Exploring Monologues through a Variety of Acting Methods

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Introduction:

For my Trape this school year, I wanted to finally incorporate practical work. I intend to do so by filming myself performing various monologues of different genres and lengths. For my theoretical part of this project, I'll be researching different acting methods and ways to implement them in my acting.

Acting being my career trajectory plan, means that learning to improve my craft is a priority, which I'll be doing through my Trape.

I'll be performing a total number of 5 monologues, some chosen randomly simply because I'm the target actor, and some not as fitting because I've heard the monologue before and want to perform it myself. I'm going to post all the Self-Tapes on a YouTube channel to make access to the videos easier as well as gaining confidence for online exposure.

All monologues can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/@ActingWithTaika

Monologues:

Monologues are speeches presented by an individual, mostly to express their thoughts out loud, though there are also a large number of them addressing a character or the audience. The term itself comes from the Greek words "monos" and "logos", meaning "alone" and "speech". There are numerous different types of monologues, some notable ones being:

- Contemporary (naturalistic style)
- Classical (formal style)
- Soliloquy (addressing oneself)
- Aside (addressing audience and not characters)
- Interior monologue
- Dramatic monologue (poem)
- Stand-up comedy
- Rant
- Villain speech

Picking out a monologue isn't always easy. To start off, getting a book full of monologues or searching on the internet are both commonly used methods.

It's important that you select one which entertains you and fits you. Now I chose mostly things for my age range, but as I haven't experimented with what fits me too much, so I decided on monologues which are very different from each other. As a guideline though, you should know your type and range.

It's always a bonus when you select a monologue which is both comedic and serious and has an arc or surprising element, since it'll showcase your range. Aside from this, one-toned monologues are generally boring to see, and casting directors might get bored.

Another factor to consider is not doing long monologues, which I mostly ignored since I won't be using them for submissions. The reason for doing short monologues is that agents usually make up their mind about an actor in the first few seconds, and if the monologue exceeds the two-minute mark for example, they start to change their minds and feel less impressed.

Some last remarks would be to not use a monologue with an overuse of foul language and rude innuendos since it's generally just too much and sounds displeasing to the ears. And lastly, avoid recently well-known monologues performed by a celebrity, the same applies to musicians when making covers. The reason for this is that you'll be compared to the star in every way and your talent will most likely be overshone by the famous actor. This factor, I also mostly disregarded because I'm still young, so comparing me to an older and much more experienced actor won't be as severe.

Self-Tapes:

What is a Self-Tape? A self-tape is a **self-made video you film of yourself performing either a monologue or scene**. The standard length for a self-tape is 60 to 90 seconds long, but since I won't be sending the tapes in, I afforded myself the luxury of also performing longer monologues. Self-tapes have you starring and no one else, so for dialogues, someone will be reading the other's lines off-screen, these people are called readers. Typically, self-tapes are made at the request of the casting director to submit for a casting call, but I will be making them for the purpose of this project of discovering acting styles as well as improving my abilities.

To make a self-tape, you'll get your scene or monologue (in my case monologues), read it through, memorize it and work it through with your preferred acting method.

Then, you'll film it by firstly setting your camera up in front of a backdrop or plain background; it must be plain to eliminate distractions and bring attention to only you. You'll also have to have good lighting, a natural light source works, but most use artificial light sources such as LED lights for the best results.

The video format must be horizontal and standard MP4 sizing. For the alignment, the camera should be positioned so that it captures the top third of your body up close.

Sound quality is also rather important, not to the point where an expensive microphone is necessary, but so that it's audible and captures changes in your voice, and most importantly, contains minimal background noise. You could soundproof the recording space slightly or buy a directional mic, which is a microphone that mostly captures sound from where it's pointed to, or you could also use noise reduction filters while editing.

Once all this is done and you're actually filming, you'll want to wear neutral colours and makeup, once again to keep attention on only you. And you'll want to mark a spot to look at, you can do so with a piece of tape for example, you should be looking somewhere off the side of the camera, but definitively not into it. If you're performing a dialogue and have a reader, then you should use them as the marker.

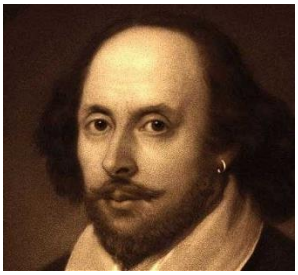
And finally, you'll perform your scene as many times as you'd like and choose the best take and edit it if necessary.

Acting Methods:

External acting:

External acting focuses on physical expression, whether it's gestures, movement, voice, or facial expressions to portray emotions and intentions. It's about showing the character from the outside in, often relying on technique and external cues.

Classical acting:



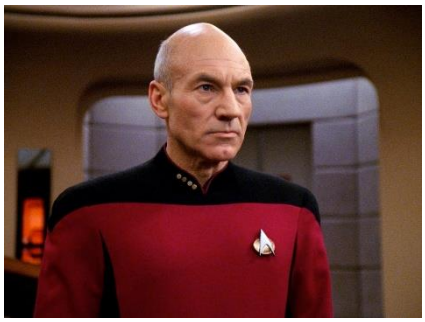
Classical Acting, also known as Shakespearean acting, is an acting style first implemented in the late 1800s by Konstantin Stanislavski and Michel Saint-Denis. Although it was created based on the performative traditions of ancient Roman and Greek dramas between the 5th and 16th centuries. Greek playwrights such as Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus, all believed in the cathartic power of theatre, which means providing psychological relief through open expression of strong emotions. And despite the fact that classical acting's roots lie in ancient Greece, it is most known for William Shakespeare's influence through metaphors, similes, repetitions, puns and alliteration.

Classical acting focuses on the external behaviour of performers and its technical aspects. They do so through script analysis, as well as dramatic expression of the body, voice, imagination, personalizing, and external stimuli. It's less about inspiring an emotional response in the audience, it's more about action and accuracy in storytelling. This technique is often seen as overly intense due to the dramatization; however, it is still used as an introductory course in drama schools.

During Shakespeare's time, the actors weren't given a complete script, rather only their lines and two cue words in a rolled-up scroll called "role". The actors would memorize their "roles" but keep the script on-hand for quick reference.

There are limited modern-day examples of classical acting aside from period pieces, but two of the most famous examples which aren't period pieces include:

- Claire Foy's performance as Queen Elizabeth II in the highly acclaimed Netflix series "The Crown".

- Patrick Stewart's performance as Captain Picard in "Star Trek".

In-practice, classical acting is very practiced, measured and controlled due to the technicality.

The following are some of the practices and teachings you'll find in classical acting:

Script analysis:

One of the most important aspects of this acting method is to closely analyse scripts to understand in detail the nuances, language used and structure.

Verse and meter:

Iambic pentameter and other poetic structures feature strongly in classical acting. Fluency in these along with an understanding of rhythmic patterns of speech and their delivery is a must.

Breath control and vocal strength:

Delivering long monologues is common in classical acting, and so it important to practice breath control and vocal strength to increase your stamina, as classical works tend to be lengthy and intricate to perform, with extended production runs also common.

Rhetorical devices:

Expect significant use of soliloquies, asides and monologues in classical acting. These are used to ensure character motivations, thoughts and emotions are effectively conveyed.

Heightened Physical and Gestural Elements:

During this historical period, specific movement styles were always being utilized. For example, acting out courtly, controlled movements of Elizabethan England or the highly stylized movements of a Greek tragedy.

Precise Diction and Pronunciation:

Articulation, precision and clarity in speech is always expected in classical acting. This is in part due to its nature of frequently including archaic or poetic language.

Linklater Voice Method:

The Linklater Voice work is a progression of exercises developed by Kristin Linklater which is laid out in her first book "Freeing the Natural Voice (1976)", with a revised version in 2006, and "Freeing Shakespeare's Voice (1992)". This renowned technique has been taught in actor training programs around the world.

The Linklater Voice progression is practical, imaginative and organic. It seeks to undo habitual tensions which restrain expression and awaken new connections in order to open and strengthen the voice/body/mind connection. The work has a rich use of imagery to stimulate the actor's imagination and to encourage the actor to fully experience the environment of the play through the language. It also has a deep respect for the structure of text and time-honoured rhetorical devices that further the progression of thought.

Kristin Linklater was born in Scotland in 1936 and died in 2020. She trained as an actor at The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts where her voice teacher was Iris Warren. Iris later trained Kristin to teach voice, which she did at LAMDA. Kristin came to the USA in the mid-1960s, where she was the Master Voice Teacher at the original NYU MFA Acting program and coached Broadway actors and theatre companies. In 2004 Kristin Linklater and Andrea Haring decided to create the Linklater Center for Voice and Language in New York.

Below you will find tricks to follow:

Sleep:

Rest relieves the vocal cords, so missing on it is very counterproductive.

Warm-ups:

Doing a 20-to-60-minute voice and body warm-up before every rehearsal and performance works wonders. Doing warm-ups in the morning and evening are also beneficial.

You can start so with loose panting and breathing, which immediately awakens your voice. You can do so by swinging down and exhaling in one impulse. Yawning then follows pursuit, as it opens up your throat. Stretching your tongue would be the next step. You'll want to press your tip of the tongue down behind your bottom teeth.

Then use vibrations while in various physical positions: diagonal stretch, folded leaf, pin wheel, yoga positions, etc. So, first you sigh and say things like HUUUUH, to connect the upcoming vibrations to your breath. Then stretch your lips and say HUM HUM HUM repeatedly in up and down pitches, before shaking it up by changing positions through the knees, pelvis, or belly.

Head vibrations should also be practiced, this can be done by humming with your lips closed while loosening your shoulders, neck and head, by rolling or stretching. Drop down your spine while in a hum and come back up to release the vibrations by bouncing your knees and sighing. Then you'll want to shake your body up as a reset.

Lastly, you need to free up your jaw, tongue and soft palate to amplify vibrations. Make forward circles at your jaw hinge, take the heels of your hands and smooth down your cheeks, following the jawline. Then proceed to shake your jaw with breath and vibrations. After freeing up the jaw, we head over to the tongue. You'll want to stretch your tongue in every direction, you can do so by pretending you're chewing toffee. Saying HEE-YUH-YUH also stretches the tongue. Lastly, to free up the soft palate, you'll want to do a horizontal yawn or say KA-KANG-AHKA-HI while stretching your tongue.

Physical Awareness:

Stretches, Massages, Yoga, Tag, Games, Walkabouts, Viewpoints are all things you can do to get connected to your body. You'll discover that the spine acts as a channel for sound.

Breath Awareness:

Being aware of breathing pattern and where they are situated is crucial. You'll want to open your body down to your pelvis, into your belly, and round to your back for many deep-down enjoyable sighs. Let your belly muscles loosen, and have an open mouth with breath dropping out, not controlling it whatsoever. In other words, you need to release the breathing musculature to find an economical, direct release of sound vibrations.

Resonance ladder:

The famous Later ladder is a progression of exercises to find out where in the body, the sound should be coming from. You'll climb up the ladder and then climb back down.

We start from the bottom at the base of the pelvis by making a ZOO sound while doing a sort of shimmy.

Then climbing up the ladder, we get to the upper pelvis area and shake again while doing a WOH sound.

The SHA sound is at the belly button, and this is also done with a shake.

Eventually we come up to the chest cavity, which is a big leap.

The GUH sound should be thought of as being pulled to the next chamber.

By being pulled to the chest cavity, we'll proceed with a knock-about with MAAAA. You basically have to continuously tap on your chest from one side to the other, which makes your voice shake.

Next, we come to the head cavity, for each step in the ladder, you'll want to repeat the sound three times. Firstly, in the area below the jaw in the top of your throat, we have HUH.

Then, in the mouth area, we have FAH.

BAH is the nasal sound, found in the nose.

DEH is thought of as being in the top of your cheekbones.

Followed by PAY, which resonates behind the eyes.

From above your ears to the top of your forehead, lies the KEE sound.

And finally, we have REE, which resonates from the very top of the head, by flipping upward and rolling the r.

Here you have a great example video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGTm-uBwDWA

Practice:

Practice whether it's singing in the shower, or doing tongue twisters, practice a lot with your voice. Practice will increase breath capacity, as well as range.

Hydrate:

Hydration is key to a healthy voice. One of the many reasons is that water reduces the viscosity of mucus, making it thinner and less likely to adhere to the vocal folds and interfere with movement. If you have a dry and sore throat- water is the way to go!.

Mucus:

We often think mucus is hindering the performance, but phlegm is actually good. You don't want to strip the folds entirely of mucus, because it does lubricate. Eat fruit, because mild acid helps clear phlegm.

Don't smoke or drink:

Very obviously, smoking destroys your vocal cords and your lungs. Plus, it also tranquilizes your emotions, so it's bad for the art of theatre. Alcohol is also bad as it acts as a diuretic and

can dehydrate you. It also interferes with your liver's ability to filter germs. If you do drink any alcohol, follow up with lots of water. Similarly, coffee or any caffeinated drink also acts diuretic.

Avoid straining your voice:

Don't yell too much or do unsafe belting, as it damages your voice. If you do happen to strain your voice, the first step is to hydrate, sleep and relax. Humming in whatever clear bit of your voice you can find, also helps regaining your voice. Lip trill like a baby up and down your range. If you must perform, rely more than usual on clear articulation.

Lecoq Method:

Jaques Lecoq was a French actor, mime, movement instructor and theatre pedagogue with a professional background in sports and sports rehabilitation in the twentieth century. He was born in 1921 and died the year 1999. His methodology is renowned around the world and takes after art forms like commedia dell'arte and improvisation exercises.

He studied sports and physical education at Bagatelle college in 1937 and later attended a physical theatre college in 1941. He founded L'Ecole Internationale de Theatre Jaques Lecoq in Paris in 1956, where he taught until his death from a cerebral haemorrhage in 1999.

He ended up publishing two books, once "Le Theatre du Geste (1987)", and once "Le Corps Poetique (1999)".

Lecoq worked on body centred training to explore the physical, cognitive and emotional states which directly related to the operations and functions of motion, rhythm, shape, balance and counterbalance. This acting approach explores muscle memory and expression of an idea through attuned sensory receptors of the body. His physical theatre approach focused on observing the world and of the movements in it such as exploring the natural elements, animals, words, sound and colour. His teachings also included work with masks, especially the neutral mask, from where we move from silent exercises to a point where the student actor can build a character.

Below you will find certain exercises he invented:

The 20 Movements (20M):

The 20M is a series of movements of referential forms. They are impossible to perform perfectly and so can be practiced over and over, in more and more details, in the quest for the "*justesse*" of gestures.

They are practiced in a state of neutrality. The body is constantly reminded to stay in a pre-character state. The concept of a "neutral state" in acting refers to a neutral, balanced, and non-expressive physical and emotional state from which an actor can more easily shift into different emotions, characters, or situations.

Jaques Lecoq essentialised this notion with this statement *"A verb has no opinion".* While a verb has no option, the character does, and their opinion will appear in the particular, "personal", way they engage with the action. The 20M allows an extremely accurate observation of this process.

Undulations:

The undulations exercise can be used to find out what kind of posture and physicality your character has.

To do this exercise, you stand in a room with some space around you. You'll undulate the spine through flowing spine rolls and then stop at various points in the spine roll in order to find the physicality. The stopping at different points inspires different feelings in you and makes you think of different attitudes and personalities.

First you start in the neutral state with hanging arms and good posture by rolling your shoulders back and lifting your head appropriately. Then you'll go forward leading with your nose. When you arrive at the deepest point you can go to, you drop the head and soften the knees. You then slowly make your way back up by pushing out your pelvis forward while still hunched over. You get out of the hunched over position by rolling through the spine, until you can bring your chest forward and return your head in the starting position of the exercise.

7 Levels of Tension:

Lecoq's methodology has 7 levels of tension, which are as follows:

1. Exhausted: In this stage you resemble a jellyfish or noodle. You have zero tension in your body and can hardly move aside maybe with some heavy limping.

2. Laid-back: Also called Californian. This state is laid-back and relaxed.

3. Neutral: Neutral is the state where you use just enough energy to get things done efficiently and functional. Done with no urgency, just the bare minimum.

4. Alert: This state is also called curious. You are interested in the world and want to explore. A good example would be Mr. Bean.

5. Suspense: Here, you are on edge, jumpy and suspicious of your surroundings. You ask yourself if there is a threat in the room.

6. Passionate: Here, you know that there is a threat in the room. You act frantic, wild, quick and irrational. You are in a heightened state, think of opera.

7. Tragic: Last but not least, the 7th state leaves you petrified, shaking or frozen stiff. The threat is about to go off. You act like a deer in headlines and are so tense that you're locked tight.

These levels of tension allow you to explore character customisation, they make you feel and connect to the character's personality.

You can implement an exercise with these individual states by picking a normal everyday activity, like walking, doing laundry, etc., and you'll do them in all of the levels.

Naturalistic acting:

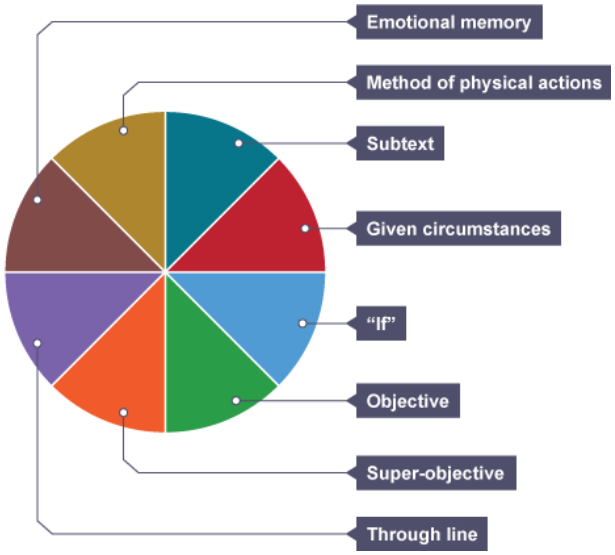
Internal acting involves drawing on personal emotions, memories, and psychological processes to authentically feel what the character feels. It's about living truthfully in the character's world, working from the inside out.

Stanislavski's system:

Stanislavsky went on to write a manual of his teachings in a book series containing three volumes, called "An Actor's Work". The series consists of "An Actor's Work on Himself Part I (1938)", "An Actor's Work on Himself Part II (1948)", and "An Actor's Work on a Role (1957)". The English titles are: "An Actor Prepares (1936)", "Building a Character (1949)", and "Creating a Role (1961)".

The system itself is rooted in artistic self-reflection and analysis. The techniques are sorted in a coherent, systematic methodology, influenced by three factors; Once there's the director-centred, unified and disciplined ensemble approach of the Meiningen company. Then there's the actor-centred realism approach of the Maly Theatre. And finally, we have the naturalistic staging by André Antoine.

The first part of Stanislavski's system, which he refers to as "the art of experiencing", is meant to subconsciously activate behaviour while willfully activating emotion, which ideally would also be less controllable, by the actor's conscious thoughts. The actor is meant to search for inner motives to justify their character's actions and goals.



The following are ways they can achieve it through:

Magic If:

The **"magic if"** is a way to reflect on how you would respond in the fictional circumstances your character is in ("given circumstances") and then applying them to your role while keeping your character's truth. This means to not transfer your own circumstances into the play, rather than putting yourself into circumstances other than your own.

Six Fundamental Questions:

These are questions to help with your character analysis:

1. Who am I?
2. Where am I?
3. When is it?
4. What do I want? And why?
5. How will I get it?
6. What do I need to overcome?

Script Analysis and affective memory:

During the script analysis, actors will also go through it bit by bit and identify all key emotions, to then couple them with their own "emotion memories". "Bits", also called "beats", are breaks in sections where there is a significant shift in what the character's objective is, or how they achieve their goal through action. And an "emotion memory", also called "affective memory", is basically your personal memory of something which conveys the same emotion as the character's bit, by adding this memory, you'll forge a subjective connection to it. This makes it easier to experience the character's feelings as well as memorizing the text.

Through-line:

Stanislavsky had also started to put emphasis on having private rehearsals as well as starting them with a "through-line" as he called it, which is a discussion over the development of the character during the play.

The second part of Stanislavski's system, called "Method of Physical Action", is improvisation, which Stanislavsky calls "active analysis". It is important to note that when developing the second part of his system, Stanislavsky began rejecting the first part, saying it often confused or blocked actors' performing capabilities, or rejected the characters' traits.

Improvisation:

Improv games range from simply giving yourself the liberty of making up your own lines on the spot to acting like an animal for example. Stanislavsky famously used to rehearse scenes with actor's only being able to communicate non-verbally through gestures and their eyes, he called these rehearsals "silent études".

Improvisation, in theatre, is the playing of dramatic scenes without written dialogue and with minimal or no predetermined dramatic activity. Improvisation, often shortened to improv, is the activity of making or doing something not planned beforehand, using whatever can be found. The origin of the word itself is in the Latin "improvisus", which literally means un-foreseen.

Method acting:

Method acting is a term which has lost its original meaning. Nowadays most people associate it with the incredibly common misconception that method acting requires actors to stay in character on- and off-stage/screen. Like Jared Leto, when he terrorized his castmates to lay the Joker. Or Adrien Brody in his role for the Pianist, where he sold away everything he had and starved himself. Or Christian Bale and his repeated extreme weight loss and gain for individual films. It has become synonymous with actors exuding pretentious and inappropriate behaviour in the name of art.

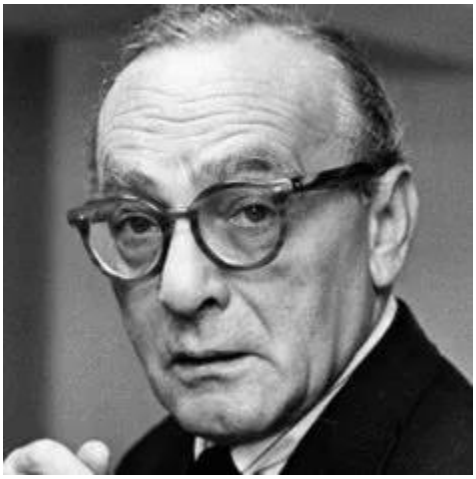
But method acting actually is just an umbrella term used for all acting styles where the idea is for the performance to be emotionally realistic by invoking affective memory or a personal memory. It's basically another term for naturalistic acting based on Stanislavski's system.

Method acting is built on Stanislavski's system and was developed and popularised in the US by the "Group Theatre". The Group Theatre was formed in 1931 in New York City by Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg, and Cheryl Crawford. Members of the group were leading

interpreters of method acting, who revolutionized acting forever. The three most prominent acting teachers were: Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner. All three also have their own acting methods which count as variations or subcategories of method acting.

Though they are different, they all share the same belief that actors should get in touch with their emotions and get into their characters. I'll be writing about Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner, but not about Lee Strasberg, who's the most famous one among them. The reason for this is that his method is Stanislavsky's method just much heavier into exploring your past traumas through affective memory. I personally don't carry much trauma and therefore aren't interested in Lee Strasberg's method.

Meisner:



Sanford Meisner (1905-1997) was an American actor and drama teacher who developed the acting approach known as the Meisner Technique. His parents were Jewish immigrants, who migrated from Hungary to the US. He attended the Damrosch Institute of Music, known today as the Juilliard School, where he studied to become a concert pianist. Unfortunately, his father pulled him out during the great depression to help out. In 1923, Meisner graduated from Erasmus Hall High School. At age 19, he was hired by the Theatre Guild for a production. He went on to pursue professional by attending the Theatre Guild of Acting on a scholarship. He also acted at the Lower East Side's Chrystie Street Settlement House under the direction of Lee Strasberg. In 1931, he joined the Group Theatre alongside Stella Adler. When the group disbanded, he continued teaching as Director of the Acting Department at the Neighbourhood Playhouse in NY, where he'd been teaching since 1935, all the way up until his death. He joined among the first teachers the Actors Studio in 1947.

And in 1983, Meisner and his life partner James Carville founded the Meisner/Carville School of Acting on the Caribbean Island of Bequia. It expanded into North Hollywood in 1985. Then it was succeeded by the Sanford Meisner Center for the Arts, a theatre company and school established by Meisner, James Carville, and Martin Barter.

He wrote the book “Sanford Meisner on Acting” in 1987.

While Meisner was exposed to method acting at the Group Theatre, his approach differed in the way that he completely abandoned the use of affective memory. He even grew animosity towards Strasberg, his ex-mentor. Meisner maintained an emphasis on "the reality of doing", by encouraging reactivity and spontaneity from actors rather than forcing a pre-made emotion or memory. In other terms, the technique is instinct-based and focuses on the actors in the immediate environment.

Down below, you will find his exercises:

Repetition:

His repetition exercise is certainly the most famous one of the bunch. The point is to have greater focus on the other actor as opposed to one's internal thoughts or feelings associated with the character.

Two actors sit across from each other and respond to each other through a repeated phrase. Initially, the phrase refers to an observation of an external physical characteristic, something like: "You're wearing a red shirt." As the exercise progresses, it becomes more about each other's behaviour and reflects what is going on between them in the moment, such as "You look unhappy with me right now." The repetition of this phrase makes actors change meaning, tone and intensity to correspond with the behaviour that each actor produces towards the other. This game allows actors to respond more freely and spontaneously, both physically and vocally. Meisner even described it as a ping-pong game that becomes the foundation for emotional connection. The more advanced version of this exercise includes repeating a scene partner’s movements.

Here is a very good example video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP1Nkr1kc5o

Given circumstances:

Meisner wasn’t ever big on character analysis, but he did implement so-called “given circumstances”. One must understand the character’s motivations, desires, and obstacles.

With these given circumstances, the actor must use their imagination to place themselves in those given circumstances, rather than recalling experiences from their own lives.

Emotional Preparation

Meisner instructed actors to use whatever affected them personally to put themselves in their character's emotional state. Actors could use imagined circumstances or real personal memories. But the prepared emotion was only to be played in a scene's very first moment.

Improvisation

All the preparation ultimately leads to improvisation and flexibility in a performance. Meisner preached that an actor should not make any choices until something provokes them, thereby justifying their behaviour.

Stella Adler:

Stella Adler was an American actress and acting teacher, born in 1901 and died in 1992. She came up with an interpretation of Stanislavski's work, which was focused on imagination, character work and sociological aspects, unlike Lee Strasberg's method which relies on personal feelings.

Adler was born into a family of actors and began acting at the age of four in the Independent Yiddish Art Company of her parents. All five siblings of hers were actors and they all were a part of the Jewish American Adler acting dynasty.

Adler was one of the very few Americans who had seen a production from the Moscow Art Theatre, when they toured across the US. She was fascinated by Stanislavski's acting style and joined the American Laboratory Theatre in 1925, where she was first formally introduced to Stanislavski's teachings. And in 1931, she joined the Group Theatre in New York, alongside Sanford Meisner and others. She married Harold Clurman in 1943, who was one of the founders, and the second of her three marriages.

In 1934, Adler went to Paris, where she studied intensively with Stanislavski in person for five weeks, making her the only American acting teacher to study under Stanislavski's guidance. Here, she developed her teachings more and reinstated her belief that Lee Strasberg was teaching Stanislavski's method wrong. She even went so far as to remark that "It will take the theatre decades to recover from the damage that Lee Strasberg inflicted on American actors.", in 1982, the day Strasberg died. She left the Group Theatre in 1937, following her disagreements with Lee Strasberg and other clashing ideologies with other members.

She then continued teaching in the early 1940s at the New School for Social Research in NYC, before founding the Stella Adler Conservatory of Theatre (originally called the Stella Adler Theater Studio) in 1949. Adler performed herself until 1961, instead focused on conducting her school, as well as teaching at the Yale School of Drama (1966-67) and heading New York's University's drama unit (1980s). She published her teachings in 1988 titled "The Technique of Acting".

Stella Adler' technique was heavily concentrated on the imaginative, research and social aspects of theatre.

Bellow you will see a glimpse into her teachings:

Script analysis:

Adler always put emphasis on script analysis and its respect for the playwright. Actors must understand the play themselves and examine the script closely by deconstructing phrases and subtext to determine a character's personality and life circumstances.

Given circumstances:

During script analysis you have to find your character's so-called "given circumstances. One must understand the character's motivations, desires, and obstacles. To find these given circumstances, thorough research is heavily encouraged, especially if it's in a different timeline.

Adler found that drawing on personal experience alone was too limited for complex characters, especially those, not from our time. Characterization to Adler meant to incorporate research, as well as imagination, social responsibility, and emotional exploration into building the fictional role.

With these given circumstances, the actor must use their imagination to place themselves in those given circumstances, rather than recalling experiences from their own lives.

Stella Adler also thought that 50% of the actor's job is internal (imagination, emotion, action, will) and that the other 50% is external (characterization, way of walking, voice, face). For instance, if a character talks about horse riding, one needs to know something about horse riding as an actor, otherwise one will be faking.

Sensory imagination:

When imagining the given circumstances, Adler advises focusing on every detail possible. It isn't enough to say, for example, 'they are having dinner'. One must ask themselves: What are they having for dinner? In which room? What is the tablecloth like? The cutlery? The chairs? The table? How does it smell? What's the ambience like? Etc.

This is called sense imagination, it's about creating or inventing sensory experiences using the imagination. The more detail you can feed your imagination with, the more you will be able to 'de-fictionalize the fiction'.

An exercise you can do is to choose someone you are in a relationship with. Examine the specifics of your past with this person and choose a gift that you want to give them in the present. This gift needs to symbolise the essence of the relationship. Draw it, write about it, describe it, imagine it, until you can see it, in all its detail, in your mind.

Actions:

Actors align their actions with the character's circumstances, rather than warping the character to fit their own experiences. An "action" is something one character does to itself or to another character to elicit a specific desired response. The actor must identify ways to convey the play's circumstances by completing an action. And then, the actor's actions must honestly reflect what the actor has observed from life. Actions provide the "why" and the justification of a character's behaviour, it is the underlying cause of everything.

Personalisation:

Personalisation is about how you interact with your own past and how you use bits and pieces of it to personalise the role you're playing. You must look at your past with awareness and no judgment and at somewhat of a distance. The goal is to bring yourself to a role, rather than putting yourself in the past to relive those memories.

Cultivating imagination:

Constant cultivation of the mind was very important to Adler; she believed in constant observation and curiosity of the world around. She encouraged actors to find the grandest character interpretation possible in a scene; another favourite phrase of hers regarding this was "don't be boring".

Sociological aspect:

"Don't be boring," also referenced the need to think seriously about human nature and communicate important ideas. We need to have awareness of the world as our work as actors comes from our relationship to life. Understanding your contact to humanity and nature, your relationship to yourself, and your relationships with others elevates your ability to act. Stella Adler once famously said: "Growth as an actor and growth as a human being are synonymous.", which means that your work as an actor comes from your relationship to life. So, it's important to observe without assumptions or judgements, it allows an actor to work from a place of understanding, and not from feeling.

Discipline:

Due to how she was raised, Adler has always been adamant about actors maintaining their health, stand by their commitments, and strengthen any weak points, like from a quiet voice to a bad back. But not just that, also maintaining a sharp mind by researching history, cultures, languages, etc.

Uta Hagen:

Uta Hagen's technique isn't as known as the others I have by far written about and is a bit similar to Stella Adler's technique. Her method encourages actors to draw from their own personal experiences, instincts, and observations to create a fully realized character.

Uta Thyra Hagen (1919 – 2004) was a German-American actress and theatre practitioner. She was born in Germany but emigrated to the US in 1924. Her mother was a trained opera singer, and her father was an art historian and musician. Hagen briefly studied acting in London in 1936 at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She debuted on Broadway at the age of 18 as Nina in Anton Chekhov's The Seagull. Hagen taught at HB Studio, a New York City acting school. She began there in 1947, and married its co-founder, Herbert Berghof, in 1957. In 1951, she won her first Tony Award, and again in 1963. She was elected to the American Theater Hall of Fame in 1981 and in 1999 received a "Special Lifetime Achievement Tony Award." Hagen was even awarded the National Medal of Arts by President George W. Bush in 2002, two years before her death.

She wrote "Respect for Acting (1973)" and "A Challenge for the Actor (1991)". Hagen later "disassociated" herself from Respect for Acting. In Challenge for the Actor, she redefined a term which she had initially called "substitution,", calling it "transference" instead.

Her acting technique is a sort of a collaboration between internal/naturalistic and external/physical work. She encourages actors to avoid over-intellectualizing their processes and instead root themselves in the observation of daily life. She also always gave the actors a voice in how their performances were interpreted and reinforced skills of self-observation and reflection. Hagen's work also completely refutes Strasberg's reliance on emotional recall and using an actor's personal, emotional experiences to build a role.

Below, you will find exercises she wrote about:

Substitution/transference:

This is undoubtedly one of her most famous exercises, where actors replace the circumstances of the play with something from their own life to create authentic reactions. It's a variation of Stanislavski's emotional recall/affective memory.

Substitution is the understanding of elements in the life of one's character by drawing parallels to elements in one's own life. For example, if an actor is portraying a character who is being blackmailed, they could think back to some embarrassing or private fact about their own life and mentally superimpose or substitute that onto the character's secret. To add, Hagen is also very clear that an actor should never substitute circumstances on stage that they're uncomfortable talking about or exploring publicly.

The main difference between affective memory and substitution is that affective memory asks the actor to dig into their own troubled past. While substitution, asks you to connect to the character's situation with your lived experiences.

It is important that when drawing parallels, you take in the situational and environmental circumstances into play. Example wise, if your character lives in the 1950s, comes from a wealthy family, is rebellious, or whatever the circumstances, you must take these into account.

Specificity:

Hagen teaches that actors should interact with objects on stage that would realistically be in the environment of the scene. She insists on rehearsing with the prop which will appear in the final performance. Or if not possible, to visualize the object. The relationship to props often moved to more authentic behaviour.

Basic Object Exercise:

Sometimes called "two minutes of daily life," this exercise requires the actor to replicate activities from their own daily routine in specific detail (think making breakfast or getting ready to go out). The goal of this exercise is to increase the actor's awareness of their unobserved behavior.

Three Entrances:

The three entrance exercise is a series of three questions you ask yourself before entering a scene:

1. What did I just do?

2. What am I going to do?

3. What is the first thing I want?

Immediacy:

Hagen asked actors to search for a small object that they could need. As you search, you should observe the behavior and thoughts appearing as you genuinely try to find something. The objective is to identify the thoughts, behaviors, and sensations you experience when you genuinely don't know the outcome, so you can use them on stage.

Fourth Side:

This exercise starts with a phone call to a person you know. You should call them with a specific objective in mind. During the conversation, you need to focus on your surroundings and the specific objects that your eyes rest on. The purpose is to help actors observe how they interact with all dimensions of an enclosed physical space so they can recreate the feeling of privacy on stage.

Endowment:

The Endowment exercise asks actors to believably treat objects on stage as though they have the qualities the actor needs in a scene. Often times it's a dangerous element like a knife, hot iron, cup of poison, etc. This exercise helps bridge the gap between the inner life of a character and the physical actions the actor performs onstage, connecting exterior physicality with interior emotion.

Uta Hagen's 9 questions:

1. Who am I? The answer to this question entails loads of relevant details from name and age to physical traits, education, beliefs, personality, etc.

2. What time is it? Depending on context, the most relevant measure of time can be the year, the season, the day, or even minute.

3. Where am I? This answer covers the country, town, neighborhood, room, and the specific part of the room.

4. What surrounds me? Surroundings vary from weather to furnishings, landscape, or people.

5. What are the given circumstances? Given circumstances here includes what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen to a character.

6. What are my relationships? Relationships can be with other characters in the play, inanimate objects, or even recent events.

7. What do I want? Wants can be what the character desires in the moment itself, or grand scheme of things.

8. What is in my way? This refers to the obstacles the character must face.

9. What do I do to get what I want? In Hagen's teaching, "do" means physical action.

The questions come from Hagen's first book, "Respect for Acting,", and although she moved away from that book, these questions are still taught around the globe. She drew inspiration from Stanislavsky's six fundamental questions.

Six steps:

The following questions are from Hagen's later book, "A Challenge for the Actor," where she condensed her original nine questions to six steps:

1. Who am I?

2. What are the circumstances?

3. What are my relationships?

4. What do I want?

5. What is my obstacle?

6. What do I do to get what I want?

Objective/Action:

Just like Stella Adler, Hagen emphasized the significance of an actor's objectives or actions in a scene. By grasping the motivations of the character, actors can deliver performances that are grounded in truth and have a clear purpose.

Through line of action:

Adler followed Stanislavsky by implementing the through-line in her teachings, which as stated previously is a discussion over the development/storyline of the character during the play. Hagen emphasized the importance of tracking this through line, ensuring continuity and consistency in performances.

The fourth wall exercise:

This technique invites you to create an imaginary barrier between yourself and the audience. By using your imagination, think of a clear, physical wall that separates you from the world beyond the stage. Then fill this space with specific objects or images that have meaning for your character, such as a clock or painting, finally consider your emotional relationship to it. This exercise connects your performance to the actual physical space around you and the imaginary world the story takes place in.

Practical Aesthetics:

Practical Aesthetics is an action-based method, invented by American playwright David Mamet and American actor William H. Macy in the early 1980s. It was a reaction to the public discussion on how people approached acting, it used to be all about the actor and not about the story of the play. So, Practical Aesthetics aimed to tell the story of the plays. Mamet and H. Macy developed this technique over the course of two years with a group of students from the Atlantic Acting School in New York. Those students then formed the Atlantic Theatre Company acting ensemble in 1985. The group later became one of the most accomplished groups in the US, and Mamet and Macy founded the Atlantic Acting School in the same year.

The concepts themselves are based on the teachings of Aristotle, Stanislavsky, Sanford Meisner, Joseph Campbell, and philosopher Epictetus. The basis is: Think before you act, and act before you think. The approach is mostly about essential questions that relate action and moment.

When the technique was done with its development, members of the Atlantic Theatre Company, wrote the fundamentals of Practical Aesthetics in a book titled: A Practical Handbook for the Actor.

The goal for Practical Aesthetics is for the process of acting to be as simple as possible for actors, by focusing on action and moment. The founders define action as “what you are doing onstage”, and moment as “how you are going to do it”. Simple, right?

Action:

This part of the method is text work by going through scene-by-scene, using a four-step analysis.

First you find **the Literal**, which is a clear description of what the character is doing, without thinking why. So, you’d ask, “What is the character literally doing?”, and a analysis would be something like this; “The character is literally proposing marriage to their partner of six months.”

The second step would be to find **the Want**, which is what the character ultimately wants to say or do. For example, you’d ask, “What does my character want from the person in this scene, and a response would look like this; “The character wants Character B to agree that they have found their soulmate.”.

Third step is **the Essential Action**, which is an idea that falls into the role’s nature of what it wants within the scene, stated as a verb/objective. The essential action is a choice an actor

makes and is the actor's objective so to say. The actor considers all factors, including the given circumstances and behaviour of the role, and turns then into an objective/goal. For example, if the Literal is that the character is proposing to their partner of only six months, and the Want is "A wants B to agree that they have found their soulmate.", the Essential Action would be "To get someone to throw all caution to the wind."

The last step would be to find **the As If**, which relates the Action to the actor's personal life by giving the actor a device to play the Action urgent and emotional, which also helps then to stay grounded and honest in an improvisational manner. For example, if the Essential Action is, "to retrieve what is rightfully mine," then the As If might be, "It's as if my grandfather, who has dementia, has given away a precious family heirloom to a nosy neighbour who manipulated their way into getting it. I need to retrieve something that should rightfully stay in our family." It's important to note, that the As If shouldn't be a past experience, rather than a personal worry or dread or dream or fantasy, which keeps the actor in the present. The last step is not a memory device, but a tool to activate the actor's imagination and body with a personally meaningful, truthful task. Practical Aesthetics teaches actors that using the memory of past experiences limits the improvisational play within a scene because they already know how that remembered experience went and how it ended.

Moment:

Moment is the second part of Practical Aesthetics and focuses on improvisation. After the script analysis, the actor should be able to improvisational freedom. This method is meant for you to be able to put your attention outward toward the other actors, with help from the context in the script analysis, as well as improved listening physical engagement, and responsiveness.

Michael Chekhov Technique:

Michael Chekhov was a Russian-American actor, director and teacher, who invented the Michael Chekhov technique. His real name was Mikhail Aleksandrovich Chekhov, he was born in 1891 and died in 1955. He was the nephew of playwright Anton Chekhov and a student of Konstantin Stanislavski, who referred Chekhov as his most brilliant student. Chekhov was influenced in his acting by his time learning in the Moscow Art theatre with

Stanislavski, as well as when he took over as director of the Moscow Art Theatre II in 1922, where he worked alongside actors Yevgeny Vakhtangov and Vsevolod Meyerhold.

Chekhov's innovative ideas put him at odds with the USSR's communist regime with the beginning of Stalinism in 1927. And so, in the late 1920s, he emigrated to Germany and set up his own acting studio. Between 1930 and 1935 he worked in Kaunas State Drama Theatre in Lithuania. Between 1936 and 1939 Chekhov established The Chekhov Theatre School at Dartington Hall, in England. Following developments in Germany that threatened the outbreak of war he moved to the US with writers, Anne Cumming and Henry Lyon Young in 1938 to form a drama school.

He explains his philosophy in several books, including "To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting (1953)" and "Lessons for the Professional Actor (1941)".

Now, Chekhov believed that Stanislavski's system led too much into a naturalistic style of performance, which in simpler terms means it seemed too realistic. Blurring the lines between your own identity and the character is a tactic Chekhov didn't support. Chekhov's philosophy differs from his mentor's in the way that it abstains the idea of building a naturalistic performance through personal experience. Instead, his technique asks actors to listen to their senses in the moment, exploring both physical and intellectual choices to deliver a truthful performance.

Because the technique is rooted in physicality, movement-based acting methods like the Alexander technique and Viewpoints overlap with Chekhov's teachings. Nonetheless, Chekhov designed his own approach which placed heavy emphasis on imagination, atmosphere and movement which he calls a psycho-physical approach.

Here are the key principles and exercises in his methodology:

The Psychological Gesture:

This vital aspect of the Chekhov technique is derived from the theories of Symbolist writer Andrei Bely, who sought to depict spiritual ideals through allegorical language. It involves physicalizing a character's internal want, need, or impulse into an external gesture. The actor practices this movement until it's incorporated internally, gradually minimizing the exaggerated gesture until it's internalized; they then are able to draw upon the emotions that emerged from it subconsciously.

Movement:

Many Chekhov exercises encourage students to express themselves physically. Yoga and other aerobic warm-ups that help a performer feel in touch with their body are key.

Radiating:

One of the primary goals of the technique is to share your character's motivations with your scene partners. This concept, called "radiating," is designed to attune an ensemble to each other's energy.

Improvisation:

Chekhov added a lot of group improv work, whether verbal or nonverbal. That said, there's one, for example, which can be alone. The actor begins a scene with one mood and end on a very different one, creating a story that takes you from one to the other along the way.

Neutral state:

Just like the Lecoq method, the neutral state helps actors clear any unnecessary tension and create a blank slate for emotional and physical transformation. His approach encourages using imagination to shift from neutral to heightened states.

Memorisation:

Memorisation isn't an acting method, but something you need, as you can't perform a monologue without text. There are multiple ways to memorise, and you might recognise some of the techniques used to memorise are included in specific acting methods. Memorizing is often coupled with learning how you want to perform your lines. Each actor has their own process of learning their lines, but most agree that the focus should remain on the performance, not solely on memorization of the text. However, an actor can hardly do in-depth work without knowing the words.

The following are some memorising tips:

Understanding the text:

The first step to memorising is understanding what you are memorising. You must undoubtedly understand the plot, characters, and emotions being conveyed.

Connecting with the text:

Find a monologue or figure out lines which you can easily connect with. One where you identify with the intentions, emotions, situation. This connection makes memorizing much easier.

Printing it out:

Having your monologue printed makes it easier to concentrate, as when you learn it on your personal mobile devices, it can make you less focused since it's on an everyday-use object.

Reading aloud/Auditory linking:

Reading out loud links the memories of hearing your lines spoken aloud to your brain. It is the most utilised way to learn one's text. You should carefully listen to yourself, the tone of your voice, your pronunciation, and your pace.

Recording yourself/Auditory linking:

Recording oneself can also be a big help, as you'll be able to listen to the recording multiple times. The downside to this is that you might get accustomed to how you specifically performed it that time. Then you'll be inclined to performing it the same way and leave no room for flexibility in your acting.

Breaking it down:

A monologue is a big chunk of text, so breaking it down into smaller sections is almost necessary. It gives you the ability to focus more and not get overwhelmed. You can start by memorising a few sentences at a time, then gradually adding on.

Breaking it down into beats or also known as bits is also a very common method. Beats are breaks in sections where there is a significant shift in what the character's objective is, or how they achieve their goal through action. So, you define the beats and then name them. Beats are also part of script analysis.

Writing out your monologue:

By writing out your monologue by hand, you'll be able to retain it better subconsciously, just like when studying for exams.

Remove Punctuation:

Removing commas and full-stops frees up the idea of how to read your lines and can be a helpful tool when doing your monologue preparation. This is a method the famous actor and inventor of Practical Aesthetics, named William H. Macy, uses.

Quiz yourself:

Quizzing yourself by covering up the line and guessing the next line is also a way to memorize, although not often used, since the other ways are much more successful and don't limit your acting abilities.

Practicing with a partner:

Practicing with a person makes everything much easier as you'll be able to get direct feedback and as well might make your reactions more natural. Speaking with a person always triggers natural responses, that otherwise can be hidden when practicing alone.

Mnemonics devices:

Mnemonics devices can be a number of things, the most common ones are rhyming or creating acronyms. These are used for tricky parts you can't seem to remember by building memorable associations.

To utilize a mnemonic device, an actor can create an acronym by taking the first letter of each word. For example, the acronym for the line "The sun will come out tomorrow." would be: "TSWCOT". With this acronym, an actor can associate a vivid visual image, like for the example before, it could be a shining sun bursting through storm clouds. Through this visual link, the actor forms a strong mental link.

To utilize rhymes or catchphrases as mnemonic devices, you could example wise turn "To be or not to be" into "Two bees flying high". That way you add an imaginative element, which enhances the ability to recall by having a difficult sentence be turned to a simple one, which sounds similar to the original line.

Method of Loci:

This method is part of emotion memories/affective memories. And the difference with this one is, that instead of associating just a memory, you associate a specific location to each bit.

Visualising:

Simply imagining the scene as a movie in your head while reading and performing it, helps you with remembering the lines.

Mind Maps:

Mind mapping is another visualisation technique which helps organising the information attained from the monologue. You can write the main themes and ideas in the centre of the mind map, then branch out into the details. You can also connect certain lines to others.

Repetition:

Practicing the monologue again and again is a sure-fire way to memorise it fast. The problem with constant repetition, is that you get used to saying the lines in the same exact manner over and over again, to the point, they lose their value and intention. Plus, often if you even just forget one word, you'll forget the entire rest, as you don't have any ulterior thoughts to fall back on.

Acting aloud:

Acting aloud is basically the upgraded version of reading aloud or repetition. When acting, you memorise it by practice, but you do so by still continuously testing out different deliveries. You can play around with possible objectives and actions, by speaking and moving differently each time. You can practice with different volumes, dialects, voices, posture, tempos, pauses, and/or emotions. Change anything and everything about the performance and see how the emotional value changes. Through doing it in different ways, you'll see what fits your character and be able to immerse yourself in it while still adding variety when reciting the same lines.

Slow way down:

Say your monologue in an almost agonizingly slow pace and overpronounce every word. This exercise will work your brain differently and improve your diction.

Italian runs:

Italian runs are fun and very helpful way to memorize. Italianos are when you say your lines incredibly fast, as fast as you can.

Sing your lines:

Singing your lines with set melodies also helps memorising as well as giving you freshness when you need it.

Changing things up:

To help acting, using a certain prop which fits the scene- or not can diversify your acting and help understand the role. Changing environments will also improve your ability to adapt to different performance spaces. Additionally, consider practicing in different physical positions or postures, like standing, sitting, laying, etc.

In the end, playing around will help you be flexible, which is especially what directors look for in actors.

Physical Movement/Blocking:

Physical movement through set hand gestures, for example, also builds associations through muscle memory to which you can fall back on if you temporarily forget the next line. For example, when reciting "All the world's a stage" for example, you might gesture expansively with open arms. And blocking is pretty much the same but stricter when considering one's positioning, movements, and hand gestures during the lines.

Random movement, such as walking around, doing laundry, or tossing a ball is also beneficial since it adds multitasking by engaging both your mind and body.

Practicing before bed:

This method uses the natural way our mind retains information, by solidifying the information while sleeping.

The Whats:

This exercise is part of script analysis, what you want to do is go through your monologue's sentences and define what each word means, either in the literary sense or the emotional sense. For example, with the sentence "Shall I compare thee to a summers day", one could reformulate it like "Could I: Romeo, compare: make a comparison between, thee: you, Juliet, love of my life, towards a bright, warm 24-hour period in January?". Then if you drop a word during your performance, chances are you'll subconsciously fill it in with a similar one.

Monologue 1: Mercutio's death – Romeo and Juliet

For the **first monologue** I'm performing, I'm doing Mercutio's death monologue from when I played in last year's theatre production: Romeo + Juliet.

Although this is a classical monologue, when I worked on it, I did so with a mix of ... with Mnemonics. This is the style in which our drama teacher taught us to act. I performed in both versions of the plays, once German, and the other French. So, I'll challenge myself and memorize the same monologue in English.

About the play:

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, the play, was written by William Shakespeare between 1594 and 1596, during his early career. It was first published in an unauthorized quarto in 1597. This play is arguably Shakespeare's best-known work, which has been and continues to be adapted in various media forms.

The story is about two star-crossed lovers (Romeo and Juliet) from different rival houses – the Montagues and the Capulets. They fall in love at a masquerade ball and get married in secret. After which a deadly brawl between Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, and Romeo's best friend, Mercutio. This fight results in Mercutio's death and a revenge murder of Tybalt by Romeo.

When Juliet, stricken by grief, gets arranged by her father to marry Count Paris, she drinks a sleeping potion to pose as dead. Romeo finds Juliet in her slumber and mistakes her as actually dead, then kills himself with poison. In the end Juliet wakes up and kills herself as well when met with the tragic display of her lifeless lover.

Character analysis of Mercutio:

Mercutio is a nobleman in the city of Verona, blood-related to the prince's family, and the best friend of Romeo and Benvolio. He acts as a stark contrast/foil towards Romeo, therefore highlighting Romeo's qualities. And although he is neither Montague nor Capulet, he involves himself in the feud on the side of the Montagues.

He is infamous for his strong personality and comedic dialogue, which is often in prose. And although he is technically a minor character, his personality has such a disproportionate impact that it makes it impossible to keep him around any longer, or else he'd take over the play. His most memorable moments are of his "Queen Mab" speech and his death scene.

He speaks as if he understands the real value of love and emotions in life, and often criticises Romeo's longing for romance. He has bawdy and sexist humour, is hot-tempered and represents what masculinity meant during Shakespeare's time: aggression, sexualisation of women, the bonds of brotherhood and the value of honour.

Mercutio's name derives from mercurial, which means "volatile" and "touchy", which represents his character quite well. He is extremely extroverted and flashy, never backing down from confrontation.

His appearance was short-lived as he got into a brawl with Tybalt Capulet, resulting in his death. He sees Tybalt as a skilled fighter but also as vain and comical due to his exaggerated mannerisms. He makes fun of him and calls him names, which further grows the tension between them.

How I tackled this monologue:

The monologue is the scene, where Mercutio gets stabbed by Tybalt and dies. This scene is very impactful to the play, as it's the turning point from a comedy to a tragedy.

I mostly used Harold Perrineau, in the 1996 film adaptation, as my reference. And then marked every line with affective memories I'd have in a confrontation like this corresponding to the emotions I wanted to show.

Speaking of emotions, I tried bringing in multiple nuances: At first cockiness when approaching Tybalt, which turns into anger. Then a moment of silent realization when I get shot, followed by built-up panic. Then confusion, wondering how someone seen in Mercutio's eyes as less worthy could do this to him. Subsequently followed by anger and

frustration. To then thinking about death and leaving grieving people behind. And then feeling betrayed and blaming Romeo for getting in the way. And finally, a desperate attempt at reaching out to Benvolio for help.

Monologue:

Link: https://youtu.be/Lyjg_P9SD8M

Monologue 2: R.S.V.P - Clueless

I chose the famous "R.S.V.P" monologue, as it has comedic elements in it as well as a serious topic. I find Cher's character also refreshing and very different from the rest, plus I get to change up my voice to sound more like the average rich, spoiled and popular white girl.

About the movie:

Clueless was released in 1995, written and directed by Amy Heckerling. It's an American coming-of-age teen comedy film starring Alicia Silverstone as the protagonist named Cher.

The movie had a budget of $12 million and ended up grossing $88 million. The film was a large success and is often referred as one of the most successful teen films. It was also followed by a spin-off television sitcom and series of books.

The movie itself is very loosely based on the 1815 novel "Emma" by Jane Austen. The plot centres on a beautiful, popular, wealthy high school student who wants to do "good deeds." She befriends a newcomer named Tai and makes her a pet project by giving her a makeover while also playing matchmaker for her teachers. The newcomer quickly becomes more popular than her, and mean not to mention, which makes her question and her own existence, asking herself if she really was a good person.

Character analysis of Cher:

Cher is a rich, white, materialistic, popular girl, who isn't interested in high school boys. She is a very good example of the 90s stereotype of a "Valley girl". She tries very hard to be a good person and is good-natured at heart, but unfortunately, she's very naive, superficial and

well- clueless, which makes her quite ignorant. At first, we get the impression, that she's not the sharpest, but we come to learn that she has good grades and studies up on several topics.

She grew up in a Beverly Hills mansion with her wealthy dad. Her mother unfortunately passed away during a liposuction procedure when Cher was still a baby. She attends Bronson Alcott High School with her best friend Dionne Davenport, also stylish and from a wealthy family. Dionne has a long-term relationship with popular student Murray Duvall, though Cher believes Dionne should be dating more mature men. She has a sort-of step-brother named Josh, from her father's brief 5-year marriage. He's still close to Cher's father and visits them sometimes. Cher and Josh have a unique bond of playfulness, on one hand Cher playfully mocks Josh's idealism while on the other Josh teases Cher for her vanity, superficiality, and selfishness. Sometimes the bickering turns into anger, but they both come to realise their underlying romantic feelings for each other.

Throughout the film, Cher comes to realize the importance of being receptive and accepting of people, and starts to get more in touch with reality. After hitting rock bottom, she realised all her friends have unique and positive traits. She also realised that she won't be able to talk herself out of everything, and that instead she has to put in the work. One example would be, when she initially failed her driving test, and blaming her circumstances didn't get her out of the situation. Lastly, she finally genuinely responds to a community asking for help by using her negotiating skills and popularity, for example when she volunteered to organize the food drive.

How I tackled this monologue:

This monologue is on the shorter side, so memorizing it was easier. To start, I watched the entire movie and the monologue scene multiple times. Then, I altered my voice to be more "Valley girl", and incorporated chewing gum, like in the original movie scene. I used chewing gum like in the movie, as it aligns with Uta Hagen's Specificity exercise. I didn't focus on affective memories, but I did divide the monologue into several big chunks, to determine turning points. I also explored the monologue by doing a mind map.

The R.S.V.P. monologue is a school presentation essentially, but the point wasn't to focus on the content, rather than Cher's carefree demeanour of presenting her debate side of letting Haitian immigrants into the US, where she hadn't made any research on and instead is comparing it to a garden party.

Monologue:

Link: https://youtu.be/QdtmGioq7UE

Monologue 3: Gillian – Dags by Debra Oswald

I resonate a lot with this monologue, as I've had a few crushes of my own. I wanted to have at least one monologue to which I relate to a lot, and this one really captures the feelings of puppy love which teenagers experience.

About the play:

Dags is a play written by Australian playwright Debra Oswald. It was first published in 1987, and has also been adapted into book format.

Dags is a comedic and heartfelt story about the troubles of adolescence, such as crushes, self-esteem and social anxiety. Its capturing of humour and pain of growing up has popularized in educational settings.

The play centres around 16-year-old Gillian, who's a misfit, also known as a dag in Australian slang. Gillian is a self-conscious teenager who feels out of place and struggles with her self-image. She's a weird chocolate addict, looking to be popular and pretty. She has intense feelings for a guy named Adam, who's the most popular guy in school. Her older sister, Bronwyn, attempts to help her by coaching her through the intricacies of dating and self-presentation. Gillian's journey includes awkward first dates, attempts to transform her appearance, and moments of self-discovery. Ultimately, she learns to embrace her authentic self, realizing that personal integrity and self-worth are more important than conforming to societal expectations.

Character analysis of Gillian:

Gillian is a social outcast with only one friend, named Wendy. Soon Wendy starts drifting away from her, and so she gets forced to be friends with another loner called Monica. Gillian is head-over-heels for Adam, the school's popular boy, but she is convinced that there's no chance of them ending up together. Not to mention, Gillian is quite dorky and obsessed with chocolate, as well as her crush. She also has an overbearing sister, trying to coach her through life.

How I tackled this monologue:

For this role I had to act like a dork/weirdo, but I didn't do too much. I also decided to be very smiley throughout the whole thing. And most importantly, I used the substitution method.

Monologue:

Link: https://youtu.be/8r7ltjonOXU

Monologue 4: Brandon – Unbearable hotness by Gabriel Davis

I found this monologue quite pleasant to read, text- and comedy wise. Also, when I read it, I had a clear vision on how I'd do it, so I'd like to see if it'll turn out how I want.

About the play:

Unbearable Hotness is a short one-act comedy play written by Gabriel Davis in 2014. It explores love, jealousy, and identity during adolescence.

The play takes place in a house party thrown by Andrew, who hopes, his crush Marisa will show up. There are two other boys who are also infatuated with Marisa and pursue her: Chuck, who is also her cousin, and Brandon. And although there are so many men chasing after Marisa, it is revealed, that she is in fact gay. When Marisa finally enters, multiple events follow, almost leading to Chuck's death.

Character analysis of Brandon:

Brandon is a college student, who is infatuated with Marisa, a classmate. He knows she is gay but narcissistically believes he's her only exception. He wants validation through romantic conquest, and Marisa represents the ultimate unattainable prize.

His delusion and obsession with the Marisa whom he perceives as the ideal woman, is the driving force for the comedic conflicts which ensue. His actions highlight the play's exploration of desire, jealousy, and the lengths individuals will go to win someone's affection. His absurdity of romantic pursuit is a social commentary on the dynamics of college relationships.

His personality is incredibly dramatic and self-absorbed. This can be seen through his delusion of Marisa's interest in him. His cockiness is just a facade and masks his confusion of

identity. And although he isn't evil-spirited, he often commits hurtful actions with destructive consequences.

How I tackled this monologue:

This is a comedic monologue, so I didn't turn to a naturalistic acting approach rather than I worked with the Linklater voice method, as well as the Lecoq method's Tension level. I also wrote the whole monologue down by hand, to remember it better.

Monologue:

Link: https://youtu.be/n1CZqMbkY3g

Monologue 5: Women speech – Barbie

This infamous speech is the most recent one I have. It's incredibly popular and I'd like to see how my performance would differ from America Ferrera's stellar rendition.

About the movie:

Warner Bros. Picture's Barbie is a fantasy comedy film by director Greta Gerwig and screenwriter Noah Baumbach. It premiered at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on July 9th, 2023. Barbie stars Margot Robbie as Barbie and Ryan Gosling as Ken. The film's budget was $128-145 million and in return it grossed $1.446 billion in revenue. This resulted in two milestones; the highest-grossing film of 2023 and the 14th-highest-grossing film of all time. The film was a hot topic even before release, as it is based on the beloved fashion dolls by Mattel, it was going to be the first live-action movie after many animated ones.

During release, Barbie watchers dressed in pink clothes, the doll's favourite colour. Its concurrent release with Universal Pictures "Oppenheimer" started the "Barbenheimer" phenomenon, encouraging audiences to see both films as a double feature.

The film itself follows Barbie and Ken on a journey of self-discovery through Barbieland and the real world. It starts of in the matriarchal Barbieland, where stereotypical Barbie starts turning human. She must travel to the real world, where she is confronted with the patriarchy. Ken, who tagged along, finds the real world amazing and introduces Barbieland to the patriarchy. Barbie meets Gloria, the reason she's becoming human, and together they save Barbieland from Ken's patriarchal views.

How I tackled this monologue:

I took a very different approach and didn't prepare this monologue at all aside from reading, therefore relying more on instinct. Although I did once, perform the Repetition exercise from Meisner with the lines from here.

Monologue:

Link: https://youtu.be/MUyT-5ZjAwk

Conclusion:

I enjoyed learning about the acting methods as well as learning the monologues. Filming them were a bit nerve-racking although. Plus, it was mor frustrating to film, as the camera adds a little anxiety, thus stunting my performance, or making me forget my lines, or making me give myself harsher critique.

One of the harder parts in my Trape was to group/separate the methods into categories. There exist many more acting methods/techniques, but they are difficult to find information about certain or even just its existence, so I included the most important and known ones.

But in the end, I believe I made the right decisions choosing the acting methods and monologues. And not to forget to mention, I'm also glad to finally be finished.

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