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MICHAEL CHEKHOV'S THIRTEENTH CLASS FOR PROFESSIONAL ACTORS

"THE IMAGINATION"

THE IMAGINATION
QUALITIES OF MOVEMENT -
MOLDING, FLOATING,
FLYING, AND RADIATING

Stanislavsky

THE IMAGINATION:

Exercise taking the image of a flower and then moving around, talking and doing many different things, still holding to the image of the flower. If something on the stage is performed without previous or simultaneous imagination, then it is dry. But if, around your business, there is the "aura" of the imagination you have gone through, then there is the charm of art there.

Exercise getting up and taking a position, but do it in your imagination only. Then try to do it in reality. Then re-imagine it more strongly, and do it again.

Now have the image of a red scarf on the chair. Walk around, having a connection to the scarf all the time. If you feel the necessity to stop and study the image more carefully and closely in your imagination, that is just what is needed.

Question: Is there a way of studying the thing objectively and subjectively?

Answer: If you are thinking, then it is not quite right, but if you are imagining and showing first, then it is more correct. But it is not possible to distinguish. The series of

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exercises will distinguish so that the more showing you do the better.

Memory gives us the possibility of understanding how exact our imagination can be, but there is more freedom to create later on, and memory will not take so much part in it. First the imagination that we have exercised by means of the memory, then we will get the habit to be exact even by imagining a dragon, which we have never seen. If I know that in my imagination I have to see a dragon moving, then I have to be able to see everything. The only aim is to train our imagination so that it will become absolutely concrete.

Question: Then you should use your memory?

Answer: You should not use the memory which will take as much part in the exercise as it has to if you imagine. The more you are visualizing, the more right it is, and the more you are calculating, the more incorrect it is.

Question: It is necessary to go through the physical process of imagining my body in motion, but it seems to me to put in my way an extra step by imagining myself outside myself. It complicated the problem for me.

Answer: It is very necessary to imagine one's own body. In the ideal case we have to have two experiences of ourselves, absolutely from outside, and at the same time absolutely aware of everything on the outside. This complete having oneself in one's own control includes both things. I must know

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exactly how I look - it is painful, but it has to be. Then I can plunge into everything I wish... Later on my instinct will govern and lead me so that all my shortcomings and my positive attributes will be used in the right way.

During our first period of work with Stanislavsky, he stressed very much - during the first period of creating his method - that everything was from inside and we must forget how we looked. It was a lopsided thing - we were very rich inside, but nothing came out because we didn't know how we looked. Then it was discovered that both things had to be developed; you are sure that you are inwardly rich, and you know how you look from the outside. So for a short period of time certain exercises may shock one, but it will pass.

Question: When I attempted to get up I found I had to put my hands down to help me, and I was very unsatisfied with the picture I had developed.

Answer: That is just the thing which trains our imagination to be more and more exact.

Question: Are we not supposed to have a feeling of the whole picture?

Answer: Of course.

Question: Is it useful in this exercise to do much in relation to drawing and sculpture?

Answer: It can be very useful but from another point of view: to awaken certain fire which is in us, but which is suppressed

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by our kind of living. We do not use our inner psychological fire. We can choose any piece of sculpture by Michaelangelo, and imagine it, and try to justify it in our imagination, and then we will realize what fire Michaelangelo had.

Exercise:

Imagine a figure of a beggar leaning against a wall, and see only one thing - the figure is calm and the head and eyes are lowered. Now imagine the beggar looking up at you and begging with his eyes for alms. Imagine it and then incorporate it. It is much finer and more imaginative because the beggar is no longer ourselves. We will see that our bodies are not flexible enough, and our imaginations are not active enough. Then we must imagine again the same thing and do it again. In this way we will train our bodies to become more flexible.

QUALITIES OF MOVEMENT - MOLDING, FLOATING, FLYING, AND RADIATING:

Exercise:

We will do the following exercise on the basis of the four qualities - molding, floating, flying, and radiating. March with the center in the chest, using the various qualities. The center in the chest makes our bodies beautiful from inside - the feeling that we are beautifully built. We are strong in our bodies. We are sound and healthy. We are large and tall. We are strong. We are active. We are full of

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activity and energy. We are able to fly. Close your eyes and imagine you are flying under the ceiling. We are light. We are healthy and strong. Our arms and hands are beautifully flexible and free. The center in our chest makes us strong, light, and free.