

Michael Chekhov

June 14, 1938

CHOICE OF ROLES BY STUDENTS
VISIONS

CHOICE OF ROLES:

I have asked you what parts you would like to play. Sometimes the answer has been vague and sometimes there was no answer at all. This means that you are not born as actors, because this most important thing - what my soul wants to act - is absolutely asleep. If I choose a certain profession it means that I have certain visions about it. But if I have no visions it means that I am still a baby and that I have no ideas about my future profession. We have been together for so long that certain things should have been awakened in our souls.

Once more I put the question to you, the same question. Please analyze with your heart rather than your head, what you actually want to act. Is it clear enough; has it become a vision; has it taken concrete shape? I do not appeal to your brain; you must meditate on it as if trying to find the answer which arises out of your whole being; standing before you as a vision. I don't really mean meditation, but the character of the way of putting the question before you is a kind of meditation.

For those persons who have given me a definite answer, ask your nature again; try to see how much you are really awakened as a person who is approaching his future. To have certain plays which we are going to perform is one

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things. But I want to hear a professional voice speaking to you. Please try once more; it must be done quickly and decisively; please write down what you want to play. You will find lots of plays and lots of parts; you may write down as many parts as you want, but you must choose one part as the most attractive to you, through which you will have the ability to speak to your audience - to say one word which you have had for your whole life to tell your audience.

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE:

When you find this one part from among the others, then choose one scene in this one part, and this one scene you must underline. You must crystalize your vision about your future. If you have another kind of vision about the play which has not yet been written, please write this down and describe it. Don't be vague; you must make your idea clear for yourself because it will open certain things inside of you which will help you to go on developing yourself.

THE FOUR BROTHERS:

The ideal actor must have the feeling of the whole, the feeling of ease, of beauty and of form at all times. Unless we get this feeling that we are unable to work without these things, we will never be able to rehearse properly. When we are bound by slow tempo, it is always a sign that something is not ready inside us. Everything which is done slowly, without necessity, means that the nature is not yet

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ready. When the same thing is done as quickly as you want to have it done, then it is already a great step forward. You must know this.

Our Phantoms: [The Possessed]

The scene with the mother: The mother's objective must be there very strongly - "I want to arouse him." She is full of will. The son wants to hide his suffering - it must be all inside. He is only able to be free and to be open, to show what is going on inside him with himself; therefore the nightmare scene. He always runs away from anyone who tries to open him; he closes and runs away. This is the explanation of the nightmare scene; he is a very closed man. The mother wants to help him, and he is touched, but all he wants from her is her hand.