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CHARACTERIZATION  
 STYLE  
 ATMOSPHERE  
 PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE

Scenes from Pickwick [Adventures of Samuel Pickwick, Esq.]

CHARACTERIZATION:

Court Room scenes:

The atmosphere is one of a certain kind of tension which is always found in high official places, where everyone speaks in a strange way, and moves in a strange way. The atmosphere is also unpleasant.

Divide Pickwick's entrance in three psychological parts: (1) The objective is "To tell me the truth." (2)

When you see Fogg, you fulfill the objective, in the most comfortable way. It is the thing for which you have prepared yourself for weeks, imagining how you will tell them.

(3) He loses his patience more and more. Fogg's tone of being almost a holy man is right for this scene - this holiness which is his mask. He speaks with love to Pickwick. Sam has the objective to calm Pickwick. He implores him very seriously. He must calm Pickwick's activity with his clear statements. He is suspicious of everyone in this situation - very serious.

From the moment the Judge arrives there is great disturbance in the court. An atmosphere of great oppression comes over everyone - also impressive. Everyone, except the officials, look at Mrs. Bardell with disdain. The three of

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them are like saints - they give a performance for the whole court. Tommy is the only one who is not really performing - he looks with interest on everything and whistles. Mrs. Bardell and Mrs. Cluppins bring more dying activity. They are dressed marvelously, with so many unnecessary things on them.

Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Cluppins, and Tommy look at Fogg with the objective to help him, while the Pickwickians want to get rid of him. Their psychological gesture is to give their own beings to him. Tommy's gesture is simply to observe all the different details in the room. When Mr. Weller says, "Widdor," everyone tries to find him, but after this disturbance they go back to their previous gestures. Mrs. Cluppins is always trying to help, and she jumps in with, "My husband often called me ducky," when Fogg is speaking. A very important statement she feels, and she speaks in the same tone as Fogg. After she has said it, she feels herself to be more important than the judge. During this soliloquy Fogg feels that he and Mrs. Bardell are one being.

When Fogg mentions the letter, it is a matter of great astonishment for the Pickwickians. They try to find each other with their eyes, and question each other. Mrs. Cluppins' speech about "ducky" is like Shakespeare or Byron, while "Chops and tomato sauce," she speaks with disdain. The

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Bardell group feels elated after this little interruption, while the Pickwickians feel depressed. After Fogg leaves the box everyone speaks to one another.

After this first wave, when they say, "Call the witnesses," there is a movement forward. When Winkle speaks, the Bardell group is quite satisfied with things, but the Pickwickians are more and more angry all the time. The reaction to Winkle's speech is, "impossible" on the part of the Pickwickians, also "despair" and "resignation." The Bardell group are like three burning candles. But when Sam speaks, without knowing what the result of his speech will be, they immediately become afraid and want to run away. They become more and more contracted and guilty. They sit staring right in front - everything symmetrical - center going down, down into the center of the earth.

The Pickwickians have a new feeling of hope. Sam is independent and condescending. He speaks to no one and is quite unaffected by the whole thing, although he is completely distrustful of the whole procedure. On "Call for the Defendant," there is a feeling of great hope for the Pickwickians. Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Cluppins, and Tommy go down with the feeling that they have lost the case.

During the Solicitor's speech the Pickwickians start by being very, very hopeful, while Mrs. Bardell's group is very, very depressed; but this changes to the point where it

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is absolutely reversed. When the verdict is mentioned, they all run back to their seats - everyone is concentrated on the jury. When they say, "For the Plaintiff," Mrs. Bardell and Mrs. Cluppins embrace each other. Pickwick becomes absolutely still and motionless when the verdict is given. It does not matter to him how much - he sees and hears nothing. Mrs. Bardell, Mrs. Cluppins, and Tommy run out of the courtroom with much talking and laughter. Pickwick continues in his motionless position during his talk with Fogg. In the scene between Sam and Weller, they invent the business on the spur of the moment, and keep the scene intimately between themselves.

#### Prison scene:

In this scene we see Pickwick staying there all his life if necessary - nothing disturbs him - nothing upsets him - nothing astonishes him. He is as if at home in this terrible place. Even in the boxing business everything is in order, and it does not upset him. He does the whole business absolutely quietly. Sam takes charge of affairs when he enters the prison. He brings activity and fresh air into the scene. He has the quality of politeness towards Pickwick and although he is familiar with him, yet he keeps a certain distance.

We have the feeling that this scene has gone on every day for months past. Everything in Pickwick is firm

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and decided, and he will go on in this way indefinitely - we must feel this. Pickwick won't allow Sam to do anything for him - very quietly he refuses. It is a serious and heavy talk, and Sam cannot find a way out of the situation. It is a fight and a duel. We see another side of Pickwick's character which can only be seen in this scene. Sam is in great despair - he is a servant, but he can do nothing for his master. Fogg visits them for fun and to torture them, therefore, they react sharply to his entrance. Fogg is full of sadistic love. He slowly approached Pickwick and even puts his hand on his shoulder before Sam knocks his hat off, in his anger. Fogg tries always to find Pickwick's eyes.

We need this dull repetitive note from Pickwick in the beginning with Sam in order to create a feeling of the time which has elapsed since the last scene. In the scene between Sam and his father Mr. Weller comes in with much noise and laughter, but Sam is absolutely serious. Weller is quite intimate when he speaks about the mother. Mrs. Weller must be aware of the surroundings in which she is. She is like Beatrice descending into the inferno. Her objective is not so much to give the money as to accomplish the business as soon as possible. For instance, she may be sitting, but she is already on her way out. Her whole idea is to get away from this horror - this place where she sees ghosts and devils everywhere...it terrifies her.

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Stiggins must have real inspiration, not only anger. It must be taken absolutely seriously - try to get in contact with something which is above. The technique is simple. If you will listen to a voice which is faraway and try to answer questions which are being put to you, you will get the same impression.

Sam and his father are always trying to establish contact unobserved by Stiggins and Mrs. Weller. Sam's objective is to take everything and have pleasure from it, being in close contact with Sam. There is a kind of telegraphy between Sam and Mr. Weller. Weller always gives the signal after which there is a little pause and then the audience sees the answer on the part of Sam. When Mrs. Weller says, "You are in prison!", she refers to this horrible place; but it is a very personal thing when she says, "How could you do it?" One is big and the other is small. At first, she merges absolutely with the prison, then the next thing is absolutely personal.

The whole scene is like one jewel after another - the whole nature of the scene requires that it be like a mosaic - it lies in each sound, in each word - the tempo will come later on. Sam's playing with Stiggins is as if he is playing with a very dangerous thing - like a tarantula - this is the atmosphere. For Mrs. Weller, Stiggin's groan is a revelation - the saint speaks. This is a moment of satire.

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Her devotion is a contracted one - she seeks permission from Stiggins before she speaks. Everything comes from him. Mrs. Weller and Stiggins are one being. They become one and Mrs. Weller accepts what he does as if she were receiving a blessing. Mrs. Weller again becomes aware of the surroundings when she notices laughter between Sam and Weller. She becomes a kind of prophet for a moment when she says, "I hope it may do you good." She is reproachful, but she does not know how much to believe Sam, so she decides they must go. She understands at last that they are laughing at Stiggins.

Everything goes on inside Stiggins, then at moments, it breaks out. Everything he says must be justified. He never speaks with simple meaning - it is always of the world of God and angels, never anything of the earth. Everything is significant.

Mrs. Weller is also very sincere. She realizes that there is great danger for Stiggins, both morally and in every way. Morally, he can be crushed by these devils, and there will be nothing left.

Pickwick enters at the end of this scene, and observes it as an observer of human nature, but without any participation in it.

Jingle must do everything with a feeling of ease. He has a sense of shame at moments. When he speaks about the judge's daughter, he has this feeling of shame. Two things -

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feeling of ease and at moment a great shame. Find difference between sections - psychological pause - feeling of ease.

Mrs. Bardell and Mrs. Cluppins are suspicious of the place from the very beginning. Fogg is always trying to lead Mrs. Bardell in, and she is dragging him back. They speak as if about the papers, but Fogg is actually thinking about the closed door. Mrs. Bardell does not want to cross the threshold. They are like mice in a trap - great tension - suspicious and wary - everyone suspects everyone else. Mrs. Cluppins is like a shuttle. The objective of the two women is "I want to unravel this puzzle." Fogg is sadistic - like a serpent.

Arabella and Winkle enter. There are two changing centers of attention - Mrs. Bardell's group, and Arabella and Winkle. The atmosphere is that the riddle will be solved in one moment - a certain light tension - just one moment, just one second. Changing the attention from one group to another. After Pickwick says, "You may do with me what you like," he is the center and the puzzle is solved.

#### STYLE:

Try to interpret everything and every sentence psychologically in the form of a question which has not yet been answered, as in the style of the old French vaudeville - nothing has yet been solved, and they are running through the whole scene up to the moment of the curtain, when the solution



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is found. Catching butterflies. This is the atmosphere on which you put all your sentences. The air must be filled with many many questions hanging in the air. After they have solved the problem and Pickwick says, "You may do with me as you like," the psychological gesture is free and very high.

It may seem that there is more than one style if you remember the scene in which Mr. Weller speaks about the death of his wife, and then the moment with Mrs. Bardell and Pickwick and Arabella and Winkle when it is almost French vaudeville, but this does not mean that there is confusion of style. The style will not be mixed from the content - drama and comedy are allowed to interweave, but style begins only from "how" and not "what." If we acted this scene by clowning or jumping over the psychology and making wrong inner psychological ways, then we would have confusion of style. But as we are standing on the basis of the feeling of truth, and every scene and gesture will be justified, then it is right to have certain extreme poses of style such as the Weller soliloquy and the Arabella-Winkle scene. It is absolutely allowed - the "what" can remain dramatic and humorous in the same play, but the "how" must be the same. In the book, Pickwick Papers, Dickens does the same thing; the scene is really so touching and dramatic; then remember the parade, how they run away, and he describes how Pickwick looks, but he describes it with the psychology; that is why this book is

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such a complete thing. When Dickens describes Pickwick running after the hat, he describes how to do it as if laughing - he describes the psychology. We want to acquire this style. We can do whatever we like if we justify in Dickens' way, the "how" must always be justified. We are never out of the style if we are truthful, and if we make more and more complicated our psychology in all these points.

#### ATMOSPHERE:

##### Dingy Doll scene:

The atmosphere is one of extreme depression. Everything is sad and depressed, with two or three servants moving about like ghosts. The reason we distinguish between personal feelings and atmosphere is because the atmosphere is around us. In the beginning of this scene, everything is done in a depressed atmosphere, but not in an atmosphere of tears. If you do it with your personal feelings, it becomes sentimental immediately. Sam has the objective, "I want to lay the table correctly," and Weller speaks about his wife absolutely seriously - that is all. Everyone is occupied with certain business - no one cries, otherwise you anticipate the tears of the audience.

The more sad the atmosphere, the more depressed it is, the more you will want to do your business in the right and proper way, whether it is words or business. This depressed

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atmosphere does not mean that you must be slow - an atmosphere of great depression does not make people slow but sometimes just the opposite. When you intellectually create the atmosphere around you but don't really produce it, then you mistake your own personal feelings for the atmosphere. Don't anticipate what the audience will feel. When we make the mistake of taking all the feelings away from the audience, they cannot go with us because everything has been done. You must lead the audience to the point where it will create for itself the feelings.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

The atmosphere is one of depression, but the business is very quick and clear and strong. Stiggins' entrance is made in the same depressed atmosphere. His objective is, "I want to penetrate into the minds of Sam and Weller, to know what is going on there." The psychological gesture of Sam and Weller is to hold themselves back. Then the moment comes when they break out.

The beating of Stiggins will not be a funny scene - it will be much more cruel psychologically and not so much physically. It is a reckoning for all that they have put up with. Weller cannot release himself from this feeling. The whole revenge is going on psychologically, and the physical part is only a very small part. He remains in this mood and

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is exhausted by it. A volcano has been working inside. Stiggins must always remember his pale suffering face and his tremendous red nose which makes life difficult. The audience will laugh at his nose, but it is tragic.

When they beat Stiggins, he does not express anything, he is absolutely dead. He gives in and waits for the next blow, almost dead. No more resistance, no more activity, no more profession. Therefore, it will become tragic - in this moment we must forgive Stiggins everything - this is his vindication.

Pickwick speaks to them as though they were children. He expresses to them what he wants them to know, and he gives them time to come to their senses. Sam is not physically tired, but he is psychologically with Stiggins. Weller is physically tired and still with Stiggins psychologically. Weller is completely concentrated on Pickwick during the talk about the girl - psychologically he grasps him and holds on to him, transfixed. His objective is, "I want to understand," and his psychological state is that he is hanging on to himself - not contracted, but weak and limp.