

THIRD LESSON

THE ACTOR'S MOVEMENTS MUST BE AESTHETIC
FEELING OF JOY THROUGH MOVEMENT
STACCATO AND LEGATO MOVEMENTS
IMAGINATION - CONCENTRATION - WILL

THE ACTOR'S MOVEMENTS MUST BE AESTHETIC:

The movements of a human being in actual life are completely different from those required on the stage. The movements in life are, on the whole, not aesthetic. On the stage all movements should be aesthetic. In what sense? The exercise which will be given you will explain in what sense the movements of the actor on the stage should be beautiful.

FEELING OF JOY THROUGH MOVEMENT:

Exercise:

Move your hand [arm] upward and back. Now try to evoke inside yourself a feeling that your own movement brings you joy - an aesthetic sensation. Feel in your arm this joy, this feeling of the movement being beautiful for yourself. This aesthetic joy is not for us as spectators, but for you - the one who is doing the exercise. As in speech, the words must be good to the taste, so your movements must be pleasant to feel.

Do the exercise in the following way: Sit in a relaxed position and start by moving one finger at a time until you get this aesthetic sensation in your fingers, not

just inside you. Every particle of your body must have this feeling of enjoyment. After the fingers have started to feel this sensation, gradually bring the whole body into this movement, beginning with the hand, then elbow, shoulder, head, body, and leg until your whole body is moving with this feeling of joy. Then get up and move about with this same feeling.

STACCATO AND LEGATO MOVEMENTS:

You must remember that two exercises which are very much alike can have two entirely different purposes. For instance, the legato exercise resembles this exercise, but does not have as its purpose the development of the aesthetic sensation. Its purpose is to discover the dead areas in your body and to bring them to life.

Repeat the legato and staccato movement exercises. Much sharper contrasts in movement. Lie down and get up all in one movement.

Repeat the statue exercise - "I am crying." Do this exercise "in" and "out," in order to feel the difference. Each time you do it, try to see your mental image in greater detail.

IMAGINATION - CONCENTRATION - WILL:

Repeat the first image exercise. Give your first impression of the word "storm." Hold this first image for as

long as you can without adding any details to it. To this exercise add another exercise, which has been taken from the Hindu. Imagine two entirely different objects - for instance, a tree and a horse. Keep the tree in your imagination in front of you and change the tree slowly in your imagination in such a way that it will become a horse, without breaking the image. Take two completely contrasting images and try to transfer one thing into another.

When you are doing this exercise, watch in your imagination to do a very clear-cut job so that you can tell which part of the original image has become the part of the other. What is the sense of this exercise? First of all, your powers of concentration will be developed. Secondly, you have to use your will power to a marked extent, and this is an element without which your imagination cannot work.

In other words, if the artist is lazy spiritually, he deprives himself of the benefits of his imagination. In order to build your imagination, you must build your will power. This exercise of transformation frees your will power and sends it straight to the imagination. This is very difficult.

All these exercises have many meanings, and you must not think that the explanation given by M. Chekhov at this time is the only purpose of the exercises. He has pointed out only one purpose, as it is impossible to point

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out all of them. Each exercise supplements the other - one enhances the other. All the exercises taken together build a whole, and the exercises which build the whole, supplement each other. Therefore, it is important not to pick out some exercises which you like best, but to do all the exercises which are given you.

Exercise:

1. Take a book and speak a sentence into it from various distances. First near, then far away, then alternate. This helps your sense of projection.

2. Take a sentence and speak it first as though each word were very tasty. Then speak it for the beauty of the sound. Then try to combine the two. Do this one way and then the other. This helps to make your ear very sensitive.

It is most important to dream of the parts you wish to play.

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