## THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE MAGAZINE PAGE

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Why Some Roles Make Actors REAL Suicides, Lunatics and Criminals.

Psychology Explains the Force of Suggestion Which Made Charles Warner Really Kill Himself After Playing Suicide for Years, Made Joe Jefferson as Shiftless in Business as Rip Van Winkle, Etc. By Professor David Edgar Rice, Ph. D.

GAIN and again we find that a peculiar, often depraved, type of character, assumed by an actor on the stage, passes into that actor's every-day life and becomes his every-day personality. When that happens the actor or actress becomes in real life the character he or she has been portraying, and acts exactly as that character does in the play.

Ida Rubenstein, the French actress who played the title role in D'Annunzio's "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," had to give up the play because of the constant desire for self-immolation that kept coming over her. She wanted to throw herself under horses or cast herself into the Seine, Charles Warner, the English actor, after playing a drunkard in "Drink," for forty years, developed all the symptoms of delirium tremens and eventually committed sui-

mens and eventually committed sul-cide in New York because those ns oppressed him so terribly,

least the assumed emotions have over-

whelmed him.

How does psychology explain these very remarkable and alarming facts?—for obviously psychological science is concerned with these facts. It explains them by telling us that a bodily change occurs in us before an emotion. We do not cry because we feel sorry, we feel sorry because we cry. We do not strike because we are angry, but we are angry because we strike. We



phantom self which, under the power of suggestion, he must imitate. As it raises the unreal pistol, he raises the Pistol—and Shoots."

To the same effect Miss Emily Bateman. occur is the emotion. one of the greatest emotional actresses, says: "If real tears do not come to my eyes I do not truly feel what I am acting.

says. If eal tears no not come to my eyes I do not truly feel what I am acting, nor can I impress my audience to the same extent when I feign emotion as when I really feel it. I have acted the part of Leah for twenty-four years, and the tears alway come to my eyes when the little child says 'My name is Leah.'"

The foregoing instances establish two facts with positive certainty: (1) To the successful actors themselves, the feelings, however induced, are for the time being real; and (2), there is an exceedingly close relation between the mental state and the physical expression, no matter whether the physical expression, no matter whether the physical expression between the mental.

According to the view of modern psychology, it is only half the truth to say that there is an intimate relation between the mental state and the expression of feeleesses. Emotions are regarded merely as

cesses. Emotions are regarded merely as the accompaniments of bodily sensations, and can not exist without them. Neither can an emotion which has once been ex-perienced be recalled to consciousness ex-

cept by recalling the sensations with which it was originally associated.

Materialistic as the view expressed above may seem, it has the sanctian of no less an authority than Professor James, who, in fact, goes one step further and as-serts that these kinaesthetic and visceral sensations not only condition the emotions.

He says: "Our natural way of thinking about the emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily ex-pression. My theory, on the contrary, is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they

"Common sense says that we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insuited by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequince is incorrect, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between (the perception and the emotion), and that the more rational

the emotion), and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we str ke, afraid because we tremble.

Professor James holds that this statement is true not only of the coarser emotious whose expression is obviously largely physical, but of the so-called higher emotions as well, as the moral, intellectual and aesthetic feelings. "A glow, a pang in the breast, a shudder, a fulness of the breathing, a flutter of the heart, a shiver down the back, a moistening of the eyes, a stirring in the hypogastrium, and a thousand unnamable symptoms besides, may be felt

Perugini's Painting of the

tors. The interest of the actor in the part, the adaptability and stability of his neryous system, his power of concentration, the length of time devoted continuously to the length of time devoted continuous; to the portrayal of one particular character, the counteracting tendencies of his occupa-tion when off the stage—all these factors will have their influence in rendering the

after-effects more or less permanent.

The psychological processes involved are precisely the same as are involved in every oceas of learning or training. The most efficient training, whether physical, intel-lectual or moral, is that which tends to establish a direct connection between the given situation and the reaction or re-sponse. That is to say, training is alsponse. That is to say, training is always most efficient when it is put in terms of action. The skilled mechanic is trained, not by reading in a book how to do a thing, but by having the tool put into his hand and being required to use it. Moral sentiments are best cultivated, not by preaching, but by inducing the individual to engage in some acts which will result in good to his fellow men. The more frequent the repetition, the stronger grows the habit. good to his fellow men. The most the habit, the repetition, the stronger grows the habit. The same law must hold good in the emo-

Kially susceptible to the effect of this actor is nothing more nor less

state and the physical expression. As Tal-ma, the great French tragedian, puts it, ma, the great French tragedian, puts it, he must have "received from nature a peculiar organization for sensibility, that common property of our being; and as all our emotions are intimately connected with our nerves, the nervous system in the actor must be so mobile and plastic as to be moved by the inspirations of the poet as easily as the Acolian harp sounds with the least breath of air that touches it." The existence of this heightened susceptibility is indicated in the case of many actors and actresses who assert that the mere study of the parts results in even stronger emotions than they give expression to when on the stage.

Further, players in most cases are likely

Further, players in most cases are likely to attempt only those parts which are more or less congenial to their natures. more or less congenial to their mature of a The interest may be in the nature of a fascination rather than of actual sympathy with the character. The man who plays the thief need not have the uncontrolled instincts of the latter, yet he cauld hardly

hope to carry the part with much success if those instincts were wholly lacking in his mental makeup.

There is also the additional fact that the

There is also the additional fact that the study of the part is carried on at high pressure and under the stimulus of intercest. An emotional experience which, for the average individual, would represent the sum total of a lifetime may, for the actor, be concentrated within a period of a few months. It is real experience none the less, from the phychological point of view, and as such is bound to have its permanent influence upon the character. It may be said, therefore, that the salvation of the actor lies either in his medicarity or his versatility. The less this genius for acting, the less will feel, and consequently the less will be the influence of the part upon his character. If he plays the part with feeling, the habit of mind will grow with each repetition. If Nat Goodwin, for example, were not such a consummate love maker on the stage, it is hardly probable that he would have had enough wives to make a book.



Dorothy Donnelly To-day, Months After Her Last Appearance as "Madame X," Still Showing on Her Face the "Muscular Emotions of the Part. Julia Dean, who played the wife in

"Bought and Paid For" and fought with her busband every evening, had to give up the role because it was becoming part of her ordinary life.

er ordinary life. Stuart Robson, the noted actor, died not as Stuart Robson, but as "Bertie, the Lamb" in "The Henrietta," his most suc-cessful role. During the last two days the real personality of Robson absolutely did not exist.

Helen Ware, after playing the part of Malina, the gypsy, in "The Road to Yesterday," says that she developed an uncontrollable tendency to become a wanderer in the country.

Richard Mansfield, in his last moments,

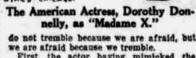
imagined himself a composite of Baron Chevrial in "The Parisian Romance," Mr. Hyde and Cyrano de Bergerac. Joe Jefferson, who enacted for so many

years the shiftless character of Rip Van Winkle, became so irresponsible pecuniar-ily, that despite his great earnings, he would have been ruined if his son had not

would have been ruled it his son had not taken charges of his affairs. Charles Kean, whose greatest role was that of Othello, became so possessed with the jealous temperament of the role that insanely and causelessly sus picious of his own wife, and they were

I am informed that Tully Marshall, a I am informed that Tuny marsaum, highly respectable citizen, after playing a "dope fiend," in Clyde Fitch's play, "The City," for a long time, found himself acquiring the peculiar manners of a "dope fiend," and was forced to give up this role in self-protection. When one says "man ners," one does not mean "habits" the ner yous twitchings and so on.

Three men who took part in the harkari scene in the last act of "The Darling of the Gods" committed suicide. Hundreds of similar instances might be given in which the assumed character has become the actor's own every-day character, or at



we are afraid because we tremble.

First, the actor having mimicked the physical expression that causes the emohabit, physical movements frequently re-peated, become ingrained in the human or-ganism. Consequently, if the actor gets in the habit of repeating certain physical ex-pressians which are emotions, they tend to

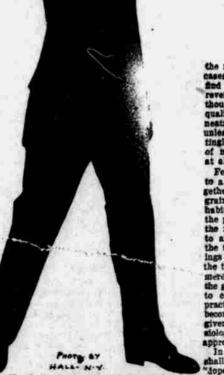
In order to get to the bottom of this mystery, we must ask ourselves: To what extent does the actor "realize" the charextent does the actor "realize" the character he represents? and by what mechanism does he arouse within himself the feelings and emotions of his part? To what extent is his real character permanently influenced by the fictifious feelings of the stage? Does the man who, for example, plays the part of a thief or a "dope fiend" actually experience the feelings of degradation belonging to the character, and does the long continued performance of such a part tend to develop permanent traits, or it is possible for him to rid himself of the acquired habits of mind as easily as he lays aside his wig or removes his makeup at the close of the removes his makeup at the close of the

As to "realizing" the character, the traditional view, as old as dramatic art itself, is that the actor will fall to achieve the is that the actor will fail to achieve the highest effects unless he actually allows the part to peasess him so completely that his body responds in apontaneous movements. It is true, indeed, that a few great players, like Coquelin, reject this view, and fasts on the predominance of the printellectual elements. William Archer, the well-known English critic, in his "Maska and Faces," has collected evidence on this point and finds that most successful actors and actresses declare they must feel the emotion they express.

emotion they express.

Salvini, for example, says:

"If you do not weep in the agony of grief, if you do not blush with shame, if you do not glow with love, if you do not tremble with terror, if your eyes do not become bloodshot with rage, if, in short, you yourself do not intimately experies whatever befits the diverse characters and passions you represent, you can never thoroughly transfuse into the hearts of your audience the sentiment of the sit-uation.



the moment the beauty excites us. In all cases of intellectual or moral rapture we find that, unless there be coupled a bodly reverberation of some kind with the mere thought of the object and cognition of its quality; unless we actually laugh at the neatness of demonstration or witticism; unless we thrill at the case of justice or timele at the act of magnanimity; our state tingle at the act of magnanimity; our state of mind can hardly be called emotional at all." Feeling and emotion being thus reduced to a purely physiological basis, it is alto-gether possible for them to become in-grained by repetition, under the law of habit, just as certainly as skill in playing the plano may be acquired by practise, or the fire horse may be trained to respond to an airm. The stealthy movements of to an airm. The stealthy movements of the thief in the play, the muscular twitchings of the alcoholic or the cocaine fiend, the tears of the woman in despair, are not merely the expression of or resultants from the given stand of mind; they actually help to constitute the state of mind. If by practise and frequent resistion the action becomes ingrained and populated with a given mental state, the physiological condition appropriate ment. appropriate ment In the light shall's acquisit "dope fiend" ;

tional life. O rembers of the theatrical profession are perior ability to establish the