

RHYTHM
RHYTHMICAL PATTERNS
RHYTHM IN GREEK AND GOTHIC STYLES
RHYTHM AND GESTURE

Dr. Rudolf Steiner

RHYTHM:

The artist always has interest for something which exists behind and beyond the facts. For instance, a person who has to photograph something is compelled to deal only with the things which are obvious - although a good photographer tries to get something more in his pictures. He tries to get an illusion, as if something is behind it or beyond it. But a picture which takes only the first level of the psychological or physical world is not yet art.

The artist tries to get what lies behind all these physical and psychological things, and in our sense it is rhythm which lies behind everything, if it is a piece of art; if not, then nothing lies there. From the other point of view, if we want to create from usual things something which must become art, we have to combine it so that something begins to live and to be behind it. In our sense, it means to compose it in a rhythmical way, and then something which can be behind it can be transmitted to the audience.

RHYTHMICAL PATTERNS:

It will be very helpful if we will get the feeling that we want to know what is behind this human being, this poster, this piece of furniture, etc. In Mr. Shdanoff's

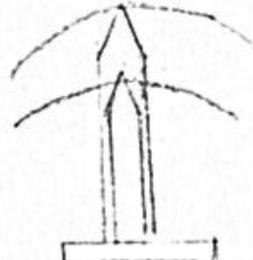
M. Chekhov

February 17, 1938

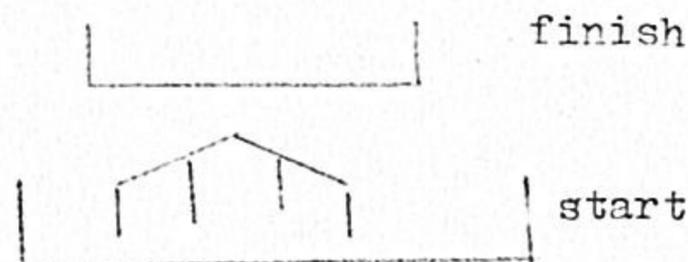
play we try to penetrate into something which is behind the psychology. Then from that which is behind the psychology we will find a certain rhythmical pattern which embraces this scene, or that character, or the whole play. In other words, that rhythmical gesture or psychological gesture. Rhythm is in everything if it is a creation - whether of gods or men - but if it is not a creation you will not find rhythm. Comedy and all other styles have rhythm.

We must develop two things; first the ability to read the lines, to read the rhythms everywhere when they are there. In human movements, if they are rhythmical, in nature, in everything that there is to read it in. This is one ability. Another ability is to create it. The ability to read it develops the ability to create it, and the opposite; you will see that if you are able to create the rhythm you will be able to continue the rhythmical line, without any stopping, being able to create each new step out of the step which went before, quite naturally, because it is an organic development. I have seen only one time when the work was actually stopped. Others have added something more because of this necessity to create the next step which belongs to the rhythmical feeling. This ability, which is absolutely necessary, we will be able to develop if we are able to read and create. These two abilities will give us the urge to go on and never stop. Everything

can be stopped - a stopped form can be taken from the rhythmical point of view and that will suggest something more than stop. For instance, we shall take only the idea of a certain period of Gothic style:



If we start from the base, where do we start this gesture? Let us say we start on the earth, and then we go further, and then when shall we stop? Never. At the same time we have to stop quite definitely, if we want and need to. This is the ground, we start here; this is the top, and we finish here because it leads to heaven. It is possible to stop but the life of rhythm is so endless that if we want we can continue. If we take the idea of a Greek temple, where shall we start?



This is the beginning, because it is from the depths of the earth. And where does it finish? Where the god is taken into the temple and bound into the earth. In the Gothic it is quite different, we have nothing to do with the earth, we are lifting ourselves to God. Therefore, we may say that we have to start the Greek temple in the earth and finish it on the earth because the god is there. The Gothic we must start

M. Chekhov

February 17, 1938

on the surface and finish among the stars. This is the idea of starting and finishing. We have to stop but we are in the ocean of rhythm which never stops. To stop in the rhythm is simply to have no idea of the stopping. If you want to start, that is your activity, but if you want to stop, that action is your activity, because the world of rhythm goes on endlessly.

Question: How do you discover the rhythm? Is it a psychological discovery? How do you find the rhythm originally?

Answer: Not with thinking, of course. It must be a certain instinct, or a spiritual ability to see the spiritual really everywhere. This is the only way. This is the artistic ability. The intellect will only disturb and stop everything. I have taken the two examples of the Gothic and the Greek only because I have read the rhythmical descriptions by Dr. Steiner which gave me very much understanding about these two styles. I chose to compare them because they are very speaking.

It is only possible to find the rhythm in things by excluding the intellect, and by doing things. To find this rhythm we must not start from any one point; we must start by doing the thing again, and by doing it all the lines and forms will be joined together in quite a new manner. It is a visual approach also, not only visual. We must create the thing afresh, then we will get the rhythm of it. With-

M. Chekhov

February 17, 1938

out this we are not able to find the rhythm. For instance, with the Greek temple, how can we get the rhythm of it? We must create these lines again, and during the process of creating them we will get the rhythm again. With will, and feeling and thinking it.

RHYTHM AND GESTURE:

Question: Is there any difference between rhythm and gesture?

Answer: There is no difference; the real psychological gesture is a rhythmical one. It is absolutely in the same world, and it must be. We have called it the psychological gesture, because we have never touched the rhythmical part of it, but it is actually a rhythmical gesture. There are certain laws. The knowledge about the Greek temple is very interesting if you are able to use it, but it is not necessary. This idea I got from Dr. Steiner but I have adjusted it so that it is no longer the idea but is part of the rhythm. He has got it from the form or something; there are no special doors to enter the world of rhythm - everything can be used as a door.