

GENERAL PLAN.
DIVISION OF PLAY INTO BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END
CLIMAX
IMPORTANCE OF CONTRAST BETWEEN BEGINNING AND END
COMPOSITION OF THE PLAY

First Lesson

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DIRECTOR ("The director must be the author of the performance." - Meyerhold):

When planning a rehearsal for a whole day, the director could take one scene - for example, the landing of John in The Fishing Scene - and work on it first with psychological gestures, then step by step discover and explore the subtleties in the scene, work on the atmosphere, the relation of each character to the various moments of the scene, etc., etc. The director should go over and over in his imagination this scene of the landing of the fisherman. It is there is the most important one in the play, and should be explored and explored.

Then meditate on the sea and its importance in the play. Something is coming from the sea, something is going away from it. If you will meditate on this movement, you will find the right dynamic of the sea. This movement towards the sea and away from it is one of the most important dynamics. Therefore, the director should rehearse how the characters approach the sea and how they go back from it. Do the psychological gesture of cleaving; the invisible power, or the one when they are being pushed by an invisible power. Then find what this power is and concretely apply it to the moment when the fisherman comes from the sea.

After some exercises in atmosphere, invent some special gesture, or repeat the old gestures of approaching; and retreat-
ing from something. Then give an objective for ^{the} scene -
if possible one objective for everyone, then individual objectives.
Then let them fulfill the objective by pulling in the boat or
by meeting John, for example.

Then the director could give the cast one or two sen-
- not more -
tences/and try to elaborate them from the point of view of
the objective or psychological gesture.

All these things will come together, and it will
give the director the possibility to say, "Now act this scene."
This is the right approach. You can divide the play into some
pieces or scenes and approach each in the same way.

Then again for John's entrance; try to create some
mise en scene and give definite places for John and the other
actors, and then ask them to move in a certain way. Then try
to explore this interplay of movements. Then add some words.

In this way you can elaborate each scene, each moment;
and then you will see how gradually not only the director
but the actors will get more and more understanding of the
subtleties of the sea - this point being one of the weakest at
the moment. You must try to find details.

From the point of view of the author; after the re-
hearsal you, as director, must ask him and yourself whether
the words he has given are necessary. You must find a special
time for concentrating on the text. If you are speaking more

that is necessary, it means you are killing the acting. In our method we must speak only as much as is really necessary. Then you will see how precious the words will be.

Then try to find some combinations - atmosphere and mise en scene, or atmosphere and objectives, or objectives and words.

After rehearsing in this way, the director will finally find the best interpretation of the movement. For instance, I see John's scene almost without words. The appearance of John, after it is sufficiently prepared, will be sufficient. Then you must develop all the subtleties you can find within this scene - for instance, the moment when John meets the others face to face.

As the director, your work can be confined to one small moment: for instance, "what has happened?" Now stop on this point and meditate on it. Now - before the answer comes - see in your imagination what each character can do. You will gradually see how each character will get the answer out of the silence. Then you must see each character in your imagination. For instance, Beatrice, when she moves forward and says, "the sea is possessed with devils." Perhaps this movement will suggest an answer in a special way. Or Gretel may whisper to herself, "they are fishers' funeral bells," and from this whisper the other women may perhaps realize that she is referring to some tragedy in her past life. This could be like an electric spark: everyone would look at her, and this

would be a point for her character. Then the next character could show a reaction. The boy who is as if from another world. He can come near to John and look at him because he does not understand the tragedy fully. Perhaps John can give him this reaction by turning away or by looking at him as if giving him the tragedy. Each character can be elaborated with certain subtleties, and then you will find the climax for this scene.

After you have done these subtle things, you will be led. They will come of themselves and you will be inspired for each moment, for each movement inside and outside. All these subtleties have this beautiful ability.

If the director will really penetrate into each small moment, you will understand how to develop it further and further, and you will lead it further and further, and it will give you and your actors great pleasure. All these subtleties have the possibility of inspiring you for each moment. But if you try to do this too early, it leads you astray. The actors will not be able to follow you because they have not the necessary foundation. You will become a despot. But if you prepare them first, they will not only understand you, but will be able to go with you. This is a question of time and the experience of the actors.

If you will divide your scenes into some sections, and elaborate each in this way, and then concentrate on the smallest point, which is the climax, then the play will grow. And more than that, you will find that the work you have done

yesterday will give you new suggestions for tomorrow. This minute work is the most exciting for the imagination. It will continue to work on in your imagination, and then you will get many things, because you have stepped this truthful way.

Of course, it is possible to give wrong foundations several times, but this is the question of your experience because you must see incorporated what you have imagined. You can do this in your imagination, but the concrete performance is another thing.

Take the plan very intellectually for awhile. See the plan as a whole and ask yourself what scenes you can take in imagination, what is incorporation of characters, in atmosphere, in speaking, etc. It gives infinite possibilities.

Give small objectives, then enlarge them, then give new ones. Everything must be done simultaneously.

JEREMIAS, MIDDLE, END:

Try to divide the play into three parts. Each play, each piece of art, each rhythmical event is always in three - it is a law - the beginning, the middle part, and the end. They seldom have very clear divisions because they merge into each other. Find these three parts. For example, expectation and hope in the first part; in the second part, reality; and in the third part, the past or the future in the tragic sense.

CLIMAX:

After you find these three parts, you must try to

find the climaxes in each one of them. The climax of expectation in the first part must not run too smoothly. Each part must have a climax; it may be only ^{great tension} inside, but it must be. In the second part the climax can be the answer in silence. And for the third part you must also find a climax - whether the people are lost, whether they find the possibility to start a new life, or whether they are absolutely dead and without further hope. It depends on the interpretation, but you must find a climax there.

COMPOSITION OF THE PLAY:

When you have found the three main climaxes in the way I have described, then you have to find the anacrusis and the metacrusis which we have spoken about today. Now you want to prepare this climax and what you want to see after it. And for the second part, how would you prepare the landing of the fisherman, and what comes after it? The same is true for the third part. When you have found these three parts - the beginning, the middle, and the end - you must know that the beginning and the end must be shown by the director absolutely as opposite qualities. After you have found this composition, your play will come to life at once because these three parts are the bones, as it were, the skeleton, the scaffold, or the spine.

For instance, if you will remember how you have shown the play on the 3th of March, you will realize that the first part and the last part were very equal, and that is not right. For example, in connection with the activity of the women: if

you want them to be very passive at the beginning, then you must find how they can be very active at the end. Or the opposite; very active in the beginning and very passive at the end. Or if you want to show them very tender in the beginning, you must show them without bounds at the end. Or if you show them very free in the beginning, they must be absolutely quiet at the end. Everything is possible. It depends on the imagination of the director and the author.

If you want them to speak and move legato in the beginning, then you must have them staccato at the end, or vice versa. If they are speaking with distant voices at the beginning, they must speak without this at the end. You must justify all this, of course, but the main lines must be shown absolutely opposite. This will give you not only the spine of the play, but a feeling of the whole, which you cannot reach without it. It is hopeless to try to persuade the audience that they have seen a whole piece of art if it is not sufficiently contrasted at the beginning and the end.

The middle part of the play is a transition - it happens once in the play. For instance, the qualities at the beginning and the end of the play, although they are opposite, they can be opposite because of a certain similarity, but the middle part has no similarity - it is the transition from the 1st to the 3rd part. From this point of view, it is important that when you, as director, have decided upon certain qualities for the beginning and the end, you must find out in the middle part how you will do this, what gesture you will find for this.

V. Gorkov

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The middle part is the transition. For instance, if the beginning of the play is very material and earthly, the last part must be very spiritual and heavenly. What is the middle part?

If you read King Lear with this idea, you will see that everything that belongs to the earth breaks, and everything that belongs to the spirit begins to appear out of this breaking. It is very clear, in the madness scene, how this broken body and spiritual moment comes. When Gloucester has his eyes put out in this dreadful scene when earthly things are broken, not only the words of Gloucester show his higher level - something rises spiritually in the audience during this scene. This opposition must be understood in a very free way.

In the first part of the play we have the beauty of the earth (it is not ugly, the beauty of the earth), and then at the end the beauty of the spirit. In the beginning the throne was the most important, and at the end the throne is the grave. It might seem that if it was beauty at the beginning, it must be ugliness at the end, but this is not necessarily so. You can have beauty in two forms. Therefore, you must be free with these contrasts.

"The director must be the author of the performance."

- Meyerhold

Make a list of the ways and means by which you will do your work, in columns such as:

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Psychological Postures</u>	<u>Incorporation</u>
.....	<u>etc.</u>

Always remember that if you give your actors some objective or gesture which they are not yet ready for, don't be afraid of it - just make a note that it must be done later, and give something smaller or more simple. The right approach is to make things smaller and simpler all the time, and then elaborate each small part.

Make a graph like that for The Soldier Steel.

Experiment with tempo in definite, small pieces. Tempo will always change the quality, and through tempo you will find some new qualities for each piece you have chosen.

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Later Suggestions Given regarding the Rehearsal Plan:

Make a very clear plan about the various approaches you intend to use, but the actual rehearsal does not need to be planned until the day before. You must be free in this way, so that your rehearsals will be organic and not mechanical.

Remember there is no beginning and no end to the Method; therefore, it gives us the possibility of flying over the play and touching it from any point.

You must elaborate the climax when John comes and tells

the people. Then you will feel at once what leads to this moment, and what is the result of its anacruze and metacruze.

The play can be most significant in its silences.

If you will elaborate the moment when John comes on the scene, you will find the center of the play; gradually develop a little from this moment and up to this moment. This is the moment when the tragedy of the play is condensed. This is the most important of the three climaxes. You will go quickly forward if you will prepare the rehearsals from this moment.

Give some definite rise on scenes; ask your actors to meditate on it, and then do it. Change it, elaborate it, and have it digested by them.