía is guilty until proven innocent, and the circumstantial evidence convicts her. His suspicions create the fear in Mencía that in turn causes Gutierre to be more suspicious. The intensity of the interaction between suspicion and fear, accusation and self-protection is heightened with every unit.

The discussion of objectives can be a useful means of prompting interaction between the students and the characters.⁸ For example, each student can be assigned a character and can be expected to discern the various units and objectives of the role individually. We can call on students to answer questions from the class directed to the character (*Creating* 177). Or again, one can assign to the female students a female character, and the male character to male students for the purpose of discussing and establishing objectives. Both strategies serve not only to focus discussion on the various possibilities for naming the objective, but also to begin to see how one character's objectives relate to those of another character (*Actor* 118).

Every objective should also carry with it the germ of physical action, and that action should not exist for itself, but should evoke an emotional response (*Creating* 208). The physical actions are not a whole-cloth invention, however; the physical action must follow from the objective, grow out of and support the words of the text, and be consistent with characterization (Hornby 43; Glenn 39; Gross 208). The text, in a very real sense, is a "pre-text for action," in Schechner's words (51). In order to help us think as concretely as possible, we need to name the objective-unit by means of a transitive, actable verb (*Actor* 116, 118-119; Hodge 34-35). To continue with the scene just mentioned, we might say that Gutierre suspects Mencía and that she faints, but "to suspect" is not really actable and "to faint" is not transitive. Rather, we can say that Gutierre spies on Mencía, and Mencía notices, fears, and succumbs to Gutierre's presence. Gutierre then accuses her of dishonor and writes to her to confess. Finally, Mencía reads the letter, and fears Gutierre even more.

Once we establish the actable verbs, it is easier to discuss concrete actions: Would Gutierre spy by creeping around the stage in darkness in the manner of a burglar, or would there be a certain pride in his actions? How would that pride be shown in his actions? Would Mencía's notice be accompanied by a shocked expression or would it

be one of inevitable recognition? When Gutierre writes, would he do so nervously or with great moral righteousness? To discuss in class the actions that might be used to illuminate the text we can only get as far as discussion because there are indeed many ways to play each scene; there is no final answer to any of the questions. What is most important is the discussion itself as it guides us to a closer acquaintanceship with these characters.

Physical action and its relationship to characterization and dramatic action can be highlighted by having students, in the roles of various characters, move, gesture, use props, speak lines (thus focusing on delivery and timing), and confront each other directly in character (cf. Hodge's "organic blocking," 68-71, 124). One can see the various ways in which one can read a text by having several different students read the same passage. Do they use different tempos, pause at different places, have more or less emotion? Why? Where are they getting the different perspectives to use in reading the text? (Hodge 29).

Let us consider another scene from *El médico de su honra*, that in which Mencía tells Gutierre that a man was in her room (2:278-360). Here Mencía's objective is to deceive with the truth, that is, to tell Gutierre that a man was in her room without telling him who it was or why he was there. Her actions include not only telling half-truths but also blowing out the candle. Gutierre's objective is to protect the honor of his household by eliminating the threat of adultery. Would Mencía and Gutierre touch? How would they look at each other? If Mencía is to be convincing, she should show some sort of intimacy with Gutierre, but her deceptions might lead to her avoiding direct eye contact. What would Mencía be doing while Gutierre is looking for the man? Once the two are separated, after line 325, how would their change in attitudes be acted? How would Mencía treat Jacinta? What would Gutierre actually do with the dagger that he found? How would he look at it? In these activities, of course, the more access one has to costume pieces and accessories such as cloaks, hats, fans, swords, and daggers, the more one can bring out theatrical action that is not so apparent when one only reads the text (Glenn 135-144). As usual, the closer one can come to actual performance, the more performance will become a meaningful function of the literary text.

The study of physical actions is called the outside-to-inside approach to character and action (*Creating* 209; Hodge 68); an investi-

gation into basic psychological motives is called the inside-to-outside approach (Hodge 7, 67-68). For Stanislavski, it is impossible to separate either the physical actions or the words from psychological elements; justification involves expanding and experiencing the text by the senses of the actor (*Actor* 132; *Creating* 153, 176). An actor must commit mind, feelings, and will to a role, and we can expect at least an attempt at such involvement from literature students. An additional benefit of this commitment is that the students look at the plays for themselves and not accept blindly what we tell them (cf. *Actor* 133).

Even a cursory reading of a play will allow a discussion of why some parts of the play excite feelings while others do not. Is the feeling in the words or the reader or both? Why? What is inherently exciting about the action? What do the words make one see, feel, and want to do? What is the past and future of this person? What does the character look like, and how does he or she fit into the believable stage society? What is the physical state of the character regarding heart-beat, muscle relaxation, and respiration? (*Creating* 123, 160-161; Glenn 80-81, Hodge 40-42). With regard to the more specific example cited, what emotions accompany Mencía's blowing out the candle? Fear, certainly, and nervousness, but perhaps also some latent guilt feelings? Or are they paranoia? Each of these emotions is also tied to concrete actions, and the class can get to know Mencía much better by speculating on the precise movements she might make. Likewise, Gutierre has many possible emotions when he finds the dagger: surprise, anger, and humiliation, not to mention the general reaction one gets to an instrument of death. This process of fleshing out the characters provides psychological and behavioral motivation to the raw physical action of the role. Of course, we must take care that we don't read into the role traits that are extraneous and overburdening.⁹

To help students understand the emotions that are inherent in the text, we can use one of the most well-known facets of Stanislavski's method, emotion memory, that is, recalling particular emotions one has felt given certain stimuli. As usual, Stanislavski is careful to note that one cannot pull emotions out of the air; they should not contradict the text (*Creating* 170, 260). While emotion memory is clearly more important to an actor than to a literary student, it does have certain applications. Because one looks for feelings that are "analogous to those required for the part" (*Actor* 167), we can in turn call on our students to think of emotions analogous to those of a

character in a *comedia*. For example, few contemporary American students can really identify with Gutierre. They tend to dismiss him as a barbarous fiend and a throw-back to a distant age. But in fact there are analogous situations. Ask the students to remember feelings of being jealous, betrayed, helpless, embarrassed or humiliated (without drawing out painful details unless one is prepared to deal with such declarations). Most students have experienced emotions in such situations, and we can direct them to look again at Gutierre's actions regarding Mencía in light of their own emotional experience.

The sum total of the motives and justifications, thoughts and feelings of the character is the subtext, and it can go far beyond the superficial words of the text, continuing even when the character is neither speaking nor acting (*Creating* 139-141, 174-185, 261; Glenn 65-71). When one character has a long speech, the other actors don't cease to act nor do the characters cease to exist. What is going on with them, how do they react, why, and so what? Not only do we get further insight into the silent character and into the relationship between the two, but it makes a discussion of the long speech more interesting in theatrical terms. In addition, the discussion of subtexts in relationship to each other brings up Stanislavski's concept of communion in that one character is indeed part of the other actors' performances (*Actor* 190, *Creating* 167, Hodge 45).

Consider the following example. The first meeting between Mencía and Enrique takes place very early in Act I (155); the audience still knows almost nothing about the situation between the two. But the actor's subtext must already be in place to foreshadow the future revelations of the complications that Enrique's fall has provoked. Mencía must speak her lines from the point of view of a woman who once loved this man but was forced to marry Gutierre against her will, a woman who fears her husband because she knows how suspicious and overbearing he is, a woman who is genuinely distraught to see her former lover in physical distress, and a woman who takes seriously her social rank and the honorable obligations that go with it. Enrique's subtext is that of a willful and impulsive young man who is the King's brother and therefore immune to the proscriptions that apply to others in the realm. He is in love with Mencía and takes seriously the standard dictum that a man in love must pursue his lady with all vigor or be held in less esteem. He is also a guest in Gutierre's house, and he feels the obligations that an Infante de Castilla must show to a noble.

Each of these characters is complex, showing at once contradictory emotions and impulses. It is the actor's job to endow the character with these traits, but it is our job at least to understand what is going on internally as well as externally, and to begin to breathe life into these characters by giving them concrete physical actions and emotional motivations. What mannerisms does Mencía use to demonstrate her conflicted state of mind? Is she overtly nervous and flustered? Quiet and afraid? A mixture of both?

The justifications of characters and actions through units and objectives taken together define the through line of action that leads to the super-objective. The super-objective should at once subsume the individual objectives of the various units, grasp the significance of the play as a whole and arouse an emotional response.¹⁰ While ideally one should be able to come up with only one super-objective, in reality plays are more complex than that (*Creating* 256-257). Instead one can come up with a reduced number of superobjectives all of which still relate to the play itself and include the essence of the whole play, taking care not to include extraneous tendencies or other objectives foreign to the main theme (*Actor* 262). The discussion of the super-objective closely relates to traditional literary treatment of the "meaning" or interpretation of the play as a whole, and as such one should avoid reification and reductionism by always allowing for complexity, even internal contradiction (Hornby 120). The very problems in identifying only one super-objective make for good classroom discussion. Is the super-objective of *El médico de su honra* the establishment of order, the repression of love, both, or something else altogether? How do the super-objectives of the individual characters relate to the play as a whole? What are the contradictions, and are they resolved or left ambiguous?

Stanislavski's second book, *Building A Character*, deals primarily with those aspects of performance that we have so far been avoiding: diction, costuming, movement, and other such elements the implementation of which truly belongs more to a class in acting or directing. That is not to say, however, that one cannot deal with these aspects in a literature class through records of performances: video and audiotapes, slides, stills, prompt books, etc. Viewing others' performances is a standard tool of directors and actors, and the purpose is to look at the minute parts of a performance for the purpose of illuminating the literary text. At this point we can indeed discuss

the various aspects of the theater that simply couldn't be discussed before: the kind of stage, the ground plan, the scenery, the props and how they are handled, lighting, makeup, acting styles, gesture, tension between characters, acting areas, the positions of individual actors alone and in groups, the spoken words, their delivery, phrasing, dialects, and relationship to the subtext (Hodge 71-264 *passim*).

Currently there is a growing interest in producing and recording performances of *comedias*, centering primarily on the festivals in Almagro, Spain, and El Paso, Texas, that each year present many different kinds of *comedia* productions. The El Paso Golden Age Drama Festival, held at the Chamizal National Memorial, is a good example of the use of live performance for discussion, because after the final curtain the director and the actors meet the public in an open forum. During the literary symposium that accompanies the festival, the companies are also available the following morning for discussion of the play and their performances with the literary scholars in attendance.

The problem with using live performances exclusively in studying the *comedia* is that one must rely on one's memory because the discussion necessarily begins when the final curtain falls. Perhaps the best possible use of others' productions is both to see the original performance and to have access to a videotaped version. A recently organized association, the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, currently housed at Texas Tech University, has undertaken to create a library of videotapes of *comedia* performances, and it, along with commercial film distributors, provides a valuable resource for teaching the *comedia* as performable art. Even when one cannot actually see all the performances, the tapes provide an alternative way of bringing performance to the classroom.

Of course, there are problems with viewing videotaped performances. Hornby (93-99) notes several differences between film and theater. Basically we are confined by the single eye of the camera and its preestablished perspective, two dimensions, and the necessity to change perspectives frequently because the camera cannot take in several planes of interest at once, as can the human eye. Tape quality is also a factor, especially when one uses a copy of a copy of a performance. Each dubbing of the original produces a tape of less clarity. Then again, without the actors there to discuss their performances or to defend themselves, the tape does not allow for a dialogue

between theater and literature. Still, the use of videotapes in class is the next best experience to actually attending a performance or producing one.

When one looks at a performance, one immediately notices the importance of the additional signs present to communicate tone, mood, characterization, action, and the like. The first question is, of course, what is in the text and what has been contributed by the production? In the case of a "director's theater" or "concept" production, the actual performance may depart radically from the text. Even in productions that try to remain true to the text, we can also see that there are some factors simply beyond the control of the text, such as the actors' physical characteristics. The discussions of textual and extratextual elements in a particular performance can serve to illuminate the text as students must prove that a particular bit of stage business is explicit or implicit in the text, or whether the director or actor added it. Two recent examples are the 1985 production of *El galán fantasma* by the Compañía Pequeño Teatro de Madrid, in which the Duke was played with very effeminate mannerisms, and the 1986 production of *Marta la piadosa* by the Centro Universitario de Teatro of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, which ended its first act (not the original play's) with a multimedia paean to Tenochtitlán. Both of these performances, which are available on videotape through the AHCT, prompted extensive and sometimes heated discussion among the literary scholars present.

Videotapes can also allow one to discuss such matters as theatrical focus and space. In the same production of *Marta la piadosa*, the director used a linear staging on several levels that disrupted the normal single focus one expects. Even dialogues between two characters were frequently performed by actors standing quite far apart and facing the audience, not each other. The set of that production was also of interest because it was nothing more than one long ramp, much more clearly approaching a Brechtian model than any kind of illusionistic one (cf. Schechner 168-177). As another example of the kind of activity one can undertake with performance pictures, either videotape or still, Hodge suggests an activity he calls "picturization." This exercise has students look at picture of the performance and tell who has the center of attention, what is the strength of eye-focus, what is the function of characters in the background, what is the function of props and sets, what is the use of triangulation, and what is the psychological

story being played out (Hodge 124-134).

Although less substantial than videotape, audio recordings can also be used to good effect, especially to hear the way professional actors say the words after students have spoken them in class, and to discuss the differences between the two deliveries (Glenn 108; Hodge 161-162). The Ministry of Culture of the Spanish Government has recently been sending to American universities radio versions of *comedias* in cassette format. A number of questions arise when one both hears and reads the text. How does the dialogue actually sound when spoken aloud? How can different methods of delivery seriously affect meaning? What is the difference for performance between dialogue in prose and dialogue in poetry? How long are the speeches? What is the use of monologues and asides? How is the passage punctuated, and does punctuation (especially of different versions) affect meaning? (Hodge 27-29, 156, 307; Glenn 105-106).

One of the most effective uses of performance records is in the study of rhythm and tempo.¹¹ Here we are dealing in actual minutes and seconds as well as lines of verse or scenes. How long does a scene take? What is the effect on the spectator? What is the relationship between the speed of the actors' words and actions and our perception of time passing? What is the rhythm of the dialogue? What is its effect on us? What does the production sound like? Is there music? What is the rhythm of speech and music, and how do the sounds relate to the actions and words? Is an uneven rhythm in speech, for example, indicative of some character trait? What is the relationship between the rhythm and the character? What is the incident-to-line ratio and what does it mean? How does the rhythm relate to the tempo, and how do both relate to the passage of real time that exists in a performance? While we may linger over or reread certain passages, such is not the case in performance. We are attempting to look at a play in terms of its execution on stage, and time is essential to performance; thus, time spent on stage is meaningful. Thus we need to look for clusters of space and time as well as imagery and consider the importance of the length of time taken to perform a certain act or deliver a speech. These considerations assure that we are dealing with the play in its real-time performance aspects. That one can draw careful correlations through a close reading of images in the poetry of a *comedia* is quite different from the perception of those images in a real-life performance in which the actual delivery of a complex poetic passage takes only a few seconds.

To conclude, it is important to remember that these suggestions are only a cursory overview of three approaches one can take in considering the *comedia* as playscript. For further investigation, I would note the additional recent contributions to both structural and semiological approaches to the theater by Keir Elam, Patrice Pavis, and Marco de Marinis, as well as more direct applications of theater theory to the *comedia* by Donald Dietz and Charles Ganelin. In addition, while Stanislavski lends himself very well to classroom discussion, the nonillusionistic theories of Brecht, Artaud, and Grotowski can provide a more radical approach to the relationship between text and performance. *Comedia* criticism is just now realizing the enormous potential contribution that performance theory can have to our understanding of the genre.

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Notes

¹The enormous difference between text and performance cannot be adequately treated here. Several sources outline the basic issues: Hornby (4-5, 10-24, 92-109); Schechner (43-91, 157-199); and Ubersfeld (13-52).

²Hornby 95-96; Schechner 46; Ubersfeld 16. Gross (17-18) calls this the "fallacy of the neutral performance," that is, a misguided belief that directors, actors, and designers are somehow neutral and interchangeable, that performance is only a "translation" of the text, and that one good performance of a text will be the same as another (cf. Ubersfeld 15).

³*Actor* 66; *Creating* 155:162-164 (for the sake of brevity, these books will be cited throughout only by title). Although structuralism is closest to Stanislavski's method itself, any method that closely examines a text will provide a sound basis for interpretation, as the other essays in this volume show. New Criticism, for example, is good at analyzing images and threads of plot that tie specific actions together, but is somewhat at a loss to explain how one sees on stage the image or connection under consideration. Semiotics, on the other hand, goes to the very heart of performance communication, to study the way in which both textual and performance signs derive meaning from their relationship to a perceiver and how they relate to each

other. Cf. Gross 18-30; Hornby 24-37, 105, 124; Schechner 52-56, 91; Glenn 4, 46-91; Hodge 7, 271.

⁴*Creating* 119-120; Hodge 29, 45-48, 292-295, 301-308; Glenn 52-62, 82-90, 106-107.

⁵Hornby 82; Stanislavski, *Creating* 129:144-148. The coherence and unity between text and performance give rise to a myriad of questions regarding the various ways in which one element relates to the others. Burke (3-20) suggests a close evaluation of ratios such as the scene-act ratio (between the setting and the action), and the scene-agent ratio (between setting and character). Burke notes a rather deterministic connection between the various components of a drama that must cohere to be believable. Schechner (67-71) also focuses on relationships. Why does one scene follow another? How do a character's words or actions relate to previous and future events? How does a particular action relate to its surroundings? How do the individual relationships fit into the whole? Hodge (27-28, 51-59, 72, 301, 308) adds some questions relating to tone and dialogue: What are the tone and mood goals for the actors? How does word choice establish mood? It is also important to consider all five senses in discussing the mood and the tone. What does the dialogue connote to character development? How does dialogue become action? What is the relationship between word choice, imagery, and physical action? Cf. Glenn 78-80. In reality, the permutations of the relationships are staggering; the actual questions asked are not as important as the understanding that each part of a theatrical event affects the other parts.

⁶See also *Creating* 153; Hodge 33-36; Hornby 20-21. There are two dangers with microscopic analysis of details: focusing on only one unit or only one series of units and not allowing for contradiction and complexity, and dividing a play more than is necessary and getting lost in details.

⁷Hornby (43) notes that the underlying pattern defined by the objective is the basic unit of acting. Stanislavski (*Actor* 112-114) gives a number of requirements for correct objectives. They must be on the actor's side of the footlights, directed toward other actors. They must be personal yet analogous to those of the character one is portraying. They must be creative and artistic, and function to fulfill the main purpose of creating the life of a human soul artistically. They must be real, live, and human, not dead, conventional, or theatrical, and truthful so that everyone concerned can believe in them. They must attract and move both actor and audience (cf. *Creating* 257). They must be clear cut and typical of the role played with no vagueness. They must have value and content, not be shallow or superficial, and correspond to the inner body of the part. They must be active, pushing the role along. There are basically three types of objectives: external or physical (mechanical, such as shaking hands, saying hello, and idiosyncratic to the character); inner or psychological (complex, with many emotions at the same time); and rudimentary psychological (sentiment of love, respect, gratitude: an ordinary objective). Cf. *Actor* 33, 64, 110; Hodge 34, 45-48.

⁸Stanislavski calls the interaction identification; Grotowski calls it confrontation and psychic penetration (Schechner 189-190). Although the approaches are quite different in perspective, the commitment to a relationship between actor and character is the same in either case.

⁹Stanislavski combines the emotional involvement between character and

actor with his "magic ifs," meaning that we can indeed flesh out a character by filling in details that are not in the text but which are consonant with the text (cf. *Actor* 51-67, *Creating* 171). For example, one might ask what Mencía dreams of, how she fills her days, or what she thought when she heard that her father had betrothed her to Gutierre. Personally, I am reluctant to engage in too much of this kind of speculation, principally because I feel that it leaves the text too far behind.

¹⁰*Actor* 239, 256-263, 283-284; *Creating* 253-259; Glenn 54-62, 75-78; Hornby 120-121; Hodge 43-48. The super-objective is also called the super problem, spine, basic action of the play, core, main action, or idea.

¹¹Hornby 18, 85-91, 115-116; Hodge 48-52, 89, 301, 307-308; Glenn 81; Schechner 74-81.

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