Archetypes – A physical approach that can affect us imaginatively. 4 characters. 4 shapes of movement.


Warrior. Alert and Ready for Action. Sword and shield across heart. Left arm across chest as shield. Right arm straight up and forward as his sword.

Carer. Selfless. Soft fists. Heart opens to others. Hands in fists touching as a soft shield across the heart. Eye contact with others opens the arms.

Trickster. Naughtly. Unbalanced. Light on feet. Constantly slightly off balance. When you meet other people you spin and click. Can introduce a noise on the click like a ‘Hey’

1. We explore each archetype physically as a whole group. After each one we discuss what words come to mind in that archetype. Also what characters from the plays of Shakespeare come to mind?

2. In each corner of the room there is a piece of paper. Each paper represents a different archetype. Each paper has two columns; positive and negative. I ask the group to head to the corner which contains the archetype you feel most like today.

3. Give each group a few minutes to write down all the positive traits of their archetype.

4. Now they have to go to the corner that contains the archetype that they least feel like today. Once there they have a few minutes to write down all the negative traits of their archetype.

5. Now we shall introduce some text. I will be using lines from Puck but you can choose any four lines from any character that could show different aspects of character. From whichever corner they are
in they adopt the physicality of their archetype and they are to meet each other and say the line. The first line is

**Lord what fools these mortals be.**

After a few minutes they return to their corners. Everyone now rotates clockwise round the room to the next archetype. They adopt the posture and their next line is;

**Here villain drawn and ready.**

Return. Clockwise. Next line is

**Pretty Soul.**

Return. Clockwise. Next line is

**I’ll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.**

Come into middle. I will now say a line and I want everyone to go to the corner that you think somehow connects to it. There is no right or wrong just choose in your head why you think that line is connected to the archetype. **Lord what fools these mortals be.**

In each corner there will be varying numbers of people. In whatever size groups they are you ask them to have a quick discussion as to why they think that line suits their archetype. They assign a spokesperson who will share with us their ideas. They need to choose three words off the list of positive and negative to back up their argument.

Go round the room and listen to each group’s ideas.

Repeat with 2nd line. 3rd line. 4th line.

Having discussed all the lines you share with the group that, all of the lines are spoken by one character. Discuss what that shows us. Relish in the complexity of the character, the complexity of each line, the complexity of each word, the complexity of every member of the group. Choices make all the difference and everyone is different and everyone is right.

**Scene with Archetypes.**

Give out the text. Again this can be any reasonably quick-fire duologue. In this case I used Oberon and Titania from MND.
1. First time they read it through they should point on all the names. Jealous **OBERON**. Proud **TITANIA**. The **MOON**. Big gesture.

2. Now I want everyone to choose an archetype for every bit of speech. Can be many different archetypes over one speech. They can change very quickly from one to another. Demonstrate one handed versions of them.

3. Maybe get a couple to demonstrate what they did. Discuss what we see. Discuss what archetypes are being used a lot. Pick out differences between the couples. Discuss the role playing that these characters demonstrate. The power playing and game playing. Can lead to a discussion about how characters use different tactics to get what they want.

**Speech work**

Having explored a character approach we can now look at a more linguistic one. What we can learn from a speech like this. How we can use the words and structure and imagery to give us character and performance. Any speech is good for this just make sure that there are enough lines for everyone. I used ‘Is this a dagger’ from Macbeth.

**Make a circle**

**Whisper it together.**

**One line each round the circle.**

**Choose 4 words from your line that would explain it to an alien.** “What fire is in my ears can this be true” becomes “Fire, ears, this, true.”

**Now choose one word. Shout it out.**

**Increase the size of it.**

**Find a gesture to go with that word.**

**Increase the size of it.**

**Now take your word and gesture and throw it to someone else. They repeat yours and pass on theirs to someone new. Eye contact is important.**
Get them to run around the space and one by one stop and shout out their line before they run again. Go through the speech line by line. They might even know their lines by now. Get them to be as bombastic as possible. Energy. This is about finding the desperate “need to speak”. Their line is the most important.

Now tight circle read it through together again. Get them to try and bottle all the energy and imagery into just their imaginations and read it through simply line by line.

The Heart rate. Iambic pentameter.

Get everyone to Gallop around the room. Lie down and find their heart beat. Pulses. Tap out whatever rhythm theirs is. Iambic discussion. Describe the links between human heart beat and the text. What makes a heart beat change? Emotion. What emotions? Love, lust, joy, sadness, stress, fear. Shakespeare wrote his heart beat in the same way. The heart rate changes depending on how the characters feel. Pick out examples of the Regular heart beat ‘If music be the food of love play on.’ ‘Two households both alike in dignity’. Then talk about ‘To be or not to be that is the question’. How many syllables? 11. It has an extra beat. Why? Suicide. Genuine questioning of life and death. The hanging unsettled suspended ending to the line. Then talk about ‘Never, never, never, never, never,’. We say ‘never’ with an un-iambic stress on the first syllable ‘Never’ So the whole line is going against the grain of the heart beat underneath. King Lear dies of a broken heart very soon after this line. Discuss what that means. Link it to the speech or play you are looking at. Long lines? Short lines? Why? The speech is like a cardio gram of the character.

Warm-up class Plan

Some of you didn’t get to take part in this class but I basically played an imagination game and then looked at ways of approaching a duologue and then lots of quick-fire exercises to find out what might be happening in a scene.

Freeze Game

Pairs. Create a secret handshake using your hands, arms and anything you want. Once everyone has one get them to do their handshakes all at the same time. When they are mid-way through
shout **FREEZE**. Walk around a pick a pair to focus on. Everyone else relaxes and gathers round the chosen pair who hold their freeze. You want to see what stories people create in their heads when presented with a picture like this. Ask for ideas as to what the **story** of this particular freeze might be. By looking at their bodies do they like each other? Are they criminals? Are they indoors or outdoors? Are they fighting? Dancing? Get loads of different suggestions. The game develops by taking one of the people **OUT** of the picture and replacing them with somebody else who adds their own freeze to the already present one and by doing this they change the story. Then the original person exits the freeze and they are replaced by someone else who again **Changes the story**. It is quite difficult to describe but I'm sure you can make it up yourselves. The game should simply demonstrate the brilliance and variety of everyone's imaginations. We all see different things. Shakespeare used this muscle and needed his audience as well as his actors to transform the Globe into Verona, Venice, Scotland, Denmark all with the power of their imaginary forces.

**Dialogue Discoveries**

Quick fire exercises with a duologue

**Into new pairs.**

**One A. One B.**

A – can only say Yes. B – can only say No. Not allowed to move at all. Just on the spot. Using their voices have an argument back and forth.

**Now no words just movement.** A physical to and fro argument where they imagine the Yes and No.

Look at a pair. Now introduce dialogue;

A – You draw me you hard hearted adamant
B – I love thee not therefore pursue me not

Watch the scenes and discuss

This time;
A - Always have eye contact with the other person
B - Avoid eyes.

Swap.
Now give out the text for the whole scene (It should still be edited so that the lines are short and pithy but that the bulk of the meaning is kept.

This time they can either take a forward step when they say a line or a backwards step. Discuss the differences in different versions. Who moves forward more? Why?

Listen and take one word from the other characters speech and say that word before you say your line.

Interrupt each other. Start speaking your line before the other character has finished their line.

Long pause after each line. Leave three seconds of silence after each line before you speak. Fill that silence with something though.

“I want to be here” exercise. Move to wherever you feel you want to be for each line and say “I want to be HERE” and then say your line. The other character then does the same thing before their line.

Physical contact at all times. You have to be touching your partner in some form at all times through the scene. You can be as surreal as you like but keep the scene going. Discuss what that does to the scene. The awkwardness, the laughter, the personality that comes through.

These plays have been done for four hundred years. There is no point in doing them unless we allow our own choices and personalities to come shining through Shakespeare’s extraordinary words.

I hope all this is clear. If you have any questions email me. Good luck to you all.
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