

OBJECTIVES
"I AM"
DESIGNER'S FLOOR PLANS
COSTUME DESIGNS & COLORS
TECHNICAL REHEARSAL - MISE EN SCENE
JUSTIFICATION
PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE

In our Method the danger is to try to analyze these things with a scientific brain. We are not afraid of scientific research in our work - we can answer psychologists and scientists - but we don't need this. Why make it more complicated, if we are able to do it simply? The whole Method is given to make things simple, not difficult. We have to work on some portions of it to make it more straight and sound, but to make from it something which makes the actor crazy, that is wrong. Our Method is like a wheel - we see it from the point of the objective, from justification, etc., etc. Or it is like a horse, if you touch it on the nose it will respond from the back...

OBJECTIVE:

Let us take the example of Hamlet, his first objective is: "to persuade," his second objective is: "to find out from Horatio's reaction whether it is true or not," and the third objective is: "to tell him the news with as much care as possible."

Let us take another situation. Your objective is: someone is standing talking, and you wish to encourage him. The condition is that you cannot move your body, but you can give

M. Chekhov

May 6, 1937

him a sign with your left hand which will encourage him. At the same time you must not forget the rule that if you move your little finger your whole body is involved in it. When you have taken an objective, it must strengthen your whole body. The exercises in concentration are very helpful for this... it is half of your ability to have an objective. Imagine how much more subtle it makes you inside to have this technique of the objective. It gives you an understanding of and a love for nuances.

Try to remember the technique of having the objective, of taking it inside your soul and your body. Realize what it means to fulfill the objective. It is very important to realize that the pause, and the objective, and everything in the System or Method is bound together. It is very important to know this. When we become very experienced in each one of these things, we will get the whole organism in us. By doing the objective, the other things like atmosphere and radiation will come of themselves. They are all bound together.

"I AM":

Exercise for "I Am": The ideal group is composed of strong individuals who belong to each other. The exercise is to think, because thinking makes one conscious of the "I Am". When the individual thinks, he comes to the conclusion that things are either right or wrong. When he feels he finds things either beautiful or ugly, and when he uses his will then things are either good or bad. These are the three approaches to life

which the individual has.

Imagine that your "I am" is in the middle of your forehead (the third eye), and then imagine that it is coming down from above and passing right through your body into the earth. Then do the exercise of being in a group and being an individual. Then enlarge your heart and include everyone as your brothers and sisters, then include everything outside. Feel your heart enlarge until you can include the whole world in your heart.

DESIGNER'S FLOOR PLAN:

The Fishing Scene: Designers:

Make a scene, and then make an actual floor plan for the theatre. The idea is that the rocks are throwing the people into the sea, and the sea is dark and deep and it receives the people with tragedy and monumental power, which cannot be stopped. The sky is high and empty and is so far away with its green spot, that the people have no possibility to get help from it. This is the gesture. The setting must not be heavier than the performance. The designer must draw his scene with the feeling of the future light. He must not draw pictures, but the nearest impression he can get for the audience's eye - not real pictures - therefore, you must get the feeling of the lighting. Directors and designers must remember that we will not be able to use the whole stage for each scene. We must have the possibility of making quick changes in between the scenes. How to use the steps over the orchestra pit presents

another problem. Some scenes may wish to use the steps, while others may wish to block them out.

Balladina:

We can take suggestions from the actors this morning. It is always better to have a mask as it were, and never reveal the character too clearly to the audience, otherwise their interest in the character is finished. For instance, in the case of Kostin, the mask of the priest over his evil is very interesting and very good. Therefore he should be most priest-like at the moment when his objective is to possess Balladina. He must be a mixture of priest and devil, and the inner characterization is like that of an animal.

OBJECTIVES - CONDITIONS:

A small country scene. A girl and a young man have half an hour in which to be together and be glad and happy. He comes to her and she gives him refreshments. His objective is to enter the room and give her pleasure with his appearance. Her objective is to get as much pleasure from him as possible - to enjoy him. Then at a given moment you must turn the objective, and he has to take the pleasure and she must give the pleasure by giving him wine, etc. Take the objective as simply as that of touching the handle of the door. His objective is to make her happy and her objective is to enjoy. The condition is that they are simple country people.

COSTUMES - COLORS & DESIGNS:

The Fishing Scene: Designs:

Almost black-blue in the sea and the rocks near it. Some reddish tones. Some soft green spots up very high which will give the feeling of peace and quietness which is far away and not to be reached. Try to work in the model theatre with figures to scale, then it will be clearer. Costumes: If the rocks make the gesture of throwing the people into the sea, should the costumes show this or taking the people back? The reddish tones will intensify the danger, while the blue will make them quieter. As the gesture of the people is to go out into the sea, then the reddish color of the costumes would be better. The designers must work again with this reddish color in mind. The designers must design more carefully in details - we must know how to cut and make the costumes. Perhaps you can change the costumes three times by showing a small place on the costumes, almost un-noticed by the audience, not obvious. 1. Make everything more reddish. 2. Express the character in colors. 3. Draw so that it will be clear how to make the costumes.

The Fairy Tale:

The gamut of the colors is all too vague - it is all too pale. What you have on the stage at the present is very expressive, and with these pale colors there will be a disharmony. The idea is that everything is very faded, because it

M. Chekhov

May 6, 1937

is old. You must take other means, but do not diminish the colors. You must have the gamut of the colors and then a contrast in this gamut, but at the present time your colors are accidental. In your scene you have so much tension, while in your designs you have so much green that your audience will want to be quiet. Perhaps you can show the Old Kingdom in green, because it is old and faded and stopped.

TECHNICAL REHEARSAL - MISE EN SCÈNE:

The Fishing Scene:

A technical rehearsal with mise en scène means that the director is trying to explore definite possibilities, for himself and for the actors. This is an approach to the future performance through one of the doors, that of the technical rehearsal with mise en scène, and the actors' responsibility must be not only to do what the director asks, but to try to justify it. At the moment when the director asks you to climb up, you have to do this by justifying this process, and from this justification you can awaken your feelings better than if you try to concentrate on the feeling that you are sad or sorrowful. You can lose hours and hours and only be ill and not sorrowful. Try to justify again the mise en scène and the movements. When we are beginning to move and a harmony of body and soul is established, the feeling will come of itself. Therefore, when the director gives you some mise en scène, please bring some justification of it to the next rehearsal. Between

M. Chekhov

May 6, 1937

rehearsals you must recall the movements and justify them, and come to the next rehearsal with the justification.

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

Balladine:

The psychological gesture is something which underlies everything - it remains our fundamental form. We find it in terms of time, space, quality and activity. What we find through the means of the psychological gesture we carry right into the play. The psychological gesture is not naturalistic, and it is not abstract. It is the thing underlying the whole psychological action and the action of the play. The director must give the cast time to establish the atmosphere before they try to radiate it. We must make sure that the atmosphere is really there.

JUSTIFICATION:

The Fairy Tale:

Elaborate certain moments, mise en scène and voices. John is now in the period when he creates a new world. It is not the play of a Chekhov or Ibsen, he is creating a whole new world. Therefore his work is so precious and so difficult, and he jumps from things in general to details because he is creating a whole world. If this period takes a long time, you must know that it is right. The director must know what he wishes to reach at the beginning of each rehearsal, in this new world of half-human, half-fairy people.

So I would suggest that you find some gestures for the whole scene which will help you very much. What is the ges-

M. Chekhov

May 6, 1937

ture of the scene in this mechanical moment? It is not quite clear, and therefore you cannot get the noise you want. If you will give your cast some gestures, then they will be awakened. The director must create a whole new world, therefore, he must be busy with everything. He must not assume that everything is clear-- the cast knows nothing. The director must create everything from the beginning. This mechanical world can be absolutely empty, being mechanical, or it can be very significant, being mechanical - two different worlds. Through justification they will know by which means they have to work. You must let them know in which air they are living.