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## **AISB Symposium 2016**

### **Abstract Proposal:**

Part of my current PhD research proposal at Kingston University, relates to the use and understanding of 'Objectives' in modern acting technique and how this concept has developed since its inception by Stanislavski during the period 1911-1916, through to the present day. It questions if this concept in its current most widespread understanding, is still wholly applicable and relevant to actor training within the UK and therefore to modern day professional acting. And also what 'versions' of this concept stand out as having a stronger impact on its current widespread understanding.

Further to this, Stanislavski did not explain how objectives (a cognitive process) can be created and held within the characters consciousness. Within my research I am also examining if there has been any relevant discoveries within western psychology and psychiatry since 1916, which may help support and develop the actor's concept of Objectives, and thus the creative process that underpins it. For example: what role if any does the subconscious play within this concept? And furthermore, is there, or can there be an understanding of this concept that will be most effectively applicable to actor training and performance?

I propose to hold a seminar with a practical element at the AISB Symposium that focuses on 'Objectives' and how this concept has developed through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through to Sam Kogan's developments of the term Objectives and Purposes within 'The Science of Acting'. I will hold exercises within the workshop that will explore and illustrate:

- Stanislavski's, Kogan's, and other current eminent theatre practitioners understanding of 'Objectives', and other related topics within the 'system'.
- The work of eminent psychologists (such as Eric Berne and cognitive scientist Dr. Thalia Goldstein) and how their work may develop and test new pedagogies and tools within actor training and professional performance.
- The exercises should also be quite entertaining.

### **My Background:**

I am currently Principal of the Kogan Academy of Dramatic Arts (formerly *The Academy of the Science of Acting & Directing* and before this *The School of the Science of Acting*).

Alongside my passion for education and pedagogy, I also work as a professional actor and director in theatre, TV and film, and have done so for the past 19 years - since graduating from drama school.

Since leading the Kogan Academy, the institute has secured university validation, BAC reaccréditation, QAA accreditation, BIS approval for student loans and publication of the text book on 'The Science of Acting' through Routledge - amongst other achievements.

The Academy maintains the ethos and teachings of Sam Kogan – i.e. the acting technique 'The Science of Acting', but within a modern and up-to-date conservatoire setting, providing a balanced education, very much in tune with the current demands of an ever-changing drama industry, higher education landscape and the expectations of Drama UK.

I believe this proposal draws on my specialist skills and experience being:

- The Principal of the Kogan Academy of Dramatic Arts, whilst also being an acting and directing lecturer at this institute as well as other leading conservatoires.
- An established and working professional actor and director.
- And having had direct professional association with Sam Kogan as a student and later a colleague.
- Interestingly, Sam Kogan studied under Maria Knebel at GITIS in the 1960's. Knebel was of course herself a student and later colleague of Stanislavski.

I kindly hope these points are duly noted.

Kind regards,

Neil Sheffield