

Michael Chokhov

February 29, 1940

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE
CONTINUOUS LIFE OF THE GESTURE

PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

When the psychological gesture is understood properly, it will contain volumes and volumes of theatrical wisdom. It must be properly understood and fulfilled with the whole being. It is the synthesis of something which can be analyzed, but the psychological gesture does not require to be analyzed. It is the opposite to analysis - if we experience it, we do not need to analyze it. It includes atmosphere and everything - it is the synthesis of all things.

Our creative spirit must see this gesture, not as an abstract thing, but it must become individual, it must be concrete. It must live as a personal experience. Therefore, the only criticism we can apply to the gesture is whether it lives in you or not. If you want to take the whole Method and find a word for the whole Method, it is actually the psychological gesture. It is the crown on top of everything. There is no one point which you cannot find in the psychological gesture. The psychological gesture is sometimes an attempt to describe the psychology behind something. We do it all the time in our general conversation in everyday life. It must be an archetype.

CONTINUOUS LIFE OF THE GESTURE:

We have spoken about using imaginary time and space

M. Chekhov

February 29, 1940

in connection with experiencing the gesture. There is another aspect of this same thing - perhaps physically we can only do the gesture once or twice, but the idea is that the archetype of the gesture goes on continuously. Something or somebody does it for you continuously while you are acting. Somewhere in your creative spirit it goes on - it is not dropped. The psychological gesture is absolutely real, and yet absolutely "un-actual." The continuous experience of the gesture can be imaginative, too. The gesture embraces both the play and the actors - everything. When the psychological gesture becomes alive with continuous life, then it is the real thing.

Never illustrate by means of the psychological gesture because then it is nothing. Do not perform it. Also, it must not be a scheme.