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Friday, September 2, 1955

Dear Doris:

In preparing one of my courses I have been going over the literary schools and manifestos of the beginning of the century and your dear Hippo was constantly on the sidelines puffing away unable to understand. Since so many of these ISMS are influenced by Nietzsche's idea of the SUPERMAN--spit on bourgeois society etc. don't accept conventions, since they are anti-society, anti-conventions, they are anti-Hippo. I thought of all kinds of scenes in which the new isms (in the person of the son) would exasperate poor Hippo.

If the play were a little earlier you could make use of the ideas of the FUTURISTS (I include in this letter some rough notes that I have recopied--you can throw them away)--they are the wildest--"be proud that they call you loco" etc. In DADAISM (1916-1922) and SURREALISM (1922-) the important thing is to delve into the sub-conscious--that is where poetry comes from--poetry is not in form but in the free association of ideas. How to get to the subconscious: interpretation of dreams, automatic writing (the person writes in a state of hypnosis, without personal awareness--sometimes suggestions are made to the unconscious mind of the subject and the response is taken down) *is their interest.*

By the way about Gertrude Stein--AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOULAS: "Gertrude Stein never had subconscious reactions, nor was she a successful subject for automatic writing. One of the students in the psychological seminar of which Gertrude Stein, although an undergraduate was, at Wm. James' particular request, a member, was carrying on a series of experiments on suggestions to the subconscious. When he read his paper upon the results of his experiments, he began by explaining that one of the subjects gave absolutely no results and, as this much lowered the average and made the conclusion of his experiments false he wished to be allowed to cut this record out. Whose record is it, said James. Miss Stein's said the student. Ah, said James, if Miss Stein gave no response I should say this is was as normal not to give a response as not to give one and decidedly the result must not be cut out."

- a series of successful
discussions

The boy might belong to an avant-garde group who conduct this type of experiment--I don't mean automatic writing necessarily, one in which the responses were not written but spoken would be better for the stage--the whole would be for the group to decide that for a certain experiment they needed a very stable, sane person (their theory being that even in this type of person, in the subconscious all kinds of rattlesnakes etc. were lurking) they would decide on the boy's mother and also they would have to conduct the experiment in her environment, at her home--they would decide on a day the father was not home--Hippo would appear in the door in the middle of the experiment, the engrossed group would not see him, but the light would be so arranged that his reactions to the goings-on would be central--he might sneak away, ask questions about what was going on, break it up--I don't know but according to his character and the plot. I suggest this as something that would completely enrage him. The boy does not necessarily appear--they might decide that his absence was necessary for the experiment.

*This is why
they are
often
cannibals*

You can't go wrong, as far as verisimilitude is concerned if the boy keeps referring to "spontaneous expression," "free association", down with all institutions--family, religion, because all these things have resulted from the intellect of mankind--our intellect is in constant strife with the sub-conscious--organized society thwarts us because it is organized--the sub-conscious is disorganized--such. . . You would have to purify historical surrealism--Freud referred to their impurity when he said: "I look for the unconscious in the classics; in the surrealists for the conscious." Since this boy is a good boy he couldn't make a perfect surrealist.

*un gran abrazo para la M. de G.
y la D.D. - M.B.*

Better not start on another page --

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