

Michael Chekhov

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THE OBJECTIVE  
FEELING OF TRUTH  
JUSTIFICATION  
CONTRASTS  
THE TEXT

THE OBJECTIVE:

Take as your objective that you have to get rid of somebody with whom you are speaking, by saying only one word, "Yes." Your whole body and your whole being must be full of streams, currents, and activity which you have to concentrate on as this or that particular means of fulfilling the objective.

I am sorry that we are not able to do all the exercises which are necessary for us, but we must confine ourselves at the moment to these three most important points which all our directors are using at the present time. Take the objective and try consciously to be aware of all the processes which are going on in you during the taking, fulfilling, and living the objective. Take the objective to shut the door - nothing more.

The more you will help yourself with your clear and quiet thoughts about your exercises, the more they will help you later on. It would be very good for you to imagine that one of the new students has come to you and asked, "What is an objective?", and you must explain. This is the right way to understand what the right objective is. The more often you will put this question before yourself, the better and clearer it will become for you. For instance, why are you



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directing in a certain way? Why are you doing such and such an exercise? You must be ready to answer all such questions.

#### FEELING OF TRUTH:

You must realize that the objective for Hamlet's soliloquies is technically the same as the simple objective of closing the door. If you will observe the people around you, you will see that they can be observed from two points of view. There are stupid and clever bodies - not brains, but bodies - and this is very important for us. For example, we can see very stupid persons with beautiful, clever bodies. This means that the body needs a special care and a special food, as it were, to be able to serve its artistic spirit, and one of these nourishing things is the feeling of truth. If the feeling of truth is neglected, then the body will become more and more stupid. Our example of doing the exercises with the hands, arms and necks for the feeling of truth means that you have got a much more clever thing. This you must do again and again, until your body will be permeated with the feeling of truth so that it will be more and more clever and useful to you as artists and actors. Try to take this idea very deeply into you, because it will help you to love this thing which we call feeling of truth.

#### JUSTIFICATION:

##### The Fishing Scene:

Let us take the character of Mother Gilla. d. You



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have justified her in the text, but you must underline this - you must make some important action about her. When her name is mentioned, everyone must react, and you must turn this exploration, as it were, into something mystical, which she is, and let it die in this dark, heavy anticipation of this something which Mother Gillard brings with her. In the second moment when she appears it is almost right, but this will be more justified if you will give the preparation which we have spoken about.

The boat and Mother Gillard must be the same thing. She must change the mood absolutely. Her appearance will do this. The people were full of hope before she appears, then everything drops out of them, and they leave her at once, but already they are a little bit dead inside. Find some words which will show the hope that is there before she comes, and then some words describing the boat, which will show that the boat is in the distance, after you have seen her. It must not be too important, because then it will not be balanced with the main plot, but only to show her more clearly, and through this breaking of the atmosphere, and the words and reactions in the first moment, it will give enough to make her rôle clear, but not too important. You must combine her with the main idea, which is the boat - she really underlines the boat. This connection must come clearly from Mother Gillard to the boat, because they know that she means disaster. This will then be quite justified and will merge with the main theme.



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The last moment of the play: You must think and imagine this many times, relying on the law that the beginning and the end must be different. For example, if they are coming on in the beginning of the play, then they must remain on stage at the end, showing that they no longer have anywhere to go. If they come on slowly, then they must remain on the stage as if falling down. Everything must be opposite. If you show them at the beginning appearing slowly, you might give the curtain at the moment when they are nearly crazy with their loss. Blair's idea is a little melodramatic, but if Eleanor - Mother Gillard - were to go to the boy and tell him what happened to his father, there would be a reaction on the part of the people, and then the curtain. If you will imagine the beginning and the end as contrasts, then you will get some important suggestions.

THE TEXT:

About the beginning of Paul's new script: it is not interesting for the audience which wishes to know whether the fishermen are alive or not. It is so obvious that the whole scene is climaxed from one big play which is not shown, and in the moment of climax nobody speaks about things which are not important. Therefore, I am against these psychological and private things. To clarify the motives is good, but do not make it weaker, and put water into this theme, by speaking



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of private things.

The last scene is too descriptive, and too much like Ibsen, but the idea can be taken in a very modest way. Perhaps for one moment the fisherman can say: "The boom - I cannot hold it." - knowing it has disappeared. He can be in a confused state of mind, but he cannot have a soliloquy which will lead the play in another direction. It is a question of how much. This scene can be a little jewel, but if the whole scene is acted out then you must produce another play - a more philosophical one.