

Michael Chekhov

(afternoon) March 16, 1938

SPEECH - PRESENCE

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Scene with the Engineer, the Idealist, and Nicholas:

Read the text and anticipate how it will be later on - how you will later on play it in the style (as a rule on the stage actors read and act at once and, therefore, they become more and more blind). You have only to touch the words - the living human words. Try to anticipate the sounds of the human words in this style - it is a beautiful and fine work - it is not acting - you are not obliged to do anything.

The beauty is that we are trying to explore the words in connection with our speech apparatus. Don't push - out of your actor's nobility you must speak. You must keep your presence on the stage all the time, no matter what you are saying - a threatening presence in this play. You must get the ability to speak the words and be absolutely sure that you are able to be present during the speeches. When we get this ability for this play, it will be easier to go through all the psychological paths. You may have to forget the technical part of speech. You may not yet have the speech technique, but by struggling with it, later on the real freedom will come.