

Michael Chekhov

March 16, 1939

TEMPO

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Criticism of scenes from The Possessed:

By imagining the play more and more in tempo, you will get it gradually incorporated, without having done any wrong things such as acting in haste, which is not tempo. The first scene is good. The second scene - Woodie as Verkovensky, is still the best and most developed of the characters. The third scene - John, as Stavrogin, is noble looking and at times he is really convincing. I would suggest bridges and transitions for him, and the exercise of opening himself to his feelings. He is not strong enough in the strong moments. I would suggest that he develop the line of the scene in graph form, or sense the line, the rhythmical gesture, more clearly. The scene does not build to a climax yet. The lines and the content don't hold one. We do not feel the line of thought and the development of it. Hurd, as Kirillov - there is a danger of this character becoming comic.

In the scene between Stavrogin and Martha - the Fairy Tale scene - John is good and convincing in the early part. Mary Lou has as yet not finally developed the character. There is no fantasy in the fairy tale. (Leading Question:) What is the reason for Stavrogin's reaction to her fear? Surely not hurt feelings - much more than that. The psychological gesture at the beginning - opening, opening.

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opening, slowly opening, with effort and pain. At the end he closes with the same slow pain. Frances, as Martha - the speech is much clearer and the whole characterization more clear. She tries to mount the scene to a climax. She really sees the picture of the fairy tale - but it can be more fantastic.

Beatrice, as Lisa - no conviction in it - no real character yet. Jeanne - a bad copy of Beatrice with no more character, and less voice.

Peter, as the officer - not convincing. No development in the last scene. Second Lisa scene is more convincing.

Leading Question: How does Stavrogin know that Martha has had her throat cut in the fire? How does he know what Verkovensky has come to tell him? It is not true - there is no development of this theme. Woodie does not find bridges and transitions here. Lisa is not true when she comes in and asks who has been murdered. In the Kirilov scene, the archetype of Verkovensky is that of a rattlesnake.