

Michael Chekhov

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CREATING THE PLAY
CHARACTERIZATION

CREATING THE PLAY:

The Golden Steed:

Don't be content with creating an atmosphere - it must be sent out. We must train our invisible muscles. We must feel where our speech comes from in the rhythmic scheme of the whole play. If you find your speech is not expressive enough, you will find that the gesture in your speech is not clear or not strong enough.

At this stage all we can do is to release the various atmospheres, and then feel the gestures in these atmospheres. If you will feel them and love them, then you will reach a very important stage. It does not matter if the gestures are not clear or are vague, because we are learning to do this, but what you have to release are the atmospheres and the gestures in these atmospheres.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Continue working with the characters. We must concentrate on our own imagination, and then show some gestures from the image. When an actor is filled with an image, even the small movement of his eye is important to us. Everything that is inside him is significant and important, and everything outside him will serve him at once if he really has something to convey. If an actor has nothing inside him, he

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can stamp and rage, but nothing will happen.

In these exercises we must try to capture our images and remember them. We must write them down, draw pictures of them, and capture them in every way. We must be very attentive to the little flashes of our imagination which we cannot quite get - we must pursue them. We must be able to see images at once, even if they are not what we thought our imagination would have done. If you will see your image entirely free, and then see it after the director has given you some advice, then you will be right. The theatre is a profession in which we are working all together. This possibility will only be reached if you are able to take a strange image as if it were your own. As actors, we must be able to find the way from the imaginative to the actual movement.

Through atmosphere we will find speech as gesture, and through the study of our images we will find our characters. We must be very clear in our images and must accept from the director, the scene designer, etc., new qualities for our images. We must be able to incorporate them.

Exercises:

1. Each person must get up and show us his image in one moment of the play which is for him very important.
2. Each character must rise from the ground as he imagines it in the first moment of the play.

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3. Each must fall down in the character of his image.

4. Each must respond to the Black Prince's speech as if he were striking our most sensitive feelings.