

AWAKENING THE ACTOR'S NATURE
FEELING OF TRUTH

AWAKENING THE ACTOR'S NATURE:

The aim of our school is to awaken the energy in our students, to awaken their feelings and will and everything because without awakening these powers in our beings, we will not be able to be actors of the type that I can use in my work. Any other type of actor is very strange to me, and I am unable to teach in that way. If you find that our direction is right, you must awaken your feelings and energy. By awakening these feelings we are always in a little bit of danger - the danger is that we try to be too active, which is a danger for your health. You must be able to be energetic during the lessons and during the whole day, but do not be energetic after meals and go to bed early. It is part of our technique to be energetic and to be free and to know when to be energetic and when to rest. This will economize your energy.

The Golden Steed:

Begin the scene where Antin says, "I try a second time." We have called this section "Cain and Abel." Here the brothers have the will to ascend the mountain. Antin is fire. In this scene he must feel that his center is drawn to his brothers and from them. His center must burn with the feeling of being drawn to his brothers. They stop him from reaching the height. The way in which they stop him is by

M. Chekhov

December 9, 1936

drawing him into an abyss. The identification of Antin with his brothers is his fall.

When we repeat a scene or moment, we must start it with full energy, as if for the first time. The ability to do this belongs to our profession. Our feelings for today must be purpose and the feeling of truth - nothing more.

The reason that Antin is a hero and a fool is because he always opens himself to everyone. He must find the continuity of his streaming somewhere. The beauty of his image is that he is never static - always flowing toward someone or something. When you have this feeling of center in your body, you will find how each limb is affected by it, and your body will become stronger and stronger.

Antin is fire, and the White Old Man's task is to help this fiery being. The feeling of pleasure and joy in the brothers increases until the moment when they see Antin. At this moment, we must see them at the height of their evil pleasure - the height of their evil power. The Guard's figure must be a majestic one out of which will grow something humorous.

There are many things which may be psychologically sound, but which are not artistically right. For instance, the moment when Antin hears the reference to his father's death. He must not hear this. We, as actors, must learn to discriminate between what is important for the action of the play and what is not.

M. Chekhov

December 9, 1936

FEELING OF TRUTH:

The truth we look for is not logical; it is psychological. If you find when you are working in the play, trying at the same time to feel the psychology of your character, that it disturbs your feeling of truth, you must put your character aside for a little while and try to find the feeling of truth; then return to the character and try to find its relationship to the scene.

Let us work on the scene of Antin's entrance at the moment of mystery when he faints.