

FORM
CHARACTERIZATION
PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE
OUR METHOD
Stanislavsky

FORM:

Our Phantoms - [The Possessed]:

We must start with the idea of form by realizing that the body is a form which must be filled with our spiritual content, therefore begin by saying to yourself: I have my body - you can fill it vaguely but that is not the real filling of the form - you must fill it as a form which belongs to your creative spirit. We start by experiencing our own body as a form which we are filling - the whole body is a form. Then you must fill this form more and more with your presence, with your "I am." In trying to fill your body with your presence, you will meet some obstacles, i.e., physical stiffness, which must be discarded, and psychological stiffness, which lead to a slow tempo, and which must also be discarded consciously point by point. Then try to fill your body with the form to such an extent that it can break or burst.

The Method may seem to be difficult while we are vague, but when we begin to manage it like a knife and fork, it is simple. The Method gives real possibility for the actor and director to "talk" together by means of showing, not thinking. The director can show the actor what he wants or what he does not want.

CHARACTERIZATION:

For the characterization of the engineer; he takes a long time to come from the inner to the outer world - a long time to walk from one world to the other. This disappearance and appearance of the character must be elaborated. When he is talking about "Man-Med" it is as if he is polishing a small jewel inside, with great pleasure and great intimacy. While he is working with this small jewel, he disappears inwardly. When he looks upon someone without knowing it he is as if a funny, cunning person who has something in his pocket which he will not show. Then he comes back to the outer world and finds it strange. He must not polish a great stone which a prophet would give, only a small thing. He is the victim of wrong-thinking.

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

Try to explore two psychological gestures for this character. When he is in the outer world he makes the gesture of giving something to someone and then retreating. When he is in the inner world his gesture is that of drawing inside into one invisible point with the quality of happiness. (Here the Eurhythmy gesture of "understanding" or "comprehension" would be very helpful.) By using this gesture in many ways you will get many nuances. Nothing in the world is more flexible than a well-developed and elaborated psychological gesture. The psychological gesture must be hidden but you must avoid

using it in acting. On principle, the gesture must disappear into the actor's subconscious when he begins to act. It is possible to use the psychological gesture in a very complicated way to combine several gestures, you can confuse gestures and apply them in opposite ways, and this will give you many nuances.

Another characterization of the engineer is that he is happy because he is flying through the world alone.

You can use the psychological gesture in many complicated and varied ways, by combining two gestures and using them in opposite ways you will get many nuances.

In the actor's work at home he must use the imagination. He must use the imagination, for instance, in the following way: when he imagines his character, he does the imagination. Then he imagines certain moments which he has chosen, and he incorporates them. Then he takes atmosphere. First he creates it, and then tries to find out what the atmosphere will suggest and how it will inspire him. Then he spreads the atmosphere and improvises on the theme, listening to the atmosphere and the inspiration from it. Then he finds the psychological gesture for such and such a scene. He explores the gesture many times then tries to speak and move with the gesture. Then he takes style. In the Shdanoff play the style is the form filled to the breaking point. The method of getting this style is as follows: Point 1: My body is a form; Point 2: Filled with my presence; Point 3: To the point where it is

threatening to burst. Now the actor begins to move and speak in the style.

All the points of the Method are given so that the actor must use each point of the Method in his work at home, one by one, quite consciously. We will save time by such work although it seems to be slower it is much quicker psychologically and the moment will come when all conscious work disappears and you will have your part, and you will be really happy so that if you awaken in the night you can play the character immediately, and you will be inspired. But to get this inspiration you must take the Method point by point and really work consciously with it. This is the future culture of the theatre. Today we have no culture. Stanislavsky started this culture in Moscow, and no other person before him has given the technique and culture for the future theatre. It is worthwhile to produce even one little stone for this culture, but to flounder is not our aim; it makes us ill. From the psychological point of view if you will look at actors who are floundering you will get the same impression. Therefore it is so painful the way actors are working at the present to me.