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Stanislavsky

ADVICE TO DIRECTORS:

CORRECT IMPORTANT MOMENTS FIRST:

The Fishing Scene:

The director has made the same mistake that John made. After seeing the whole play the director must have an idea of the most important gaps, and the less important ones. Today Deirdre started to repair the less important gaps, instead of the most important ones. It would be much more helpful to start the reparation from the most important part, and it would save the director much time. You will see that if you leave the most important moments to the end, you will have to re-create the details which are always depending from the main point.

This is not a rule, because there are situations when you do not have to follow this, but it is almost a rule. Remind all directors to start with the main point. For example, the most unhappy moment in John's fairy tale play, and the most important one too, is when the two kings meet. Then the connection

between the two kings begins to develop. The connection between the two kings is the knot for everything, and this was the weakest point in the play, because the psychology of both was not clear. In this case the director started to repair the play from the beginning instead of the end.

MAKE FORM OF PLAY CLEAR:

The same mistake was made by the director of the Fishing Scene. The appearance of the fisherman is the point to which the whole play is climbing, and the audience is waiting for this. The audience will look at John, the fisherman, and wait for something from him. The audience has been with the group alone until now, and it wants to be with him. This is the weakest point at the moment, and it is the most important point in the whole play. Right now John is on the same level as the other actors, but the impression is much weaker because the audience requires much more from him. This is the psychology of the audience, therefore, we must elaborate John's part so that there is no loophole.

Start with imagination - try to give John some pictures which will awaken his feeling for this part, because to awaken the imagination is to awaken the emotions and feelings. Then ask him to try to move by improvising that he is dead-tired. Do this several times, then leave it. Then have him improvise being dead-tired, and cold and wet, then leave it. Then again, dead-tired, cold and wet. You will awaken some-

thing in his body, which will awaken certain psychological responses. Through such an approach; from the imagination, from atmosphere, from physical things, then give him some objective to explore - his appearance and his being here, and to find the depth of this moment - not as simple as it is now.

The quality of the whole play is built much higher, and requires a much higher standard from the main actor, and from the main point. Because when John's figure appears higher, the audience will take it much higher. He must be responsible for what he is doing, because on him depends the whole understanding of the play, on the part of the audience. When the director gets materials as he has today, then he can hold because the material is there. It is so important that our actors are responding so quickly to everything.

Palladia:

The setting for both scenes is a somewhat formalized, stylized one. We must make the movement of the play fit into this kind of setting. The spiral will be kept, and the general form of the spiral down. This suggests the slope of a hillside. What is the idea underneath all these heights and depths, and why such and such number of steps?

INTERPRETATION OF PLAY THROUGH SETTINGS:

From now on the directors must be more and more conscious of what they are doing. The director must explain to his cast what is lying behind the setting - this is absolutely

necessary for the actor to know. There are many fine radiations which must be explored by the actors. Explore the orientation in space for the whole scene. The setting is a very abstract one, but it suggests the action of the whole play. The accents send Alina down.

One gesture remains through the two scenes - the main line in the two scenes - the going down and around. This is the line of Balladina's will. Is it the incorporation of the moral themes? What is the idea of the spiral? What is the form of the play? Balladina is driven by a force over which she has no control, until the last point - which is death.

When we are looking at the rehearsal we must have some point of view. What is the idea of the right side being nearer to the front of the stage than the left side? For an actor not to feel the difference between the high point, the low point, and the middle makes the actor's experience very flat. It is very important for the actors to explore such things. The director and designer must find these elements in the setting, and give them to the actors.

The spiral suggests something which becomes more and more intimate. You can get this same thing by leading someone from far away, to the scene where Balladina kills Gralon. In this play the space is a special problem which must be solved. I would suggest that the director and designer discuss these things, and bring them before the actors.

Critician: Balladina Rehearsal:

What conclusion can we get from today's rehearsal? First of all we were trying to find the meaning in the setting. If the director wants his actors to explore the structure, he must give some explanation as to why it is lower, or it is higher, why it is bound with this level, this height, this depth, this right, this left. Each height is a height, but each one depends upon the play. All these things depend upon the interpretation of the play. Without this they will mean nothing to us, and therefore nothing to the audience. In finding mise on scenes, this exploration of the setting will be one of the most helpful things.

Although the director today was not sure of many mise on scenes, we do have some idea of the spiral movement. But it is quite clear that the actors are doing this spiral movement either too much, or too meaninglessly. It is the director's task to remind his actors, and to explore deeper and deeper.

RADIATION:

What Ceirdre has done with her last rehearsal of The Fishing Scene is in the same line. I would suggest that she now explores this line to find out why it is like that. This will not only be seen but it will be felt by the audience, if it is trained to feel certain kinds of radiation, because the real action is not what is seen or heard, but what is felt.

and radiated. All this power of radiation is created by certain decisive things - we want to explore and we are doing this, and this will be turned to a certain power of radiation.

Today the director gave the task to explore the setting in general. It would have been better to explore it concretely. The actors should have gone on exploring, and this would have been a concrete thing. If you only explain what you mean by height and depth, it will remain an intellectual part of your actors, and will not be turned into radiation.

FEELING OF THE WHOLE:

In all the sketches, and especially in Balladina, I have noticed that not one of the actors on the stage has the feeling for the whole which we have tried to develop. The idea for the feeling of the whole is still dead in our Studio, and this is the part which actors are responsible for. Why are we developing our imagination, for instance? To acquire the possibility to go through the whole play so many times that the actor will really get the feeling of the whole.

The performance of Balladina must be a whole thing for the actor. By taking the costume, the make-up, etc., you will feel that it is part of the whole performance of Balladina - "I am going to act Balladina." Without this feeling of the whole the actor will never find - with all your efforts and your director's efforts - you will never find the bridges between not only the scenes, but dialogues and words.

You must get this experience. You must be more critical of yourself, from this point of view. With time you will get it, but perhaps you will get it earlier if you consciously try to get it from your imagination. Without this feeling of the whole, you will always be torn to pieces.

What will be the result of this feeling of the whole? Everything will sound differently. It is not enough if I feel my part as a whole - I must feel the performance as a whole. Then I will know my partners in a very subtle way. You will not reach the result until you get the feeling of the whole, which will lead you much more cleverly than any director in the world can do.

The feeling of truth, atmosphere, the feeling of the whole, the feeling of rhythm, they are such directors that no one can really know how much they can help. You will know it in your soul. And for this the first thing I would suggest is for you to use your imagination. If you have time, use your imagination by acting the whole sketch again, and again, and again, until you really get this feeling of the whole, which is the ground and basis for everything.

INSPIRATION:

Question: What can the actor do when he is asked to act, and finds he is not able to do it because he is not inspired?

Answer: The whole Method is given as a substitute for inspiration. If you are not able to act you must take something in

the way of a ground. You need only know what to do. You can use imagination, let us say. If the imagination is well developed it will lead you sooner or later to inspiration. You can take the objective in the same way, but you must then do it. Or if you want to speak out of atmosphere, or to move out of atmosphere, your muscles will at once be in another position. All these things are nothing other than the answer to the question, "What shall I do when I am not inspired?" Whether you are able to do this or not is the question of your experience, but the answer is that you must use the things which you have been given.

IMPROVISATION:

Question: What kind of rehearsal was The Fishing Scene yesterday?

Answer: Improvisation, which we have not yet touched. We will begin this with the Comedia del'Arte scenes. In improvisation you are free to do everything by getting some suggestions from yourself, or from your director. For example, the director tells you that you have a certain objective. Then you can improvise on this objective and continue to improvise, taking and adding this new suggestion of the atmosphere. It is a full free combination.

What disturbs one about the usual kind of improvisation in schools is that it is only floundering. If we know even one point from which we can start our improvisation, for instance;

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objective, atmosphere, etc. - or feeling of truth, which is a very good thing for improvisation - then we have to improvise, more or less well, this depends upon the inspiration which is out of our power, but if we have a ground we must improvise - for good or bad. Concrete suggestions from the director can only help the actor, because it gives him more ground when he is improvising. But if the actor tries to improvise without any real ground, it is easy to fall into nothing. This is the question of experience.

Many things were lacking in today's rehearsal of Salladas - nothing was done completely. The director must go through all his notes, but there is another thing in which the actors are to blame. For instance, the director asked you to take atmosphere. It was not done, and I am not able to understand why. It was as if you have not heard the request of your director. It was so far away from any atmosphere, and was low from every point of view. Even simple human activity was not there. Such things no method, or director, or teacher can give you. It must be there, or everything is in vain. Sometimes you are beautifully gifted, and at other times so helplessly ungifted. What does this mean? It means that you are lazy. You are gifted but you are lazy, because you don't wish to keep your engine warm. No one can help you do that.

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THE STANISLAVSKY METHOD:

There was a long period in Russia during the use of the Stanislavsky Method, when everybody thought now there is nothing else to do, it will be done by the Method. It was a real psychological mistake in our midst, and we were only waiting for what Stanislavsky would tell us; by which means he would awaken us. It is easy to understand this psychology, but how wrong it was! Later on we have understood when it was announced that the Method was only for gifted persons. Then everyone tried to be gifted, and all the activity came back and the Method was used.

THE WILL - ACTOR'S ACTIVITY:

A little mirroring of the same thing can be here. It is not quite the same case, but something similar to that. You must be more careful with yourselves. You must know that certain regions of your soul are so important, but they belong only to yourselves, and no one else has the power to penetrate them.

Today's case was that you were not powerful enough to awaken yourselves with the will. For instance, you came on stage without any feeling for the threshold. Why have we spoken about the threshold? Because it appeals to your will. If you are aware that you are crossing the threshold, you will be conscious of it. I want to have this idea of the threshold.

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and I will make an effort to cross it. I want to explore - that is what is meant by having an objective.

The second part of the process, which is to take something, is too weak sometimes. When it is not taken, the Method is lying strange and cold. When you take it, you are gifted. It must be taken through your will.

Today, because of your weak will, you have not made the effort to cross the threshold, to take the atmosphere, or to enter the level of tragedy. It was no kind of a play - it reached no level. You will never get any results from such a rehearsal, and you will and by thinking that the play is dull, that the director is not experienced enough, Mr. Chekhov is sitting silent instead of helping, etc. But this is not the case. The fault is in you. If you will not arouse your activity, nothing will happen. Your own activity. Don't forget this. No one can help you to want it. Everything stands or falls by that.

TECHNICAL REHEARSAL:

Question: What do we mean by a technical rehearsal? We are not sure what is meant by it.

Answer: By taking a technical rehearsal, the director must always tell his cast what he is doing the rehearsal for. For example: to go technically through the mise en scene - you must do this. Or to go technically through the speech - you must do this. When the director has set the speech or the

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movement, then you can be free. Everything can be done technically, but the director must say what it is that he is working for.

Question: When asked to do the rise on scene technically, should the actor improvise a little?

Answer: Of course. If the actor will try to do it absolutely technically, he will be inspired. It is a question of tact. If I am absolutely uninspired and try to do other things, it will spoil the whole thing, in which case the director will tell you to go on or stop.

Question: Is the actor free to do free things in a technical rehearsal, or must he do just what the director says?

Answer: It can be given as a real technical method if the director is doing some technical thing. It can be both, but it is to a certain extent a secret which you have to know. If you are doing something technically, in five minutes you will be inspired and will do it. I would say to be quite free in a technical rehearsal, and let the director say yes or no.