

Michael Chekhov

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THE OBJECTIVE
The Deluge - The Flood

Old Students:

Improvisation on The Deluge. It is late, late at night, the lights and the telephone have gone out. The group of people understand that there is no more life in the town, no more hope for them to see the world, and to meet again the people with whom they have connections in the outer world. They have accepted death, and their destiny.

Now you must see in your imagination in which form they have accepted their death. They have reached a state of ecstasy, and now they are half-drunk from wine, and half-drunk from this ecstasy. They feel themselves already no longer on the earth. Somewhere in their psychology they have no more connection with the earth and they see each other with different eyes. They see in each other the human being as such. In this state of ecstasy they meet each other each moment afresh. Remember that until now they have only seen each other as business enemies, unhappy lovers, etc., but now they see each other as human beings. They are astonished, and they are living in this state of astonishment. The leader of this strange society is the strange advocate, O'Neill.

Let us improvise the scene on the basis of the objectives. The objective is to be absolutely expanded in ecstasy - try to expand and observe and take in more, and more, and more. That means to have this ecstasy, and to want to get more and

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more by expanding. The psychological gesture is, "I want to know more and more by means of expanding my being." The objective of the advocate is to keep them in a state of ecstasy.

From time to time there will be a sound from the outer world, which will remind these people what is outside. This will mean a psychological gesture for each one - the ecstasy will be gone, and they will want to get away. Out of this abyss the advocate will bring them back to the state of ecstasy.

Incorporate two moments: ecstasy and abyss. We must see the psychology of the person through their incorporation of what they have seen. After incorporating you will have some new suggestions which will affect the imagination and the incorporation. Rehearse it many, many times in your imagination. The difference between rehearsing, incorporation, and imagination is that in the imagination you have to develop lines, while in rehearsing it means you must always repeat the same thing, and then incorporate.

OBJECTIVE:

In taking an objective it means you must understand everything - the chairs, the room, your own things, everyone, everything. If you have your objective you will never flounder or do things in general. You will always have a certain point, a foundation. You will awaken a new process of life.

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This has nothing to do with thinking. It is the actor's way of understanding. The objective of the abyss moment will be, "I want to get away from this place." With the whole passion of the ecstasy, O'Neill's objective will be to pay more careful attention to everything and everyone. For him, everyone is a living being and not one of a mass.

In our work there is no room for the hysterical - it will only make the actor and the audience ill. It is not our kind of performance. If we have the objective it is enough, and we have to send out a tremendous power, by means of the objective, never by means of this pseudo-psychology. It happens very often with actors, and is like making an attempt to stop a hole.