

THE CREATIVE STATE - INSPIRATION
THE OBJECTIVE
THE PAUSE
CHARACTERIZATION

THE CREATIVE STATE - INSPIRATION:

Balladina:

The creative state which we are working toward, with all our means, includes everything - feeling of truth, atmosphere, character, etc. This is what we call the creative state, or inspiration - it is the moment when all these things are there, merged together. The aim of our Method is nothing less than to analyze as it were this creative state. It is really not an analysis, but let us say for the moment that it is an analysis and that we have this part of the creative state and that part, and we are trying to call out of our souls this creative state by taking each part of it, and in this way awaken our creative activity if we are talented by nature. If a person is not talented, no method can help - nothing will give the spark.

The conditions are, to have the actor's nature, to have talent, and then this thing will help you absolutely. Let us say we are gifted, but there are some difficulties for us as students, and they are quite natural and legal. Until the moment will come when all these separate things - which we take and put into our soul - until we get accustomed to this taking and putting inside, we will meet the difficulties by finding this thing and putting it perhaps not in the soul

M. Chekhov

June 5, 1937

but elsewhere. This we will get only through training, and therefore we are here, but the training must be done in the right way, and that is why I want to tell you more about the objective.

OBJECTIVE:

Let us take the objective to penetrate, as in Balladina. (This will be an experimental lesson for all directors). Alina's objective is to penetrate into her sister's heart - to discover what is wrong with her sister. Balladina's objective is to prevent her sister from winning Kirkor. The first mistake today was that the objective was taken only in the head. To take the objective in our method means to take it with the whole being. We must do it inside before we actually start to do it. We have to have the picture of the objective which is already reached.

The director should have stopped the actors at once, because when they start without the right approach, they will go more and more in the wrong direction. The director must help the actors by being very, very careful with the beginning of each thing. To take the objective means to do it inside and see with your imagination what the result is. There must be no unnecessary tension when the objective is taken. We are trying to do everything with as little tension as possible. To fulfill the objective means to be able in time to act without tension.

THE PAUSE:

Now we come to the pause, and we can use this example for showing how important all these points are in relation to each other. The objective in, "Sister are you ill?" - this is one of the means by which Alina is penetrating into Balladira's heart, but the condition is that Alina's whole body is doing this objective. Balladira does not answer, and naturally the pause arises.

Every pause is the result of something which has happened, or the pause out of which something will be born. What was wrong with this pause? It was right to begin with, but the next sentence came without any justification from the point of view of the pause... "Or do you love Kirkor?" where does this come from? If the pause is there you must divide it as we have done before. "Sister are you ill?" - the pause is the continuation of this, and then comes the transition and out of the pause comes, "Or do you really love Kirkor?" As it was done today it was only half a pause, and the last half was cut off.

To fulfill the objective, it is necessary to develop all the other points we have which lead to our creative state. Now what shall the director do? The director must not allow the actors to start and to try to fulfill the objective by doing wrong things, because then they will never find the right way. It is better to take the time to point out that it is wrong, then through many concentrated efforts the actors will

A. Chekhov

June 5, 1937

be able to carry through the objective. To carry through the objective means to do many things which are not the objective, and this is the director's task to remind the actors what they are lacking at the moment, which will help them to carry through the objective. The actors must do the same thing themselves. They must not wait for the director to tell them and flounder in this uncertain state. The actor must find the same thing for himself - I am trying to fulfill my objective. It is not quite right, so I must remember with which means I have to do it. The actor must help himself, and then the director will be free to give more important suggestions which will lead him forward.

You must not be afraid that our work sometimes seems very pedantic - it must be like that at certain times, because if we jump over many problems we will reach a certain point certainly, but it will not be the fullest one. Sometimes it is necessary to be very careful with some details and be pedantic about them, and the time is not lost because we are getting them deeper and deeper, and we digest them so that with time we will re-create them into our instinct - that is our aim. To get the Method from this part of our being deeper, deeper, and deeper until we will get it in our whole being. Then will come the moment when we will really manage and govern this Method, and we will be able to use it absolutely freely. The freedom will come only after this careful and pedantic work with details.

CHARACTERIZATION:

The Fairy Tale:

Question: What can I do when I feel there is nothing that I can hold on to? I have no feeling of truth about the character and it hurts me to go on. How can I act a person who is not real?

Answer: What have you done to escape from these conditions? How can you improve this? It is a real person, but a fantastic one. If you try to escape into naturalism from the fantastic, you will kill your artist's soul. It is very good for you to have these difficulties and to overcome them, therefore we have our studio. Take it as a problem which you have to solve. Realism is a rosy way which leads to nothing. It is so easy to do but Gielgud can do it much better than you can. You will have to play naturalistically too in some play, but when you have such a difficult task and such a difficult director as John, take it as a great happiness and it will give you a real experience, and by trying to help you, John will have a valuable experience too.

The case helps very much in the Fishing Scene, but perhaps the Fairy Tale does not require this. John's despotism in his character, it is his power, and if it is taken from him he may become weak, and he will lose something which belongs to him. He must try to improve this thing, but he must not lose it.

The Fishing Scene is much more simple, because it

is so close to naturalism. The only way is to struggle to overcome these problems - that is why we have both The Fairy Tale and The Fishing Scene to work on. The Method gives you the way to use your imagination, and the moment will come when you feel that your character in The Fairy Tale is a living person for you. It is necessary for you to do this. If you are creating a part with great difficulty, that means that you must not stop, but must go on and on. Our school must be one of hard experience, and therefore it is so necessary for the students to find the way.

The Fishing Scene:

Criticisms of set. It should all be much nearer the front of the stage, and the back must not be so exposed. It is too passive. The highest point should be on the left, not on the right - where the danger is.

The Golden Scepter:

You have become actors. This is important. Your mistakes are very speaking - they can be corrected. In amateur groups all mistakes are chaos, and no one knows which end to help because everything in the actor's nature is wrong. Now I see in you that your actor's nature is growing up. It is a great joy to me to see how your natures are getting professional shape. The play is also taking shape - when the bad moments are very clear it means that the play is getting some shape, otherwise it is all chaos.