

THE "WORLD" OF THE PLAY  
ATMOSPHERE

THE "WORLD" OF THE PLAY:

The Green Cockatoo [Schnitzler]:

The first step is to research the various atmospheres, and when we are able to do this, we must simultaneously create our images. The next step is to study the play - its historical values, background, costumes, etc. In this study we must discover the "world" in which the play has to be acted. Each play must have a special world around and about it. Hamlet is a special world. Faust is another world. We must develop each play as a world; therefore, we need special study for each play.

The first two steps we have to take are: first, to discover, to research the various atmospheres; and, second, to create the characters and slowly incorporate them. Then we must research the world of the play in a special way. We must penetrate into the atmospheres with our hands, legs, bodies, voices, etc. How must we do this? We must move in the atmosphere which we think is the right one - speak in this atmosphere. We must move in this atmosphere and in moving in the right way, we will create the atmosphere. These two things are very closely allied. We must move in an atmosphere, and, in moving, create an atmosphere.

In working on The Green Cockatoo, we must feel the French Revolution as a more romantic thing than a revolution of the present day. We must also see it through Schnitzler's eyes. The character of Henri, for example, is typical of the French Revolution. As actors, we must feel the revolution of The Green Cockatoo. For this we must study. Concentrate on the atmosphere as the first step, rather than on the images of your characters.

#### ATMOSPHERE:

We must start with very simple movements and words. Choose some movement; for instance, sitting down and getting up. Do these simple movements in the world of the French Revolution. By moving in this way, we will create the atmosphere of the Revolution. Very simple movements like this will bring us nearer to the play than attempting to do big scenes. Do the exercises all together and again and again. Then take another movement, another exercise, and do it all together.

#### Exercise:

1. Jump on a chair and then get down, seeking and searching each time for the atmosphere of the French Revolution.
2. Two persons meet with a gesture, say "hello," and then, "goodbye." Do this simple exercise again and again.
3. Divide into two groups. One group appears with, "We have won." The other group shouts, "Hurrah!" Find the right voice and the right gesture.

4. One group cries, "We have won!", and the other group reacts with, "Is it possible?".
5. One group pursues the other, which runs away in fear.

Create the exercises and rehearse them until you feel you know the atmosphere of the French Revolution. By knowing it, you are able to move as artists.

After you have done such exercises, you must study the play in greater detail. What is the movement? What is the atmosphere in the street and in the cellar? You must find some exercises for the cellar and for the street - they may be the same exercises, but the conditions are different.

Everybody must think of an exercise before the rehearsal begins. Sometimes a conductor may be appointed to help an exercise, which must be done together.

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Paul Rogers gave a lesson in movement, starting with the exercises of lying down and getting up quickly and lightly.

#### The Golden Steed:

Begin with the group standing gazing at the mountain with a feeling of joy and exaltation, exclaiming, "Look!"

Then divide the next atmosphere into five moments:

1. Seeing the rider fall, the group cries, "Oh..."
2. With renewed hope, they cry, "There," and when he falls once more, they cry, "Ah..."

3. Everything is lost for them, and they wander about crying softly, "Ieeee," then "Mmmm," and with a final shudder look once more to the mountain in silence.
4. Gaze at the mountain again.
5. With a sigh, return to their own solitary thoughts. the guard enters and throws food to the group - they turn from it and from the woman who tries to tempt them, and from the others who follow her.