

Michael Chekhov

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FLYING OVER THE PLAY -
WHEN THE CURTAIN IS DOWN
RADIATION

FLYING OVER THE PLAY - WHEN THE CURTAIN IS DOWN:

The Golden Steeds:

Fly over the play in retrospect - beginning from the last moment of the play and working backwards. Imagine that the curtain has come down and try to think of the whole play. This gives us a special kind of "spectacles" through which we are able to find the main feeling, the main action of the play. From the end to the beginning, try to remember all the things we have spoken about. First the crowd as the hero of the play. The last heroic moment, then the coda. The moment when the brothers have gone into the abyss. The moment when evil devours itself.

Question: When an actor feels absolutely hollow inside without any feelings, and yet he has his image and an image of the whole scene, how can he reach his feelings and awaken them so that his words will be true instead of false?

Answer: By knowing clearly the task you have to do and doing it in a real way with all your concentration and attention and feeling for truth. By way of your imagination and attention to the task you are doing, these two things will, with time, awaken the right feelings. An actor's feelings cannot be forced to come, and sometimes the more you try, the more they elude you; but if you consciously apply yourself to the

problem you have been given and do the task with all your energy and feeling for truth; and if you see clearly in your imagination the task you have to accomplish, the feelings will come of themselves. Through being aware of what we are doing, we will get our inspiration.

In the scene in which the brothers fall into the abyss, the characters in the crowd are a mirror, or a reflection, of the serious mystery they have just witnessed. They must have the feeling that they are looking at something which is much bigger than themselves in the scheme of things. This thing they reflect in their seriousness, this is the moment when evil destroys itself. The gesture is to back away from the scene of the mystery, but at the same time emphasize it by pointing at it.

Imagine the fall of the brothers. What is the purpose of this black mystery? We have to follow the brothers from above to below. Their highest moment is not the same as Antin's high moments. The crowd helps to lift the brothers with their exclamations, but they are disdainful at the same time so that the exclamations will not have the same height as those of Antin. With this we must follow the brothers down and into the earth, and then we will come to the deepest moment. The laughter of the evil group is a mask to show a feeling of disgust and pushing away. There is dark laughter at the beginning of the mystery; the laughter of closed mouths,

Another fault in actors is that sometimes they are so creative and concentrated somewhere in their beings that they lose contact with the outside world. This is another extreme. It is just as wrong to take everything from the outside and nothing from the inside as to take everything from the inside and nothing from the outside. The right way is to see the character in everything everywhere around.

RADIATION:

The pause on the stage is a most active moment. You will never be able to radiate until you have experienced the division between your body and your soul. You must be able to radiate without using your body. The following exercise is for the purpose of radiating during the pause: The whole group stands in a circle feeling an imaginary ring in their hands. They lift it up and let it down, and finally they send it up into the sky, having the feeling of connection between themselves and the floating-flying ring. This is radiation.