

Michael Chekhov

January 21, 1939

CHARACTERIZATION

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Rehearsal of scene from The Possessed:SLIM MIKE - FEDKA (Warner Anderson, Peter Tunnard, Sam Schatz):

Look on this character and this scene from the point of view that Slim Mike does a very fine work. He has some difficulties when approaching the question. Ask your imagination to show you how he would act if it is so difficult for him even to start this talk, to make his first approach. Explore this character and this scene from the point of view of how would Slim Mike do it with much greater care and with reticence. How this murderer with a knife tries to play the finest psychology. At the beginning it is very promising, especially in your eyes, then it becomes too primitive and too obvious; then again you get this promising figure. Remain the whole time this promising figure whose moment has not yet come. Explore this by looking many times into the world of the imagination.

STAVROGIN (John and Peter):

Look at this scene (Scene 4) from the quality of complete depression - everything is wrong in your life - the last person whom you had in your heart you lost just eight months ago. There is nothing left in this life for you. An absolutely depressed figure - in addition to the rain, the night, Slim Mike, and the umbrella which covers him and

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confines him to this small space. Out of this heavy, heavy mood and heavy body, he awakens to this nightmare which is before him - the person whom he knows will sooner or later kill is his wife. Look at this character in the most crucial moment of his life, then you will see more and more things, but do it from your imagination. Let this scene be acted before you many, many times. Never stop before you get this marvelous moment when the scene begins to reveal before you things you never thought of. This is the task, to appreciate the crucial moment in which we see him.

Tasks must be fulfilled immediately.