

SECOND LESSON

SCENIC TIME  
THE IMAGINATION  
PROJECTION  
THE ACTOR'S BODY AND EMOTIONS,  
FEELINGS, OR SOUL  
ROLES THE ACTOR DREAMS OF PLAYING

SCENIC TIME:

Problem: Think over all the possible values to be gained from the exercise for sensing time [scenic time] on the stage. How can mistakes arise if you do not know the value of this timing? What kind of mistakes can you make?

IMAGINATION:

Exercise:

Think of a word, visualize it, then react exactly as you have seen it. For example, "suffering," "joy."

Criticism:

Too much time was taken and not enough expression shown. Do the same thing, but very quickly and sharply - very extreme.

PROJECTION:

Criticism:

The feelings were all "in." You cannot do this on the stage. The feelings must be "out." The emotions, gestures, body, everything must always be "out" in expression. On this depends whether the actor can project to the audience or not.



M. Chekhov

March 18, 1935

There are actors who feel very deeply, and yet they leave the audience cold. Everything depends on the direction of your emotions, whether they are "out" or "in." Emotions, body, and gestures must always be out. Examples: "I am shouting." "Hatred." "I beg."

#### THE ACTOR'S BODY AND EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, OR SOUL:

Your body must become the expression of your emotions. It is a mistake for the actor to think that right away he must be emotional, because the emotion will grow up itself from some conditions on the stage and that these conditions may be present, we have to study.

The emotions cannot be "done" - they are there in you. The study of the emotions is how to clear up the way in order that the emotions may come through. To see the "statue" or image, for instance, opens the door a little bit towards the expression of the emotions.

The work on the body is also a help towards releasing the emotions. If, instead of seeing the image and then making the body like it [copy it, incorporate it], you just force your emotions, the whole purpose of the exercise will be lost. If it were only necessary to take the emotions and use them, there would be no need for the exercise. You must not force your emotions - you must see the image. Repeat the same exercises, but add the word. Don't strain your



M. Chekhov

March 18, 1935

emotions. Expression must be "out," not "in."

Exercise:

Falling down a precipice. Make a statue of it, then keep it - hold it.

It is a great responsibility for the actor to bring what he sees to the stage. Many an actor thinks that if he combines all the passions and emotions inside himself, it is enough. A gamut of his own passions. This "animal" work in the theatre is very easy, but it is not art. To bring a small image out of your imagination is a great responsibility and very difficult, and this is art. You can run the whole gamut of animal feelings, but they have nothing in common with art.

Problem: Know very clearly the sense, the meaning, of this one exercise. Absorb and completely understand this exercise and work on it. Tell what the object of the exercise is. Do it slowly but exactly.

Explanation of "in" and "out": Physically you must do things "in" and "out" so that you will be able to feel it. Psychologically you cannot explain "in" and "out." Projection is "out."

The purpose of this exercise is: You have a soul, and you have a body. Your soul can have imagination, and your body can embody your imagination. The creative work is to bring the imagination to the body life. To bring your



imagination from your soul to your physical life, you have always to be in a state of projecting "out." This exercise will serve the purpose of helping you to bring your imagination "out."

The soul of the actor has to have faith that the body will always be subordinated to the soul. You have to bring up a very flexible body and also something else. You must bring up the assurance in your soul that your body will obey. If the soul is in doubt, nothing will come out through the body, even if it is trained. If the soul is perfectly sure and certain that the body will do everything, then the body will express.

In order to train your soul to have faith in your body, you can do very simple exercises:

Take an ash tray from the table. The spectators will see that you do it very easily and loftily - like a juggler. In order to do this, the actor must have this feeling in him. Only because of this can he project this feeling. Imagine that you touch everything with the touch of a magician. Feel in yourself that you are graceful and beautiful, and you will be.

1. First handle things lightly, like a magician. Don't smile. Use first light and then heavy things. React physically with the whole body all the time.
2. Legato movements - like water - every part of the body moving all the time.



3. Then staccato movements - to the count of 1, 2, 3, increasing the speed.
4. Then interchange legato and staccato movements.
5. Legato movements slowing down like the clock until they come to a complete stop.

Criticism:

Beatrice is better in legato things, and Deirdre is better with staccato.

These exercises may seem very simple, but they lead to great, creative things. Only when you reach the heights will you realize how much has depended on these simple things. These exercises will show you quite clearly what it means to play a part.

ROLES THE ACTOR DREAMS OF PLAYING:

It is very important for your imagination to want to play certain roles. Search through dramatic literature until you find the roles you dream of playing. This is good for your imagination - roles such as St. Joan and Heloise.

\* \* \* \* \*