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Finding the Target:

Discovering the Heuristic Journey of the Actor

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
Of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

THEATER ARTS

By

Noah Lucé

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The Thesis of Noah Lucé
is approved:

Professor Amy Mihyang Ginther, Chair

Professor Patty Gallagher

Professor Danny Scheie

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Students

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Abstract:

Finding the Target:

Discovering the Heuristic Journey of the Actor

By

Noah Lucé

From nonlinear stories to ambulatory productions to realism, the styles of theatrical productions in 2017 are incredibly varied in nature. This presents a unique challenge for the actor to have the psychological dexterity to translate an array of different techniques into the application of character construction.

However, in actor training there is not a methodology that articulates how the actor learns to make this critical choice. The essential process of how to approach character construction is paramount to the performer and I propose that it should be considered as much as the technique and eventual performance itself.

In this thesis, I adduce that adapting the qualitative methodology of heuristics to this microcosm of the actor's process would bridge this gap. Through the lens of heuristics I will dissect two different productions using them to fuel my research in the hope of becoming a more effective and affective actor.

Acknowledgement/Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Randy Luce, who encouraged me to never stop fighting for my dreams.

I want to thank my partner in crime, Brady Voss, for his love and unselfishness, my Mother, Debbie Luce, her beauty and grace, and my best friends Melody Anderson, Kevin Bordi, Rush Cosgrove, Patricia Lambert, and the outrageous Amanda Szymczak, for all of their love and support.

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Finally, I wish to thank my cohort for always teaching me new things; I've been consistently humbled by their honesty, intelligence, and patience.

Prologue

As I entered the final semester of my B.F.A., I had the opportunity to work on a scene from *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter. During this acting workshop, we were given the chance to use the tools from a congruent acting class to help craft the scene. On a very cold, rainy day (during which I had a severe cold), I performed with my scene partner. I was struggling internally with the techniques from the class. The instructor then gave my partner and I notes and, upon completion, asked me to stay behind. I was feeling lower than low when she said, “What the hell, Noah? You’re better than this, what’s going on?” I was startled by the directness of this comment. I explained that I was trying my best to implement the techniques that another instructor had asked me to use for this scene. She quickly responded and asked, “If it’s not working, why the fuck are you doing it?” I was taken aback, as I didn’t know the answer. She went on to give the analogy of thinking of various techniques as different tools and my brain was the box in which they lay. It’s really up to the actor to figure out what tool is needed for the job. As I reflected on this interaction, I realized that this was something I already did for different styles of performance, but had been so caught up in the need to get things “right” that I forgot that the training I was receiving was for *me*. This loose methodology was simple, but it could have been outlined in more detail.

This has led me to believe that a new challenge faces the actor in 2017. While, previously, actors could train in one technique that could apply to most theatrical styles, a paradigm has shifted that now challenges the actor to have working

knowledge of the multitude of techniques available for construction of a character. Therefore, the performer can choose a primary technique in which to launch their work, but it serves the artist to be as well rounded as possible because each tool can provide different points of access into the work. This creates a dilemma for the actor. As there is a matrix of techniques being taught all over the world, how does an actor know what tools to use? This is a prevalent issue that performers face. In essence, actors know *what* they are doing, but not always *why*. Actors wish to create a performance that appears authentic and convincing, thereby evoking an emotional response from the audience. In support of this assertion, Tzachi Zamir, in their¹ 2010 article exploring the relationship between actor and the audience experience, observes that:

Not only actors are involved in imagining this transformation: the audience also is supposed to be actively sharing in the creation and acknowledgement of an imagined construction to which it can then respond (228).

Their response, or what I consider affecting the audience, is key when approaching a character. The issue then rises, that if there are a multitude of techniques being taught and many different styles of theatre produced then the actor has the need for a more concrete methodology when choosing their technique in order to affect the audience.

Attempting to denote an actor's work through scholarly research is a unique challenge. So much of an actor's technique is rooted in the training that they have access to or, in some cases, their natural impulses that could be classified as "raw talent." Regardless of this, the work of an actor is typically spent on their feet moving

¹ The use of the singular they/their is intentional.

through space creating a three-dimensional performative experience, as each has their own set of techniques when constructing a character. I am certainly not an exception to this rule. During the course of my actor training I have been fortunate enough to be exposed to many techniques of character construction, but not to a methodology with which to select a technique from my options. This vital component has been left out of the technical training that I've received as an actor, in which methodology or foundational theory is often left to self-discovery.

I must clarify the difference between “methodology” and “technique.” For the purpose of this discussion, methodology refers to a series of phases that the actor goes through to arrive at a decision, while technique will be used to discuss the various teachings or rather theories proposed to the actor by different practitioners within the craft of theatre making. At no point should the reader think that I don't believe that each practitioner's work lacks methodology (as all techniques have a methodology behind them), but I am interested in examining the intersection between having a knowledge of various techniques and having the understanding of when and why to apply them.

Lacking a methodology could be a hurdle for many actors as every university, actor training program, and theatre company has its own set of techniques that align within its program. For example some might favor an immersive approach to the creation of character, like Stanislavski's System² or the Method (a derivative of

² See further discussion of this below.

Stanislavski System), while others use a more cerebral approach, like the Meisner³ technique. Other techniques initiate access for actor through voice work while others prefer a physical training method. In his 2014 dissertation, Ofer Ravid summarizes the current state of actor training:

Contemporary actor training in North America includes a myriad of techniques and approaches, each with its particular aim in shaping the actor's skill. Despite the continuing prevalence of text-based, psychologically oriented acting techniques, that is techniques focusing on the conventions of "psychological realism," in recent years several psychophysical techniques have gained influence in theatre training programs in both Canada and the USA. While "text-based" acting techniques have traditionally focused on ways to create character and tell story, many psychophysical techniques shift the focus of the actor's work from this traditional psychological/behavioral interpretation of text to being psychophysically engaged in the moment (8).

Through this term, "psychophysical," Ravid unpacks the correlation between the relationship of the mind and body and how the two come together in many techniques. Ravid clarifies that many physical techniques are not regarded as acting technique, but rather support psychological techniques, playing almost a subservient role to these techniques. I have found relevance to this claim because anytime I have approached physical training such as Leqoc, Viewpoints, or Suzuki⁴ the instructor has made the correlation for students to a more psychologically based technique such as the work of Stanislavski. But without a methodology, the logic underlying this connection remains opaque to the student. This is not to say that the various techniques of actor training (including the work of Stanislavski) don't each have their own

³ I refer the readers to the works of Stanford Meisner for further detail about his techniques.

⁴ I refer the readers to the works Leqoc, Suzuki, Bogart and Landau.

methodologies, but rather that what I find lacking is a methodology about how to choose which technique or approach is most viable to different processes.

During the course of my training, there has been the opportunity to work with a variety of voice and physicality-based techniques, yet the majority or highlight of my core acting classes have been through the lens of the Stanislavski System or a technique that has roots within said system. This is hardly uncommon because, as film director Sir Richard Eyre stated in 2016:

Most of what we now take for granted as the rehearsal “process” and much of what actors achieve in rehearsal, however empirically, owes some debt not only to Stanislavski but to his determination to run a theatre which took itself and the art of acting seriously (Eyre).

Due to Stanislavski’s omnipresence in western training, we must take a detour as to establish context for the argument around methodology by examining a brief overview of the Stanislavski System.

Act I: Stanislavski System

Stanislavski believed the greatest wisdom is to recognize one's lack of it. What we can actually do as actors is to commit to our art, rely on our natures as human beings and never stop exploring with compassion, understanding and humour (Gillett 285).

Setting the historical context is important when understanding the roots of naturalistic acting because the following techniques that have emerged are still widely used by theatre practitioners today. Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) lived through an interesting and tumultuous time in theatrical history. During his early life and career as an actor, the style of performance was shifting dramatically. Melodramatic performance was succumbing to a wave of naturalism spearheaded by Emile Zola (1840-1902) summarized in his preface to his play *Thérèse Raquin*, that reads like a manifesto.

I am profoundly convinced – and I insist on this point – that the experimental and scientific spirit of this century will win over the theater, and that is the only rebirth possible for the stage... Besides, naturalism has already shaken the theater (trans. Bierman).

This was written in 1873, predating the creation of the Moscow Art Theatre (co-founded by Stanislavski) by nearly twenty-four years. Zola undoubtedly played a major role in influencing Stanislavski; this time would have also been Stanislavski's formative years of study in theatrical practices that would have dictated his choices in training and pursuit of the art form. Another influence on his work was Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and the canon of his work in psychology; as Sonia Moore observes, "Stanislavski was constantly trying to increase his knowledge of all facets

of man's inner life. He studied psychology, physiology, and aesthetics as well as historical and theoretical writing on theatre" (49). Congruently, there was the rise of the role of director, the visionary that has a particular story to tell and, through their lens, that story is told. All of these details⁵ are the precursor to what we know as the Stanislavski System.

Although there are many books written by Stanislavski, it was Sonia Moore who digested his teaching down into what she calls the "Stanislavski System." Although her work was originally published as *The Stanislavski Method*, there is a dichotomy here that we must be aware of: "Method Acting" vs. "Stanislavski System." Mira Felner and Claudia Orenstein summarizes the rise of Method Acting:

Method Acting, that distinctly American brand of theatrical performance marked by the force of personality and emotion, and personified by such figures as Marlon Brando, James Dean, and Paul Newman came to American consciousness during the 1923 tour of the Moscow Art Theatre (194).

As it came to consciousness during the early 20th century, various practitioners began to adopt Stanislavski's work and infuse with their own set of values. Furthermore, as Marianne Conroy writes:

To further complicate the line of influence between Stanislavski and his American avatars, the public image of Method acting develop in an institutional context quite different from that which had fostered the Stanislavski system (245).

Understanding the context in which not only the perception, but moreover the

⁵ There are many other contributing factors, but for the purpose of brevity I have summarized what I believe to be the essentials in order to give context for the reader.

instruction of different techniques began to foster a world in which many schools of thought emerged. The examination of this explosion of techniques in America helps us to further understand the main difference between system and method.

Method Acting or simply “The Method” can be crudely summarized by the actor taking on the character, attempting to stay in said character at all times, and exploring the world through the characters’ eyes. This could include going to the extreme of participating in drug use or inducing extreme mental states that could be dangerous to the health of an actor. An extreme example of this behavior is categorized in the rumors that have taken place since the death of Heath Ledger which some have attributed to Method Acting.⁶ In any event, The Method cannot be considered a methodology because, by my definition, it is an acting technique.

“The Stanislavski System” as synthesized by Moore gives us a view into the world and theories of Stanislavski. Mainly these revolve around an approach to a character and text that looks at the psychology of character creation and the practical applications of “scoring” a script to help guide the performer when building the character:

The behavior of a character must be composed of small, logical, concrete actions. Every action must be consecutive, as in life, in life’s temp-rhythm, and must have as much concentration as it requires in real life (Moore, 68).

⁶ This has not been confirmed, but there remains in the public imagination a link between The Method and mental illness. An article from Bustle reads in part: “Obviously you can't have a list of great method actors without having Heath Ledger on the list. As we all know, Heath Ledger's role as The Joker in *The Dark Knight* was something he took very seriously, to the point of holing himself up in his apartment for months on end and running on two hours of sleep a night to put him in the manic, chaotic shoes of The Joker. His performance was incredible and will live on past his tragic, unexpected death” (Mize, Web).

Moore goes on to state that there are eight larger concepts within the Stanislavski System⁷ and each have a series of exercises or theories for the actor to put into practice. This type of specificity gives the actor the opportunity to examine the character's entire minutiae if executed with earnest.

Deeper inquiry will reveal that these are but two of the many iterations of Stanislavski's work. Hugely popular, Stanislavski has inspired many influential practitioners of theatre, including but not limited to Stella Adler, Uta Hagen, Sanford Meisner, and Lee Strasberg, who branched out and reimagined his teachings. Although many of these techniques find roots in Stanislavski, is Stanislavski still relevant today? The authors of *The Viewpoints Book*, Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, offer these thoughts:

The approach to acting for the stage in the United States has not changed much over the past sixty years. Our misunderstanding and miniaturization of the Stanislavsky system remains the bible for most practitioners. Like the air we breathe, we are rarely aware of its dominance and omnipresence. ... The inherited problems and assumptions caused by the Americanization of the Stanislavsky system are unmistakably evident in rehearsal when you hear an actor say 'If I feel it, the audience will feel it,' or 'I'll do it when I feel it (15-16).

The perspectives of Bogart and Landau illustrate and support the notion that the Stanislavski's cultural and historical impact (as mentioned earlier) and, moreover, the Americanization of this impact have influenced the performer to make choices about technique that don't necessarily serve the creation of character. Another critique of

⁷ Please refer to Fig. 1 in Appendix A.

the Stanislavski system and its use as a practical technique within the field comes from Vladimir Mirodan who states:

We are left with an inevitable question: who engages in these actions? Who reacts and interacts? Who actually behaves like that? ... no one! [sic] No normal human being behaves in the real life by consciously breaking down his or her actions into tasks, activities and units. Stanislavski and all those following him are wrong(!) (27).

Although his tone is impassioned his answer demands further inquiry.

I believe that the answer to the question about the use of Stanislavski's techniques and its relevancy is complex. My initial answer is I believe that the Stanislavski system continues to be highly relevant today. Many theatrical forms still call for realistic acting due to the fact that play scripts that are being produced now still rely on naturalism (this form of theatre is relatively⁸ new). However, there is now a heightened sense of inclusion of different techniques and practitioners from around the world; furthermore, because it is becoming increasingly common for theatre makers in 2017 to play with the conventions of theatre by the creation of devised⁹ work, ambulatory¹⁰ productions, etc., I believe that the theatre is evolving quickly and that it is the responsibility of the actor to adapt to these changes to be versatile as possible.

⁸ A mere 160 years old.

⁹ This is a type of theatrical performance that is generated by a collective or group. Does not necessarily contain a lot of dialogue, but it is created by an ensemble.

¹⁰ This is a type of theatrical performance where the audience moves around the theatrical space. There can be interaction with performers or the environment of play that aims to enrich the experience for both performer and audience.

Act II: Heuristics

Although theatre is a collaborative art form in which many people make decisions around the show, the conversation regarding acting technique or the approach to character is primarily between actor and director. The director's role exerts significant influence over the actor as they have a specific vision of the story that they wish to tell. Successful directors relay this information and sometimes even offer specific techniques for the actor to employ during the process. This is not to discount the actor's contribution to the process as an individual, but it does augment their experience within the process. By being cognizant of this dynamic, the actor has a choice when working on their character in how to fully realize the details and forms in which it is created.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the vast array of tools at the actor's disposal. I propose that discovering a new and effective methodology for purposes of locating or implementing techniques would be beneficial to the actor. The heuristic method or inquiry would be a wonderful guidepost that would coalesce the need for growth and adaptation when determining which technique to employ while approaching a role. This qualitative methodology is grounded in the idea that the subject of inquiry, the technique to be selected, unravels or becomes revealed over time. Patricia Leavy supports the correlation between qualitative methods and how they are being used more frequently within the scope of performance:

The merging of qualitative research practices and the dramatic arts, out of which performance based-research methods have emerged, has occurred within the context of larger linkages being identified between artistic practice

and qualitative research (347).

This connection is important as these qualitative methodologies naturally lend themselves to performance-based study.

Heuristics has no measurable outcome in terms of success, but rather aids the practitioner through this process, by improving the quality of the work over time.

Gerard Kenny succinctly summarized the creation of this methodology in his 2012 article “An introduction to Moustakas’s heuristic method”:

Moustakas’s (1990) heuristic method has its roots in an autobiographical account of loneliness when having to make a decision regarding his daughter’s need for an operation for a heart defect (Moustakas 1961) He used his experience to explore and understand that in others. The methodology was refined over 30 years as Moustakas sought to identify the processes and qualities that helped in the internal search of researchers to explore, collect and interpret data holistically (6).

As this methodology is rooted in the self-exploration of emotion it has a natural connection to the acting process. Lee Bach’s chapter written in 2002, “Heuristic Scholar: Heuristic Inquiry and the Heuristic Scholar,” is a digestible dive into the world of this methodology. Bach writes:

The heuristic model is inherently phenomenological in nature, and it seeks to uncover the meaning and essence of human experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person. As with some other qualitative models, one enters heuristic research without hypotheses or suppositions. The purpose is discovery rather than proof. The focus of heuristic study is the recreation of lived experience; it requires the researcher to engage in a process of internal search (92-93).

By phenomenological, Bach means that this methodology tends to have long term application followed by sudden moments of complete clarity. That is not to say that

that there are no contradictions when applying this to the actors selection of technique. As the model of heuristic methodology comes from philosophy and as I will be adapting how Gerald Kenny synthesized the methodology to nursing, there are antithetical elements to this process; understanding some of the alterations and my synthesis of heuristics to this microcosm of the performer's journey will reveal how this methodology can align with the application of the performer's search for a technique.

Heuristics stresses the importance of engagement in a central idea or thought, but also takes into account that the practitioner of heuristics is open to the possibility of other valuable life experiences leading them to discover new sources of inspiration around their research. This process is similar to the actor. Although engagement with the self can be paramount to the performer's work it can never be fully realized alone as performance is shared with others. It is rare to find an actor who does not share a story with others while performing. This link is key. Drawing inspiration from the world around the heuristic researcher is a deep parallel to the process of an actor finding inspiration. Therefore, heuristics can potentially be tethered to the acting process. Even over thirty years ago, a connection between performance and the principles of heuristics were being made. For example, Phillip Zarrilli writes:

[T]he creative process which occurs on the night of a performance. The creative process is a synthesis of past training, reflection, study, and maturity of the individual actor – a process of reviewing past performances, making conscious decisions about the particular performance to be given each evening, and attempting to use his own personal imagination and concentration in achieving an 'ideal' characterization (68).

During my research I was amazed to discover that after thorough research there has been little scholarship directly relating the actor's process of selecting technique to heuristics. With this in mind, I discovered the work of Gerald Kenny, who successfully adapted heuristic methodology to their chosen field of nursing Gerald Kenny.

From the heuristic process Kenny outline involves six steps, the name of each evoking the imagination, thus creating strong mental images the actor can immediately ascertain and build upon. The six steps include:

- Initial engagement
- Immersion
- Incubation
- Illumination
- Explication
- Creative Synthesis.

Although there is recognition that there is a linear process, an interesting point of this method is that one can slide back and forth between the phases. As Kenny suggests, "There is an intimate and natural link between the processes of heuristic inquiry and the phases"(8). Let us further examine each of these phases in the heuristic journey and how they intertwine.

Initial Engagement

Looking at the first phase of the heuristic process, "initial engagement," concerns the discovery of a question. Bach says, "... one intentionally turns inward to gain a greater understanding of the meaning of a particular quality or theme of experience. It requires one's thoughts, feelings, wonderings, and tentative knowing"

(93). This could be outlined in the anecdote from my earlier training when I was made aware of my power to select which technique or tool to apply when approaching a character. Thus, I was initially engaged in questioning how to best select the technique to apply in character construction. Although it took me years to actively apply the idea to the context of heuristics, the initial engagement had taken place. I propose that, for a performer, initial engagement, in relation to choosing a technique, happens subconsciously. However, with the integration of this methodology into actor training, it could draw attention to this microcosm of the acting process. After the initial engagement of heuristics, the actor would then learn to recognize the second phase called “immersion.”

Immersion

In the adaption of this phase, the actor has accepted a new role and begins to learn about the character they will be playing. Kenny describes the immersion process as “the invitation, the experience or question to the researcher to stay fully within the experience of the phenomenon in whatever form it takes” (8). This similarly parallels the initial process of an actor in the early stages of rehearsing a role for a play; diving head-first into a vast ocean of newness¹¹ that requires constant thought about character construction. In 2014, theatre practitioner David Scott links the immersion process to the technique choices the actor makes while constructing a character:

¹¹ I refer to the beginning of an actor starting a new project. Usually there are beginnings of new relationships or the expansion of old, the possibility of creating a role and production from a blank canvas, researching different aspects of the character or production. Really this list is endless. For a wonderful crash course in the process of creating a production I refer the reader to *The World of Theatre* chapter 7 and 8.

We must take the audience into account and ensure they are being accessed and told the story. As much as we desire that feeling of total immersion, there is no point to it at all if the audience sitting outside the thing, disconnected from all of you wonderful, immersive acting (84).

Connecting familiar terminology like immersion, would engage the actor within the methodology of heuristics because it would foster a deeper connection to the craft of acting. From immersion, the phases of this methodology become more interchangeable and the actor has more discretion in choosing techniques of character construction.

Incubation and Illumination

The following two phases of “incubation” and “illumination” have a direct connection to the actor’s journey because they happen simultaneously. The phase of incubation occurs when that actor is away from the primary source of initial engagement (not working on creating a character). This phase would be classified by discovering the value of time spent away from the primary source of study and with what Bach calls “co-researchers”¹² who, moving forward, I will identify as collaborators. Collaborators, is another term that many performers are familiar with because it is widely used in Western practice and can be directly related to the actor’s process because actor’s work with an array of people. These people include: the director, playwright, choreographer, other performers or even friends and family; whoever the actor is engaging with during their process becomes a collaborator. The

¹² “...encounter co-researchers using self-disclosure, person-centered presence, and open ended questioning. This type of contact enables co-researchers to express their experience or phenomenon fully.” (Bach, 93)

phase of illumination happens during incubation and can be summarized by the actor forgetting about what techniques to implement during character construction. By forgetting about the subject and working with collaborators, illumination strikes the actor, affirming or drastically changing their previous ideas about character construction.

Explication

Kenny outlines the fifth phase of heuristics by stating that “explication” involves examining what has arisen in the process and coming to an understanding of what meaning it might hold” (8). For the actor this could be the “Eureka”¹³ moment when working on a character (when the actor begins to feel the rhythm of the character they are constructing) or it could come later in the production process (when the play opens and the actor feels the character has solidified). This is not to say the character does not continue to grow and shift throughout the performances, but the main elements of the character have been decided. For the actor, the final phase of heuristics occurs simultaneously or immediately after explication because the actor has begun to realize the agility they possess and can actively identify and implement the techniques they need in character construction.

Creative Synthesis

Kenny concludes that creative synthesis occurs when “the many strands of experience and understanding that have emerged in research are brought together to

¹³ Bach states: “The term ‘heuristic’ comes from the Greek language and means to discover or find. It is akin to the word ‘Eureka,’ also Greek, which signifies what U.S. culture has come to identify as the ‘aha’ moment.” (92)

form a coherent whole” (8). This is the moment when the culmination of techniques the actor has used results in what they deem as a “successful” creation of character and in my case I identify obtaining success through being an effective and affective actor. Although this is classified the final stage of heuristic methodology, it is by no means the end. The actor would continue to identify this problem over the course of their performative career and by repeating the methodology outlined above, gain further insight to their approach to character construction.

By outlining these six phases Kenny came to the following conclusion:

Heuristic approaches to nursing research offer nurses the potential to explore questions that emerge from within themselves. They provide frameworks in which the researcher can integrate experience and knowledge so they can continue to evolve and expand (11).

The practitioner of heuristics, then, not only engages in deep thought about their subject, but also has the ability to interact with data in a visceral way. Kenny’s conclusion is similar to my own, yet I believe the integration of heurism to acting more closely aligns with Moustakas original methodology as it adds agency for the actor to not only to continue to evolve and expand, but also make a finite choice depending on the project.

To outline how this could be beneficial to the actor’s process I will (in true heuristic fashion) explore my own performance journey in two case studies. The first displays the struggle of implementing the Stanislavski System during a process that left me feeling less effective. From there, the question of how to be a more effective and affective actor propels me forward and through the application of heuristics I

discovered Declan Donnellan's work from 2006 (revised) *The Actor and the Target*.
Implementing the phases of heuristic methodology and incorporating Donnellan's
techniques take me into my second case study.

Act III: The Odyssey

Upon entering University of California Santa Cruz, I was cast in an adaptation of Homer's *The Odyssey*, directed by Kimberly Jannarone, in which I played Antinous. The character traits of Antinous include, but are not limited to: being a leader, a nationalist, a misogynist, and leading suitor (out of many) vying for the right to marry Penelope, a woman waiting for her husband to return from war. I initially approached the character by employing techniques from Stanislavski. In retrospect, if I had thought about Stanislavski's historical context and relevancy and contrasted it with the surreal nature of the *Odyssey* production, it would have become clear to me that many of the techniques I typically used would not serve me in this process. During the process we were also encouraged to use a physical acting technique called Biomechanics, which was developed by Stanislavski's contemporary Vsevolod Meyerhold (1873 -1940) to move the characters into the world of gesture and specific physical qualities in order to aptly convey strongly shaped characters with little to no text.

Over the course of the production I was constantly challenged as a performer. There were over fifty collaborators serving the needs of the production, from many different artistic fields and experience levels. As identified earlier in heuristics, collaborators can guide the practitioner to make new discoveries. With the scope of this many creative minds unified, it meant there was a lot of inspiration and input. Yet, as an actor, there were many times I felt my previous training with the Stanislavski System being exposed for relying heavily on using dramatic text to

analyze a character.

As there was no script, the use of Stanislavski's techniques didn't always seem to serve me creatively. As the story and construction of the piece changed, grew, and soared the challenge of having few words to say left me feeling muddled mid-process. It wasn't until I let go of the need for text that I felt I able to dive deep into the character. Text is normally one of the essential keys into how I implement the use of Stanislavski while constructing a character.

Even though I was struggling, I was able to implement a few tools from the Stanislavski system to build my character. The "given circumstances"¹⁴ was a wonderful way into building Antinous, as we had our source material from the words of Homer as translated by Robert Fagels. I was able to access information about Antinous from Fagels' translation, for example, I knew where he was from, who his father was, his objectives (what he wanted most) and so on. This meant, that although I was struggling, I still managed to work through the process of my own inner exploration of character, to discover who Antinous was. Yet without text, I was constantly questioning myself and, of course, how I was going to ultimately craft this character.

I had an incessant need to impose text onto the character for me to understand him. This was very telling for me as an actor. I had never before realized before how important the use of text is to me, and without this key component, would I find

¹⁴ Given circumstances, as outlined in the Stanislavski system is the: who, where, and what of the character. This should be based on information the actor gleans from the script, but can be made up by the imagination of the actor as well in order to achieve as specific character as possible.

success? Discovering what techniques to employ for the construction of Antinous seemed to evade me still. In essence I was trying to figure out a way to create a set of actions that would cause the audience to feel something. Without realizing it I had entered the first phase of heuristics (initial engagement) as this problem emerged. A question had begun to form in my mind, but at this point, I couldn't identify it.

As the production progressed I was fortunate enough to encounter a collaborator Dor Atkinson, who led workshops in Biomechanics, a series of movements and gesture work. This work is rooted in discipline and the actor's willingness to commit. By just allowing my body to feel what Antinous wanted to say, through the use of things like pace of movement (for example walking through the world slow and slithering) with specificity I could convey his confidence, and how exacting he is. With quick arm movements that seemed to explode out of me, I could convey his need to control, or annoyance at any given situation. As his physical vocabulary emerged, my goal as an actor became clear: I needed to master stillness, within his body, only allowing him to explode when needed. This quiet and hopefully menacing stillness would help ground me in the character's body, thus creating an affective presence for the audience. The introduction of Biomechanics thrust me into the phase of illumination because I had finally found a technique that began to serve my process more precisely.

As I trudged toward the middle of the process I was given yet another new opportunity, which was to create Antinous' dialogue within his living installation, interacting with the audience who in effect were entering his world. As he owned the

world in which he inhabited, I knew I wanted to make a political statement so I pulled text from famous dictators and demagogues, like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Donald Trump. As the United States was in the midst of the tumultuous 2016 election, I integrated the campaign rhetoric of Hilary Clinton because I shifted my focus from famous quotes, to easily recognizable slogans and campaign rhetoric to ensure an affective response from the audience. The political climate and the heuristic process of immersion (staying fully engaged) into Antinous' construction inspired these choices. Lee Bach espouses the qualities of the heuristic scholar:

They are in love with the world at large, or at least many aspects of it. ...For heuristic scholars, there is a unique juxtaposition of self and world. Though it is paramount for these individuals to follow their own direction, they are most respectful of others and encourage others to be self-attuned and follow their own paths. Individuality is a value that is highly prized. Heuristic scholars are life long learners. Their process of education is ongoing in a variety of venues and tips. ...Heuristic scholars are highly disciplined in their process of search and discovery. Long hours of immersion and timeless engagement with a topic are common. (98-99)

The proverbial dots finally started to connect and by the time the play opened I had created specific choices about the character. One review of the production commented:

As the audience explored the DARC¹⁵, they met a character, Antinous, who announced that Ithaca should be “made great again.” While pulling several women aside, he made stereotypical remarks about belonging at home or in secretarial roles to be suited for his city of Ithaca (Buchanan, Web).

Antinous' views of himself and his world became clear to me. Creating the

¹⁵ A common abbreviation for a room/area in the Digital Arts and New Media building on the campus of University of California Santa Cruz.

inner life of this character and how he approached simple everyday tasks became my mission. Using the Stanislavski's "magic if"¹⁶ I was able to further access the truth of this character and his growth through performance. How did Antinous pour a glass of champagne? How did he tuck in his shirt, hand out a business card, and especially how did he "perform" for others he was trying to impress? All became exercises in improvisation.

This is especially meaningful to Stanislavski System, as one of the paramount thoughts for this technique of acting is "living in the moment". Within the context of how the technique works this might be seen as a contradiction, but the end goal is to implement all of the techniques, rehearse them as much as possible and then ultimately find a spontaneity during performance that causes the audience to believe that these events are happening for the first time. Sonia Moore writes, "When the actor is inspired he is in the same natural and spontaneous state that is ours in life, and he lives the experiences and emotions of the character he portrays" (23). The hope is to enable the performer to affect the audience to believe that this is a flesh and blood person behaving this way in real time.

During *The Odyssey*, although I experienced what felt like many roadblocks, I was ultimately able to create the character and find his truth with the combined use of Biomechanics and Stanislavski's System. Moreover, I had heuristically come out of the incubation phase and now had a moment of explication because a question that

¹⁶ The "magic if" is another technique within the Stanislavski System. In essence, the actor asks themselves, "what would I do, if I were" (Moore,28), and then respond accordingly. This engages the actor's imagination to fill in the blanks in the hopes of creating further specificity.

had been on my mind since the final year of my BFA had become clearer than it had ever been before. How would I improve the process of my own technique selection when approaching the construction of a character, thereby helping me to become a more effective and affective actor?

Act IV: Finding the Target

The summer before returning to complete my graduate studies, I had the privilege of working on two productions, back to back: one as an actor and the other as an assistant director. This opportunity provided me with the platform to have many discussions about theatre making. Continuously watching actors work was a gift and the opportunity to discuss different techniques was the foundation on which my journey began. I was hungry for new ways to launch into character construction and several theatre practitioners asked me if I had read *The Actor and the Target* by Declan Donnellan. The general consensus between these collaborators was that Donnellan's work connected the dots between the classic Stanislavski System and today's style of theatre making. In essence, Donnellan's work seemed to speak to a more modern theatre maker and also got to the root of problematic moments when working on a character.

Once I arrived at the University of California Santa Cruz, I was instantly immersed within the *The Odyssey* and left without the time to dive into Donnellan's book, thus launching me into the third phase of heuristics, incubation. This time of not paying attention to my question was cut short after a collaborator gave me the reminder that I should explore the text, which served as a "heuristic reminder" that it was within my best interest to continue stretching myself to become the more effective and affective actor. I finally gave the text an initial once over and I marveled at its simplicity and directness for the actor. Donnellan instilled new insight as I read about his techniques and it framed how I thought about the integration of Stanislavski

technique in a new way. The connection between Donnellan and Stanislavski is explored by Aleks Sierz when he writes that the *Actor and the Target* is:

[D]erived from a simplified notion of Stanislavski-inspired acting, that the actor discovers a universe from within. Instead of finding everything inside yourself, Donnellan argues that you discover everything outside yourself by aiming at specific targets: an object to be seen, a question to be asked, a decision to be taken (150).

Although Sierz points out the contrasting tone between the two techniques, I believe that Donnellan's text is grounded further in the notion of making techniques work for the actor during the process of character construction. For instance, Donnellan writes about the actor's process saying:

[W]e can divide the work of an actor into two parts, rehearsal and performance. More controversially we can also divide the mind of a human being into the conscious and unconscious. The rehearsal and the unconscious have certain things in common. Both are normally unseen, but both are essential. They are, in their different ways, the four-fifths of the iceberg, the performance and the conscious are both seen. We can easily see the tip of the iceberg, but we need the wisdom to infer the other four-fifths (7).

Analysis of the iceberg metaphor supports the notion that much of the actor's process is indeed unseen. The same is true with the heuristic journey of an actor selecting a technique when constructing a character.

The Actor and the Target also supports the actor through the process and application of removing any "blocks"¹⁷ the actor might come across during character construction. Donnellan's concept of "the spiders legs" aids in the discovery of these

¹⁷ Actor blocks, as discussed by Donnellan, are moments when the actor doesn't know what to do next during the rehearsal process. In my experience, blocks can manifest in many ways, but in most cases the actor can become frustrated and feel stuck.

blocks as he explains, “Actors often use precisely the same words when they are blocked” (12); there are eight such phrases,¹⁸ analogous to the legs of a spider. He expresses that his analogy is problematic because each of these issues are talked about in a sequence as if they are independent when really they aren’t:

The actor’s imagination, text, movement, breathing, technique and feeling are essentially inseparable. Yes, it would be convenient if there could be a logical step-by-step progression, but there isn’t. These eight apparently different problems are utterly interlinked (Donnellan, 12).

However through his thoughtful analysis of each of these phrases (and his crafting of different techniques in which to overcome them) gives the actor agency to move through many common problems. Many of the phrases expressed in his discussion resonate with me. As with heuristics, Donnellan identified specific issues through his initial engagement and, through inspiration, created a book that has the ability to speak to a diverse group of performers. It is a call to action for performers for many issues that arise for the actor and how to implement his techniques. His voice is clear, incredibly honest, and digestible. This makes his work approachable by the modern actor.

Critically speaking, his work does fall flat if the actor does not have the working vocabulary or terminology from Stanislavski. However, thanks to Stanislavski’s current omnipresence in theatre, the book is still accessible to most Western theatre practitioners. Donnellan has adapted juicy, descriptive words to

¹⁸ These phrases outlined by Donnellan include: ‘I don’t know what I’m doing.’, ‘I don’t know what I want.’, ‘I don’t know who I am.’, ‘I don’t know where I am.’, ‘I don’t know how I should move.’, ‘I don’t know what I should feel.’, ‘I don’t know what I’m saying.’, and ‘I don’t know what I’m playing’ (12).

support actor terminology. For example, the word “target” supports or replaces the word “objective”. Donnellan writes:

The target is the only impetus for what is played both consciously and unconsciously. Seeing specifically what is outside will send the actor deeper into the character than thinking what is inside (242).

Supporting the claim that the target serves as “the only impetus” is challenging as I believe the target is another way to approach the work. Working within the technique during my second case study supported this hypothesis as well.

Finding Donnellan was a direct result of heuristics. The phase of explication I experienced at the end of my journey during *The Odyssey*, had led me to this point and after absorbing *The Actor and the Target* I was excited to begin work on my next production. Donnellan’s book had inspired me to critically engage with the approach of constructing characters differently than I had before. Although excited to take my next step, I still wondered if applying the methodology of heuristics and integrating Donnellan’s techniques would help me become more affective as an actor in *Lion in the Streets?*

Act V: Lion in the Streets

After the winter audition process at University of California Santa Cruz, I was delighted to discover that I had been cast in Judith Thompsons' play *Lion in the Streets*. I was overjoyed at the prospect of being able to dive into such an unusual character track. I would be playing many characters: Isobel's Father, a Portuguese immigrant's ghost, Lily (a phone sex operator enjoying a party with her married lover who's wife shows up and a confrontation ensues), David (a jaded gay bartender looking for absolution who may or may not be a ghost), and Michael, a figment of a man's emotional memory (who suddenly becomes an abusive homophobic apparition). It would be complicated and fascinating to portray all of these different characters in one play.

Constructing these four intricate and unique characters in six weeks was a challenge that I felt I could accomplish. Employing the methodology of heuristics as a performer granted me further agency to make decisions of the techniques I implemented during the rehearsal process. By making the choice to utilize the techniques as outlined by Donnellan, I was forging my way into the methodology of heuristic scholarship. Bach clearly states that, "the heuristic process leads to the acquisition of knowledge at its most fundamental and profound level, in the person as knower" (96). I was making active choices about technique selection that gave me a pathway to work thus making me more effective within my process.

Instead of feeling blocked or stressed I could breathe, find recognition with process, and execute the work more agilely than I had in the past. For example, I was

able to employ the techniques of Donnellan and critically think about his concept of the spider's legs as an initial point of engagement for these characters. I asked myself how I would address all of his outlined phrases around blocks that could inevitably arise for each of the characters to determine what techniques I might use as access points. This thought process demonstrates the utilization two of the phases of heuristics and wherein I was confronted with a problem (illumination) and then came to an understanding (explication) in how to proceed within the process.

To illustrate this point, I will examine the early stages of working on the character of Lily.¹⁹ I was flooded with concerns that stemmed from identifying as male but playing a character that identified as female. I was able to use the legs of the spider, if you will, to determine what exactly I wanted to do to craft her; I didn't want the audience to feel as if I was merely commenting on what I thought an overtly sexualized woman would "act" like or worse, to feel like I had created a negative stereotype. By addressing these concerns early and using Donnellan's techniques specifically his "Imaginary Text Exercise"²⁰ I was able to move past these fears and create Lily. After interviewing a handful of audience members about my performance, my initial fears about playing Lily were allayed. Audience member Victoria Gardiner wrote to me:

Lily resonated with me in a number of ways: an example of strong female sexuality, a strong personality, which completely shattered the conventions of

¹⁹ Please refer to Fig. 7 in Appendix B.

²⁰ An example of this exercise using the character of Lily is outlined in Appendix Fig. 2 in Appendix A.

her social situation, and as a figure who provoked both a mental and physical arousal response in me as an audience member.²¹

Gardiner's response supports my hypothesis that the integration of heuristic methodology and moreover, my use of implementing Donnellan's techniques caused her to be affected by my performance as she both had a mental and physical response to the character of Lily. Although this was true, there were other challenges I faced during the course of the rehearsal process.

A challenging reality I had to explore as a performer was the act of dying on stage and even though I had done this before in productions, I have typically felt a level of untruthfulness portraying death onstage. At this point in the process I was completely connected to the production, thereby entering the second phase of heuristics (immersion) and through it I was able to identify what technique I could use to overcome my obstacle. By incorporating the concept of target and following Donnellan I felt as if I could accomplish this task. Donnellan writes, "[F]or example, an actor cannot play 'I die' because there is no target. However, the actor can play: 'I welcome death – 'I fight death' – 'I mock death' – 'I struggle for life' "(18). I used this technique with the character of David²² as there is a moment toward the end of the first act of the play when Father Hayes recounts David's death in a monologue. In our production, David experiences Father Hayes words viscerally and through the use

²¹ See Appendix C – Audience Interviews. Interview #3 – Victoria Gardiner.

²² Please refer to Fig. 5 in Appendix B.

of movement and gesture drowns in the sea. In order to justify the choreography²³ to symbolize this death I crafted a series of targets to affect the audience. This process works by using a piece of dialogue and the target in correlation with the choreography assigned to tell the story. Father Hayes says, “I looked up and your hand from the sea” (Thompson, 38), during this line the choreography was to slowly spin toward Father Hayes and then reach out to him from across the stage; here is where I would employ the use of a target, directing my eye contact to the character and playing “I fight death”. While implementing this technique, I came to the heuristic phases of explication and creative synthesis. As outlined earlier, this is when the performer has come to understand things in a new way: in this case it was how implementing Donnellan’s techniques was causing me to become a more specific actor, thereby making me more effective.

As the production approached opening night, I was feeling confident in the work I had constructed with the exception of a few moments experienced by one my characters, Michael²⁴. As he was a figment of a gay, closeted man’s imagination and the character experiences split-second dramatic emotional shifts. From the act of discovering an old friend to recounting childhood memories, from sexually charged physical engagement to my character physically assaulting the other onstage while simultaneously having his own mental breakdown, from passionate kissing to asking the other character to kill him, these levels and changes happen with seconds in

²³ In this context choreography is identified as a series of movement and corresponding gestures. This should not be considered danced, but repeated the same way every performance.

²⁴ Please refer to Fig. 6 in Appendix B.

between. It was a challenge to engage in these shifts with nimble grace, while still being effective as an actor because striking the right balance in the character's erratic behavior was something I had never done before. However, I had come to the creative synthesis of my journey on this project and I was able to employ different techniques not found from Donnellan to help these dramatic shifts happen more quickly. With the application the first three phases of heuristic methodology, I recalled working on Antinous in *The Odyssey* and experienced a moment of creative synthesis: because I was experiencing a problem, I critically engaged with it to arrive at a place of new meaning. Instead of struggling through using one technique I pulled from Biomechanics to create gestures exploring Michaels' emotional world that I incorporated into the overall arch of the scene. These gestures allowed me to create triggers to access the emotional shifts quickly and would appear authentic to the audience. Audience member Joe Krempetz wrote in his interview:

It's always startling to see something violent onstage in a live performance, but the contrast between the violence of that moment, and the friendly reunion earlier in the scene was amplified to me after watching you be sassy, comedic, and friendly in your other roles throughout the play. I was particularly impressed by your ability to escalate your intensity without reaching an unsustainable point[.]²⁵

Clearly, the use of the methodology of heuristics was an asset to my overall process as Krempetz felt that I was able to sustain my performance despite the range of different levels of emotion I was portraying. Overall, throughout the process of obtaining audience interviews about my performance I was pleased to read that

²⁵ See Appendix C – Audience Interviews. Interview #3, Joe Krempetz.

overwhelmingly they had each felt that different aspects of performance had affected them in some way.

Of course there are aspects of my performance of the characters that I would alter if I could go back in time but, part of the methodology of heuristics is that the process is continuous in nature. For example, if the actor employs heuristics to select the techniques when they create a character, they will not engage with that question a singular time. They will undoubtedly encounter that question many times over during the length of their career in performance. In retrospect, I would make small adjustments to each of the characters I played. For instance, I would have loved to explore Lily further by using Biomechanics to give her character further body awareness. With Isobel's Father, Antonio,²⁶ I would have employed Donnellan's imaginary text exercise to see if that would have given him further specificity. Moreover, I would have liked the chance to further explore the targets I used with each character, crafting them to be even clearer. That being said, I believe my hypothesis was confirmed: applying the process of heuristics to select the techniques I used for approaching a production aided me in the process of becoming not only more effective and affective as an actor, but I had a greater effect and affect on my audience.

²⁶ Please refer to Fig. 4 in Appendix B.

Epilogue

Declan Donnellan expresses the challenges of writing about the craft acting; as I did in my prologue, he shares:

It is not easy to write about acting. Acting is an art, and art reveals the uniqueness of things. Talking about acting is hard, because ‘talking about’ tends to make us generalize and generalization conceals the uniqueness of things. Good acting is always specific. (3)

Creating specificity is paramount in the field of performing and it can be much easier to speak through that process, than write it down. Words have a finality to them that performance does not. That is not to say performers do not share a final product, but as director I have worked in the past says, “we are sculptors in ice,” which means our work is not permanent the way a typed page is permanent. Actors in the theatre create beautiful works of art that are inherently changeable and transient.

Stanislavski enumerates the actor’s process in his book *An Actor Prepares* by writing, “every invention of the actor’s imagination must be thoroughly worked out and solidly built on a basis of facts” (70). I believe that this not only completely true for use of the imagination, but also the techniques with which the actor constructs a character. The essential process of how to access the creation of character construction is paramount to the performer and I propose that it should be considered as much as the technique and eventual performance itself. Employing the methodology of heuristics when choosing these techniques as I have outlined in my case studies, gives evidence to the conclusion that it can aid actors in being more effective which then, causes the audience to be more affected.

The portrait that Bach draws of the heuristic scholar is very specific (98). The discernable qualities are: driven, creative, intelligent, passionate, curious, self-aware, and with a need to succeed. I believe these are qualities that the actor possesses as well. I believe we must take this into consideration, when working with a performer. Potentially working within this methodology could help expose further what I find to be problematic about the overall process of how we train as actors. This is not to say that the training is negative, because by no means has that been my experience. Quite the contrary, I believe that incorporating the methodology of heuristics might help free the actor from feeling blocked giving them the agency to choose what techniques are right for them. It stands to reason that it could aid the actor during training as they learn to employ the variety of techniques being taught and needed for the different styles of theatre being produced today.

Appendix A: Charts

For the reader this is a visual demonstration of the relationship each of the different techniques used by the Stanislavski System. As with heuristics, it is important to note that there is not a set order in which to approach these techniques as an actor because they are interchangeable. Some practitioners might disagree with this, however the way I implement the technique is fluid when constructing a character. For further information, I refer you to Sonia Moore's book.

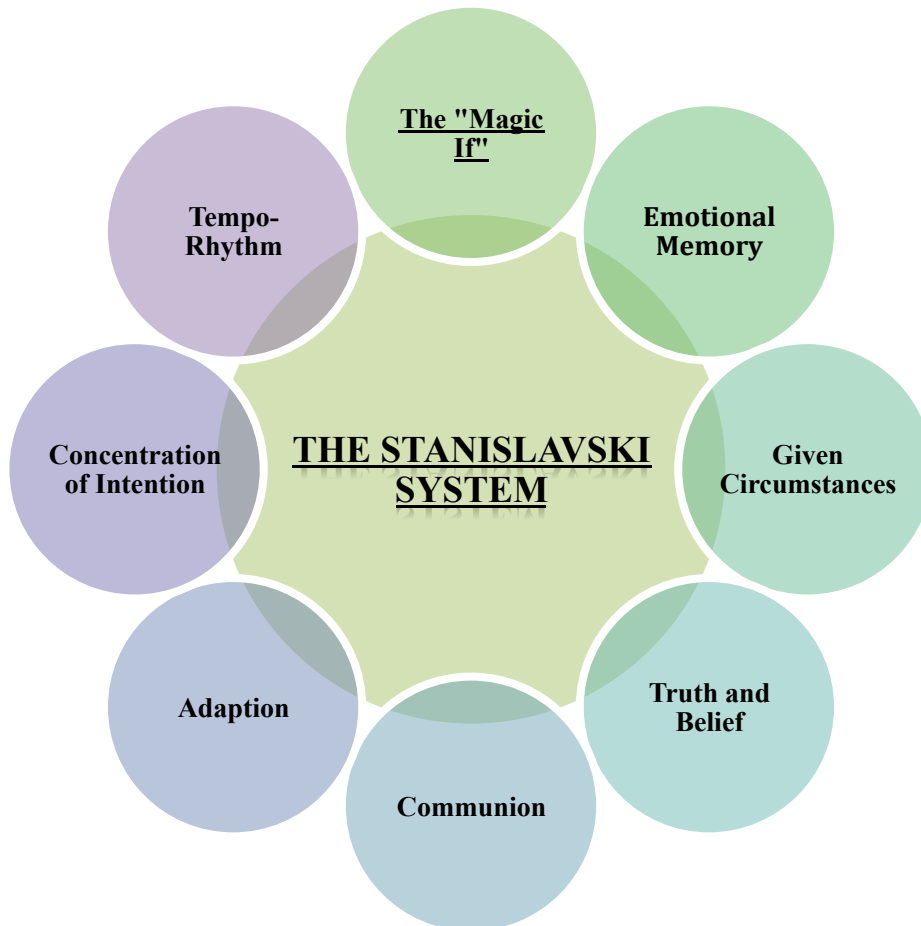


Fig. 1. The eight principles of *The Stanislavski System* (Moore, 27-53).

Imaginary Text Exercise

I include this example for the reader to understand how this technique works. Unlike Stanislavski's inner-monologue and subtext this exercise connects the text to what is imagined from all characters as opposed to how the character feels and transforming the exercise into something more tangible for the actor to respond too.

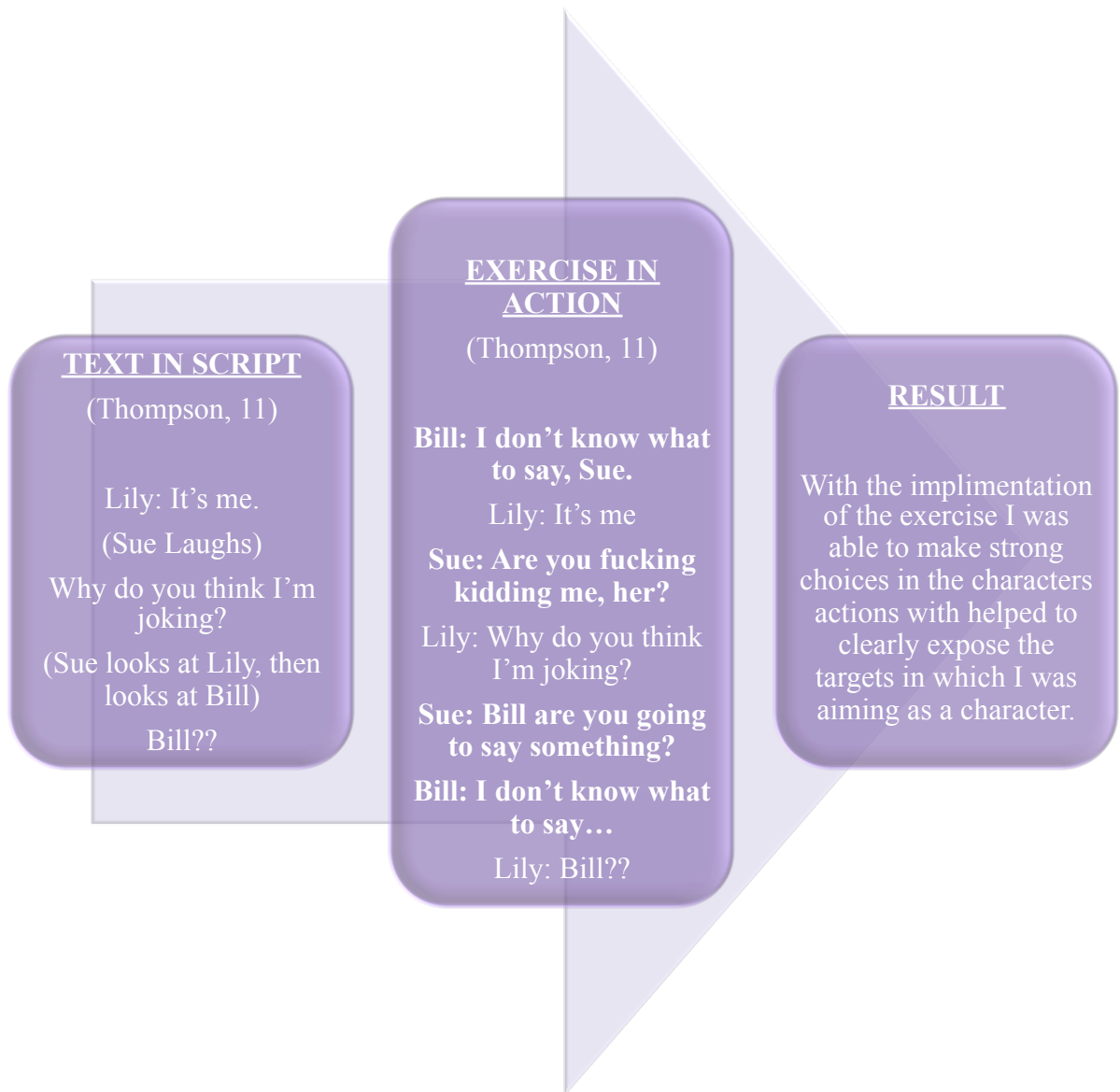


Figure 2. Imaginary Text Exercise from *The Actor and the Target*. (Donnellan, 181-9)

Appendix B: Production Photos from Case Studies

These are visual representations of the characters I created during my two case studies. I've chosen to include them for the reader to see a visual representation of how different characters came to be. Of course theatre is visceral and should be experienced live, but for the sake of the readers imagination I believe they help to illustrate all of the characters I used as research for this thesis.



Figure 3: Antinous, *The Odyssey*. Photo Credit: Steve DiBartelomeo



Figure 4: Antonio, *Lion in the Streets*. Photo Credit: Nicola Percy



Figure 5: David, *Lion in the Streets*. Photo Credit: Nicola Percy



Figure 6: Michael, *Lion in the Streets*. Photo Credit: Nicola Percy



Figure 7: Lily, *Lion in the Streets*. Photo Credit: Daniel Escudero

Appendix C: Audience Interviews from *Lion in the Streets*

Interview #1 – Christy Conway (Response received 4/28/17)

For the purposes of interview audience members I choose the format of email response as I felt I would get more honest responses not being directly in front of the person as they critiqued my work. This way they were able to take time to actively think about the open ended questions and respond.

Christy Conway
Age 22, Senior Film Production with a minor in Astrophysics

Q: When did you see *Lion in the Streets*?

A: March 5th 2017

Q: What parts of my performance resonated with you or what about my performance stood out to you?

A: Noah's entire performance resonated with me, as an actor and an audience member. His ability to perform four different characters and make physical distinctions between them was truly mesmerizing to watch. As Isobel's father, he vocally changed his voice to have an accent similar to Isobel's. He was stoic and proud, when he existed in his daughter's memories. When Noah was the other woman, his ability to alter his voice to a higher register and move effeminately with his hips, clearly diminished him from Isobel's father.

Q: How did my performance affect you?

A: As an actor, Noah's ability to alter his voice and physicality really resonated with me. Actors use their physicality and voices to mold themselves into these distinctly different characters that audiences may not suspect them to be able to portray at first glance. Noah clearly demonstrated his vocal and physical techniques and talent throughout the play, and should be proud of his performance.

Interview #2 – Victoria Gardiner
(Response received 4/23/17)

Victoria Gardiner
Age 22, Senior Theater Arts Major, MA Candidate (2017-2018)

Q: When did you see *Lion in the Streets*?

A: Saturday February 25th, 2017

Q: What parts of my performance resonated with you or what about my performance stood out to you?

A: Lily is far and away the character who I remember the most, I think for a variety of reasons. That character transformation was the most evidently significant from you as the actor, her material was the most provocative, and overall that particular vignette in the play is the one I remember the most. There's a combination of it being my favorite and it being the one I saw before getting lost in the confusion of the memory play. Lily resonated with me in a number of ways: an example of strong female sexuality, a strong personality, which completely shattered the conventions of her social situation, and as a figure who provoked both a mental and physical arousal response in me as an audience member. Michael and ...I can't for the life of me remember the name of the object of Rodney/Emmet's fantasy, but him... were both interesting as examples of queerness, but they were so raw and visceral that I disengaged from them to a certain degree for my own safety. Isobel's father was a captivating icon on stage, but he did not resonate with me other than visually.

Q: How did my performance affect you?

A: I suppose I've sort of wrapped this answer into my answer above but: overall the performance affected both mental and physical stimulation. I was moved to sympathy, anger, disgust, arousal, objectification, and sorrow through a variety of characters. The emotions each character inspired came quickly and furiously, not leaving me with much room to breath and often producing a feeling of being overwhelmed, but not at all to the performance's detriment. In Lily I saw elements of a person I would like to be, along with elements of a person I would never ever want to be anything like. Michael was confusing, but also rather close to home with my own experiences as a queer youth in organized religion. The man whose name I can't remember is one of my demons. Either the hatred others who I have loved have directed at me or the hatred I have directed at myself. Confronting a lot of those things was frightening, which is not to downplay the benefit of having attended the performance, thank you for doing a great deal of emotional labor for me. The performance was difficult to watch, but not without reward and certainly not at all for a lack of being technically astute and emotionally impactful. It was moving on a night

where I had not anticipated, and had even tried to close myself off from being so thoroughly moved.

Interview #3 – Joe Krempetz

(Response received 4/27/17)

Joe Krempetz

Age 22, Senior Theatre Arts Major at UCSC

Q: When did you see *Lion in the Streets*?

A: March 3rd 2017

Q: What parts of my performance resonated with you or what about my performance stood out to you?

A: I think what stood out to me most about your performance was the wide range of emotions you were able to successfully portray. *Lion In the Streets* seems particularly oriented towards multi-talented actors capable of representing a variety of characters onstage, and I was impressed to see it pulled off successfully, by yourself and the other lead performers.

Q: Did or How did my performance affect you?

A: A particular moment that I remember was the (one-sided) fight between you and Emmet's character (Froggy?) It's always startling to see something violent onstage in a live performance, but the contrast between the violence of that moment, and the friendly reunion earlier in the scene was amplified to me after watching you be sassy, comedic, and friendly in your other roles throughout the play. I was particularly impressed by your ability to escalate your intensity without reaching an unsustainable point, and I went home with yours and Emmet's performances on my mind.

Interview #4 – Alyssa Ponce
(Response received 4/30/17)

Alyssa Ponce

Age 19, Sophomore Theater Arts and History of Art and Visual Culture

Q: When did you see *Lion in the Streets*?

A: March 5th 2017

Q: What parts of my performance resonated with you or what about my performance stood out to you?

A: The very first scene you acted in was incredibly relevant to my life. Your character did exactly what I would have done. They watched a family fall apart and were quiet. But your presence was more than felt. The presence was disturbing and harsh because of how off putting it was to watch you be a factor to someone else's pain that was being poured out in that moment. It was relatable in that you watched a domestic and tragic situation play out in front of you. Sometimes when actual high-tension situations unfold in front of us we have to wait for the right moment to speak up. You weren't overacting and acting hurt or scared. Then you stood up for yourself. You said the harsh bitter truth of the situation. You spoke your truth. You did the same with the character that kissed Emmet. It wasn't overdone, you acted angry in the right ways that are honest and yes, sad, but relatable.

Q: Did or How did my performance affect you?

A: Your performance, in a play with such intense expression and emotion, reminded me what it means to be human. Not that what you were doing was by any means natural. You had a phone call on stage, and you fought with someone, but they were honest, human emotions that were being felt. It was like my eyes were opened to the fact that we as humans are indeed capable of these levels of desperation, anger, and violence. It was hard to watch sometimes. No one wants to realize that they are capable of horrible things. But you were honest about just that.

Interview #5 – Travis Rynders

(Response received 4/29/17)

Travis Rynders
23, Senior Theatre Arts

Q: When did you see *Lion in the Streets*?

A: I saw one of the Friday performances.

Q: What parts of my performance resonated with you or what about my performance stood out to you?

A: I really noticed the amount of presence you brought to the father character. He was imposingly soft somehow. It made me unsure if I should feel at ease by his presence or intimidated and was very familial.

Q: Did or How did my performance affect you?

A: While this character was on stage I was inspired to reflect onto my own relationships with my father. I found myself questioning the relationship we all have with family. I was thinking what makes us love and seek comfort from someone we know can't give us what we need? Why do we have this tender feeling for someone who's relationship isn't tender.

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