

ATMOSPHERE
STYLE
FEELING OF TRUTH
PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE

ATMOSPHERE:

Shdanoff Play: [The Possessed]:

Meeting scene:

We must remember the psychological moments and bridges from the very beginning to the point where we try to speak the real text. On the basis of atmosphere - slow, stately, expectantly waiting for the arrival of the leader.

Criticism:

The moment you try to act too early it is wrong. Therefore, we must always have a certain ground. If atmosphere is taken as a ground it must be taken throughout the whole rehearsal, otherwise we begin to act without having any right to do so. That is why the Method is so important as such. It gives a certain foundation for each stage of the work. From the beginning to the last moment when we are ready with make-up, etc., we will always have a certain kind of foundation and we will know quite clearly that we are working on the basis of such and such.

We must appreciate this part of the Method because groundless floundering has brought our theatre to its present state. No ideals, no ideas, no art, nothing - everyone speaks as he does in everyday life - if he speaks well he is

paid better perhaps than another who speaks badly, or he is paid because his figure or his face is like this or that - a very easy job, but it has nothing to do with the future theatre. For the future theatre we must have very clear ideas about every stage we are going through during our preparatory work.

The beginning of your work today was good, but it died out because you lost the fundamental quality which had to be developed. When we know that we are developing everything out of atmosphere, then we are free because we know what we are doing and where we are going. You have the full right to act and do everything out of atmosphere, but not out of the feeling of acting in general. You must follow the gesture of the atmosphere. It draws quite a definite gesture - it can't be proved, of course, but it is a fact.

The gentleman in spectacles enters like a dog, looking at everything and everybody as if they were "things." He is a spy, and he treats everyone as "things" - he must know how many - who they are - and what is what.

Try to get the freedom in the atmosphere - you must not freeze in it. If you know that the atmosphere is the ground, you are actually free, but you must know it. Every point in the Method frees us if taken consciously. You must develop the atmosphere itself and then all the action and speeches will grow out of it.

The order of the scene was the following: First, the moment of depression after the spy's first speech, then the moment of relief, like air, when the old professor spoke,

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and then the moment of great shame. But you have slurred them all together today. This we must not do. In our theatre we have a Method to elaborate things which present actors cannot do, because the commercial theatre does not give them the possibility even if they want to elaborate the develop more details - we can't even blame them. But if we have the time and possibility to elaborate things we must make it an absolute rule that what has been done at the previous rehearsal, not only won't be forgotten, but it must be increased and elaborated. This is very important for our theatre.

Today the scene should have been more clearly remembered, and if you could not elaborate it at least the succession of events should have been remembered and made clear. If we slur and annihilate it the work is actually lost, and we must start again from the very beginning. Why must I do it twice? It must be done once and finished - never forgotten. The director has a right to ask the next time for what has been done last time. It must be done absolutely. I remind you of this fact which must be a rule in our un-commercial theatre.

STYLE:

Scene with the Engineer:

From the point of view of the style. You must un-

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derstand this simple idea which will help you so much. If we are doing this scene on the basis of the style it means that nothing more is required, and then something will come as inspiration. Don't think that you have to act the scene. Impending, threatening, imminent...this is the style. This feeling of form must be in each sentence - the form which is filled with this impending danger.

We have so many psychological and physical difficulties and hamperings, therefore, we have our school. On the principle we are all geniuses, but there are so many obstacles around us. To take them away means to free our spirit so that we are able to create. Therefore, the school is necessary. Our exercises will give us the possibility to push away our obstacles.

FEELING OF TRUTH:

Railway scene:

On the basis of the feeling of truth.

Criticism:

It was very truthful. Now repeat the scene but add to the feeling of truth the idea of the style. You see when the ground is right the director is able to add certain conditions.

Criticism:

It was good from the point of tempo, but the form

was broken too much. Of course the form can be broken - more or less. These are the nuances we want to be aware of.

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

Mother and Son - last scene:

Read the text from the point of view of the psychological gesture. The mother's gesture is to grope in the darkness for her son, but because of the style of the play this gesture must be much more active than it would be without the condition of the style. The son's gesture is also one of groping, but while the mother's has a purpose because she is groping towards Nicholas, his is without purpose - he is groping through the whole world and has no aim. He is simply trying to find something, somewhere, while the mother knows definitely what her aim is. Speak the words by trying to produce inwardly the gestures. Only this task - don't try to act.

Mother: So there you are, my boy. Forgive me for being so silly - greeting you with tears. Why, what a mess you are in.

Nicholas: Rain, Mother dear.

Mother: Heavens, how pale you are.

She is not able to grasp him, therefore, she can apply a great amount of power, but the form will not be broken. She is just touching him - just seeking. A very powerful gesture, but without any end. She has a certain direction, but Nicholas has no direction in his gesture. Such a gesture can

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be individually interpreted by the actor. In the son's gesture he is really not here. The mother can vary her gesture as much as she likes but she must not grasp him - many waves or one wave, whatever you like, but she must not grasp him because the whole idea of the scene is that she is losing him. To grope, to penetrate, to find him. To grope and not to be able to catch - this is the gesture. All the nuances are right if you are not really grasping, but are seeking. It is an entirely different dimension. Then add some character, like speaking clearly to him - this will give some colors.