

To Study 'Red'

The training of the senses and of the emotions should be an essential part of our educational system, and the procedures discovered for the training of the actor could prove to be of inestimable value in this regard.

Lee Strasberg

Science, Language and Experience

The genius of language is its simplification of experience. The experiential and verbal are words apart. Language is divisive on purpose (Villela-Minnerly 1991:36). The idea that language can represent an underlying process without distortion is a *left* illusion. The distortion of abstraction is necessary for efficiency. It excludes everything “else” from a definition. Without abstraction and its limitation, there are no words, no language, no science.

Our primary connection to color is immediate and emotional. But this experience of color can be articulated in words and studied quantitatively (Wright, 1962a & b).

Poetry takes wing on connotations of *hue*: red—heat, anger, excitement, danger; blue—cool, strict, sad; green—calm, peace; yellow—joy, warmth; purple—passion, royalty. *Hue* is wavelength, a measurable quantity.

Color *saturation* communicates vitality, excitement and tension. Warnings are printed in saturated red and orange. Color *saturation* is purity, a measurable quantity.

Color lightness communicates safety or danger, light weight or heavy, freedom or confinement, and weakness or strength. Color *lightness* is intensity, a measurable quantity.

If color experience can be worded and color physics measured, why not kinesthesia? Muscle tone and muscle relationships have physical and perceptual properties as distinct as color. Surely connotations of muscle tone can be as richly language as connotations of color. Variations in muscle tone are sensed by proprioception, felt by palpation, measured electromyographically.

Language is the ability to label and remember experience so that it can be recalled, reconsidered, discussed and renegotiated. A science of

experience requires a language. Naming variations in muscle tone and muscle function, and developing connotations as well as denotations, are the steps to recording, remembering, discussing and studying the significant stages of kinesthetic education.

Integrative, Conscious Learning

Stanislavski's method frees expression from habitual *pre-tense*, extends the range and depth of our observations. The actor, by learning to access and then use his own inner experience, brings life to art, truth to communication, so that soul emerges in body and mind and communication becomes whole.

Psychoanalysis invites spontaneous, uncensored word play. An analyst, by speaking and then hearing what is said, undoes the armor of *left* repression, develops access to unconscious process, discovers how mind can know. Undoing the rigidities of thought releases creativity. Making better decisions is the natural outcome of allowing a wider range of emotional experience to come to conscious consideration. When we know our feelings, we are better able to choose a good response.

Freud finds unconscious drive (id) unreachable by consciousness, except indirectly. We become aware of the unknown processes that shape our lives only by noticing their consequences in what we explain as inexplicable behavior. Slips, jokes, dreams and free associations expose our unconscious drives, the presence of body in mind. But it is, by *left* definition, unclear where id is or what to do about it.

The power of *AT* education is Alexander's discovery of a palpable doorway into an inner process intimately related to id but more accessible. *AT* is where id emerges, where id can be touched and reshaped, where id is at. *AT* is the accessible layer of id, the knowable layer, the touchable, workable layer.

By kinesthetic dialogue, an *AT* lesson generates a new sense of self. A pupil becomes aware of and then learns to avoid the stubborn habits that impair coordination, numb kinesthesia, resist change and impede our fundamental well-being. *AT* education shows what not to do, what to undo. In a sense, there is nothing to *AT* education beyond its moment—except its infinite consequences.