

2018
Michael Chekhov

February 23, 1940

STYLE

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Twelfth Night:

The style is like a circus, consisting of many tricks - some small, some large, but many fine tricks. The first scene is in darkness - early dawn. The second scene will be in the same costumes and setting, but it is much lighter - the night storm has almost gone. Although it is a very tragic situation, the second scene is still a little higher than the first scene. It is more in the major tone. Sebastian is tender and not rude - all the rude notes in the play come from the clowns. Sebastian is a noble boy who is able to speak and move beautifully and to fight gallantly. He is the only person in the play who is a middle figure, on one side of which is the love line, and on the other side the funny men. If you understand this, you will understand what your part requires.

Sebastian is either very much alone or very much with the Captain. His gesture is one of striving upwards. He is full of transitions because he is in two worlds - therefore he finds difficulty in speaking.

Scene X: The difference between this and other clown scenes is that the mood here is like children playing when the parents are out. Absolute simplicity, naïveté, and spontaneity. That is the difference between this and other

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clown scenes in which there are rude and lewd things. The first atmosphere is simple and happy, the second is a cathedral-like atmosphere, and the third is light and happy and quick.

For Malvolio there must be an atmosphere of extreme longing - the gesture one of being unable to get out. It is a dramatic moment, inclined to be tragic without any humor from his side - all the humor will come from the others. We see them, and we don't see Malvolio very often - only his face at moments. This is a real dramatic moment, yet the main thing is Malvolio and not the funny company.

It is interesting from the point of view of composition, that the main character is not seen and is on a secondary plane, while the secondary characters are, for the moment, on the first plane. Therefore, we must find a special kind of acting for this scene - a terrific feeling of ease, and a tremendous seriousness behind it. Transparent hinges in the front and the main line at the back make it still more tragic.

The fool has a very clever and handsome face, and he has the ability to immediately transform himself into this person - a complete change. It is not very funny but a bit like a nightmare, this figure. Malvolio has received a terrible shock, and is as if without breath - he can't get his breath.