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Michael Chekhov

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PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE
THINKING - FEELING - WILLING
INNER CHARACTERIZATION
THE INVISIBLE BODY
INTUITION - INSPIRATION

Stanislavsky

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

Have you thought about psychological gesture as I tried to explain it to you last time? Please do it because we are thinking of it and trying to exercise in the form I gave you. Unless you do this we will not be able to go on - our going on will be only an intellectual illusion, not our actor's ability. You have seen from the last time when we tried to make our first improvisation for the future theatre, how badly you need to have some ability to manage the Method. Without this the actor does not know what to do and begins to flounder, and the time and activity of both sides is lost. It is good to repeat until the thing is reached. Something must be done - at least repetition.

Psychological gesture is something which exists between the person who produces it, and through the gesture another person receives the content which is behind the gesture. On the other hand, the gesture produced works back on the person who has produced it.

The next step: The ability of the gesture to influence the person who has made or has done it can be, and must be used in our profession as a means to investigate our

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own inner life, to increase certain feelings which we want to have. Therefore, by using this method of gesture we have at our disposal the means not only to investigate our own inner life, but to increase it in the direction in which we want to. To make a certain gesture many, many times means to influence our inner life, and to increase it by repeating the gesture. In this case the most important thing is how the gesture has been built, and on this depends how strong the influence from it will be on the inner life. There are a certain number of conditions which the gesture must follow - the gesture must be built under certain rules, then it will be one which will influence our inner life.

THINKING - FEELING - WILLING:

The human nature, roughly speaking, the human inner life, consists of three main kinds of activity. These are the activity of thinking of imagining, the feelings, and the realm where the will lives. This division in three parts - thinking, feeling, willing - is to a certain extent justified, and to a certain extent unjustified, because all three activities are to a certain extent one activity. Therefore, when we speak about thinking, we speak conditionally about thinking, feeling, and willing. When we feel something, that is we imagine something at the same time and we desire something - whether we are conscious of these three activities or not is another question - but the human nature intends always

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to put them together, although one of these qualities will always be the primary one. Now this is the psychological side of our life.

Yesterday Mr. Oppenheim spoke about actors. This is a very important thing for us to remember because our will, our thinking power, and our feelings embrace our whole body and again, conditionally, we must say that thinking takes this part of our body (zone of head); feeling this part (torso) where the heart is; and will takes the limbs.

When we wish and desire something, we wish and desire with our imagination and with our heart too, but primarily with our limbs, whether we are aware of it or not. If we feel, we feel with our limbs, but primarily with this part (heart). That means that our whole body is permeated with our thoughts or imagination from the head down; our whole body is permeated with the feeling from the heart down; and our whole body is permeated with the impulse streaming from below up. If our psychology, in spite of this division in three parts, is one, and if our body, in spite of three parts, is one which is permeated with the first whole thing, then we have to draw the following conclusion: The psychological gesture must be produced by the means of our whole body, and never by the means of one of the parts of our body.

We have to create our psychological gestures with our full and whole being. Does it really mean when we want

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to use the psychological gesture that we have to move the whole body? Not at all. I can indicate psychological gesture by lifting only one hand, but my whole body, whether it is moving or not in space, must be filled with certain psychological streams inside. If I move my hand upward, of course I do not need to lift my legs at once, but psychologically I must have this gesture invisibly in my limbs and my torso. By actually lifting my hand, and in imagination my whole body, then the psychological gesture is fulfilled - all three kinds of activity are completely taken and used for the creation of the psychological gesture. We have to use our whole body and our whole psychology, remembering that there are three kinds of activity interwoven with one another - three powers we possess as living beings.

Let us say that we lift our right hand up, and we finish our gesture like that. By doing this I want you to realize the fact that the whole body is full of this stream. We have to overcome the common feeling that our body is movable in sections. That is the disease of today, when the human being thinks it consists of certain divided parts. It is the same process as a sculptor who would try to mold with dry clay.

This exercise must give you the idea about the ideal artist who, when he is on the stage, is something like a powerful tropical plant which is full of quick, luxuriant growth.

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This is again a link with radiation.

Exercise:

Do opposite gesture from above to down.

INNER CHARACTERIZATION:

I will repeat again. Characterizations must be intuitive creations. There are fanatics who devote their whole life to a method - they attempt to say that their method is everything, but it is not. It is nothing more than a scaffolding. If the creative spirit is not there it will remain a bare outline - nothing. Stanislavsky, in answer to the criticism "I am gifted - I do not need any method," said, "My method is only for the gifted actor." Therefore, by managing this invisible body, and your center, you have always to imagine that it is not everything. Intuition must be there, and by remembering this you will get great help from the method I try to explain to you.

I will give you the task and you have to find out what kind of invisible body you have to create, and gradually try to move and speak. This does not mean that you have to make clever sentences, but be sure your throat can produce something out of these new compositions.

THE INVISIBLE BODY:

Character: A lady coming out of church. Will you please incorporate in this a human being who is full of real,

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good, strong life - that means the ability to give, because love is not to take. This human being is full of love, and consequently is strong and powerful. Combine these two qualities. More flexible - do it outwardly. Now, will you please repeat the exercise, this time excluding the warmth and love and using only the will power. By studying qualities separately, and then putting them together, you will get some new shades. Nothing to do with the physical body.

Find the approach to the inner characterization.

Do not allow your physical bodies to exaggerate and to be too early active. Let your physical body follow your imaginary body. Now take the exercise using only love and warmth - the ability to give everything you have to the world around you, and exclude the will power. Put together these two qualities of will power and love power, again through the creation of your invisible body. Don't confuse this work with the invisible body with the work of incorporating a character.

These are two different approaches and although the result is the same the approach is different.

INTUITION - INSPIRATION:

When working on characterization the influence from the intuition is always there. It is a very thin something, which you touch like a string when trying to make some real physical, methodical, adjustment or incorporations of some suggestions. What does it mean? It means that after getting

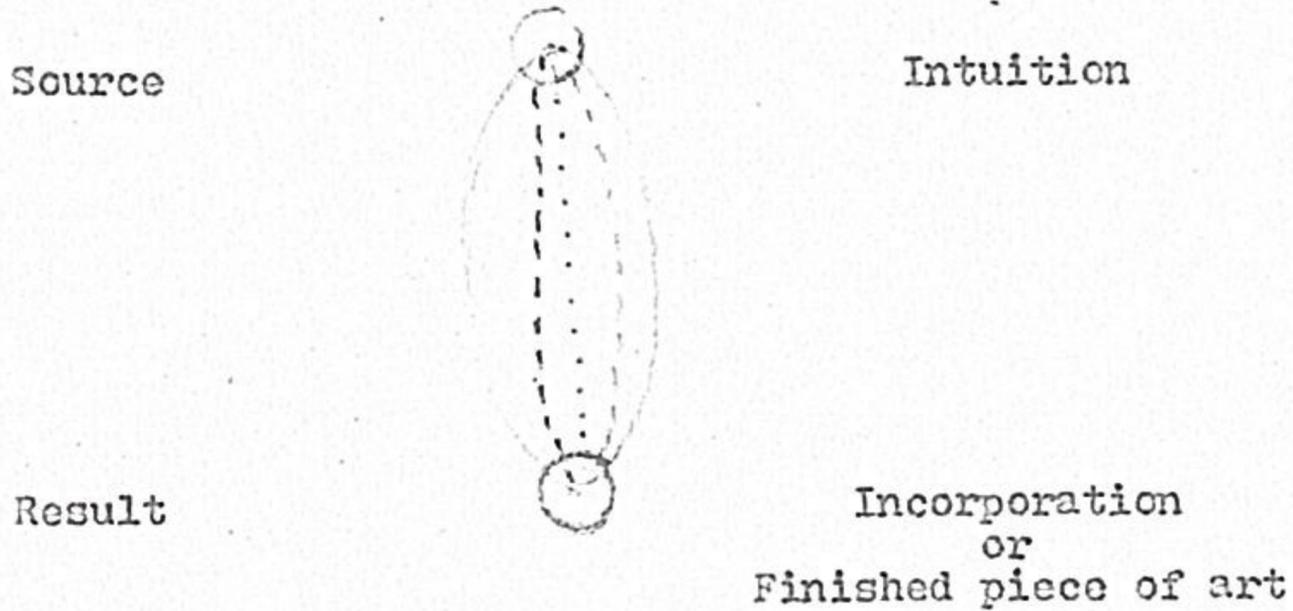
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this inspiration from your intuition, you send a message back. When the intuition gets this it sends back a big letter which you read. You are almost sure of the content or gist of the letter and then you get a parcel, and finally a registered letter from the intuition.

This is the real process:



When we know we have this intercourse with our intuition we are not afraid to wait. Intuition needs much time, and this clever waiting for the result is hard work, but you must wait for it.

On the other hand, the person who only works under the influence of inspiration is without aim, without support, and will have that dreadful feeling of emptiness. He is supported only by the wings of Lucifer. When he is full of something he flies everywhere, and then when the time comes to really create he is empty. This is the tragic state of many artists who rely only on the wings of Lucifer. The same is

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true of an artist who creates only cleverly and materialistically. The end of this artist is very tragic in quite a different way.