

Michael Chekhov

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ATMOSPHERE
THE OBJECTIVE
PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE

ATMOSPHERE:

In the Inn:Scene III:

Take the tea drinking scene as the first section - the pale, strange, mysterious figure of Stiggins and 14 ladies drinking tea like Egyptian mummies, and Mrs. Weller full of attraction.

The mysterious atmosphere is broken by the approaching coach bearing Rachel and Jingle - their voices are heard and they rush in in a tremendous hurry. Everyone moves and it becomes uncertain and a little chaotic.

THE OBJECTIVE:

The third moment is the bargaining between Jingle and Stiggins - two figures bargaining at very quick tempo - the saint with the red nose and this creative actor personality. The marvelous contrast of these two figures. Everyone around waiting stupidly like sheep. Jingle wants to drive on immediately, and Stiggins wants to get as much money as possible. Both strong clear objectives

The fourth moment is when the lamps are extinguished - complete darkness - the audience hears only voices and noises and strange sounds. The thunderstorm goes on the whole time.

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

The fifth moment is when it is light again and there is

2F28
M. Chekhov

2758
July , 1939

another bargaining scene - between Wardel and Jingle, but the psychological gesture is different - they are like two dogs fighting, measuring each other before they fight - great tension.

The sixth moment is when Rachel and Tupman are alone - melting and getting weaker and weaker. Voices behind stage - two figures - Tupman is weak from love - the more he loves the more he loses his power.

The seventh moment is when Fickwick receives the letter - there is the tinge of seriousness in it. This is very necessary - there are two lines in the play - one is absolutely humorous and this prevails, and the other is a slight seriousness which even touches the tragic, and this will be shown in the prison scene, with the serious soliloquy which is heard out of the darkness. Dickens is never only funny and never only tragic - we cannot accept the sentimentality which is there sometimes - the important thing is that he is both tragic and humorous. The prison scene is where we hear the first sign of this half-drama half-tragedy. Imagine the scene with the feeling of the whole.

Kisses of Peace:

The old ladies are filled with real devotion to the teacher and leader. When they get his kiss, happiness comes to them - they suffer because of Stiggins' suffering and through this suffering he gives them peace.

Stiggins tries to awaken a gesture of meditation and exultation - absolutely serious. When he kisses the women he drops

M. Chekhov

July , 1939

everything for a moment, and like an animal chooses a place to kiss them. After each kiss he becomes ecstatic again and exclaims, "There is nothing like temperance." Then he comes again to the inner state of meditation. For the old ladies this ^{is} like a sign from heaven. Stiggins is saint and animal. When he speaks he is a person through whom God speaks, but in reality he is absolutely weak - he does nothing but drink, and kiss, and speak. He has two or three gestures which he always uses.

Stiggins & Jingle:

Stiggins' objective is to hear his pursuers. Something outside is drawing him. Stiggins must combine his suffering for humanity with the objective to get money.

Scene between Wardle and Jingle:

The psychological gesture of Wardle and the Pickwickians is to choke and strangle Jingle, and to protect Rachel. The psychological gesture of Jingle is to be victorious or make his escape - ready for anything. Jingle is pressed against the wall and the others surround him.

It is like a thunder-bolt when Rachel says, "I am free." The whole structure of the family life seems to totter and a new person is born. Rachel goes from the point of highest activity when she says she is a free woman, to the point where she is almost fainting from the shock of realizing that Jingle is willing to sell her. She is like a flower which has bloomed and then fades. The moment that Jingle gets the cheque he is an entirely different

M. Chekhov

July , 1939

figure - full of ease and flight.

Rachel and Jingle in the Inn:

Up to the moment of "hide" the objective of Rachel and Jingle is to accomplish everything as soon as possible, and the objective of the old ladies is to absorb all the details of the event, every word, every intonation. Stiggins has the objective to finish the thing as soon as possible. It is the objective which Rachel and Jingle have to accomplish, and not the love which leads them in this scene. The condition is that they must make sure whether they are pursued or not.

Jingle is under great tension but pretends to be loving towards Rachel, while Rachel is always trying to get nearer and nearer to Jingle. Stiggins has the quality of a certain kind of greed - his objective is to get as much as he can - quite heartless and calculating and mercenary.

Jingle has an absolutely clear brain and makes each move cautiously - the impression that he is in a hurry will come from the exactness with which he does every bit of business - not through hurrying, which will only give the impression of chaos. He masters the situation powerfully and shamelessly. He is like an animal running away from a pursuer. He becomes more and more rude and is a little dangerous especially for Rachel - we must get a glimpse in this scene of what her future destiny with him would be if he married her. Rude, almost brutal, and quite shameless. In their drive to the Inn they have been psychologically helping the horses on, and

M. Chekhov

July , 1939

they have accumulated some devilish temperament.

The scene between the Pickwickians and Jingle:

Take the same gestures as before. The moment when Rachel says she is free is one of great astonishment - such a thing has never been heard of before - it is the first blow and it is an important moment for the whole play. Rachel is hysterical but in a soft way.

Rachel is very tired and exhausted when she reaches the Inn. At the sound of the horses approaching, the old ladies fly like moths about the room, trying to put out the lights.

When Wardle and the Pickwickians rescue Rachel from Jingle it is done physically. It is a physical scene. The next moment is a series of emotional explosions. The rude power in the scene between Wardle and Jingle - then they become practical, a scene of sense - fencing.

The cheque-writing scene is like the illness and death of a child. When they are discussing it the child is ill, and when the cheque is written the child dies, when he gives Jingle the cheque the child is buried, and there is a sense of relief as after a funeral.