

REHEARSAL OF SKETCHES  
THE OBJECTIVE  
CONCENTRATION - THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR  
PLAYWRIGHT - DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP

THE OBJECTIVE: Hamlet  
Balladina Meyerhold  
Dr. Rudolf Steiner

There was a new approach today made through atmosphere and objective. Balladina was given the task of exploring and discovering whether the figure of the Saint was living or not. It was a very clear objective, and as a result of this objective an atmosphere should have been created, but some mistakes have displaced the first idea.

By giving the objective the director was attentive to the psychology of the actor. Balladina had really to do something as an objective, she had to discover whether the Saint was living or not. She must explore this. But when Balladina was asked to explore the fact that he is living, there was nothing more to explore. If the director had asked her to explore whether he moved willingly or unwillingly, this would have been something to explore. The objective means that you have to fulfill your task - by discovering whether the Saint is living or not the actor must fulfill some task. For instance, if I plunge my hand into water to discover and explore and ascertain the temperature, that is one thing, but to explore what it means to have my hand in cold water means to do it without any objective.

There was the first moment of trying to under-



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stand whether the Saint was living or not, and this was right. But the second moment of exploring that he was living was not right because he is living. This is again somewhat like the "abyss".

The director could have made it more clear which atmosphere the actors should have. Instead of leaving your actors vague, it is better to say that by having such and such an objective you will get such and such an atmosphere. You must give your actors the direction in which you want them to go, and the more exact you are the shorter will be the way.

#### CONCENTRATION:

In our exercises for concentration we are always trying to be attentive not only with our eyes, ears and senses, but we are also trying to touch with our invisible hands. We are trying to awaken in our souls the kind of activity which is higher than the physical senses. Let us suppose that our group is so well trained that they know exactly what it means to be concentrated. If so it would be enough to say that through your concentration you must try to do the objective, as a result of which you will get the atmosphere, and in getting the atmosphere you must try to radiate it at once. This would be the right way. By leading your actors through the senses of seeing, hearing and touching you are helping them to explore in a more exact way. The mistake is when you try to use the senses of smell and taste. These two senses we



have eliminated in our work from the beginning, because they lead us too deeply into material things. Eyes, ears, and the sense of touch are absolutely enough if you wish to use them, but only if you understand them in a higher sense, as we do in the exercise for concentration.

When the director asks his actors to do the gesture with a hundred percent activity, this does not mean physical activity, although to begin with physical activity is easier.

#### THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR:

In Russia I once asked three directors to prepare the same play - Hamlet - and by doing so they were to create a fourth approach.<sup>1</sup> By that I mean they were to find something which was higher than all the three of them. The director and the cast must be open to each other so that the time will come when they fall in love with something mutual. In other words, they must infect each other. The director must infect his cast, but he must take all their ideas too. There is no mechanical way. A director can be a despot like Meyerhold, but this is another way. Meyerhold is so rich in his imagination that he would not be able to do anything but incorporate all the images which are around him and in him. He is a genius. He sees something and does it, and what will be the result he does not know. He is full of images and all his actors - in comparison with him - are so weak and small that it would be ridiculous for him to ask his cast for ideas. He must be



a despot, but this is a rare case in the theatre.

PLAYWRIGHT-DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP:

The Fairy Tale:

In our theatre there are no boundaries. The director has to direct the play, but the author can give him suggestions, just as the director can tell the author what is not good, so the author must also give the director some ideas. The director has power over everything. If the director tells the author that the play is not right, the author must accept this, otherwise he becomes an ordinary writer and the director could buy his play in an ordinary way. The author in our theatre will receive blows from the director many times, but he will also be able to suggest many things to the director.

On general principle the director and the author must collaborate. For example, perhaps a director will want to withhold the words of the play until he has produced some gestures, etc., while another director will perhaps ask his cast to listen to the text and then give some exercises, gestures, etc. There must be absolute freedom. The play must be invented when the rehearsals are going on. It must not be written before. It must be written during the rehearsing. Only in this way will we get some new results. If we take the same habits from the theatre which exists now, we have nothing to add. The designer can also make suggestions which may affect the whole play. Because we are a studio, and I am your teacher, I give you my suggestions. In time perhaps you will give me



suggestions. Of course the director has the possibility to use the author's words right from the beginning of his work if he wishes to.

Balladina: (Director's exercise).

Balladina and the Saint walk back to back, sensing one another - moving as one. This is a contact exercise. Then the Saint gradually leaves Balladina and she begins to realize that he is a separate being. Standing back to back the Saint and Balladina speak the following words: "Cleanse," "Heal."

Criticism:

The exercise is so beautiful - it has the whole psychology of Balladina in it. It does not relate to one moment only, but to the whole psychology of Balladina. The quality of the exercises are very deep, and the director must realize this. Directors must choose the best psychological gestures because well-thought-out psychological gestures economize the time very much, and give the play<sup>into</sup> our hands in a most tangible form.

In this exercise we find the interpretation of the play, the character of Balladina, the relationship between Balladina and Goplana - all these things. The deeper the gesture the more functions it can serve. It is so important to have the feeling; what is the value of the gesture? It was not

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good to have the Saint and Balladina touch hands when they were walking back to back. The great mysteries are centered in the middle of the back, as in Siegfried, for instance. This is a very important center, a most telling and significant place. It can be the center of our intuition or subconscious. The future is coming from behind, according to Dr. Rudolf Steiner. It shows us another perspective.