

Michael Chekhov

(afternoon) February 10, 1938

THE ARCHETYPE  
PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS  
PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS

THE ARCHETYPE:

As we are going to prepare our two plays for the future theatre, we must go the more professional way in the theatre, and one of the things which we must take into consideration in working with the play for the audience, is that we have really to open up the "windows" through which we may look into the life of the archetype. We know that the means we use for opening these "windows" is to imagine faces, characters, beings which may lead to certain archetypes belonging to this type or character or event.

While working on these two plays, it will be well if you will accumulate different impressions which may lead you to the archetype. If you see pictures, or read about similar incidents and you get an image or a thought, write it down. There will come a time when you will have to look through this "window" time and again, and the more you work with the characters the more will you need this material. Therefore, in your books you have to accumulate everything you require, and this is the difference between the right and wrong approach during our process of preparing the part.

If we are going to do Joan of Arc we may go to cathedrals and get impressions. We do not bring back a window, but we get the spirit or impression of the window, and

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then we recreate from the impressions we get, our own "windows" as we need them. If we are able to absorb and store the impressions in our creative memories, then we have the right to take them.

Now, for the character of the spy. In this character we have an example that leads to the archetype. If Paul is going to prepare this part, from time to time he has to come back to this "picture", because from day to day he will see different qualities in the character. He has to "live" with this character. For instance, you may ask this picture, "How do you love?" "How are you angry? Happy? Unhappy?" etc.

Rehearsal: I want to remind you once more the mistake we make when the director in this case speaks with our group. We directors fail to remember that we have to follow the group with ourselves. If the director speaks quickly, the actor must follow quickly. Remember this thing.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS:

During our rehearsal of Mr. Shdanoff's play and Henry's play, we are touching different psychological patterns or situations, or psychological dynamics between different characters in different situations. We shall continue this work. Please consider it as touching some psychological patterns, being able after the performance to con-

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tinue this work alone. It is absolutely necessary for an actor to work between rehearsals on the basis and ground they get. Today we will touch another psychological moment:

The son goes throughout the whole play, not in a straight line but zig zag. That means from the good spirit to the bad spirit. When he comes to the good things, he gets certain disappointment, as for instance in the fairy tale, when he tries to see the light image, in his mind arises the spy and the whole thing is broken. When he comes to the bad line, he meets and speaks to the spy and he is a mechanical reality. He becomes so desperate that he again seeks this light line, until he comes to certain things at the end of the performance. It is characteristic of him that after getting certain disappointments in the black and white moments, his energy rises and he runs toward the opposite thing. When he touches this disappointment, he goes actively to the other side and back again. Now after meeting this girl with the fairy tale, when he has touched this other world and seen the spy, and has offended the girl and his disappointment is complete, he runs to the evil, and now we shall take the moment when in his evil side he meets the other woman.

It is the night after the Convict scene. He comes back desperate and exhausted, and he is able to run towards the evil spirit. He is cynical. Then in his room appears

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the other woman. How she comes is quite a different question, but for his psychology she appears, and she asks him to join the work and the ideals of the spy. Again he sees the spy through her. This is his nightmare, his tragic destiny, that he sees the spy everywhere and in everything.

Now, prepare this sketch, following the psychological gesture. You are looking physically at this woman, not at her, but through her, and you speak with the spy through her. This is a very fine thing which you must find out, but this is very much in line with the character of the son - who is "hearing through," guessing at bad and good things. Even to his mother he is a riddle. He is never here - he is always "somewhere." He is always "looking through." What he meets there behind these screens that he is looking through is the important thing for him - not the person he is with.

In the past, this woman and he had been lovers, but since then the beggar girl had come into his life. The woman was deeply offended because he had left her. Her woman's psychology is that she hates him, but this is a mask, she really loves him most passionately. The spy knows all this, and that this flaming, passionate, "luciferic" woman is seeking the son, so the spy gives her the idea that she should become a revolutionary, and use her influence to make the son join in the revolutionary movement. She is to inspire this in him, and with this contorted psychology she appears before

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him in this particular scene, and is absolutely sure that she hates him, but she has come to fulfill this high duty to awaken his revolutionary instincts, and to lead him to do this big deed for humanity. But after the fairy tale encounter he looks through her and sees the influence of the spy at work, and that she really has no connection with him any more. This will develop later on in a certain way. He is standing as before a glass, and he sees something else and not the person, which makes her unhappy at the moment.

I want you to start the sketch with the moment when he came back after his night of adventure, and he is able and ready to accept every evil and negative thing. This is the starting point for him. Then she appears before his tortured mind and says, "I hate you," but underneath must be, "I love you passionately." He says, "When did you join this organization?" She answers, "Recently... I don't know when I joined...I have not joined..." This is the point which she is not able really to understand, but when she does understand she will know that she loves him.

Although our small sketches are only the schemes for the future psychology, you must rehearse them as real and true, as if they were the play.

Condition: The woman is sure that she hates him, but she is not sure whether she is a member of this organiza-

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tion. The real fact is hidden. In this word, "Nicholas," I want you to call him back to the past where you were lovers. After you have to push him back with the words, "I hate you." Confusion. Three points. The son is astonished. He realizes that even this woman has been taken into the sphere of the spy.

When she is chasing him in her mind, she is always dreaming about him, and at the moment when she sees him, please take time to turn your imagination into the idea of this reality: "I love you passionately - I hate you."

The son asks her, "When did you join this organization?" more through her, in other words, "When did the spy take you in his power?" The son must penetrate into her with the psychological gesture by different dimension. Be as evil as you can. It must be more evil than the spy. For example: Your objective must be, "I take the past and lift it over my head, and down into her."

The son's body must be absolutely free. You are hanging on yourself. There is no precise tension. You may have a powerful gesture inside you, but outside there is absolutely nothing. The audience must be shocked. For the spy it means nothing to kill anybody. The body must express this nothingness. Her body is also nothing. This beautiful devil, this woman, is never asking or begging. She can lose ground but she is not asking. "Come back," from her is a hidden

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order to come back.

Addition: Quite naturalistic. The son has taken off his jacket and when he sees her, and without breaking the line, instinctively puts it on, and makes apologies to her.

Addition: Keeping the same line when you see her, say "You"...(I do not understand - inexplicable.)

Addition: Before the woman says, "I hate you," she says the following sentence, "Do you think I came to tell you that I love you? - No, I hate you."

She has succeeded in her mission, and she has taken him under the guise of political ideals, and they spend the night together at his estate, and it is the following morning. He now feels after this experience, quite dead, and that it was not interesting, and that she is as cold as before. He sits absent-mindedly, and his clothes are untidy. She means absolutely nothing to him. But she has lost her mask and is now only a woman, and she caresses him, and gradually she begins to notice that he is unaware of her, and realizes that she has not awakened him as she thought, and gradually she has to realize this tragedy and shame. She has been absolutely drunk with her passion, but now she has to realize the truth. Try to experience this big gap which has grown between you, and the shame of it. She has forgotten that she is a revolutionary, and is now only a

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woman, and he reminds her of it. Finish this retreat with the words, "He does not even answer me."

The style of Mr. Shdanoff's play is full and can break. Find the really big emptiness out of which we will develop another line. Do not forget that this woman is passionate, quick and "luciferic," without any half tones. She is one with Nicholas. She must not leave him passively and slowly but actively. Please develop this emptiness. She does not know what she will do in the next moment - she is an uncertain nature, passionate and possessive. The son is absent-minded, but when he realizes she is really there, he turns in his chair and says to her, "Revolution?" Then she begins for the first time to really hate him. Her gesture is to make this big idol smaller and smaller, and to bring him to one small point and annihilate him. Start with a big "You," in an effort to annihilate him, and gradually diminish from big to small. The whole gamut - past, present, future.

The spy knows, of course, that they are together. He has arranged it. We have seen in the previous scene how he has inspired her to do this. By now the spy has killed the beggar girl. He comes to the son and the woman, knowing it is very risky, because if the son knows the spy has committed the murder, the spy's whole organization will be shattered. He announces to them that something has happened.



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but neither of them is guilty as the convict has done it. He must say this as quickly as possible. He is ready to answer any questions.

The son knew that the girl would be killed, and had given the money for it, but in another form. He gives the money for something else, but actually he knows it will be used to kill the girl. His first question is, "Has it happened?" Then the spy says, "Yes, but you are free of suspicion." The son jumps up and asks where it has happened. Big gesture and final collapse - he is broken inside absolutely.

The spy has no heart and he loves only one thing - his idea. At this moment he loves the son because he hates him. He is able to kiss and comfort him through this contorted love.

At the last moment the woman hears the words, "dead... killed..." and then she remembers her husband. She feels she is alone and her last hope is gone. She comes and says, "Who is killed?"

The whole story must be hidden. The spy must protect himself. He does not dare to move too quickly, but inwardly he is being careful and quick. He changes every moment and shows us many masks. He hides everything inside and outside. He is always busy with something.

Think about psychological patterns and try to develop them in your imagination.