THE LIBERATION OF ACTING

A SELECTION OF 26 STUDIES AND CLASSES

By

Peter Bridgmont

Foreword by Mark Rylance
Woodcut by Edward Gordon Craig
DEDICATION

To students past, present and future.
FOREWORD

Peter and Barbara Bridgmont made a profound difference to my persona as an actor with their teaching about voice and speech. I use the word ‘persona’ carefully, as they taught me how to move with sound, through sound, persona. In our visual-material age, sound is the great undiscovered or forgotten land for actors and audiences. Reason and Emotion are all very well in speech, much needed, but with Peter and Barbara I learnt of the limbs of speech, the feet, the legs, the arms, the great will and beautiful spirit to move with speech. Just as a marvellous javelin thrower wills his spear down the pitch to the winning distance and harnesses every muscle necessary in perfect balance to achieve his aim, so, when appropriate, we speak in space and silence. It was a lucky day for me when I met them; they know some great secrets and forgotten pathways.

Mark Rylance
PREFACE

Dear Colleagues,

having completed eight years as an actor in weekly repertory companies, twice nightly touring, and a survival course in London’s West End, a day came when I was given a small booklet introducing the work of the actor and stage designer Edward Gordon Craig. His book, ‘On the Art of the Theatre’, stopped my career. For the first time in my life I put myself out of work, wrote to Craig, made masks and pined for the stage. This came to life again when I joined Joan Littlewood’s Theatre Workshop and, incidentally, met my future wife Barbara, who was at that time the darling of the Company. Two seasons with Workshop brought to life the dreams of a new theatre; inspired by Craig. I was invited to work with Rudolf Laban. This heady life was completed by a honeymoon in Vence and three interviews with Craig. I formed my own Mime Company and, after three years of touring, determined to stay at home. Our other inspiration was the ‘Speech and Drama Course’ of Rudolf Steiner. We studied his speech technique with Dr Ernst and his wife and later with a fine teacher; Maisie Jones. We formed our own school in our own theatre, teaching and touring for the next twenty-four years. Finally, semi-retired, we met many young actors, queuing for work. At least in my time we had Weekly Rep. Today’s young talents are not so fortunate.

Putting together all that Barbara and I have done in our school with the dogged help of Elisa Terren, a tenacious actress and relentless critic with the voice of today echoing down the corridors of yesterday, we created this Book.

With these studies you can work alone, with a colleague, with friends, form a company, or form a school if you must. Let actors begin to discover what they have got and from their talent and no one else’s look towards what the future of the live theatre wants from you. For a time, let the actor go free and make his own discoveries and laws. It is time he took over the reins and drove the theatre into the magical world where it belongs!
INTRODUCTION

When asked what the difference was between the Chrysalis Theatre Acting School and the more conventional drama schools, I would answer that our work comes out of the periphery; as opposed to out of the central, centripetal, or centrifugal impulse. In other words instead of thought, breath, speech, gesture, and the impulse to move coming entirely from within yourself, they would approach you as an inspiration out of the periphery; stimulated by ‘Entheos’ from which the word enthusiasm comes, and originally meant ‘to be touched by the Gods’.

All these studies take for granted that a living actor is communicating with a living audience, and therefore they are only relevant to live theatre. So, presenting all the exercises and ideas developed in this work, is only like placing the tools into a sculptor’s hands; from then on he’s on his own to create the future. Giving him the tools is an activity from the present and even from the past; the development lies in the future. Therefore what I say only describes the exercises, the purpose of them, and perhaps the history, but it’s from the experience of DOING the exercises that you make discoveries; after all ‘Drama’, in Greek, actually means ‘A DOING’.

If you ask an actor to create something with no thought of what may result, then there is a space for discovery; we do not know the future, and that not knowing is our freedom. But if you work on something where you know what the result ‘should’ be, then it has no freedom and therefore no future. When you walk into the unknown it may also have no future, but there still is a very good chance that something will arise from your work which until then you had never conceived.
When visiting California I would always try to take some time off to visit a surfing beach, for I always felt the surfer to be like an actor. There is the actor/surfer on his little stage, the surfing board, being carried by the huge wave of drama. Without the wave where is the drama?

On the beach there are practice boards on springs for the surfer to rehearse his moves. But we all know there is no surfing without the waves. In theatre the actors on their stage should reveal the large wave which carries them through the play. Marie Steiner, the speech teacher, illustrated this in speaking alone by saying, “First master the audible – then discover the inaudible – in the spoken word – and then reveal the inaudible in the audible.”
FIRST STUDY
RELEASE

The living space around the artist is the support to all his work. The actor, as a speaker in live theatre, is fully aware of it. He then imagines an approaching flow of activity; as though from another, perhaps spiritual, world, coming over his head and plunging; by way of his physical breath and the vibrating activity of the larynx, to soar onwards into the material space. Such pictures are essential; one may change them, improve them but never forget them. The gathering of the approaching desire to speak is balanced by the equal desire to release the speech into whirling space.

Breathing Out

In order to begin to sense this idea of coming from the periphery we need to learn to exhale. Today we store breath; it is even a technique for speaking; we store breath and then release it, as though rationing it for future use. This style of breathing lives with us in our daily experience; we can breathe in, but find it more difficult to breathe out. We are inhalers.

This holding onto the breath is also psychological. We so often save something, hold back, withdraw. Our very speech is restrained and presses against a deep instinct not to release. The actor expresses emotion by apparently restraining it. We guess what the emotion may be by his disguise of it and if he then has to release pent-up feelings, according to the demands of the play, a deep resistance to such a demand causes him to wrestle with his voice and force it out against, it would seem, his inclination. This is not a criticism of actors for it is deeply embedded in our modern cultural life. To release the word on the breath almost calls for a complete reappraisal of one’s lifestyle.
The pity is; the breathing technique for opera singing has been passed on to speaking in drama schools. By all means store the breath for singing, but not for speaking; they are two completely different techniques.

This first exercise is one to practice exhaling.
Use up all your breath in each line. One could even slightly collapse in each line.

**Breathing Out**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oh no</th>
<th>O why did it have to be now?</th>
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To lift our concept of speech from the breathing, larynx, lips, tongue and teeth, which are so important in elocution, we adopt a style that we call ‘spear throwing’. This consists of reaching back into the invisible space behind you and then imagining that out of this space comes the impulse to release one’s speech into the theatre.

The following exercise brings into play our Spear Throwing Style.

**Exercise:**

I throw long spears  
I throw them High  
I throw them Far  
Let’s throw Spears.

Description: Spear throwing was part of speech training in the ancient times and even now one can speak of the “spear throwing style”.

Instruction: Stand sideways to your aim. Looking over your left shoulder, and stretching out your left arm, you should hold the spear upright in your right hand and say “I throw”. On the word “long” you lift your imaginary spear above your head and pointing forwards you lean back stretching out your arm behind you. As you reach back, picture that your arm encompasses the blue sky so that your impulse to throw comes from the cosmos. You lean and stretch back and then picture on the word “spear” that an invisible impulse flings your arm forward in an arc, always at full stretch, and as you fling your invisible spear you cry out “spear.”

You stand again within yourself and say “I throw”, then on the word “them” you reach back across the blue heavens, collect the impulse which flings the invisible spear forward again, and cry “High”. The same with “Far” and finally “Lets throw”; standing and silently reaching back into the invisible world silently receive the impulse to fling the spear forward on the word “spears.”
I’d like to share this quote from an interview with William Gaskill; speaking about Laurence Olivier:

“I suppose the outstanding impression I’m left with is his energy. My memories are of those moments when he projects his energy outwards – in speaking, for example, when he hurls a line as if it were a javelin. He has the ability to take his voice and actually throw it, knowing exactly where it will go.”

With the same sense of Spear Throwing in the speech, but without the movements, deliver these lines:
Exercises

The War Song of the Saracens [Excerpt]. By James Elroy Flecker

We are they who come faster than fate;
We are they who ride early or late;
We storm at you ivory gate;
Pale kings of the sunset, beware!
Not in silk nor in Samet we lie,
Not in curtained solemnity die,
Among women who chatter and cry,
And children who mumble a prayer,
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp,
And we rise with a shout and we tramp,
With the sun or the moon for a lamp,
And the spray of the wind in our hair.

Fundamental approach in this study

• Sense that the speech comes downwards from above and descends as a breath into the physical mechanics of vibrating tone. Like a waterfall. In the Greek this would be called the vital life force: RYTHMOS.

• You commence your impulse to speak as though it comes from above and behind you, as though the impulse to speak came from another realm.

• You as a speaker provide lungs, larynx, teeth, tongue and so forth (we deal with this later), but you reach back to grasp the spirit of speech when spear throwing.
SECOND STUDY

SPEECH AND SPACE

The inner movement of the speaker is revealed in his speech. Physical movement, dance and gesture play an important part in creative speaking. This may sound most strange, but one of the most repeated criticisms from a director, which can be irritating for the actor, is the statement “But your speech is not moving.” A speaker/listener will soon recognize when the words and the speaking are not moving. One of the most common faults, and I am sure elocution teachers will agree, is the ‘shortening’ of the word. By this I mean the time it takes to say a word.

The word today has no place to play; there is no space for the word to flow out, except maybe in the theatre. This is not only true for speaking; in modern dance you see now that the professional dancers jog forward, then back, then sideways, and then stick out an elbow, a knee, and so forth. In my time with Rudolf Laban and his Art of movement, this form of dance would have aroused ridicule and derision. Dancers are to move through space, to travel, to ‘indulge in space’. The jerking, sclerotic movement of today could have then been considered more of an illness than a style. The same applies to speaking, the word must move.

First of all we will illustrate this by Greek style ‘running’; in that time they would run with their arms outstretched before them, which would show their emotional state, as opposed to pumping away with the elbows. The runner is reaching for the winning post, he feels himself pulled towards it, his arms outstretched in front of him, and his feet flying under him; at the same time the wind is pushing, or carrying him. Only having passed the winning post will he plant his feet firmly to slow himself down. He has been flying.
As an exercise try to emulate our Greek runner. First you might want to run with the
sense of being attracted to the winning post; that you are being pulled and that for a
moment you resist the pull until you are ready and then imagine you are pulled (by
desire) to win or just to reach the finishing line. You feel dragged along, your legs only
just keeping up with you.
The second time round have the sense of being carried by the wind. Of course all this is
largely imagination but feel you are being lifted into flight. And in a third time sense both
the pull to the winning post and the sense of being carried by the wind. As you run feel
yourself rising in an arc and then settling down at the finish.

This is to live in space in a focused way and with the will and desire to travel across the
surface of the earth. For the Greeks a precious experience. As you fly you have to stamp
upon the earth in order to stop and resist the flight. But you have had “lift off.” A Greek
runner could be judged by the small impact of his foot in the dust as in his running he
feels to be flying.

This same applies to speaking, helping us towards the ‘Syllable Step.’ And what is it?
Well, simply, you step out each syllable of the line like in Greek running. So from your
experience of running you now release your words as if they were a little athlete coming
out of your mouth and running in front of you; in this way your speech becomes athletic.
If one does not develop this as a habit, one is literally speaking to oneself; in drama you
wish to reach out to your fellow actor and he in turn, in a duologue, will step the syllables
back to you. In this way we illustrate Molière’s thought that Drama happens between the
actors.

As an introduction to Syllable Step the following small exercises encourage the speaker
to experience the idea of stepping through the words out into space.
Exercise:
O why did it have to be now?  Tell me the truth
Why not later?  Seek and you shall find
Or earlier?  Speak out your mind
Before the meeting  See, the moon
Not on this day  Fly to the sun
Of all days  Look before you leap
It is too much  He who hesitates is lost
It cannot be  Do your very best
It must not be  Do not lose heart
Prevent it  May good fortune be with you
Cancel it
End it

If you wish, you could now go back to the excerpt of the War Song of the Saracens and try to travel along the lines with Syllable Steps.

The War Song of the Saracens [Excerpt]. By James Elroy Flecker

We are they who come faster than fate;
We are they who ride early or late;
We storm at your ivory gate;
Pale kings of the sunset, beware!
Not in silk nor in Samet we lie,
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Among women who chatter and cry,
And children who mumble a prayer,
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp,
And we rise with a shout and we tramp,
With the sun or the moon for a lamp,
And the spray of the wind in our hair.
Here are two speeches from The Seagull, by Anton Chekhov (Translation by David Iliffe). Try to use the same principle of ‘Stepping Out’.

TREPLEV: We need a new theatre – a theatre with new forms, and if we can’t have them, we’d better do away with the theatre altogether. I love my mother. I love her deeply. But she leads such a useless life, always going about with this novelist, her name bandied about in the newspapers – it torments me. I often wish I hadn’t got a famous actress for a mother. How much easier life would be if she were just an ordinary person. I suppose it’s stupid to be jealous of one’s own mother, but you’ve no idea how difficult it is for me sometimes, and how foolish I feel. She used to entertain all sorts of famous artists and writers and I used to be the only nonentity among them. They tolerated me only because I was her son. Who am I? What am I? I was sent down from University before I’d finished my third year. I have no talent and no money. My father was a shopkeeper in Kiev, though he did at least achieve distinction as an actor. But I, I am nothing. So you can imagine what it was like – all these artists and writers assembled in her drawing-room, graciously favouring me with their attention, and it seemed to me that they were looking me up and down and measuring my insignificance. I guessed their thoughts and suffered agonies of humiliation.

NINA: Why do you say you kissed the ground on which I walked? You ought to kill me. I’m so tired. If only I could rest – rest. I – am a seagull. No, I’m not – I’m not. I’m an actress. That’s right – an actress.

(Arcadina and Boris laugh off)

So he’s here. Well, well. Never mind. He didn’t believe in the theatre. He was always laughing at my dreams and little by little I stopped believing too, and lost heart. And then I began to get worried about things. I grew jealous. I was afraid of losing him and I was always anxious about the
child. I grew bitter and quarrelsome. My acting got worse and worse. I
didn’t know what to do with my hands. I didn’t know how to stand. I
couldn’t control my voice. You’ve no idea what it feels like when you
know you’re giving a bad performance. I – am a seagull. No, no, no – I’m
not. Do you remember when you shot a seagull? A man came along by
chance and killed it because he had nothing better to do – theme for a little
story – what am I saying? Where was I? Oh yes, the theatre. I’m not like
that any longer. I’m a real actress now. I enjoy acting. I revel in it. And
now when I act, I know I’m acting well, and it’s a wonderful feeling. And
while I have been living here, I have been walking; walking everywhere
and thinking, thinking and feeling, and every day I see things more clearly.
I know now, Costya, that for an artist – it doesn’t matter whether he’s an
actor or a writer – the important thing is not to be famous and to have your
name in lights nor any of the things I dreamed about, but simply to be able
to suffer; know how to bear your cross and have faith. I have faith and
life’s not so bad, and when I think of my calling, I’m not afraid of life.
THIRD STUDY

BREATH FORMS

We will now commence where we left off in the part about Breath in the first study. We talked about the singer’s technique of storing the breath and we introduced the concept of the actor’s technique, which should be to not store the breath. You might ask: “How does one speak by ‘not storing’ the breath?” We would say, “By releasing it”. Releasing all of it, in every possible place.

Musicians use the term phrasing. Imagine a violinist playing a whole phrase of music without once lifting the bow from the strings; tone, phrasing, enharmonics, would cease to exist. However, when he releases the bow from the strings for each new moment in the music, then the music begins to appear. The same applies to the speaker; where the violinist lifts his bow, we release the breath; as the violinist returns his bow to the strings, so we, with a new breath, return to the words.

For example let’s take this line from Macbeth:
“My Lord, as I did stand my watch upon the hill I did look towards Burnham, and anon methought, the wood began to move.”

In a way one could release the breath completely every time in the line one can ask ‘What?’, ‘When?’, ‘Where?’, ‘Why?’ etc. Then one has what the musicians would call phrasing.

So: “My Lord, [what?], as I [what?] did stand my watch [where?] upon the hill [what?] I did look [where?] towards [where?] Burnham, and [what?] anon [what?] methought [what?] the wood [what?] began [what?] to move.”

The actor, of course, would choose the best places to breathe, but one must have released all the breath in every small section.
Sometimes I will say to my students, “Don’t snatch for the breath”; this is because it isn’t necessary. We worry far too much about when to breathe in, whereas when the lungs are empty the air just pushes in. We don’t need to snatch for it.

At the beginning, when we start experimenting with this concept, we often find that we don’t actually know when we’re breathing in or when we’re breathing out, for, if I may say so, the technique of storing breath is incredibly lazy, because we can go on for a line or two without having to make any ‘breath’ decisions. One of the reasons why it can be difficult to allow one’s self to empty the lungs is that the storing of breath has something of a defensive quality about it. When we prepare to do something rather challenging often we suck in the breath and brace ourselves, this gives us a feeling of strength; if, on the other hand, we gasp out our last breath this can create a strong feeling of vulnerability.

This releasing of the breath in the line, on a broader level, releases the whole play, giving it freedom; instead of hanging on to it or standing in the way of drama the actor releases it. Bringing more breath into the speaking carries the drama to the audience. If you don’t have this releasing, nothing new can come in, and the play soon becomes stale. In the releasing of the breath we leave a space for something new to come in; we call it the ‘creative chink’.
I’ve included this picture of Nike because we feel that the large wings are but an extension of our lungs, and often as an imagination consider our breathing to be like the beating of large wings.

With these exercises, which we have already encountered in study one, this time say each line trying to release all your breath with the words, and then observe how much breath is left in the lungs by hissing out what is left.
Oh no  O why did it have to be now?
It can’t be true  Why not later?
They lie  Or earlier?
They are false  Before the meeting
It cannot happen  Not on this day
It will not happen  Of all days
All is lost  It is too much
All is gone  It cannot be
Nothing  It must not be
Nothing remains  Prevent it
                  Cancel it
                  End it

The following poem may help you to experience what we have been talking about. As a little hint, make sure you start strongly at the beginning of the line.

“Who comes so Gracefully” by Tom More

Who comes so gracefully?
Gliding along
While the blue rivulet
Sleeps to her song;
Song richly vying
With the faint sighing
Which swans in dying
Sweetly prolong.

So sung the shepherd boy
By the stream’s side,
Watching the fairy boat
Down the stream glide
Like a bird winging
Through the waves bringing
That siren singing
To the hushed tide.

“Stay,” said the shepherd boy
“Fairy boat, stay,
Linger sweet minstrelsy
Linger a day,”
But vain was his pleading
Past him unheeding
Song and boat speeding
Glided away.

This ancient Celtic verse, “The Mystery of Amergin”, allows us to breathe slowly into the nature forms described. The Priest does not think he is all of these things; he speaks on behalf of them. Therefore he lets them appear in his speaking. He does not stand in the way. The first line gently indicates the attitude and style we must adopt. Only the last three lines may denote the human individual who begins to question. Imagine it is in the stillness of the evening and then the voice begins.

Note: ‘Ahroe’ is intoned slowly with three separate tones: Ah – roo – ae.

The Mystery of Amergin.   Old Irish

I am the wind which breathes upon the sea. Ahroe,
I am the wave of the ocean, Ahroe,
I am the murmur of the billows, Ahroe,
I am the ox of the seven combats, Ahroe,
I am the vulture upon the rocks, Ahroe,
I am the beam of the sun, Ahroe,
I am the fairest of plants, Ahroe,
I am the wild boar in valour, Ahroe,
I am a salmon in the water, Ahroe, Ahroe,
I am a lake in the plain, Ahroe, Ahroe,
I am a word of science, Ahroe,
I am the point of the lance in battle, Ahroe,
I am the God who creates in the head the fire, Ahroe.
Who is it who throws light into the meeting of the mountain?
Who announces the ages of the moon?
Who teaches the place where couches the sun?

Next, we could approach a scene. The characters are aware of an invisible presence and can hear the presence speak. I wrote this little scene just for the actor to try and live in another world with their speaking. The scene has no esoteric significance whatsoever; it is for fun and a sense of speech that lives in the space around them. Our ability to truly listen has been damaged by our careless every day speaking; and our ability to speak has been damaged by ignorance of the true nature of listening. This scene may in a slight way awaken us to the breath life and space in both the qualities of speaking and listening. After all you don’t hear Chopin; you listen to Chopin.

Exercise
The Existence. Invisible gesture within the Group

A. Dear God, what a place.
B. Well, at least it’s dry and out of the wind.
C. But it’s so dark.
A. What do you expect – a moonlit castle would hardly look like Piccadilly Circus.
B. That name, Piccadilly Circus is somehow cheering.
A. Familiar.
C. It’s the unfamiliar that scares me.
B. The unknown.
A. (Quoting) The unknown passing through the strange.
B. I don’t mean we are unknown, I mean this place is unknown to us.
C. Or rather the situation is unfamiliar to us.
B. Yes, we are known – but this is certainly strange.
A. Anyway…
A.B.C. It’s dry and out of the wind. (Silence)
B. I think I’d prefer the wind and the rain.
C. We know that, the wind and the rain – but a moonlit castle – that’s difficult to come to terms with…
B. It’s so silent now.
C. And still.
A. And watchful.
B. Do you think it knows we are here?
C. Who?
B. The Castle.
A. Dear God, what a conversation – would you ever believe, that in the eyes of the world, we are intelligent, qualified people – we talk like idiots.
B. Listen.
C. What?
B. I heard a word.
A. A word?
B. “If” (As if quoting)
C. “If”?
A. I heard a word – a whisper (Quoting) “I”.
C. “If I”…. (Pause) “Exist.” I heard it, I heard it.
A. “If I exist.”
B. “If I exist” – God, what a thing to say.
C. What a thing to think – “If I exist.”
A. But who is saying it?
C. “Who.”
B. What?
C. I heard “who.”
A. (Softly) So did I.
A. “I.”
B. I heard it.
C. I heard it.
B. We heard it.
C. “Who am I?”
A. “If I exist, who am I?”
B. Oh God, save our souls. (Weeps)
C. Save its soul.
A. There again.
B. Yes.
C. I heard it.
A. “If I exist, who is I?”
C. We don’t know who you are.
B. You don’t exist.
A. You do. You do. Lost soul, you do exist. (Silence)
C. It’s gone. (Long pause)
B. You know, this place could be quite cosy for the night.
A. Do you think we have done a good deed?

To exhale the breath into the word is a vital quality, without such an ambition the mechanical side of speaking will predominate. To store breath is frankly unhealthy and inartistic.
FOURTH STUDY

STEPPING OUT AND WRESTLING

Speech travels parallel to the surface of the earth. We sensed this with the flight of the spear (First Study), the reaching back and flinging forward; and with running (Second Study). The sense of running in speech is known as “Stepping Out” and “Syllable Step”. First we must sense an element of flight in every syllable; if we say a one-syllable word, “Why?” for example, let it appear to travel across the room or studio. Then two syllables, “Wherefore?” or “cannot” is now two steps away from the speaker and yet each syllable still flies.

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<td>LENGTHEN</td>
<td>LEPROSY</td>
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<tr>
<td>languish</td>
<td>LITTLENESS</td>
<td>LIKEABLE</td>
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Now, the actor’s speech travels by way of syllable step; thus you sense that each syllable of the line is leaping ahead of you. The single lines that are listed below are actually set out to encourage one actor in his speech to step from word to word and another actor, or
actors, to physically step out the line with their feet. Thus the speaker should impel the actor to move and the actor feels impelled to move by the speaker.

Lines for Stepping Out

• Now, now, now, I begin to suspect that he does not speak the truth.
• I doubt it – I doubt it very much – I can’t imagine that he would do it.
• Can’t you see, can’t you see how stubborn you are?
• I am amazed; amazed to hear you say such a thing.
• Never, never, never in a thousand years, would I agree to such a thing.
• Couldn’t we try to reach – to reach some arrangement, come to – come to some agreement?
• For God sake – can’t you see what is happening, can’t you – understand?
• Now it’s all over – all finished – thank God for that.
• You know, I have a funny feeling that it is all going to be alright – it’s going to be fine.
• I wish I could find a way out of this – I really do.
• Maybe he’ll come back, maybe he’ll return – and then be sorry and say that he is sorry and then we will all laugh and be glad.

Who benefits from this? The Audience! Because they inwardly copy not only the movement of the speech, but also the movement of the actor. In this lies the magic of live theatre. As ballet-goers inwardly dance like the dancers, and operagoers inwardly sing, so in theatre we copy the actors in their speaking and movement, Hamlet, Archie Rice, Nina; we are all of these. This is why Joan Littlewood would march onto the stage in the middle of rehearsal and shout, amidst a lot of swearing, “Where is the Drama?” We were too tired to answer. “There,” she’d say pointing out into the darkness “There! With the audience!”

Let’s return to our verse from The War Song of the Saracens. This one verse in rhythm, style and sense gives the feeling of running in speaking, a sense never to be lost again!
The rhythm of the lines is short-short-long, an anapaest, all of which we will talk about later.

The War Song of the Saracens. By James Elroy Flecker

We are they who come faster than fate;
We are they who ride early or late;
We storm at your ivory gate;
Pale kings of the sunset, beware!
Not in silk nor in Samet we lie,
Not in curtained solemnity die,
Among women who chatter and cry,
And children who mumble a prayer,
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp,
And we rise with a shout and we tramp,
With the sun or the moon for a lamp,
And the spray of the wind in our hair.

Exercise
One person speaks the lines, stepping out the words, and the colleague should only obey if he feels the force of the order.

-“Cross the room.” *Step out the words*
-“Now return.” *You call to him and maybe even point but the voice directs the order.*

Your colleague may obey or demand more movement in your speaking.)
-“Would you kindly cross the room?”
-“And now would you be so good as to kindly return?”
(As you see I’ve tried to make each line longer, to encourage the stepping out)

“Move that chair.”
“Move it back.”
“Would you be so good as to move that chair?”
“And now, if it is not too much trouble, move it back.”

“Look out of the window.”
“Don’t look out of the window.”
“I would advise you to look out of the window.”
“I would not consider it advisable to look out of the window.”

Note: All this is a kind of game and you can devise your own orders.

The next step is to apply this to dramatic conversation. We move into duologue by way of wrestling. Stand opposite a partner and place the palms of your hands against theirs; you agree on the level of pressure. In this way you can perform a dance moving your arms this way and that still pressed together, you go high and low, right and left dancing in circles; the movement can become bigger and bigger until you are dancing all around the space. The purpose is not to throw your partner down; that is, you must never step away and let him or her fall. There is a mutual understanding that through the palms of your hand you sense your partners Will. Once you feel you are in tune you separate but still maintain an invisible contact. You move as far apart as the stage or room will allow and continue circling each other. You can come together and fly apart as you choose, this trains one to maintain contact with your colleague across an acting area. That is the invisible gesture of duologue, or dramatic conversation made visible.

Moving on to duologue. For the following exercise, try to maintain a space between the actors; sense that the movement that came from the physical wrestling is now in the spoken duologue. Also, imagine that the whole duologue moves like a figure eight between the actors.
Wrestling into Duologue

A. Why don’t you do as I say?
B. Because there is no reason to.
A. There is every reason. If you think carefully.
B. Why bother to think carefully, I can feel that it would be better to leave things as
   they are.
A. No. Sometimes you make me so angry!
B. I make you angry! I sometimes wonder why I ever talk to you.
A. Alright, all right. Let’s start again. Unless I write to him and explain, he will
   never understand.
B. He does not need to. It does not matter what he thinks.
A. It does!
B. No. What he thinks does not change the situation.
A. True, but out of common decency we should inform him how we came to our
decision.
B. What’s the point!
A. Never mind the point, let’s write to him.
B. All right, if you have nothing better to do – by all means write.
A. I have a lot of better things to do but I am trying to help an awkward situation.
B. Created by yourself.
A. It was not!
B. It was!
   (Silence)
A. I will write to him.
B. No, I will.
A. You’ll just be insulting.
B. No I won’t. I’ll be gentle.
A. Promise!
B. Yes.
A. Let’s shake on that.
B. Let’s. (They shake hands)
FIFTH STUDY
STRENGTHENING THE SPEECH

If I may paraphrase Laurence Olivier, he said the two qualities needed in an actor were physical strength and the ability to maintain concentration throughout a whole production. The speaker must not only be aware of the physical body with regard to balance, harmony in gesture, and the sense of support for speaking, but also be aware that the energy in the muscle can be transferred into the speaking. In the old days you would often hear a good director saying: “Bring some muscle into your speaking, boy!” To speak freely requires a firm support of the physical.

The firm stance of the epic speaker creating a tripod of strength with his staff indicates that his power needs such a support. We may not require a staff (though I have struck this pose with a broom handle, and found it effective!) but the firm legs and the sense of planting the foot in the earth is part of the speaker’s technique. So, the muscular strength in the legs supports the body of air floating in the lungs, whilst the head, with its powerful eye of intelligence, guides the speaker in his or her work.

Physical movement springs from below; it is Dionysian, so you have the athlete, the dancer and the mime. Air comes from above; it is Apollonian, so you have thought, speech, and song. It is only in acting that the two, the Dionysian and Apollonian, work together. Apollo carries us with thought and speech; Dionysius supports us with running and gesture. If you stand with these two gestures in mind then you understand the actor and the beginning of his art.

So, a few exercises to strengthen the legs will not come amiss; if the legs are weak we compensate by tension in the shoulders. Having a massage for the back and shoulders to ease tension and pain is a sort of nonsense. If the legs are strong then the shoulders have no need to lift up the body through misplaced tension.
Exercise

Try being a circus horse, your legs dancing across the floor with great energy, knees high, beating the floor with your feet. Your upper body relaxed. Your horse can go forwards, backwards, gyrate, and so forth but always the upper body (hands, head, and eyes) remains calm. You can observe this quality on the Parthenon frieze in the British Museum, where horses gallop with great power and upon which sit a few youths, relaxed but in control.

With the circus horse we get the Dionysian side, now we move to the Apollonian side.

With the following exercises, which were developed by Barbara Bridgmont, bring the speech forward to the teeth, tongue and lips. Taste the sounds. It is essential to develop a love not only for speaking, but also for the very sounds themselves. The mouth shaping the sounds can be made more conscious if you imagine eating a sour apple.
Articulation Exercise

First test the tongue
With this trotting little ditty,
Steadily striding,
Not tottering nor stuttering,
But strongly striving strictly
To tap the “Tongue-tip drum.”

Then thrust through with breath
And,
As with breezes freshening,
Everything that’s static
Starts to frisk and dance.
Leaves, like rascals,
Go racing with each other,
Or, reeling merrily,
Somersault and cartwheel
Round and around
In a frantic, frenzied ring.

Now ride with the storm clouds –
Roll with the thunder –
Rage,
Rush,
Crash,
Till the rainbow shines.
Vowels

Sense the right position for each vowel sound. ‘Ah’ at the back of the mouth, or soft palate; ‘Ay’ the middle of the mouth; ‘Ee’ coming between the teeth; ‘Oh’ framed by the lips; ‘Oo’ moving out beyond the lips.

Five Basic English Vowel Sounds

**AH** (Open Monophthong)
Dark the lake –
Dark the shore –
Dark sky where one star
Sparkled like a gem.
Calm, cold night, frost enchanted;
Then, from the farther shore,
Owl answered owl.

**AY** (Vanished Diphthong)
I say my name
I stake my claim
I state the nature of my aim
Make no mistake
I will not break

I say again
Whatever state he is in
I shall remain his friend.
So go away and stay away.
EE (Open Monophthong)
To be eager –
To see keenly –
To feel deeply –
To speak freely –
To weep briefly –
To sleep sweetly –
To shield those in need.

We are three incredibly eager people
Preaching what we believe in,
Seething with idealistic speeches,
Teaching unbeatable precepts!

We are free - - -
If you think yourself free!

OH (Vanish Diphthong)
Hold his golden harp by his head,
Fold his woven cloak over his bed,
The tale is told, the last word said,
So the old troubadour goes home.

Behold the glowing rose
Unfolding golden glory;
Or hold a polished stone.
Who knows its story?

OO (Open Monophthong)
Who flew from the tomb?
Who flew from the hollow room?
Too few were those who knew.
Yet soon,
Through gloom,
New flowers of beauty bloom.

Who knows the solution to the
Unroofed wretchedness of those who
Stoop under the cruelty
Of hunger’s rule?
We must move soon!

The sound of hooves recedes
Through forest glooms
Cool night, moonlight
And silence.

Other English Open Vowels (open Monophthongs)

**AH**
Ah! Marvellous garden of garlanded arches
Of roses, and arbours for harbouring glances
From hearts that would hide from the farthingaled dances
That pass and re-pass on the green grass lawns.

O garden, now shrouded in sparkling darkness,
Where glow-worms and starlight play answering parts
In the patterns of night. Elfin carnival starts
And far through the larches, the laughter of fauns.
I heard the first bird singing
In an early burst of sun,
And from his perch such joy he hurled
Upon the world, the wordless world,
I turned, and could observe his way
Of waking the earth to the stir of day.

Thirty girls with swirling skirts
Were flirting with the colonel.
They turned and smirked and twirled and jerked
But he remained paternal.

“No More hawks ought to be caught,”
Said the lord of the hall this morning,
“For no glory may be bought
By the fall of a Hawk.”

This glorious early morning, sought,
Caught before fall of rain,
When warmth is born
From the cool of dawn,
And the chorus swells again,
As foot and paw
And claw and wing
Explore or chase or soar and sing
Lords of their own domain,
When men are but guests at Nature’s board,
Enthralled by her as they walk abroad,
Through the orchard walled to the field’s fresh dews,
Revives, re-forges, renews.

K. L. S. F. M.
The positions of these five consonants in the mouth, is the foundation for all consonants. ‘K’ is at the back of the mouth; ‘L’ comes forward with the tongue; ‘S’ we’ve reached the teeth; ‘F’ we come to teeth and lips; and ‘M’ is the two lips creating the final sound.

When speaking it is possible to sense the movement forward and backwards of the

K
The rocky current of the brook
Kept company with clinking hooves.

Clear then carve the crystal rock,
Create great glory.

Torchlight crimson on the copper kettledrums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes.

L
Lissom, lightsome, lovely ladies
Glide among gilded pillars tall,
Whilst the gallant cavaliers
Splash loud laughter round the hall.

Lovely lilies blooming
In the middle of the lake;
Lifting and unfolding
Their petals to the light.
S
See, see, the east is streaming light!
See, see, it reaches westward!
Night recedes.

Sliding, insinuating
Slithery, slippery beastie,
Snatch, swallow then swell
With your strangled prey.
Scrape your scales through the swooning grasses.
Sinister shape, you have vanished away.

Suddenly the sultry sirens sang
Their susurrant song,
And thus seduced sad sailors
Into the silent and sombre sea.

F
“Fee, fie, fo, fum,”
Fierce the giant frets and fumes.
Captive feet and fingers flail,
Then frantically fight free.

The frost’s fantastic surfacing upon the ferns’ curled fingers,
Feels the firm force of the sun’s first rays.
The infinitely fragile forms melt and fade,
Leaving the brown fronds bare.
While the mists of morning moisten
All the meadows by the stream
Which meanders, making music,
Like the melody from a dream,
I can see the molten sun,
Where grim mountains meet the sky,
See the menace of the armies
Of the foemen marching by.

May we move mountains
May we move men
That souls who come
May find their home.

The awareness of the position of the sounds in your mouth, as shown here, is very important as it allows the speech to move freely on the breath.

Here is an Epic poem in all its grandeur. Remember Laurence Olivier, “strength and concentration”, remember, “releasing the breath”, “Taste the sounds”, “find the mood”, “sense the rhythm” Trochaic, short-long-short-long (we will talk about this later), and go through the whole poem. It is exhausting!

THE RAVEN - Edgar Allan Poe

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“T is some visitor” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more.”
Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;– vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore –  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore –  
   Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
   “T is some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; —  
   This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you” – here I opened wide the door;—  
   Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore!”  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”  
   Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.  
“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then what thereat is, and this mystery explore –
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; –

`T is the wind and nothing more.”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of Lord or Lady, perched above my chamber door –
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door –

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,

“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore;
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning – little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door –
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,

With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered – not a feather then he fluttered –
Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before –
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.”

Then the bird said, “Nevermore.”
Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore –
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ‘Never – nevermore.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore –
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee – by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite – respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!”
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”
“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! – prophet still, if bird or devil! –
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted –
On this home by Horror haunted – tell me truly, I implore –
Is there – is there balm in Gilead? – tell me – tell me, I implore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil! Prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us – by that God we both adore –
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore –
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting –
“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! – Quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

    Shall be lifted – nevermore!
SIXTH STUDY
TASTING THE SOUNDS

To complete this first section let us look at the sounds themselves, these we must grow to love. Impossible? Yet, a musician would not be considered eccentric if he or she said, “I love the tones that I can raise from my cello or violin. I love going from one tone to another. I love music and trying to play it.” This would not be so strange. The problem with our speaking is that we use it for a tool of communication every minute of the day. It has often become stale and flat; a shade melancholy, a means only of conveying meaning. Familiarity has wrung the soul out of it. Actors who live into the speaking, and there are still many of them, have to be most cautious or they could be accused of vanity, exaggeration, and so forth. So even a good actor hesitates to live into the sounds.

The usual words that are muttered or flung around have become so worn that, like an old raincoat, you would not display them as something of interest. Yet we can recall the beauty of the human speech; the strangeness, the aptness of sound in words, the joy of tasting the sounds. But we have to find a space for it, where we feel free to experiment, a hidden attic or studio. Having found a space we can begin to experiment with the sounds.

Exercise
If there is a group working together, or even just two of you, you stand scattered around in the space, relaxed, and one of you will carefully produce a sound. Let’s start with ‘S’, phonetically, in a hissing sound. Those listening move to this sound, quite freely, in whatever way they inwardly feel reflects the ‘S’ sound. The speaker expresses all forms of ‘S’ and the dancers respond in movements appropriate to the sound. The speaker then moves on to the sound ‘T’ and tries to make the sound behave in all manner of dance; heavy, quick, light, etc. Then the speaker intones an ‘E’ sound or ‘eeeee’ and the dancers ‘E’ around the studio; finally a great billowing and repeated ‘L’, the speaker indulges in ‘L’ of all kinds, and the dancers move it. Then the speaker will say the whole word ‘STEAL’ slowly and repeatedly, while the dancers mime each sound of the word as
it comes. That would be an introduction to human speech. Then you can change
speakers and words. You can use the following list or decide on your own words:

STEAL       LIFE       TIGHT
FLY         BIND       DEAD
CUT          PRAY       FIERCE
FEAR         BRAVE       (Etc…)
LOOSE        STRONG

One thing you will quite often discover is that the sound of the words often indicates the
content or meaning.

It is very useful when you are warming up first thing to go through a series of sounds and
then the word, but stay with the single sounds. Of course you use the phonetic sounds of
the letters rather then the alphabetical names, ‘M’ rather than ‘em’ and so forth. One can
go through all the sounds until one has completed our old friend the Alphabet, then into
words again if one wishes.

With the following list, try to mime the word as it is spoken, and try to sense that with its
sounds it describes itself.

DIG       ICE       HILL       SWING
SWIM      RAIN      STAMP      RUN
COLD      WARM      TREAD      JUMP
HOT       LAKE      STROKE     NO
FLOWER    RIVER     PAT        YES
LEAF      STREAM    POINT      (Etc…)

This can lead into great exploration into words, but make sure you always go back to the
single sounds, that have no sense by themselves and yet speak to you.
People might say that this is onomatopoeic, but it is not.
The following exercises have been created to arouse a feeling of taste for the sounds. Just to play with them is for the speaker a vital part of the work.

**Tasting the sounds – an exercise for actors speech**

Ah. If fathers could cast their shadows far before the young, they would become part of the new start that must last far into the future’s task.

B. Bedevilled by blinding bonds we press and strain against these bounds of past benefits and brace ourselves to burst asunder and breast the waves that pound and beat before us from future bold demands.

Ae. Stale, still and static, makes the present fail to invigorate. To separate ourselves from desperate states, we are made to gain step by step the strength to stimulate through pain the patience to face heroic fame.

M. Mention but the mood that methodical members of our group measure their majestic progress that mounts mountains of melancholy and pessimistic mystery, to march with purpose and meaning, to meet new monsters from the mysterious future.

Ee. Seek new peaks of stimulation by the dream that we feel the future will steer us with surety, weaving from scenes of eternal dreams the myths and legends of yesteryear into seeming victory.

D. Dashed down the slope of hopelessness yet determined to stand and demand our dues, the debt that must be paid. Desperately dragged towards danger and defeat, yet daggers drawn, we will defend our right to progress undaunted, undismayed, towards the dark forbidding future.

N. Never has it been as noticeable as now, that needless negative notions navigate the mind and unnecessarily numb the finer notions of finer minds and negate the nuance of positive natural normality.

O. Or to odious oracles that prophetically order our future as though ordained. Honour we owe them but a new order, abhorrent to olden times but the obsequious past must pay homage to the silent prophets of individual occult knowledge.

R. Wrenched from the winnowed thoughts, whence the wages of sin, wrought recklessly from reproachful elders. The repetition of the recent events and the
rapport of the representatives of future roles, regardlessly recount the re-occurring rivalry that has ripped the ragged and the wretched.

U. Universal is the use of Euphemism, Euphoria and further useless eulogies, invoking fools to usurp the stool of prophecy and mule–like, coolly disclose prudent but useless information for the future.

L. Lethargy. Loosely lay its lowly lazy and languorous length across the enthusiasm of less likely lovers. Though lost, these phlegmatics can boast of latent talents and latter–day legends.

Ah. Ah, rather had I a star that may carry me far from all that can mar the future paths and further bar all men from the start.

G. To gallop across the gaunt chasm of ghastly granite gradients and avoid gashes, crevices and other ghoulish gaunt and granulated crystalline, glass–like masses of grim earth.

Ae. Fair weather may not scare the unwary but care to repair our defences against the scaring nightmare or approaching, tearing, uncaring winds of stale air, haunted by yesteryear and daring to withhold the future’s summer fair.

Ch. The Scots light is licht, the night is nicht, between the chs is the ficht or fight, the micht or might, for the richt or right.

Ee. Creep needlessly into the steely creek that those for the future seek. Weary of the dreary meek and weak that feel the future bleak.

F. Frenetic and fearful, the foolish, fatal and fanatic friendship which soon enfeebles the force, to fire the fierce desire for the future. Their failure must fall like fickle blades into the forest of forgotten fables.

O. O, most holy, cold and lonely noble lord, lead us not into onerous offices of omens and prophecies but open to our hopes a token of the future.

S. Single-mindedness soon searches and searching solves the insurmountable sagas of past centuries and steers a course that soon discovers the searing truths of future years, so sought for by those who survey the social spheres with an eye to super-human senses.

U. Doomed are those who cruelly refuse those who would know or knew the foolish few may continue further towards the future.

T. Tried and tested is truth and verity. Tamed by the tempered steel of taut, tight
tension. We tread towards the true future, turning from the tame paths into the treacherous but finally triumphant tracks of true occultism.

A few more sounds…

V.W  The very venues of vain adventure
     That weave and wave like wind-blown
     Veils of wickedness – they will
     Wax and wane and reveal a welter
     Of what was – not what will be?
     A veritable vortex of whirling waste.

R   Restrict the rational requests of registered
     Representatives that require no respite
     In relentless re-generation of rational
     Relegation of responsive roles, whose
     Rates retain a remuneration rendered
     As a rank refusal for requisitioned rents.

E.   Tedious meanings dream away
     The real feelings for keeping indeed,
     The stream of meaning springing
     From the scheme of things.

Ae.  Failing to attain to ambitious aims
     Drains the vain claims of gains
     That escape the fate of states,
     Nor driven by greed to seek
     The teeming seams of silver
     That gleam bewitchingly.

T.D.  Technicalities tend to direct with
     Tenacious deliberations, create a tendency
     For dubious trends.
     Dissected through debates, through discretion,
     Discriminate between, doubtful tycoon-type delusions
And democratic-type intrusions.

L. Liquid assets lack long-term layers
Of loosely linked lengths of laborious life.
The land lost leaves only lessons to be learned.

A little verse playing with the sounds:

She leapt, loose limbed, twisting in space,
To touch with tiptoe the earth below,
Only to spring in an arc of flight,
A floating figure bathed in light.
Gripping the space then hurling it free,
Her limbs forming phantoms of shapes to see,
That lingered vibrating, slowly to fade,
Like the dreamworld, the dreamworld, the vision had made.

To complete this study, let’s apply what we have got from the previous exercises to some fine poetry.

SONNET 12
When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

SONNET 18
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

SONNET 29
When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
SEVENTH STUDY
THE SUPPORT OF SPACE

We will now move on to larger action, first involving this earlier idea of being “blown by the wind”. Either by your self, or with a group, play with the wind. First you can feel that you are pushed or carried by the wind as though Overwhelmed; then you turn and gently push against the wind, this is when a character is Asserting itself. Conversation consists of this basic principle; one person speaks and asserts himself or herself, sometimes quite gently, against the colleague who, very slightly, feels overwhelmed. Then in answer the other asserts himself and so on, and a kind of invisible figure of eight develops between the actors during conversation.

The following scene is a short exercise written for the performers to sense being either overwhelmed by the wind or asserting themselves against the wind. The wind for the moment can be defined as a form of living space and energy that we call from the periphery to carry our body this way and that and to support our speaking.

In this little scene the secretary is overwhelmed by the wind with the fear. The manager pushes against the wind with his suspicion.

WIND BLOWING SCENE

A. (Speaking on the telephone) No. No. You must not call me at this number. I’ve told you. I made it quite clear you must not ring here. If you… (Hastily sets down phone with guilty fear.)
B. (Enters) What’s going on?
A. Oh, they have just rung to say that the whole arrangement is off, that someone has written and cancelled our contract with them. It’s most mysterious.
B. There is no mystery. I cancelled the contract.
A. You did?
B. Yes.
A. But why?
B. Because I don’t trust you.
A. I don’t understand.
B. I suspect that you are not being entirely honest with me. That you are planning to involve me in a complicated financial arrangement so that when I have to borrow money in order to fulfil the contract you will tell them I am financially at risk and they will then blackmail and threaten me into a new agreement.
A. Why should you think that I would do such a thing? I don’t understand you. Have you gone mad? Why have you invented such a wicked story? There is no reason for me to cheat, no point of purpose. I gain nothing by destroying our own business. Why are you behaving like this?
B. Give me the contract.
A. I haven’t got it.
B. Where is it?
A. Why do you want it?
B. To see if you have changed it behind my back.
A. Why should I?
B. Don’t argue. Give me the contract.
A. I don’t know where it is.
B. The contract!
A. You must be either joking with me or quite mad.
B. The contract!
A. I tell you it must be in the Bank. It is not here. I left it with the Bank. Why are you treating me like this?
B. Give me the contract. If you don’t then I must believe that you have re-written it to your advantage.
A. I have not got it. I haven’t seen it since we last discussed it. You said we should put it in the Bank. It was your idea. Yes, I remember now you said quite clearly, put it in the Bank. So I did. Now when was it? Last Thursday – no Tuesday. Yes, I
remember…

B. Go to Hell. *(He goes)*

A. *(Breathless, goes to telephone and rings)* He suspects, he knows, everything, everything! *(Rings off)*

The awareness of the wind blowing style is known as the large gesture, the invisible gesture pervading the stage and theatre. To discover and create these large invisible gestures is as much part of rehearsal in the live theatre, as detail of character or plot. An understanding of the movement throughout the stage and theatre is even more important than the details. Though for the actor the great challenge is not only to fill the theatre with the invisible gesture, mainly through speaking, but also with subtle physical gestures to guide the audience. Laurence Olivier pushing his beer glass away at the very end of “The Entertainer” could illustrate what we are talking about; a tiny gesture reflected his total despair. That is why an imagination of living in a storm for instance, during a conversation that hardly goes beyond normal behaviour is some of the magic of ‘Naturalism’ when the undercurrent is understood by the actor and acted out strongly.

Years ago I saw the ballet “Romeo and Juliet” and was, to my surprise, deeply impressed. I could almost say at one point it was for me a profound experience. Alarmed, as I am no great lover of ballet, I tried to work out why I was so caught up with the horror of this play, or rather ballet’s, ending. Then of course I understood. Behind it all there was the music, that magical music of Prokofiev, which was working on me as I watched the action. The story was in the orchestra pit, the display of the story was on the stage. The magical music worked on my soul beyond the sadness of the tale, and I had to admit to myself, that this ballet was for me a deep theatrical experience. The drama lay in the orchestra pit; in our case it’s in the tones of our speaking, not in action. In the invisible sound lies the heart of drama.

The previous scene we worked on is a preparation for the dynamics of the Othello scene that follows. But first let us do two warming up exercises. Move around the studio going
from attitude to attitude in your own time but trying to sense that the underlying impulse for each is either being overwhelmed by the wind, or asserting against the wind.

**WIND-BLOWING**

**OVERWHELMING**
- Looking.
- Listening.
- Fearful.
- Angry.
- Joyful.
- Finding.
- Aladdin’s cave.
- Admiring.
- A fan.
- Enthusiasm
- Receiving impressions.

**ASSERTING**
- Triumphant.
- Commanding.
- Searching.
- Challenging.
- Overseeing.
- Revolutionary.
- Pushing back.
- Resisting challenge.
- Defiant.
- Successful.

In this scene Othello is Asserting, and Desdemona Overwhelmed (…well nearly), it is these gestures that fill the theatre with drama, not just the understanding that he is suspicious and she is guiltless.

**OTHELLO**

*Act 3 Sc IV*

**OTHELLO** How do you, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA** Well, my good lord.

**OTHELLO** Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady.

**DESDEMONA** It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

**OTHELLO** This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

DESDEMONA
You may, indeed, say so;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

OTHELLO
A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

DESDEMONA
I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

OTHELLO
What promise, chuck?

DESDEMONA
I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTHELLO
I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

DESDEMONA
Here, my lord.

OTHELLO
That which I gave you.

DESDEMONA
I have it not about me.

OTHELLO
Not?

DESDEMONA
No, indeed, my lord.

OTHELLO
That is a fault.

That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while
She kept it,
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose't or give't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA Is't possible?

OTHELLO 'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DESDEMONA Indeed! Is't true?

OTHELLO Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

DESDEMONA Then would to God that I had never seen't!

OTHELLO Ha! Wherefore?

DESDEMONA Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO Is't lost? Is't gone? Speak, is it out o' the way?

DESDEMONA Heaven Bless us!

OTHELLO Say you?

DESDEMONA It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHELLO How!

DESDEMONA I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO Fetch't, let me see 't.

DESDEMONA Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit:
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHELLO Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.

DESDEMONA Come, come;
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

OTHELLO The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA I pray, talk me of Cassio.

OTHELLO The handkerchief!
DESDEMONA  A man that all his time
        Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,
        Shared dangers with you,-

OTHELLO    The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA  In sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO    Away!

I’ve added these other scenes where you can experiment or discover for yourself the invisible gestures.

ROMEO AND JULIET

JULIET  O, here comes my nurse,
        And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks
        But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.

(Enter Nurse, with cords)

Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? The cords
That Romeo bid thee fetch?

NURSE  Ay, ay, the cords.

(Throws them down)

JULIET  Ay me! What news? Why dost thou wring thy hands?

NURSE  Ah, well-a-day! He’s dead, he's dead, he's dead!
        We are undone, lady, we are undone!
        Alack the day! He’s gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

JULIET  Can heaven be so envious?

NURSE  Romeo can,
        Though heaven cannot: O Romeo, Romeo!
        Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

JULIET  What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?
This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.
Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'I,'
And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more
Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice:
I am not I, if there be such an I;
Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer 'I.'
If he be slain, say 'I'; or if not, no:
Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.

NURSE  I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes, --
God save the mark! --Here on his manly breast:
A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaub'd in blood,
All in gore-blood; I swounded at the sight.

JULIET  O, break, my heart! Poor bankrupt, break at once!
To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty!
Vile earth, to earth resign; end motion here;
And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier!

NURSE  O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!
O courteous Tybalt! Honest gentleman!
That ever I should live to see thee dead!

JULIET  What storm is this that blows so contrary?
Is Romeo slaughter'd, and is Tybalt dead?
My dear-loved cousin, and my dearer lord?
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom!
For who is living, if those two are gone?
NURSE  Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;
      Romeo that kill'd him, he is banished.

JULIET  O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

NURSE  It did, it did; alas the day, it did!

JULIET  O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
      Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
      Beautiful tyrant! Fiend angelical!
      Dove-feather'd raven! wolvish-ravening lamb!
      Despised substance of divinest show!
      Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
      A damned saint, an honourable villain!
      O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell,
      When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
      In moral paradise of such sweet flesh?
      Was ever book containing such vile matter
      So fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell
      In such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE  There's no trust,
      No faith, no honesty in men; all perjured,
      All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.
      Ah, where's my man? Give me some aqua vitae:
      These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
      Shame come to Romeo!

JULIET  Blister'd be thy tongue
      For such a wish! He was not born to shame:
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth.
O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

NURSE   Will you speak well of him that kill'd your cousin?

JULIET   Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
          Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,
          When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?
          But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?
          That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband:
          Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
          Your tributary drops belong to woe,
          Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.
          My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
          And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:
          All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?
          Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,
          That murder'd me: I would forget it fain;
          But, O, it presses to my memory,
          Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds:
          'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo--banished,'
          That 'banished,' that one word 'banished,'
          Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death
          Was woe enough, if it had ended there:
          Or, if sour woe delights in fellowship
          And needly will be rank'd with other griefs,
          Why follow'd not, when she said 'Tybalt's dead,'
          Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
          Which modern lamentations might have moved?
But with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,
'Romeo is banished,' to speak that word,
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
All slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banished!'
There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.
Where is my father, and my mother, nurse?

NURSE  Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse:
         Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

JULIET  Wash they his wounds with tears: mine shall be spent,
         When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.
         Take up those cords: poor ropes, you are beguiled,
         Both you and I; for Romeo is exiled:
         He made you for a highway to my bed;
         But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.
         Come, cords, come, nurse; I'll to my wedding-bed;
         And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

NURSE  Hie to your chamber: I'll find Romeo
         To comfort you: I wot well where he is.
         Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night:
         I'll to him; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

JULIET  O, find him! Give this ring to my true knight,
         And bid him come to take his last farewell.

(Exeunt)
RICHARD III

RICHARD  Lady, you know no rules of charity,
    Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

LADY ANNE  Villain, thou know'rt no law of God nor man:
    No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

RICHARD  But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

LADY ANNE  O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

RICHARD  More wonderful, when angels are so angry.
    Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
    Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave,
    By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

LADY ANNE  Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,
    For these known evils, but to give me leave,
    By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

RICHARD  Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have
    Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

LADY ANNE  Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make
    No excuse current, but to hang thyself.

RICHARD  By such despair, I should accuse myself.

LADY ANNE  And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused;
    For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,
    Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

RICHARD  Say that I slew them not?
LADY ANNE  Why, then they are not dead:
            But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

RICHARD  I did not kill your husband.

LADY ANNE  Why, then he is alive.

RICHARD  Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.

LADY ANNE  In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw
        Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood;
        The which thou once didst bend against her breast,
        But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

RICHARD  I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,
            which laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

LADY ANNE  Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind.
            Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:
            Didst thou not kill this king?

RICHARD  I grant ye.

LADY ANNE  Dost grant me, hedgehog? Then, God grant me too
        Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!
        O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

RICHARD  The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

LADY ANNE  He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.
RICHARD    Let him thank me, that help to send him thither;
         For he was fitter for that place than earth.

LADY ANNE    And thou unfit for any place but hell.

RICHARD    Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it

LADY ANNE    Some dungeon.

RICHARD    Your bedchamber.
EIGHTH STUDY
GESTURE BEFORE LINE

Stanislavski urged us, before speaking the line written by the playwright, to discover the thought that lay behind it; I have always gone a step further and tried to discover the gesture that lay behind the thought. I agree the thought is important but the actor is stimulated to speak out of the gesture that is formed from the line. For instance, get up and dance this line: “O for a muse of fire”. And now speak the line from your memory of the gestures. A drama consists of a series of living thoughts; thoughts transformed into gestures that cross the stage, wave their arms about, shout or cry. Our director, from the darkness of the theatre, can shout, “Lift the lines of the page!” or “I can see the print!” The way that we do this is by finding the gesture and it’s the gesture of the thought that speaks the line.

Even under pressure, as in live TV and radio broadcasting, you learn to read the line, transform it into a gesture, and then the gesture speaks the line.

I will invent a line now:
“How can you say such a thing?”

Process: read the line and immediately let it disappear into inner hidden gesture, for we don’t speak our thought immediately, do we, if at all? The gesture seethes inside you; it can move you. Now you go into a strong outer gesture from the impulse of the inner. For example you leap, you turn, you point, turn again, freeze in disbelief and stare. When the gesture springs into speech, what you endeavoured to carry out as a dance-like gesture, you now use as an inner impulse for your speaking. The printed line has long gone.

Ancient philosophy: “Physical gesture will, through time, slowly disappear and reappear in human speaking.”

Equally important to the gesture before the line is the gesture after the line.

This idea of mime before and after the line must become a habit.
Exercise:

Mime Before the line – Speak the line – Mime after the line.

“How can you believe such a thing?”

(It is interesting to find out how long you can hold the mime after the line.)

Short phrases with which to experiment:

How can you believe such a thing?
Have you thought this over carefully?
You need not tell me – I know!
What is the point of discussing this?
We must come to some agreement!
This is our final offer!
If we cannot agree on this, we must end the discussion.
I feel we have reached a very good stage in our negotiation.
O God, I should never have done it.
I say. I’m sorry! Have I said anything wrong?
No I don’t believe it. I don’t believe it.
Life is full of sound and fury signifying nothing.
I must hide my hate.
I must conceal my fear.
O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt.
O my offence is rank.
I want more, life must give me more!
Is it a sin to envy?
Can you keep a secret?
O yes, sure I can. I can keep a secret. You bet. Yes.
So now let’s try the same idea of gesture before and after the line with a very mundane bit of prose. For the sake of exercise, make sure that before the line you do a visible gesture that is relevant to it. This only applies to the exercise. With a script you of course can choose whether to reveal your invisible gesture or not.

**Exercises**

I cannot accept what you are saying. I think your suggestions are based on incorrect assumptions. You advise us to purchase more land. How can you recommend such an action? You know that at present we have sunk too much money into land; too much money into land – but not enough into property. That is the truth. You know it. I know it. Now, how can you, with that knowledge, suggest we purchase. But what have we got? Three hundred acres of swamp in Lincolnshire; two acres of gravel to the south of Heathrow… and seven square miles of moor land to the west of Scunthorpe. All of which, I was assured would increase in value. It has not increased in value and it will not until we build on it. We must invest in building. Not invest in land. I have been in the business for a considerable time. Many of us here, came into this firm, twenty or more years ago. We know what we are doing. Our success proves this. For this reason we do not welcome advice unless … I say unless it happens to be better than ours. In this case I think we are being ill advised and wish that to be set down in the minutes.

Sooner or later we actors discover silences; positively it increases tension, negatively it takes the guts out of the play. I’ve introduced the following little exercise, just to remind ourselves that we should stand in the middle of what we do and are in control. So, for the exercise, try to get in as many silences as you can, without losing the inner tension of the little speech.
Silences

This may be the right moment to think again about our original proposal – which was – to transfer our central office into a city. Is this a good plan? Is it necessary? Are the reasons for such a move still valid? We must think again. Our situation two years ago was different from what it is today. Today we face a crisis on a world scale – it is not enough to consider only our position – we must see our position in the light of a new vision – if vision is a suitable word – but a view – a picture – an image – that reflects an international problem – not one that concerns us alone. This is how we must think.

If you wish, you could go back to the Othello scene and apply this idea of mime before and after the line to it.

We could say that the actor should go through every line of his script at least once and find a suitable gesture for it. Then you know that, even if you do not do it in the show, that you are jerking and bobbing about inside and reflecting an inner movement; the tiny expression of which is coming through in your voice. If there is movement in your voice then when you speak the audience inwardly dance. They may come for the plot, or for the characters, but they also come to be moved by the speaking.

As an exercise in the passages that follow one actor speaks and a colleague reflects in movement what he hears. Therefore the speaker plays the part of the actor and the dancer plays the part of the audience.

DANCE TO SPEECH.

AUDIENCE INWARD MOVEMENT. WILL IN SPEAKING.

Now I understand. At last. I’ve got it. I get it, and it is true. I see it. I see it. What a great feeling it is to grasp an idea. To grab it. Hold it…. to get it. To keep it. Hell! What was it? O my God, what was it? I’ve lost it. What was it? Now calm. Find it. Feel for it. That
thought. It was a good one. It was a great thought...But what was it. Wait! No. It’s gone. Gone. Well, we had a great time together that thought and I, but now it’s gone. Gone. I’m thought-jilted.

I’ve had a cracking good time. A real cracker of an evening. A real shaker, a sparkler, a shocker, a good starter of an evening. I’ve loved every minute of it. A laugh, a real laugh from start to finish. Now I’ve finished… But it was a laugh. It was a great laugh …… You have to re-live it. Not lose it. Not leave it. But love it. Mull over it. But now end it.


Where the hell is it? Where is it? For God’s sake, it was here just now. Here, right before me. I put it here. No! Perhaps there! No, here! I put it here. And now it’s gone! Like that! Amazing! Impressive disappearance! But gone it has! For God’s sake it can’t go. Things don’t just go like that! Help me! I’m a busy man. I haven’t got time for this sort of nonsense. Now, where is it? It must be here. Now look, look carefully. Let the eye travel easily around. The most hidden clue is the one in front of you. Steady now; keep the eye travelling round in a full circle. Do not lose concentration or else the object of your desire will betray you. No! It’s not here. It’s not here. Dematerialisation of wooden pencil. I give up. I’m lost. I’m beaten. I can’t go on. I can’t work. Without a pencil I am lost and that pencil has been taken from me. That is the truth. The tool of my trade has been stolen and I cannot work. I have been betrayed. Broken upon the pencil of fate.
It is also possible for an actor who is working on a speech to ask a colleague to read it in order that he may dance the mood and dynamic.

I’d like to give you some material for thought, with this paragraph from the book Speech and Drama, by Rudolf Steiner.

“In gesture lives the human being; there, in the gesture, is man himself. Man disappears into the speaking. When the word is intoned, man appears, a gesture making man. When Man speaks, we find in his speaking the whole human being, – that is, if he knows how to form his speaking. An actor should disappear into the gesture and then rise again in the spoken word. Because the art of the stage employs physical gesture, it does not let the actor disappear, nor does it let him arise again entirely in the word. So drama and acting hover between gesture and word. This is the area where imagination can play, an essential element of drama.”
NINTH STUDY
SPEECH GESTURES

We have explored the idea of finding the gestures in the lines. Now let’s look at how we can apply this as an approach to character.

Exercise:
Imagine that each of the following five little speeches is the inner life of a character; this is how he or she feels. Find the mood for each speech and continue improvising briefly.

1)  

2)  

3)  
I’m lost. Lost in a damp smelly wood. Where’s the path? God, it all looks the same. Where am I? Where have I got to? I can’t move. I daren’t move. Help. Where’s the path? Help me. I’m suffocating. I can’t breathe. I’m fainting. I’m lost.

4)  
Open that door. Come on. Open it! You can hear me. I know you are there. I know you’re listening. Don’t think I don’t know you’re hiding in there. Open up. Open up or I will break the door down. I swear it. I’ll break it down. Damn you!
5)
Now, don’t be frightened. It was only a dream. You dreamt it all. Silly thing. Who’s a silly thing? You see there’s nothing. Nothing to be afraid of… what a lot of fuss. All a dream. Just a dream. If anyone asks, you must just say it was a dream. We can’t have you shouting like that, can we? Can we!

Note: Feel free to write your own exercises.

Actors have the ability of experiencing every kind of mood and passion without it touching them personally; we are often called hypocrites. We can experience and express every emotion and yet remain detached from it. This allows us to be more truthful than if we included our own personalities; we can be our own puppeteer, have control and make decisions. We only need to read the five monologues above to see how quickly we can experience and understand the little passions.

The opposite of this is that when rehearsing we understand our character more and more by his or her reaction to the situations in the play. In order to hold on to the character we can transfer our understanding into a short phrase, which reflects the main gesture of the character in sense and sound. For example, if an actor was working on Richard III, he may create a phrase like this: “I torment myself, I hate myself, I am disgusted with what I am. Yet will I kill and climb upon their deaths.” This is just to illustrate, each actor is free to choose a phrase of his own making.

**Exercise:**
With these monologues, which you already know from the second study, try to break their mood and character into a couple of sentences like the ones on which we have just worked.
Two speeches from The Seagull, by Anton Chekhov. Translation by David Iliffe.

TREPLEV: We need a new theatre – a theatre with new forms, and if we can’t have them, we’d better do away with the theatre altogether. I love my mother. I love her deeply. But she leads such a useless life, always going about with this novelist, her name bandied about in the newspapers – it torments me. I often wish I hadn’t got a famous actress for a mother. How much easier life would be if she were just an ordinary person. I suppose it’s stupid to be jealous of one’s own mother, but you’ve no idea how difficult it is for me sometimes, and how foolish I feel. She used to entertain all sorts of famous artists and writers and I used to be the only nonentity among them. They tolerated me only because I was her son. Who am I? What am I? I was sent down from University before I’d finished my third year. I have no talent and no money. My father was a shopkeeper in Kiev, though he did at least achieve distinction as an actor. But I, I am nothing. So you can imagine what it was like – all these artists and writers assembled in her drawing-room, graciously favouring me with their attention, and it seemed to me that they were looking me up and down and measuring my insignificance. I guessed their thoughts and suffered agonies of humiliation.

NINA: Why do you say you kissed the ground on which I walked? You ought to kill me. I’m so tired. If only I could rest – rest. I – am a seagull. No, I’m not – I’m not. I’m an actress. That’s right – an actress.

(Arcadina and Boris laugh off)

So he’s here. Well, well. Never mind. He didn’t believe in the theatre. He was always laughing at my dreams and little by little I stopped believing too, and lost heart. And then I began to get worried about things. I grew jealous. I was afraid of losing him and I was always anxious about the child. I grew bitter and quarrelsome. My acting got worse and worse. I didn’t know what to do with my hands. I didn’t know how to stand. I
couldn’t control my voice. You’ve no idea what it feels like when you
know you’re giving a bad performance. I – am a seagull. No, no, no – I’m
not. Do you remember when you shot a seagull? A man came along by
chance and killed it because he had nothing better to do – theme for a little
story – what am I saying? Where was I? Oh yes, the theatre. I’m not like
that any longer. I’m a real actress now. I enjoy acting. I revel in it. And
now when I act, I know I’m acting well, and it’s a wonderful feeling. And
while I have been living here, I have been walking; walking everywhere
and thinking, thinking and feeling, and every day I see things more clearly.
I know now, Costya, that for an artist – it doesn’t matter whether he’s an
actor or a writer – the important thing is not to be famous and to have your
name in lights nor any of the things I dreamed about, but simply to be able
to suffer; know how to bear your cross and have faith. I have faith and
life’s not so bad, and when I think of my calling, I’m not afraid of life.
TENTH STUDY
IGNITING THE SPACE

In live drama, recital, dance, music, even in painting we endeavour to “Ignite the space.” When we speak we could imagine that the space is heavy with vapour; we ignite it and the space is aflame. The listener, the audience, wants the space to come to life. We can create in the theatre a conflagration like a forest fire, or the theatre can become calm water and move the dark forms. The Othello scene may be an example of this; the dark water eventually dousing the flickering flame of innocence. The theatre can, within its walls, contain a gale, a storm, a blizzard, so that the audience may almost have to hold themselves strongly against the elements.

Rhythm in speech changes Space into a circus acrobat. The speech flying about, with that curious magic of the gymnast that allows him to fly, spin, and dive, in the same way with the actor we follow the dialogue of the play. This is just a fanciful picture of the actors dealing with space. When touring many actors would walk around the theatre and speak and stamp until they felt the cold space on Monday morning had become their territory. Space must become alive, it is the speaking that enlivens space. Without this we are but “Lear’s shadow.”

The two tone poems are just a limbering up for the single sounds to leap and spring, a warming up process, before we move on to dramatic scenes.
TONE POEMS

FIRE DANCE

From the firm forms of branch and stick, from the criss-cross twig to the stout tree trunk, held in the network of twisted timber, the first flame flickers darting forth, full of enquiry, flashing forth as though to light the path for others, whose hidden darting forms begin increasingly to peep out like the sharp eyes of a dozen dragons, they lick their winsome forms about the logs and twigs, splashing with red and yellow, the dark grey and brown of the brittle bark. Swift as a snake striking its prey, the first flame leaps to challenge the blazing sun. Upwards it stretches as though with intense strivings, fed by the logs, its companions similarly flicker into life and fanned by the sucking draughts below the pile soar up into a conflagration, spilling destruction down the structured branches to dissipate, destroy and dematerialise the structure, now falling pitifully into the gaping mouth of the hot fire’s centre, there to perish, while triumphant flames, like lengthy veils of vermilion, prance and dance their whip-lash ballet writhing in the wood’s agony, which, as it falls, drags after it the last flickers of passionate destruction as in the fairy ring of smoking ash, the wanton dance becomes a fumed shadow of smoke to laze away the final strand of timber into black and grey.

UNDERWATER DANCE

The smooth surfaces move like mobile mountains, unfolding along the horizon’s line, weighty with threatening content, the weaving currents underlie the shining surface. Transparent whales, in volume, vast in measure with the interplay of surfaces, confusing the mind. The breathing of the dark depths, unfathomable leviathans, that roll with continuous will and purpose into the ever-enveloping width of the world watery circle. The dark depths, light denied, slumbers and breathes the weight of mystery, moving rhythmically in the inner swell of evolving life. Wanton weeds weave and wave their frail farewells or beckon like dark dreams, their lithe forms enchanting the sleepy subconcious depths of the human, revealing no secrets, yet moving to unveil the impenetrable. A lost enchanting world, guardian to nature’s secrets, yet in deep shuddering thunder, hinting tremors shake the soul.
Of course, what we want in the voice of Othello is the darkness of his mind; and in Desdemona’s the lightness of her love.

A director could say, “I want the audience to experience everything in this scene in the first two lines.” Shakespeare gives Othello three D’s; make the most of them. And Desdemona can shine in the fountain of her love with “Well”.

OTHELLO
Act 3 Sc IV

OTHELLO       How do you, Desdemona?
DESDEMONA     Well, my good lord.
OTHELLO       Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady.
DESDEMONA     It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.
OTHELLO       This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
              Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires
              A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
              Much castigation, exercise devout;
              For here’s a young and sweating devil here,
              That commonly rebels. ’Tis a good hand,
              A frank one.
DESDEMONA     You may, indeed, say so;
              For ’twas that hand that gave away my heart.
OTHELLO       A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
              But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.
DESDEMONA     I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.
OTHELLO       What promise, chuck?
DESDEMONA     I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.
OTHELLO       I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
              Lend me thy handkerchief.
DESDEMONA     Here, my lord.
OTHELLO       That which I gave you.
DESDEMONA I have it not about me.

OTHELLO Not?

DESDEMONA No, indeed, my lord.

OTHELLO That is a fault.

That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while
she kept it,
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose't or give't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA Is't possible?

OTHELLO 'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DESDEMONA Indeed! is't true?

OTHELLO Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

DESDEMONA Then would to God that I had never seen't!

OTHELLO Ha! wherefore?
DESDEMONA Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

DESDEMONA Heaven Bless us!

OTHELLO Say you?

DESDEMONA It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHELLO How!

DESDEMONA I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO Fetch't, let me see't.

DESDEMONA Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.

This is a trick to put me from my suit:

Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHELLO Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.

DESDEMONA Come, come;

You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

OTHELLO The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA I pray, talk me of Cassio.

OTHELLO The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA A man that all his time

Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,

Shared dangers with you,--

OTHELLO The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA In sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO Away!
Before we look at the business of duologue we will try and analyse conversation. It is understood that the nature of drama comes out of dialogue; the talk between characters. The personal outburst of soliloquy is more towards the lyric, not requiring an answer; and the memory or thoughtful considerations are more towards Epic, the picture making. The lyrical rushes towards the future, the epic from the past, but the essential quality of duologue in drama is that it is happening now in the present.

In this scene I have tried to create a primitive duologue, as though discovering the very basics of communication. When performing this simple scene I recommend long silences while the Parsifal boy searches in his mind for a reaction. As John Wayne said, “Acting is not acting, but reacting.” What comes alive in the first duologue in one’s life is the ability to eventually react. This is what I tried to find in this rather unpleasant scene. The first two lines of Parsifal could take a considerable time to come to the surface. Later, when the bully pushes Parsifal, there can be a long pause for consideration before Parsifal pushes back. The hitting should be nothing but a voyage of discovery. Even the bully could be moved at the fact that the little boy looks generally upset at hurting him. It could be the start to a friendship. The duologue starts from a deep emptiness on both sides, which slowly develops a little into a form. The last line I thought to leave in for it is only from contact with others that we can sense what we are ourselves. A friend of mine once said to me “Listen to your enemies and you will understand yourself.” Not sure if that is quite correct, but your social life can clarify for yourself what you are.

PARSIFAL AND THE WORLD

W. Hello Blockhead!

P. (Stares)

W. Blockhead, hello! Hello stupid. Stupid Blockhead.
P. (Slowly) I am not.
W. Oh yes you are. I know a blockhead when I see one and you are a blockhead.
P. (Louder) I am not.
W. Hello, hello! Getting a little aggressive are we? A little resentful. Well, all blockheads are resentful. That’s what makes them blockheads.
P. I am not – stupid.
W. Do you mean you are not stupid or did you foolishly call me stupid?
P. I did.
W. What?
P. Call you stupid.
W. Watch your mouth. (Pushes Parsifal)
P. (Pushes him back)
W. Oh no you don’t!
P. Oh yes I do!
W. (Hits Parsifal)
P. (Hits back)
W. Oh! You’ve hurt me!
P. Oh, I’m sorry.
W. You’ve cracked my rib!
P. Oh, I’m sorry. I should not have hit you. I should not have done that. (Weeps)
W. No you shouldn’t have.
P. No.
W. Are you crying?
P. (Ashamed) Yes I am.
W. (Mocking) Really crying because you hurt me?
P. (Suddenly) No.
W. Blockhead!
P. (Looks angry)
W. Blockhead and stupid! (Runs away)
P. (Calmly) Perhaps he is a sad boy. Perhaps, one day he will be as happy as I. If I am happy?
Now, here is an exercise in slightly more complex dialogue. It can be very enjoyable for the actors because so many of the lines imply a situation that we, the audience, as yet don’t understand. With regards to any scene, we must remember that the actors know the end of the scene, which would secretly colour their performance at the beginning of the scene, though the audience just follow it as the story unfolds.

Things to take into account as you perform this scene: Timing, Silences and Thought.

THE KEY DOOR

A. Excuse me. Can you give me a hand with this door?
B. What’s your problem?
A. This door. I want to lift it.
B. It looks heavy.
A. It is heavy.
C. Come on, we’re being left behind.
B. This chap wants a hand with this door.
C. Why?
B. He wants to lift it.
C. Well, let him lift it.
B. But, he can’t by himself.
C. Well, don’t you try?
A. I’m sorry, but it’s rather important.
C. I’m sure it is, but he’s not going to lift it.
A. But I can’t lift it by myself.
B. What about all three of us lifting it.
C. God, what a foolish thing to suggest.
B. Why is it on the floor anyway?
A. It fell off the hinges – see; they ripped out.
C. Come away; leave him to sort out his own problems.
B. Tore off the hinges?
A. Yes… as he pulled it open.
B. (Slowly) As who pulled it open?
A. My friend.
C. Where is your friend?
B. Yes, can’t he lift it?
A. No, that’s the point.
C. What’s the point?
A. He can’t lift it.
B. Why can’t he?
A. He’s under it.
C. What!
B. Under it.
A. Yes, he pulled it to look into a room and it fell on him.
B. O my God!
A. Yes.
C. Come away – it’s nothing to do with us.
B. But – we can’t leave him.
C. We’ll go and get help – yes, we’ll go and get help.
A. Can’t you help?
B. By lifting?
C. But …… we don’t know … what’s underneath.
A. My friend.
B. Yes but… he may not …… be well …… and that could upset us.
A. He was well when it fell on him.
B. All right. Here goes!
C. No. Leave it!
B. No. Give a hand!
C. Leave it!
B. No.
C. Then … I’m leaving. I can’t stand it. (Hysterical)
A. Right. Lift!
B. It won’t budge… (To wife) Give us a hand.
C. Alright
B. Now …… together.
B &C. Heave!
A. Lift!
B. Push!
C. Keep it moving!
(They lift the door)
B. Where is he?
A. Who?
C. Your friend.
A. (Grinning) Sorry. I just needed your help.

All performers, even in antagonistic characters in a scene or play, work together, as a creative group, to create a mood. We developed the idea of ‘Underwater’ to unite the actors, in common agreement of the mood of the play. The actors being like seaweeds that are totally influenced by the movement of the sea. The sea can be grey and cold, or moving and stormy, or swirling and whirling with passion, or warm and sunny. The sea is the drama, the mood of the scene, act, or play, which should be established by the director, and which the actors, in common agreement, would reveal to the audience. Even though it’s not under the sea, the “Shipwreck” by Turner is a good image to illustrate the invisible, but effective side of drama.

Having written this scene, I can say in this case the sea is grey, cold, with sudden stormy movements; a mood of suspicion hovering over the scene.

UNDERWATER SCENE
A. I suspect you are to blame for all this.
B. I beg your pardon.
C. He said you are to blame for the mistake.
D. Someone always has to blame someone.
C. Philosophising doesn’t become you.

B. Why am I to blame? I didn’t even know the contract had been completed.

A. Because you didn’t bother to find out.

B. Sheila! What do you think about this?

S. Don’t drag me into it!

P. Oh no. Always on the fence, always looking after number one.

C. Girls, girls, a little more decorum. This is a serious board meeting. You don’t want to be sent out of the room do you? (Half joking)

M. I think he was making a joke, so we’ll excuse him.

D. What is inexcusable is the reason for this meeting. Somebody told somebody and the cat was out of the bag.

C. Nothing personal, girls.

P. God give me patience.

M. David sometimes you can be a …...

S. Marian, easy or he may bring the weight of his full authority to bear.

M. With any other man that could be interesting.

P. Two days ago someone here was interviewed by a magazine; which shall be nameless.

A. Who gave the interview?

B. (Silence) A little bird.

C. One way of gaining silence is to ask who was responsible.

M. For anything! No one is ultimately responsible for anything here. That’s its weakness.

A. I thought I was responsible for everything here. Or have you all forgotten?

S. Then why did you call us together?

B. Silly cow.

M. O no! Not verbal abuse.

S. Abuse is the sign of a tired mind.

P. If there is a mind to be tired.

B. Could it be that we are wasting time?

M. At last, you’ve contributed something to the discussion.
S. They don’t know what a discussion is. Fascists.
B. Abuse is the sign of a tired mind.
D. Edgar, have you any control over anything?
A. What the hell do you mean?
D. All this trash going on and you sit there examining your navel.
P. Perhaps, he’s looking for something.
S. He won’t find it.
P. And no one can help him.
B. Many years ago when I was a boy, this was an intelligently run, well organized, and moderately successful firm. With two characters running it. No meetings. No discussions. Just professionals getting on with the job. The job! What is the job!
A. Are you auditioning for something? A part in telly?
M. Perhaps it was Bernard who had the interview, and as usual talked too much for too long and let slip our little secret.
C. What do you say to that Bernard?
A. Bernard?
S. I’m dreaming of a white Christmas.
M. Quiet Susan. We are waiting for Bernard.
P. Bernard, speak to us.
B. I suppose this is how rumours begin. If I remained silent you would have concluded that I was guilty of some indiscretion, because of my silence. That’s how rumours start, scandal ……
A. So, it was you.

After seeing my production of ‘Merry Wives of Windsor’ an old actor friend of mine said to me, “Peter, always ask your actors to be aware of the end of the drama as they begin it. It will colour all the performance, and give the drama form and unity.” Scenes, or acts or plays, to the audience appear to unfold but they don’t, they are a complete form from the very first line. A playwright would know this, and the actors should know it too.
TWELFTH STUDY
SECRET SELF

We asked this question once before; where is the drama? And we answered it by saying; the drama is in the audience. What the actor feels personally is a matter of indifference, and his acting only illustrates and supports the passion; but the passion, the truth, is when he or she ignites the space, when the theatre becomes full of a thought, a feeling or a decision. Now this can be demonstrated either through the secondary familiar expressions of anger, fear, love, hate, etc., but it’s the primary gestures which really are the drama, the reason why the play was written. Only when the speech is free, when it breathes and steps out into the auditorium, is a whole new realm of experience possible in the live theatre.

Technically the actor’s main responsibility lies in what we’ve called the secondary gesture, that is action and speaking which is recognizable from our daily lives. The primary gesture is that which haunts the scene, which the audience do not see but feel. And this is only possible when the speech is released and free; moving in the space. As Marie Steiner said, it is when you sense the invisible in the visible.

Our surfer on the wave illustrates this rather well. The chap on the board is in the secondary gesture, the wave is the primary gesture. I once met a surfer and he would tell me of his technique on the surfing board but then his voice would take on an almost holy tone and he would say, “It’s the wave Peter, it’s the wave; that is what it’s all about.” To begin to get the idea of two gestures, primary and secondary, we devised some light-hearted exercises that we called, “The Secret Self”. In the first exercise two people have a game of chess (secondary gesture), while their respective secret selves mime their true feelings (primary gesture).

The exercise is to first do the sequence with the secret selves, but finally the players perform the whole sequence, inwardly including their secret selves in their performance.
THE CHESS GAME

We see before us two characters seated at a table. On the table is a chess set and they are about to play. Behind each there stands a figure resembling them, but more colourfully attired.

The two characters gaze at the board. The game is in progress and has reached tension point. All four characters gaze at the board intently. The seated figure on the left begins to fidget with his right hand and purse his lips. The figure behind him, his secret self, expands into a posture of triumph. The player shoots out his hand, slowly raises a chess piece and then, with infinite care, sets the piece down in a new position. The seated player on the right fingers his lip in deep thought. His secret self slowly contracts in fear, ducks under its own arm and peers out. Tentatively it moves forward again. These large movements are reflected in the tiny hesitant gesture of the seated player’s hand. Finally a piece is moved.
The left-hand player’s secret self curls itself into contortions of doubt. The seated partner pinches his nose thoughtfully and slowly moves a piece. Our partner on the right runs his hand through his hair with a certain vigour and then presses his fingers together. His secret self performs a dance of delight and hope. Then he creeps towards the visible self, slips his arm under the arm of the seated man, and together they thrust a piece into a new position. The left-handed partner sits absolutely still but his secret self collapses in despair, and so on. The mime progresses until with a whisper of, ‘Checkmate’ one of the two secret selves is struck down by the other. The two characters slowly rise and, with a few muttered pleasantries such as ‘A good game’; ‘Very pleasant’, leave their secret selves in a transfixed stranglehold upon each other.

The same applies to the following spoken scenes.

1. Separate performers for the Characters and the secret selves. The secret selves can be loud and expressive out to the audience.

2. The same performer speaks the lines of the Character and the secret self’s lines.

3. The performer speaks the lines of the Character and thinks the secret self’s lines. (Hint: The secret self’s thoughts will appear more in the breath during the line than in the tone.)
THE JOB INTERVIEW

CHARACTER

A. Do come in.

B. Thank you I really have come here more to enquire about the work you offer.

A. Well there isn’t much to enquire about it is straight forward filing.

B. I see. Filing is really for young people; it’s a beginner’s job. Is there nothing more that is more demanding?

A. Not at the moment.

SECRET SELF

Oh, will the day never end.

I need the work but I don’t want it.

If one was allowed to do nothing all day but in nice surroundings, would one be happy?

I really don’t want anything more demanding. I am forcing myself to look as though I want to work but I don’t, I want to dream.

Bit old to be ambitious.
B. I’m not as young as I was and am used to greater responsibility.  

All lies, all lies. I loathe responsibility. I want to dream, write poetry, and listen to music.

A. I appreciate how you feel.  

Pompous little worm. I would love a cruise to the Caribbean, Jamaica, anywhere.

B. I don’t think you do appreciate how I feel.  

I am a poet, an artist. My Father stopped me painting, stopped me singing, and stopped everything. Made me feel ashamed. Now look where I am.

A. Well, that’s not my business is it? I think you would be suitable for a filing clerk taking into account your previous experience.  

I doubt if he has experienced anything. An empty shell, a husk of a man.

B. Well I’ll consider it.  

It’s either that or shooting myself.

A. I must ask you to decide within the hour. Others are waiting to be interviewed.  

To walk alone on the sand. To hear the sea. To feel the warm breeze, to see my chalet. To know that I am free.

B. Then I am not free to decide in my own time.  

The door is slamming shut, I must enter this prison or I will starve.

A. Free. Who’s free? Are you talking about freedom?  

Running into the sea, the clear water, swimming, diving.

B. No. I’m talking about prison.  

A dying poet; a trapped musician; a lost artist.

A. What prison. You mean this firm is a prison?  

He’s mad. A mad filing clerk.

B. Well, isn’t it? Isn’t it?  

I don’t care. That stupid face. That pompous cardboard cut out.

A. There is no need to shout.  

Yes there is! There is!  
I am. I am. A great poet, a great artist.

B. Who’s shouting!  

Drama, drama. This is dramatic.
B. *(At the top of his voice)* I’m not! I’m not! 
To hell with you all, to hell with this life, to hell with you.

A. Sir. I insist. *(Standing)* 
This is dramatic!

B. To hell with you. Don’t you tell me what I should do and not do! 
This is dramatic.

A. I’m not telling you anything. 
*Mutiny on the Bounty. I am the captain of this ship.*

B. I’m not some petty little filing clerk. I am? … 
*A petty little filing clerk.*

A. What are you? What are you Mr Harding? 
This is dramatic.

B. I am a poet, an artist, a painter. Not a filing clerk. Not a little tin god, like yourself. 
*I’ve lost the job. O no, I’ve lost the job.*

A. Perhaps you could start as a filing clerk but when there is a vacancy for something a little better, you would be the first to hear of it. 
*As King I will be kind.*

B. Thank you. Thank you. 
*That was close. I must keep my feelings hidden.*

A. I admire you for not hiding your feelings. 
*Perhaps I am not the only one with a dream.*

B. Thank you. You see, I write poetry. All day. I write poetry. 
*Very poor poetry. It’s not good. I know. But I like to write it.*

A. I cruise on a large white ship somewhere in the pacific. 
*Yes, in my white trousers and shirt, looking superb, bronzed and beautiful. He’s mad.*

B. Do you really? 
*But I am. Look at me.*

A. Yes, most of the day. Though of course it doesn’t show. I mean you would never think I was cruising on the Canberra at this very moment, would you? 

B. No I wouldn’t 
*He’s madder than I am.*
A. But I am. He looks as if I’m mad.

B. You are. Well, in my briefcase here, I have a small book full of poems written by myself. I shouldn’t have said that.

A. Really? He’s mad.

B. (Silence) So I have the job then. Where am I?

A. Yes. Of course. Where are we?

B. Thank you for the interview. What have I been saying?

A. Not at all. A pleasure. What have we been saying?

B. Good day. (EXIT) I’m exhausted.

A. Good day to you. What a funny fellow. What a funny fellow.

THE NEW PRODUCTION

CHARACTER

SECRET SELF

A. Oh, how delighted I am to see you. How wearisome ... how demanding you are.

Come and sit down. Oh tedious effort. (Sighs)

B. It is so kind of you to see me. My own sycophantic behaviour sickens me.

I will only be a moment. But what a moment!

A. Well, no need to hurry. Take your time. I am resigned and will convert my resignation into a bland patience.

B. I suppose you remember me. For you’ll never forget me!

A. Yes, of course. Somehow your dull cow-like face registered on me, though I can’t think why.

B. You must meet so many people. Oh I’m overdoing it!

A. Yes. Oh, I ache and ache of boredom, my face
aches, my guts ache, I am so bored with you and myself and us and them and those and these and this and that ……
(inward sigh)

But I am not … I AM NOT.

B. You probably think me a dull little thing.
A. No.
B. But my agent, who is my husband, advised me to speak to you …… about the future.
A. (Silence)
B. It’s about the new production.
A. The new production.
B. About the casting.
A. Is something wrong?
B. You are … I mean, it is felt that you have been wrongly cast.
A. I see.
B. The part is mine.
   But I don’t want it.
A. I see.
B. You probably think me a dull little thing.
A. No.
B. But my agent, who is my husband, advised me to speak to you …… about the future.
A. (Silence)
B. Oh! Oh! Oh! I spy danger!
A. Oh! Oh! Oh! I spy danger!
B. Oh, look! She is quiet, she is thoughtful.
A. Oh, look! She is quiet, she is thoughtful.
B. See how she watches me.
A. See how she watches me.
B. I could laugh out loud but her silence arouses pity.
A. The new production! Help me, help me,
Oh god I am empty, I am hollow, I need help – I am going to be hurt … I know it!
B. Oh, look at her eyes, how they flick with fear – I must not smile, please hide my smile, hide it.
A. She is going to hurt me – and I will never recover, I’ll never be the same again – my life is at an end.
B. Oh, it is too cruel, I am filled with shame; I could weep.
A. I see…
B. I am so ashamed; it should be hers. She is so much better than I. She should play it.
   To hell with everything – she will play it.
A. I think you are the kindest creature in the world.
B. I think they are wrong. I know they are.
I will ask my husband to think again. He is a fool.
I am so sick of him, so smart, so clever, and so ambitious for me, but no artist. He is nothing and she is everything.

A. I see. She wishes to see me humbled, she wishes for my grateful thanks.

B. You are an artist; I am not. I would consider it a great honour if you would accept the role offered to you and kindly forget this shameful conversation.

A. You are very kind. I am utterly bewildered.

B. I will go now. My very best wishes to you, and may the rehearsals be happy.

A. I am sure they will be. As I am sure I will be.
Silver Wedding, by John Bowen, is pregnant with primary gesture and a frantic smoke screen of secondary gestures to disguise the truth, an actor’s dream.

SILVER WEDDING

By John Bowen

A kitchen in a semi-detached house in Purley. It is 8 o’clock. As the clock in the hall strikes, AUDREY is discovered sitting at the table. As she checks the time with her watch, there is the sound of a key turning in the front door.

JULIAN Enters.

AUDREY Do you want some tea?

JULIAN I’m sorry I’m late.

AUDREY There’s plenty in the pot.

JULIAN I’ll just get changed, shall I?

AUDREY It might be a bit stewed.

JULIAN I’ll just get washed and changed.

AUDREY You’ve time for some tea.

He exits and leaves coat, hat and briefcase off stage, and re-enters.

JULIAN I really am sorry. I nearly burst a blood vessel running for the train.

AUDREY (Has poured). Here you are.

JULIAN You’re all dressed up. (Pause) Well you would be, of course. (Pause) I’d have phoned, dear, I really would have phoned, but the meeting went on and on, you see. Then when I did manage to get away, I thought the best thing I could do was just make a bolt for it. Even as it was, as I say, I nearly burst a

AUDREY Julian, nobody has suggested that you’re late on purpose. Please drink your tea.

JULIAN Trouble was, there was nobody else to speak for the Geological Section. Hilary Jamieson’s off with flu. (Pause) It won’t take me a moment to
change. I’ll just finish my tea and ring the restaurant to alter the booking.

Good lord, Audrey, seven-thirty, nine-thirty, what’s the difference? (Pause)

Or we could go somewhere else. It doesn’t have to be the White Tower. I could ring... what’s that place the snobs go? ... The Mirabelle. (Pause). If you’re sure you still want to go.

AUDREY Why not?

JULIAN No reason. None, I just thought, if you were upset, you might prefer…

AUDREY But I’m dressed.

JULIAN Of course, of course. I’ll ring them right away, dear. They can easily change the time.

AUDREY Don’t you want to go? We could open a tin, I suppose.

JULIAN I just thought … Sitting about waiting; it might have taken the edge off things. (Pause) I mean one doesn’t want to make do. Everything spoiled and rushed. If something’s not special on an occasion like this, it’s not worth doing. (Pause) Silly of me. (Pause) You’re not using our teapot.

AUDREY In the kitchen?

JULIAN Oh, I don’t know. Things are bought to be used, you know.

AUDREY We shall use it.

JULIAN Tea in the kitchen with a Georgian silver teapot, properly hall marked and attributed to Bellamy. It’s rather … I mean, one doesn’t do appropriate things. It’s much more idiosyncratic to use a silver teapot in the kitchen. I rather like the idea. (Pause) I’ll ring the restaurant, then.

AUDREY Stop humouring me, Julian.

JULIAN What gives you –

AUDREY Ever since you came in, you’ve been making small talk. Trying to get me to tell you I don’t mind sitting here all dressed up and not knowing what’s happened to you. So all right. I do tell you, Julian. I know you couldn’t help it. I’m not blaming you. So please get changed and ring the restaurant.

JULIAN Well, you must mind a little. (She looks at him sharply). I’d have phoned, dear if I could. I’d have missed the train though. It was the D.C.P.’s meeting, you see. Somebody from the section had to be there. There was the D.C.P.
and the D.D.C.P. and the D.A.D.C.P. – all the top brass, you know. Every section had to be represented. And there was Hilary Jamieson sweating it out in Twickenham with summer ‘flu. I did what I could. I made an extremely brief report, and I hope I managed to discourage discussion. Then the moment – the moment – the geological section stuff was over, I made my excuses and left. Took a taxi to the station and ran all –

AUDREY You’re not supposed to run. The doctor told you.

JULIAN I couldn’t have known about the meeting.

AUDREY Nobody’s suggested you could.

JULIAN Well, I knew there’d be one, of course. I knew there was a D.C.P.’s meeting set for today. I didn’t tell you because I didn’t want to annoy you.

AUDREY Thank you.

JULIAN I didn’t want to worry you. I couldn’t have known –

AUDREY That Hilary Thing would be ill.

JULIAN Jamieson.

AUDREY He was off yesterday. You told me.

JULIAN He might have come back.

AUDREY Never mind, Julian. You get changed and I’ll ring the restaurant.

JULIAN The trouble was not getting the agenda until this morning. (He produces it from his jacket pocket). I’ve still got it, actually. Brought it home as a sort of alibi in case you didn’t believe me. Really, one does behave in the most stereotyped ways. I thought you’d be annoyed. I suppose I was frightened of that. (Shows her). See? Geological Section comes right at the end.

AUDREY Couldn’t they have moved it?

JULIAN Moved what?

AUDREY Changed the order? Brought it forward, your thing.

JULIAN Well – hardly.

AUDREY Why not?

JULIAN I don’t think one does that, dear.

AUDREY You mean they never change the order of the agenda? I don’t see why it should matter.
JULIAN Oh they do sometimes change the order. I mean, I have known it happen. If something crops up, or if it’s not clear one will be able to reach important business, or if somebody –

AUDREY – has to leave early.

JULIAN I suppose it could be changed.

AUDREY You said it has been.

JULIAN I said there are occasions. It’s not at all usual.

AUDREY But it’s been done.

JULIAN Occasionally, I’ve known it done. One doesn’t think of such a thing oneself.

AUDREY You mean, you don’t?

JULIAN One doesn’t disrupt the D.C.P.’s agenda simply for –

AUDREY One’s Silver Wedding day. (Pause) You’re too junior, is that it? They wouldn’t take it from you.

JULIAN Hardly too junior, dear. I think you know my position well enough.

AUDREY You have two ways of calling me ‘dear’. One is when you are trying to hurt me, the other is when you’re crawling. It was the second when you came in, and now it’s the first.

JULIAN I’m not trying to hurt you. I’m not trying to attack you in any way.

AUDREY Thank you.

JULIAN But please don’t attack me through my job. I am not junior. I’m not yet head of my Section but I shall be when –

AUDREY When Hilary Thing dies of summer ‘flu.

JULIAN Jamieson.

AUDREY Jamieson.

JULIAN We do important work.

AUDREY And live in Purley.

JULIAN What?

AUDREY The work you do is so important that we live in a semi-detached house in Purley, and when we want to buy a silver teapot for our Silver Wedding, I have to pay for half of it with my own money.

JULIAN But this is ridiculous. I won’t have this argument.
AUDREY I’m not arguing. I just don’t know why you couldn’t change the agenda, that’s all. I went to work at the Advice Bureau this afternoon, and at four-thirty I told Miss Peace –

JULIAN It’s not the same. You make your own hours at the Welfare.

AUDREY It’s work though, isn’t it? It’s worth doing. Do you think helping people isn’t work?

JULIAN (Losing control). That’s not the point. (Regaining it) I’m sorry, but that’s not the point dear. If you’ll just stop cross-examining me and accept my word …

AUDREY Cross-examining! You come in. I don’t reproach you. I’m prepared to give you the benefit of the doubt.

JULIAN You’ve been doing nothing but cross-examine me since I came through the door.

AUDREY You told me yourself. You brought the agenda home to show me.

JULIAN Look. We’ve planned a celebration, dear. Let’s not spoil it. Let’s just have it.

AUDREY Are you telling me?

JULIAN What?

AUDREY ‘We’ve planned a celebration’ – are you telling me that? Look at me, sitting here, dressed up …

JULIAN You didn’t have to get dressed so early dear.

AUDREY It takes me longer to dress; you know that.

JULIAN Audrey, dear –

AUDREY Don’t ‘dear’, me.

JULIAN Dammit, it’s our Silver Wedding Day.

Pause

AUDREY Well go on, go on. Ring the White Tower. Get changed. We’ll go out. Why not?

JULIAN For God’s sake! …

AUDREY Well, what do you want me to say?

JULIAN I want you to –

AUDREY You want me to go out to dinner, just as if nothing had happened. Well, all right. We’ll go out to dinner. You’ve got your way.
JULIAN There’s not much point in going out, if you’re going to sulk all through the meal. Spending more than we can afford on food that’s going to turn to acid in my stomach.

AUDREY There’s a simple remedy for that, isn’t there? Don’t upset me and I shan’t sulk. When we’ve arranged a celebration dinner …

JULIAN Audrey …

AUDREY And you’ve already promised you’ll leave work early –

JULIAN I tried, I tried.

AUDREY Then don’t get into some meeting or other.

JULIAN I had to be there. I told you there was nobody else to speak for the Geological Section. It was a very important meeting, and the D.C.P. –

AUDREY Don’t D.C.P. me. I’m sick of it. I’m sick and tired of your D.C.P.’s and your important work. You haven’t a spark of ambition, and you cover up by pretending.

JULIAN There’s more to life than ambition.

AUDREY Such as?

JULIAN Contentment. I’m doing a serious job in a serious way. It’s a worthwhile job; it’s cultural. It uses my special capabilities, my special interests. I will not join the rat race for material –

AUDREY Oh that rat race!

JULIAN I have believed, I do believe that to be content in one’s own –

AUDREY Content!

JULIAN In my job, in my job.

AUDREY Don’t shout. Don’t raise your voice at me.

JULIAN I’ve never pretended to be content at home.

AUDREY The walls are like paper.

JULIAN In my job I have a position, I’m valued; I’m respected.

AUDREY But not enough to change the order of the agenda so that you could get home in time to go out to dinner with your wife on your Silver Wedding day.

JULIAN Don’t push me, dear.

AUDREY It’s ‘dear’ again, is it?
JULIAN  I said, don’t push me.
AUDREY  Why not?
JULIAN  There are moments in an argument … in any argument …
AUDREY  Yes?
JULIAN  There are moments at which one should stop.
AUDREY  Why?
JULIAN  Even in marriage – we know this, dear; we know it of old – even in marriage there are … necessary reticences, boundaries one doesn’t cross if the marriage is to be preserved.
AUDREY  But ours has been preserved, Julian. Twenty-five years. We are preserved. We could hardly be expected to break up now, not after twenty-five years. Where should we go? How should we live? I don’t think we need these necessary reticences any longer.
JULIAN  One always needs them. Things that are hurtful …
AUDREY  Yes?
JULIAN  Should be suppressed.
AUDREY  But the hurt’s out. It’s out now. You thought about changing the agenda and you didn’t do it. Isn’t that right?
JULIAN  It may be.
AUDREY  You could have lifted the phone, and talked to someone’s secretary, and done it.
JULIAN  Probably.
AUDREY  Because you’re not junior, Julian. You’re not nobody. You’re a valued and respected member of the staff.
JULIAN  If you put it like that.
AUDREY  But you didn’t lift the phone.
JULIAN  No.
AUDREY  You wanted to be late. You wanted to spoil the evening.
JULIAN  Not consciously.
AUDREY  Unconsciously!
JULIAN  Perhaps.
AUDREY Well now it’s conscious. So it’s all right for you to be late, it’s all right for you to ruin the celebration, but when it comes to asking why, then there are the necessary reticences to be preserved.

JULIAN Unconsciously I may have been … reluctant.

AUDREY I want to know why.

JULIAN What is there to celebrate?

Pause

AUDREY You know what.

JULIAN What do we have to celebrate?

AUDREY Twenty-five years. We’ve been together twenty-five years. That’s an achievement if nothing else.

*Derisory noise from JULIAN.*

Has it been easy for you, then? It’s not been easy for me.

JULIAN Yes. It has. It’s been easy. It’s not always been pleasant. But, it’s been easy. Look at it. Twenty-five years of doing the easier thing. When we got engaged, everybody we knew – everybody who mattered in a place like Teignmouth – they were all expecting it at that time, so it was easier for me to propose than not to, and easier for you to accept than have them wondering if I hadn’t proposed.

AUDREY I shouldn’t have accepted if I hadn’t –

JULIAN Loved me?

AUDREY Liked you. Been fond of you.

JULIAN Then children.

*She turns away.*

If we really wanted one, we could have adopted one. Face it. You don’t want a child. And nor do I. It’s easier.

AUDREY I’ve always been fond of children.

JULIAN Just as you were fond of me. But it’s easier to work in Child Welfare than to have a child and rear it. So you had your work, and I had mine, and the easiest thing was to go on from day to day and come home in the evening and read and watch television or listen to music in each other’s company,
because we’d left the West Country behind, and it was too much trouble to make new friends.

AUDREY You don’t suggest we should make friends here? We have friends in London.

JULIAN But we never see them. It’s easier not to. Don’t tell me it’s not been easy to stay together, Audrey. It’s been the easiest thing, it’s been the obvious thing. Not always pleasant, that’s different.

AUDREY Don’t split hairs.

JULIAN I’m making a distinction.

AUDREY Splitting hairs. You’ve always done it.

JULIAN I’m making a distinction between what’s easy and what’s pleasant.

AUDREY I thought you were telling why you’d spoilt our celebration.

JULIAN I did tell you. Because there’s nothing to celebrate.

AUDREY We got married. We’re still married. That’s something.

JULIAN Not enough.

AUDREY You’re not trying to tell me you’ve never been happy?

JULIAN Think about it. When were we happy?

AUDREY We were happy at the beginning.

JULIAN Yes. It was easy then. Sex made it easy.

AUDREY That’s cheap.

JULIAN No, it’s true.

AUDREY We weren’t innocent. You talk as if we were a couple of innocents.

JULIAN No. We had a wide theoretical knowledge. We were progressive people, and we weren’t going to be made miserable by ignorance and we’d read the books. We weren’t innocent, but my God we weren’t experienced, and when we found out about sex, how wonderful it could be, how we could have as much as we wanted, because we were married –

AUDREY Julian!

JULIAN It was so wonderful that we never realized we hadn’t a thought or a feeling in common. All the books kept saying we should ‘discover’ each other; that was the word they all used. It made you feel like Captain Cook. But we
didn’t discover each other. We just discovered how bloody wonderful sex could be, when secretly we’d both been frightened of it, and we only discovered each other when sex wore off, and then we discovered that we didn’t really like each other. But it was easier to go on. For twenty-five years.

AUDREY I’ve never said I didn’t like you.

JULIAN No, but I’ve got the message.

AUDREY You imagine things. (Looks at her watch). There’s not much point in phoning now. It’s too late.

JULIAN (Begins to gather tea things on tray). Yes.

AUDREY I can make a pilaf. There’s some pork left over.

JULIAN Good.

AUDREY What are you doing with the tray?

JULIAN I thought I’d wash up.

AUDREY Why?

JULIAN Because I hate you, dear.

Pause.

AUDREY I’ll dry.

The sound of the hall clock is heard striking as the lights fade to blackout.
The pulse beat of the heart and rhythmic breathing, which was so much a part of ancient drama, must somehow be retained, in spirit, by contemporary drama. The ancient pulse beat drove the drama forward, like a galloping horse, and we can remember this when we drive our modern prose drama forward to its conclusion. To discover the heartbeat of a play, of a scene, even of a speech and its breathing out and breathing in, is still an essential part of living drama in the theatre. To say that a play is a living entity is not a fanciful figure of speech, but an artistic reality.

There is discussion now of the idea that new rhythms are coming into our lives. But, to encourage this thought, let us indulge for a moment in those ancient rhythms long past. You are familiar with the four Greek rhythms: Anapaest (short-short-long), Iambic (short-long), Dactylic (long-short-short) and Trochaic (long-short).
Whenever you work with these rhythms always remember that it is a form of stepping out and striding towards the future; that is, towards the end of the line, the speech, the scene, and the play. Sometimes, do these rhythms before rehearsing, speaking them and stepping them and you will find they will all generate marvellous energy into your work. Also you will find that each rhythm becomes an experience.

**Anapaest (v v —)**
What a fiend that he fled what a failure sustained,
What a fear and a dread what an anguish so pained,
For I found and I fooled and I fled before them,
Flying far in the depth of the dark floods stem.

**Dactylic (— v v)**
Clash of the cymbals and thundering of drumming
Tread with simplicity the pathway that’s coming,
Measure and martinet mostly in dread we get,
Fierce is the soldier but lost in his battle yet.

**Iambic (v —)**
O now I see that facts are free, the whispered dream to fantasy,
For there the time has proved its worth, for there the stillness of the Earth.
O let the light come shining through, O let the stillness speak to you,
O let the darkness thunder past, O let the whisper sound at last.

**Trochaic (— v)**
May the winter and the darkness never bow before the gloaming,
May the simple sin of starkness prove the lonely loss in groaning,
May the darting elementals flitting near and whispering low
Perish in one tumbling spasm gathering tight in mystic glow.
A healthy lifestyle relies on a good sense of rhythm. One understands one’s sense of rhythm comes not only from the heartbeat, but also from the steady inhaling and exhaling of the breath. The Epic speaker in ancient times shaped his stories in the knowledge that there are four heartbeats to every breath. He based his entire story telling on this “four to one” rhythm. Please forgive me if you think what I am about to say is wrong, or irritating. The Hexameter was understood to be the rhythm for story telling, but that is only six beats; one should have eight beats. But the eight beats are there if, in a hexameter, you add a silent dipody in the middle of the line and a silent dipody at the end of the line; one breath four heartbeats to the middle of the line, and a breath and four heartbeats to the end. Now I understand that the whole rhythm of the cosmos, the stars and planets, and the way they swing through the universe is based on a “four to one” rhythm. Homer, therefore, used cosmic rhythms to support his story telling.

Here is an example of strict hexameter, written for us by Barbara Bridgmont. There are six dactylics (long-short-short), with a silent dipody (silent dactylic) in the middle and end of line.

For the exercise make sure to have a slight stress on the long and two light beats on the shorts.

— v v — v v — v v —vv — v v — v v — v v —vv

Old is the year and in graciousness (D) Spreads he his riches for all of us (D)

Old is the year and in graciousness / spreads he his riches for all of us,
Gold is the year and in mellowness / strength he transforms into gentleness,
Fire of his might into fruitfulness / joy of his light into hopefulness,
Hope that can hold when the iciness / tells the old year to depart from us,
See him in wise generosity / open the doors of his treasury,
Fling his abundance in front of us / riches beyond our imagining,
Gold of each leaf framed in brilliancy / fired by the sun’s waning majesty,
Silver of twigs wet and quivering / cold in the moon’s shimmer glistening.
The example below is four Trochaics in the line. Try to keep to the rhythm while at the same time bringing in full expression.

**The Song of Hiawatha** - Longfellow

**The Peace Pipe**

On the Mountains of the Prairie,
On the great Red Pipe-stone Quarry,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
He the Master of Life, descending,
On the red crags of the quarry
Stood erect, and called the nations,
Called the tribes of men together.
  From his footprints flowed a river,
Leaped into the light of morning,
O'er the precipice plunging downward
Gleamed like Ishkoodah, the comet.
And the Spirit, stooping earthward,
With his finger on the meadow
Traced a winding pathway for it,
Saying to it, "Run in this way!"
  From the red stone of the quarry
With his hand he broke a fragment,
Moulded it into a pipe-head,
Shaped and fashioned it with figures;
From the margin of the river
Took a long reed for a pipe-stem,
With its dark green leaves upon it;
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
With the bark of the red willow;
Breathed upon the neighboring forest,
Made its great boughs chafe together,
Till in flame they burst and kindled;
And erect upon the mountains,
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
Smoked the calumet, the Peace-Pipe,
As a signal to the nations.
FOURTEENTH STUDY

TIMING

To discover if we have a sense of rhythm and a sense of timing, we will do this exercise.

Circle Dance
A group stands in a circle. Now the first actor steps into the ring and with a mixture of stamping and clapping performs his or her dance. You can dance like the folk dancers, slap your thighs and chest, and your feet can take over so that the whole body is involved with this business of generating rhythm. When the dancer feels he or she has done enough with a strong gesture they pass their rhythm on to another in the circle. The next actor follows the rhythm that is already there, or immediately creates his or her own. They dance in the ring and then pass the rhythm on until all have had their turn. The circle of actors begins again, but this time with less clapping and stamping and more movement. In the third round the performers no longer clap and stamp at all but only move, they can even stand still if their timing is right. You can be as inventive as you like. Small movements, large movements, but all the time with a feeling for silent rhythm and then of course pass it on to the next person in the circle. This trains your sense of timing.

Now we turn to a little contemporary scene. One character is perhaps hasty, the other dark and grim, and so the interplay of rhythms can be practised on the scene exercise. It can be slightly competitive, as with the dancing. Who can be the most daring with their silences and movement, pauses and speed of delivery? The timing has to only be a second wrong and you can wince with embarrassment knowing that you have spoiled the action. It is from the mistakes that you learn. The body tells you what is right and what is wrong and this instinct can be developed.
Scene

A is hasty and sanguine, B – stubborn and melancholic.

A. Hello, I do apologize, so sorry I’m late I got caught in the traffic –
B. I don’t want to hear your excuses, you’re late and I have been waiting here for over a quarter of an hour.
A. Look, I apologized didn’t I? I said I was sorry…
B. That’s not good enough. To say you are sorry doesn’t disguise the fact that I have been waiting here for…
A&B. A quarter of an hour.
A. Well, try and forget and forgive and let’s plan our evening.
B. It’s spoilt already.
A. Nonsense.
B. It is not nonsense. Don’t think that you can blithely pass over the fact that…
A. I can’t believe this. Are you always like this when things go a little wrong? Obsessive and stupid…
B. O no! That is the cruellest thing that has ever been said to me. That is wicked, vile and sadistic.
A. Please, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you. I’m afraid I was just showing off, you know, being clever, saying clever things.
B. How can you say I am obsessive, how can you say things like that! I’m not, I’m not. I never have been…
A. All right, all right. Keep calm. Please forget what I have said and let us plan the evening.
B. Yes, yes. That is just like you. Always wishing to forget. Forget that you were late; forget that you were rude and hurtful, what else have you forgotten?
A. I’ll never forget you, that’s for sure.
B. I wonder, I wonder. Perhaps you daren’t try and remember all your friends, your enemies, all the things you’ve said, all the horrible things you’ve said, the hurtful cruel…
A. Listen, listen. Can you hear something?
B. No
A. Neither can I. Sorry; it was the only way I could think of making you stop.
B. O, you are so cruel.
A. Yes, yes.
B. Also you are short.
A. Short?
B. Yes short! Now I come to look at you.
A. I’m not short.
B. Yes you are.
A. If you say that again I’ll walk away. I’ll leave you.
B. I won’t cry.
A. I’m not short. I’m definitely not short. You are the first person to say that I am short. The very first person. Nobody has ever said I am short, nobody.
B. Have you finished?
A. Yes.
B. Now we have both been hurt, and I am sorry.
A. Sorry isn’t good enough.
B. It will have to do. I’m sorry.
A. You are getting your own back on me.
B. Yes. You were late.
A. I’m sorry… but I’m not short.
B. No, sorry.
A. I was late but I’m not short.
B. No, I mean yes.
A. I’m sorry that I was late.
B. And I’m sorry that you were short.
A. I’m hungry.
B. So am I.
A. Then let’s go for a meal.
B. Let’s
Intelligent Timing. Play on words. Accurate and disciplined imagination.

A Knit to Remember

A. Oh what pretty knitting.
B. A pretty kitten.
A. No, pretty knitting.
B. All kittens are pretty.
A. No, not the kitten, your knitting – pretty knitting.
B. Pretty kitty, (calling) pretty kitty…
A. No, your knitting, your knitting is pretty. Pretty colours.
B. It is a pretty collar, it suits the kitty.
A. No, not the kitty’s collar, the colour of you knitting is pretty.
B. It’s always important to get the right coloured collar for the kitty, perhaps blue or pink with a bell on it.
A. That is very true. A pretty coloured collar for a kitten is important but it is the colour of you knitting that is really pretty – the pale green and knitted patterns.
B. The tail is green and the kitten fattens … what are talking about … it’s a slim Kit.
A. (Sighing) Oh yes, the kitten is thin but your knitting is neat.
B. The kitten’s on heat.
A. No, your knitting is pretty, it’s pretty knitting.
B. It’s a pity the Kitty can’t know how pretty it is.
A. Yes, it is a p
B. They are so pretty as they skip about.
A. And it makes me grin, to see the kitten and hear your needles clicking.
B. Clicking?
A. Yes, click, click they go, click, click…
B. Who goes click, click?
A. Your needles.
B. My whatles?
A. Nee! Nee! Nee!
B. My knees go click, click, click…!
A. No, not your knees – your needles.
B. My needles … you mean both my knees?
A. Not your knees, your needles, when knitting.
B. My knees click when sitting.
A. No, your needles click when knitting.
B. Kitty, Kitty. Pardon me young lady; I’d rather talk to kitty when knitting.
A. I’m sorry. (Slow exit)

We will now turn to our genius Mr Shakespeare with the Macbeth scene and marvel at what he does to disturb the rhythm of the spectator almost to the point of giving them a cramp, as the heart and breath become overwrought.

MACBETH
Act 2 Sc II

LADY MACBETH That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench’d them hath given me fire.
Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek’d, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'est good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.


LADY MACBETH Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

*Enter MACBETH*

My husband!

**MACBETH** I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

**LADY MACBETH** I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

**MACBETH** When?

**LADY MACBETH** Now.

**MACBETH** As I descended?

**LADY MACBETH** Ay.

**MACBETH** Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?

**LADY MACBETH** Donalbain.

**MACBETH** This is a sorry sight.

*Looking at his hands*

**LADY MACBETH** A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.
MACBETH  There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!'
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH  There are two lodged together.

MACBETH  One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other;
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'
When they did say 'God bless us!'

LADY MACBETH  Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH  But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH  These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

MACBETH  Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep', the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

LADY MACBETH  What do you mean?
MACBETH  Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
       'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
       Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

LADY MACBETH  Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
       You do unbend your noble strength, to think
       So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
       And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
       Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
       They must lie there: go carry them; and smear
       The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH  I'll go no more:
       I am afraid to think what I have done;
       Look on't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH  Infirm of purpose!
       Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
       Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
       That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
       I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
       For it must seem their guilt.

*Exit. Knocking within*
MACBETH
Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appalls me?
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH
My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white.

Knocking within
I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber;
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.

Knocking within
Hark! More knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.
MACBETH  To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

Knocking within

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

Exeunt

Silence and thought between the lines is part of the game. How thoughtful can each character be without losing the dynamic of the scene?

Phrasing Exercise

A. Doubt is for mortals.
B. A quote?
A. A quote.
B. An ancient sentiment?
B. Doubt is for mortals.
A. Only!
B. What?
A. For mortals only. That’s the complete quote.
B. You didn’t say that!
A. What?
B. At first.
A. At first?
B. At first. What you said.
A. What I said?
B. Doubt is for mortals.
A. Only!
B. Yes, but you didn’t say that.
A. I’ve just said it.
B. Yes, now. But not then.
A. What did I say?
B. Doubt is for mortals – no only.
A. No only?
B. Doubt is for mortals, but you said no only.
A. I couldn’t have done. I couldn’t have said no only.
B. No!! You didn’t say no only, that was the point, you said no only, whereas you should have said only.
A. I doubt it!
The first form of public speaking was, as we know, the storyteller, the Epic Speaker. He, standing firmly, would speak more from the back of the mouth, the soft palate, to bring to us the historical events and memories, as in the works of Homer. The chorus in drama would move, as we call it nowadays, upstage for memories. This area was believed to be a world of imagination, indeed of magic, and, by allowing the voice to open out through the mouth, a sense of creative will was released into the speaking. As Drama evolved and two actors would converse together, say, Antigone and Kreon, the speech would come forward to the teeth, the tongue and the lips; this would give dramatic duologue an immediacy, as though in the present. The actors would move to the centre of the stage and the speech would be sharp and alert; this was Dramatic speaking. Finally, in a burst of passion the actor would come forwards, as we would say downstage, and deliver his monologue from the front edge of the stage, and the front edge of his mouth. This was called Lyrical speaking.

Many years ago I used to regularly perform at Christmas in town the part of Jiminy Cricket in the children’s play Pinocchio. There was little concern about accurate positions on the stage which allowed me to run upstage as I caught a memory, and centre stage as I urged Pinocchio into some action and then downstage as I told the children what I intended to do. At the time it all seemed to make sense.

So we have three areas of experience in our speaking; the Epic, the Dramatic, and the Lyrical. I was so interested by the idea that I wrote one burst of nonsense to try and capture the spirit of it; a friend of mine wrote another called ‘Three Localities on the Stage’; and finally I wrote a more detailed script, which can be for ‘Father and Son’ or ‘Mother and Daughter’ and from which you may be able to gather every nuance of epic, dramatic and lyric.
These three speeches were designed for you to experience something of Epic, Dramatic and Lyric in the strongest possible way. Let these strange speeches draw drama out of yourself into the three experiences:

Up-stage: Listening, listening, I hear whispering,
Epic Distant beckoning, reaching, pleading, pictures,
Glistening, echoing, beckoning, conjuring,
Misting, forming, storming, stronger making,
Shapes partaking, stories calling, forming, forming.

Centre-stage: Such tales I have to tell you, such mysteries.
Dramatic Will you believe me? I see you smile.
A clown you say. A fool, a dreamer, a tool of fantasy!
But I tell you my friend, when I have finished,
You will agree, you will accept and not reject,
The tales I tell.

Down-stage: O if only I could release the magic of those moments.
Lyric O such dreams, such memories. How can I ever express
In tame words, the conjured magic. O what purpose
Can there be in my witnessing of worlds unknown,
If my words cannot pass on those moments. O Muse!
I invoke you! Speak through me, let me show
The mystery that I know.

This little duologue by my friend, Ilya Duwan, is perhaps the first attempt to create an exercise dealing with the three localities on the stage; epic, dramatic, lyric.

Exercise: For each line decide whether it’s epic, dramatic, or lyric and try to reach the appropriate locality on the stage for your line.
Three Localities on the Stage

A. Where have you come from?
B. Oh, that I had never seen such misery!
A. Tell me at once: what has happened?
B. Have patience. I shall try to answer, wait a moment.
A. Is it possible that his wife has perished in the storm?
B. Listen to me, listen!
A. I am listening; speak!
B. The storm broke – I hastened to the lake and from afar I recognised the little boat.
   Oh! Why did she choose this disastrous hour?
A. Go on; don’t keep me in suspense.
B. The boat capsized, the waves dashed over it – there was no escape from her or for
   your child who was with her.
A. My little child, my dear boy? Oh woe is me!

Now, in a more detailed form, epic, dramatic and lyric are used in this scene; it could be
that the Father or Mother character, being invalids, stay in a chair, and it is only through
their speaking that they show us the epic, dramatic and lyric. The Son or Daughter
character is free to move round the stage and so can get to an appropriate position on the
stage.

Father and Son or Mother and Daughter

Father: I can recall, not so very long ago, that we quarrelled on some matter. What it
was I can only faintly remember, something concerning money. A debt. A loan,
something concerning money, I know. Some loss or some finding. Some
injustice. What was it that caused us such pain and anguish? Can you remember,
my boy?
Son: No Father. It must have been some time ago.
Father: But can you remember?
Son: No, I say. It's all forgotten.
Father: What is forgotten?
Son: What you are trying to remember. Give me patience!
Father: What?
Son: Nothing Father.
Father: Wait! I think I have it. It was to do with my will.
Son: O no! Light up your pipe Father, enjoy the evening.
Father: I begin to recall it now. I had got out my Will to add a Codicil to it.
Son: God! I think he will drive me mad.
Father: What?
Son: I said, I think you will drive me mad.
Father: Why?
Son: You are talking about a time, when you dreamt up the idea, that I was a bad lot and that my brother should have all your money and I none.
Father: So what did I do?
Son: Changed your Will.
Father: So your brother has all?
Son: Yes ……… but unfortunately, Harry is now dead.
Father: Oh my God! Harry, dear Harry. I remember him as a lad. So neat, always so clean. So bright, like a new penny … and such a naughty grin and yet so wise. He always seemed to me so wise. He would frighten me, when, with his grave eyes, he would gaze at me, unsmiling suddenly. He died of pneumonia, did he not?
Son: Yes, Father.
Father: You did not like him, did you my son?
Son: No! He was a wiseacre and a smart little cub. Cheeking me, because I was older and not letting me be older and wiser than him … and he would look at me with those old eyes of his… ‘wise eyes’ I would call him and then regret having said it, because, it made him sound wiser then me. What a pest he was! So smart, so clever, so clean. Now, he’s dead and I’m alive.
Father: In my heart he is not dead. His every movement haunts my memory. The sound
of his voice – he would whisper sometimes and then laugh and run away, when I asked him, what he had said.

Son: A few moments ago, you didn’t remember he was dead.
Father: It is true. I still can’t believe it. To me, he is still alive.
Son: Well, he is dead, so let’s say no more about it.
Father: Now I remember what you did to make me so angry!
Son: So you remember. So I remember … but now let’s forget it. It’s some time ago and there are better ways of spending the evening than talking about old memories.
Father: Yes… I remember. You tried to persuade the authorities, that I was mad and not responsible for the setting down of my Will.
Son: Well, you were mad. But now, I think I will go mad myself – just stop talking.
Father: If the money did not go to Harry, where did it go?
Son: Just stop it! It’s more than I can bear! This old man has been the bane of my life! That’s the truth! The bane of my life!
Father: What are you saying?
Son: That you have been the bane of my life. A pest! A wiseacre!
Father: Like Harry!
Son: God give me peace and rest from this old man of the sea!
Father: Where did the money go?
Son: I have it.
Father: How?
Father. Just leave it!
Father: What did you do with the money?
Son: It didn’t work out as I planned. I planned to get it, by convincing the authorities, you were not sane.
Father: And you failed!
Son: No. I succeeded. God help me! I succeeded! The only thing I have ever succeeded at!
Father: You succeeded. How?
Son: Because you are here.
Father: Here? This is my home.
Son: It is not your home.
Father: No! Now I remember. We had a veranda. The veranda. The lawn. The staircase in the centre of the house. The black iron stove. The blinds, the curtains, the sewing machine in the corner… where is it all?
Son: Gone!
Father: Gone?
Son: This is a Home. I told you – I succeeded!
Father: My memory must have gone but not my mind.
Son: True, but now it is too late.
Father: And you have the money … and Harry is dead. O Harry, I wanted so much to help you. You deserved help. I could have helped you. I could have set you up. Now you are gone and the money is gone.
Son: Yes Father. It is being used to keep you here. It is supporting you. I did not get it. I only got the joke. You see! The joke. The money is supporting you in the trap I laid.

When you read any play or speech from a play; out of interest, try and mark the three different qualities of epic, dramatic and lyric on the page. I think you would be surprised at how often you have to ring the changes. This shows what a rich world of experience lies there for us if we but look for it. For the actor, the lines can come alive before he has even applied anything of a detailed study on them.
SIXTEENTH STUDY

CHARACTER SOUNDS

In light music, back in the twenties, my father would often help his fellow composers by advising them on the right key for their little love songs. They would come to him for help in this matter and he could, by changing the key, transform an ordinary idea into a little classic of its time. We can develop such a sense for dramatic moods, by trying to discover the sound quality of a character or a dramatic situation. I can hardly apologise enough for the next two scenes, but please treat them with humour. All I have done is to run a line or two based on a word. So the word becomes a complete mood and for the exercise I have taken the mood and expressed it in a line to extend the experience. The word expresses the mood as well as the meaning of each character.

SCENE ONE

Mr Sly.  In many ways I could be considered a good guy. Admired for my fine line of not speaking my mind.
Miss Prim. It’s a neat thing, to pin the blame for everything on sin. To consider such a thing is in itself a fine thing.
Mr Brave. All knaves who indulge in such things – should behave. I made a great trade from all things only British made.
Miss Fear. Oh dear! It really isn’t clear to me in my foolish frantic sphere, how men behave, for if they come too near, however sincere, I feel freer as an old maid.
Miss Sharp. That’s enough! You shame me to harp on such stupid charlatans. Men are but sharks in the dark waters of life. Mark my words, mark!
Mr Joy. To jump and spring is a joyous thing. Have you noticed when jaded or jilted: if you jig or jog or jump about you’ll find that soon you are just as jolly as before?
Miss Tentative. I tremble when I tread with my toe upon the stage of life. I totter on my two pins and taste as though through a thin straw the tincture of experience.

Mr Grand. Can granite support the gargantuan grasp of my fantastic mind? A gantry only could lift my cranium to reveal its gorgeous god-like concoction of my fancy that gallops like Gagarene swine to the gorge of folly.

Miss Sad. Slow and bad is the course of all things sad. The quick and good dragged from gladness into the flat and flagging, sagging, flaccid malady of melancholy madness.

Mr Success. Satisfied with soaring swings of fortune we sit soul singing on the blessed, festive crest of success. Not resting from the test, lest we sense the tense and depressing failure.

SCENE TWO

Miss Fear. It is a frightening thing this interviewing. As it draws near I am filled with fear.

Mr Joy. Nonsense! You should feel the joy of spring, for this interviewing is a jolly thing.

Miss Sad. My anxiety does not allow for such aggravation. Be still and silent, soft and sad and know…

Mr Brave. Put a bold face on the situation. Behave with stern disdain. Calculate the questions they may state, prepare your answers and leave the rest to fate.

Mr Grand. March with élan before the man. Show him style, panache, and display the magic of your personality!

Miss Tentative. O! Mr Grand, how can you dare to even tap upon the door? I can only whisper – little more. I only hope he is attentive to my tale and his attention will encourage me.

Mr Success. Slide in with a satisfied grin, sure you will win. Then begin before
he has time to butt in. Let it all swing, so that you can accept his offer without bother.

Miss Sharp. It’s shameful to be so sure of your success. The work is hard, demanding and commanding – far from the starting a lark! I think you will soon depart.

Miss Prim. And you soon after him. Oh forgive me, but you are so grim, I had to defend him, I only hope the man interviewing likes thin women.

Mr Sly. (Enters) Hi! It’s good to see you girls and guys. Don’t be frightened, don’t cry or sigh, just take it easy – easy as ‘pie’. Make a queue from you few that I will interview. One comes first and then the rest. (Exit)

Mr Success. I suggest that I go first, I’ll be the best and the last the worst.

Miss Sharp. Shame on you! The last the worst indeed!

Mr Grand. Then let me go first. I’ll strut and stand, like the leader of the band. (Laughs)

Miss Tentative. May I hold your hand? I’ll trip with trembling. I’m nearly fainting.

Mr Brave. Be brave dear lady. Don’t be intimidated by despair.

Miss Prim. I pity him who meets you, Mr Brave. Your manner is impertinent beyond compare.

Miss Sad. But I’m glad he’s here to cheer us on, or alas, I would have long gone.

Miss Fear. So would have I. The sheer ordeal of this fearful interview almost brings me to tears.

Mr Joy. But Mr Brave jolts us into jolly courage. By Jimminee, just to look at him makes me want to laugh and jest with the rest.

Mr Sly. I’m so sorry; I can’t see any more tonight. I hope tomorrow will be alright for you, I really have too much to do.
If the playwright does not provide certain suggestions the actor could create his own sound patterns for speaking his character. For example, here is the first line from Shakespeare’s, Richard III:

Gloucester: Now is the winter of our discontent
      Made glorious summer by this son of York;

An actor could grab the word ‘discontent’ and base the sound quality of the character on the consonants and vowels in this word. For instance, you have ‘D’ (establishes one strongly on the earth), ‘Ee’ (a penetrating sound), ‘S’ (it can have a violent quality), ‘C’ (as in ‘K’, a cutting gesture), and ‘T’ (a finalising sound). This, of course, is just an illustration of the idea of working with the sounds to establish the character. The importance lies in the sounds and not the chosen word. An actor is free to choose whatever sounds he believes establish his character, but it need not make up a word.

Exercise:

In the ninth study we tried to define the characters of Nina and Konstantin from Chekhov’s “The Seagull”, by creating a sentence that suited them. Now try and find the sound qualities that seem to describe their characters.
SEVENTEENTH STUDY

PHANTOMS

The theatre is an artistic medium. By its very limitations, it must be artistic. Remember our violinist, who is always striving to move into the world of enharmonics, that each note vibrates and lives; it is the same with speaking in the theatre; we must, like the musician, sense space and tone.

I don’t know where I first heard it, but I thought it an invaluable piece of advice “Don’t say a line, speak it.” The scenes on this study have been deliberately written, or chosen to encourage a sense of stage speaking. To quote Marie Steiner again, “First master the audible, then discover the inaudible in the spoken word, and then reveal the inaudible in the audible.”

The two scenes I have written, “The Visitor” and “The Mountaineers”, may help us towards this ambition. Speaking in the theatre should have a certain quality. The speech must live in the space, must travel on the breath, must soften the tone, and be full of movement. My two scenes are in a way loaded, behind their trivial comments there should be a quality in the voice that makes us feel there is more to what they say than what we know. This prepares us for Hamlet’s ghost scene.

By portraying mysterious situations we enjoy living in the world of the ethereal voice; a quality that should somehow remain with us whatever character we play, though with our skill we disguise it. Rudolf Laban once said to me “All characters are phantoms. When you have finished the play you leave them at the side of the stage and unite with them at the next performance.”
THE VISITOR

A. They said they would send someone to watch over us.
B. Being as we are old and afraid.
C. That was generous of them.
A. They said he would watch over us and protect us.
B. From fear.
C. How kind.
   
   (Silence)
A. When he comes I suppose he will knock.
B. At the door.
C. Very thoughtful.
   
   (Silence)
A. When he comes.
B. Oh!  (A man is standing in the room)
C. You are here, how kind.
D. (Quietly) Good evening ladies.
C. Good evening.
A. You could have knocked.
C. How thoughtful of him, it would have made us jump.
B. High in the air. (She giggles)
A. Don’t joke Mildred. Please sit down.
D. Why?
A. To rest your legs.
D. My legs? (He laughs quietly) I prefer to drift about the room.
C. Do, by all means.
   
   (After Silence)
B. Are you guarding us?
D. Am I?
A. Well, aren’t you?
D. From what?
C. Danger!
D. I like danger.
A. Oh!

(Silence)
A. Please, do sit down.
D. This is a lonely place.
C. That is why they sent you – to guard over us.
D. A lonely desolate place.
A. Desolate?
B. The place is alright; it’s we that are lonely and desolate.
A. Mildred!
B. Well, it’s true!
C. That is why we are grateful for your company.
D. My company? I am no company for any man – or woman.
C. (Giggles)
A. Stop that! What do you mean young sir?
B. You are here, so you are company for us.
D. You are company for me – briefly.
C. For you!
D. I always seek company – human company.
C. So do I. So do I.
A. Bertha, be quiet. (Slowly) What do you mean – human company?
D. Human company – the warmth of the blood, the pulse, the heart, the soft breath.
B. Dear God, preserve us!
A. I think you had better go.
C. Sister!
A. Go! Go! Leave us!
D. I will – but where to? (He disappears)
THE MOUNTAINEERS

A. How did it happen?
B. Quite simply. She was dancing on ahead of us …
A. Dancing!
C. Yes. You know. Skipping about … showing off.
A. Why was she ahead of you? Being the least experienced she should have been between you.
C. We suggested that, at the beginning of the climb … but … well, you know what she is.
D. Was. (Quietly)
C. (Shouting) Well then, you know what she was … if that makes you feel better.
B. Then she just disappeared over the edge.
A. Fell over the edge.
D. Two hundred feet.
C. (Sarcastically) Are you sure Mathew? Are you quite sure it was two hundred?
D. Could it have been two hundred and ten?
A. I don’t believe this conversation.
D. In a way she deserved it. She ignored all our instructions … thought that we were boring old fools and said so … and then suddenly silence.
A. Much to your relief it would seem.
C. Incidentally, why are you investigating us … why these questions? You know the facts, there’s nothing more to be said.
A. It is vital to get the truth.
C. You missed the climb … you didn’t even bother to get up, you lazy pig … now, you assume the role of truth detector. Why?
B. Because he feels guiltless … but wishes to make us feel guilty.
D. Why didn’t you come for the climb?
A. I drank too much the night before. I didn’t trust myself the next morning.
D. Why did you drink? Because she chucked you over … is that why?
C. Now, she’s been chucked over herself.
B. Fell over Williams. Fell over.
D. Fell down. She fell down.
C. Down and down.
A. I was still asleep.
B. Strangely lucky.
C. Down and down.
D. Silently.
B. Yes. That was strange … silently.

Note: Both actors can imagine their voices echoing down a corridor.

HAMLET
Act 1 Scene V

HAMLET Where wilt thou lead me? Speak; I'll go no further.
GHOST Mark me.
HAMLET I will.
GHOST My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
HAMLET Alas, poor ghost!
GHOST Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
HAMLET Speak; I am bound to hear.
GHOST So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
HAMLET What?
GHOST I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

HAMLET O God!

GHOST Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET Murder!

GHOST Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

HAMLET Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

GHOST Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, --
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce! -won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

To finish this study I’d like to elaborate on this idea of the Theatre being an artistic medium. When I was playing King Lear, standing in the middle of the stage during the storm, I asked the actor playing my Fool if he would shake my cloak as though it were blown by the wind. I found that with his cloak waving attached to my shoulders and my struggling and stumbling as an old man in a storm, though just as far from the real thing as little pieces of paper falling to represent snow, the audience seemed to have powerfully experienced the nature of a storm.

If you want the truth behind the façade of daily life, look at a painting. I brooded over this recently, until I saw a simple painting called ‘The Snowstorm’ where white paint was scribbled on the canvas. On the same day I saw a documentary on TV that showed a fall of snow. I had to smile, for the truth of a snowstorm was more apparent from the painting than the photograph of the real thing.
EIGHTEENTH STUDY

TOPOS

In ages past the Greeks felt they spoke out of the periphery, out of the blue sky. The auditorium of their theatre was buried in the hill, but the stage was backed only by the sky. They felt that every line came from space, from many directions, but always out of space. ‘Place’ in Greek is ‘Topos’. Therefore in dramatic speaking, be it chorus, monologue or duologue, they spoke of the need for a ‘change of Topos’.

Today we speak of change of pitch, this is an activity in the throat and the impulse for this is mainly physical. But the impulse to change the pitch should come from a place in space, from out of the periphery. Working only from change of pitch is like our surfer on the beach, but working with change of ‘Topos’ is like our surfer riding on the wave.

Exercise:
The following duologue is composed of short lines. Be sure that the first word of your line does not copy the tone of the last word of your partner’s line. In other words you come out of the periphery, from a different place (change of Topos).

A. What the devil is that?
B. What?
A. That – over there.
B. What – Floating.
A. Yes, floating.
B. Part of a boat?
A. Or old clothing.
B. Or a man.
A. You think so?
B. I know so … it is a man.
A. Dead, do you think he is dead?
B. We must rescue him.
A. But he may be dead.
B. Dead or alive we should go to him.
A. Swim to him?
B. If we can.
A. Alright, let’s do that.
B. Both of us?
A. Yes, both of us.
B. We could take each arm and pull him shore.
A. It would need both of us.
B. Right – let’s do it.
A. Here, take my coat.
B. What for?
A. I don’t need it.
B. Nor do I – here, take mine.
A. What for?
B. I need to free my arms for swimming.
A. Put it on the beach with mine.
B. Right.
A. Not on top of mine – at the side.
B. But it will get wet on the damp ground.
A. So will mine.
B. But if I lay mine of top of yours…
A. Look, a movement.
B. O my God – in we go.
A. In we go.
B. Yes in we go – go in then!
A. You.
B. No, you.
A. Look it moved again.
B     In we gooo…
A.     Riiight…!

(They start swimming … they arrive)
A.     A bundle of old clothes.
B     God, I’m tired.
A.     What?
A.     I’m tired.
B.     Back … we must get back.
B.     I’m too tired.
A.     So am I.
B.     Hang on to the clothes.
A.     Yes, hang on.
B.     Hang on.
A.     Hang on.

The following speech from Lord Byron’s “Manfred,” comes out of the mist, a ghostly
voice coming from every direction. This allows the actor to experiment with coming from
different places with the first word of every line. In the play, the spirit torments Manfred.

MANFRED
Lord Byron
Act 1 Sc I
When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer’d owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather’d in a cloud;
And forever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn’d around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

Finally, with this Song from Shakespeare’s ‘As You Like it’, the aim is for two people to speak in chorus; each approaching the lines from different directions and making the mixture of the two voices, though not sung but rather spoken, very musical.
It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonny no,
That o’er the green cornfield did pass
In the springtime, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonny no,
These pretty country folds would lie,
In the springtime, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonny no,
How that life was but a flower,
In the springtime, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonny no,
For love is crowned with the prime,
In the springtime, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding.
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This polyphonic style was used in the Greek choruses; behind it was the ideal that the chorus created a new voice that belonged to no man and arrived from the periphery.
NINETEENTH STUDY
EXPRESSION

GIBBERISH

You may all know what I mean by ‘gibberish’. It’s speaking a series of sounds, without using real words, which seem full of sense but, of course, have no meaning at all. The process separates the meaning from the sound, and seems to give the artist a curious sense of freedom, once they have got used to the idea. You can hear how dull one can be with normal text, and then discover the freedom of answering to a stream of gibberish from a colleague, by your own original response and comic invention. All gibberish seems to make sense, even though you can only register the sound alone; it is surprising how satisfied we can be with sound-sense and no meaning.

Take the time to experiment with gibberish!

A way to take this further into the process of rehearsals is to take the individual scenes and run them in gibberish. Often a whole stream of original sound expressions begins to appear, which we can then try to recapture when we come back to the script. Often one entirely loses the liveliness of the speaking, at which point one can go back to gibberish and start again.

In our time we listen for meaning with little feeling or awareness for inflection or sound (often lectures can be like that). Listening to sound, which is either guided by sense, or just by sound, awakens us to the lack of expression in our inflections when we talk sense. It seems childish at the beginning but as one progresses it can lead to much pondering and thought about communication.
MELODRAMA

Henry Irving in ‘The Bells’
“Them’s were the days”

These few gestures may make us smile but when Irving died in the foyer of the hotel after his performance of ‘Wolsey’ he was, I believe, worth three million pounds. Just thought I would mention that. I think we should not smile at his gestures but marvel that they held the audience spellbound. He was also famous for his voice, which had something of the ‘Great Actor Style’; again, marvel that the audience drank in these unique experiences, which only the theatre of that day could provide. The audience of that day were “Theatre Goers” and highly critical, yet performers such as Irving and Ellen Terry could carry them through a play as though in an ecstatic dream. Try it some time. Copy these gestures; static like the photographs.

Actors are born with a sense of gesture in movement and sound. This sense they have allows them to experience everything they do. So, even by copying a static image of one of these gestures, that sense should reflect upon you and give you a sense of what the gesture truly conveys. The audience have the same experience. As Irving rose up and
flung back the chair, they also, inwardly, would rise up and fling back the chair; and they would be startled at the experience it brought them. Even if we don’t consciously realize it, this is why we go to the theatre, for unique experiences, which we could only get in the theatre or only under extreme circumstances in life. Therefore, we applaud the actors at the end of the play; thanking them for two hours of unique experiences, which we had never felt before and will probably never feel again.

So copy and experience these gestures and then try to transfer the experience to your colleagues when you do the gestures. That we may all laugh does not matter. Somewhere young actors and actresses should be given the opportunity to thrash around in their drama, exaggerate and experiment! Get it as wrong as possible, and you will find how right it is.

Below is a Melodrama. To capture the atmosphere, imagine yourself in an old theatre. The only lighting is floats, a burning wick floating on oil, hence the necessity for large expressive gestures. And imagine a piano in the orchestra pit supporting with ‘Melo’, the ‘Drama’; hence Melodrama. The audience are strangers in a strange world; they need slow, dramatic, clear speaking, hence the style.
MELODRAMA

CAST: Sir Hotley, Father, Mother, Little May (their lovely brave daughter).

Hotley: Tonight is the night when in the darkness of the moonless gloom I will enter the cottage of that poor and simple family that live at the end of the lane. There I will search for the box of golden coins. They do not know it but they are rich, but I have been informed that their riches are hidden in the old armchair. I will knock.

(Knocks on door, the door opens)

May: Good evening Sir Hotley. This is an honour. I will call Mother.

Hotley: No need dear child, I will enter.

Mother: O Sir Hotley. Do forgive me. We are not prepared for this visit. The rent is ready for you, though you are a week early. But little May has worked at her sewing day and night and Father has ploughed the field night and day and I have kept my hot-pot on the boil to give them strength to work all hours God gave them to pay the rent.

Hotley: Then why does he sleep in the old armchair, hard by?

Mother: Oh no! Oh no! He has not died. Arthur, Arthur; speak to me, come back my dear, come back.

Father: What’s this? What’s this?

Mother: Sir Hotley is here.

Father: Oh Sir Hotley. (Leaping up) Welcome Sir Hotley to our simple homestead. Though not so simple that it is not worth every penny that we pay you for it.

Hotley: I wish to purchase your old armchair.

Father: This old armchair?

Mother: The old armchair?

May: The armchair?

Hotley: The armchair.

May: The old armchair?

Father: This old armchair?
Hotley: The armchair.
May: How much will you give for it?
Mother: May! You bad girl! How dare you say such a thing to Sir Hotley!
Hotley: No, no, no. The child is right. I shall give you sixpence.
Father: ‘Tis almost too generous, Sir Hotley.
Mother: Indeed it is.
May: Two sixpences!
Hotley: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. You have a bonnie lass there, indeed you have. I will tell you what I’ll do. I’ll give you three sixpences, if your Father carries the chair for me to my house at the top of the hill.
Father: ‘Tis done, and I will do it. (Picks up the chair)
Hotley: Here are the three sixpences, Miss May. May they bring you happiness and all that you desire.
Father: ‘Tis something in this chair. ‘Tis heavier than it should be.
Hotley: Come my man! Haste now!
Father: Mother, there seems to be something in the seat of this chair.
Mother: O Father, off with you! You always tiddle taddle. Get on with you now.
Father: I can feel a box within the seat of the armchair.
Hotley: I’ll box you ears, Man, unless you quickly take this chair up the hill to my house.
Mother: Master’s right Father. Off with you!
May: May I look, Sir Hotley?
Mother: May, you may not!
Hotley: You certainly may not.
Mother: No, May, no!
Father: I don’t know what to think. There is surely something in the chair
May: It is grandpappa’s box of golden coins.
Hotley: (Pushes her) Go away May.
May: O I have fallen Mother! Father, gather round me I am leaving this world
forever.

Mother: O Sir Hotley, what have you done? You have struck our child.

Hotley: Let me help her up. ‘Tis a great deal of her Father’s tiddle taddling.

(As he leans over May to lift her she snatches a letter from his pocket.)

May: Grandpappa’s letter. I’ve found it. (Hands it to Father, then appears to faint)

Hotley: (Dropping May) Give it to me!

Mother: O Father, give Sir Hotley his letter. O May, speak to me! O Sir Hotley, be not too angry, I beg of you, I plead with you. O May, speak to me. Father, obey Sir Hotley. Sir Hotley help me with May. Father, help Sir Hotley, May…

Father: ‘Tis indeed Grandfathers writing.

Hotley: (Snatching letter) Give me that! Pick up the chair and follow me to Hardup Hall.

May: (Weakly climbs into the armchair)

Father: How can I take the chair all the way to Hardup Hall, when May is resting in it?

May: I am dying.

Hotley: Get out of that chair, you pest, or I’ll squeeze the life out of you for good.

Mother: O Sir Hotley. That is not like you.

Father: Hands off my Daughter.

Hotley: (Dragging at May who clings to the chair) Let go or I will…

Father: Let go you brute or I will…

Mother: Let go Father or Sir Hotley will…

May: Let go Sir Hotley or we will…

(A box falls out of the bottom of the chair)

May: Granddad’s gold. (She faints)

Hotley: Foiled. Goodnight, to you all. From now on the rent will be double what it was. Look to be finding two shillings on Friday. Two, mark you!

Father: ‘Tis Granddad’s gold, but Mother we have paid a price. May has passed from this vale of tears. She was sitting on a fortune and knew it. Brave – brave little soul. I would give every coin to have her alive again.

May: (Springing up) Father, I am here. Give me that gold. I will invest it in the local coalmine, at fifteen percent interest and we will live happily ever after on the
dividends.

Mother: Ah! She has got her head screwed on the right way, though it took her other end to save the gold from Sir Hotley.

I remember working with Wolfgang Ernst, a Greek scholar, on his translation of Antigone by Sophocles. I was playing Kreon and suggested we could, perhaps, be a little bit more natural in our speech and gesture. In that moment he lost it and leaping around he cried, “Do you call how we move and speak today – Natural? It is the most unnatural movement and sound that we utter today, little to do with the human being. It is only in drama that we can see a hint of how the human should behave…” Something along those lines. At that moment a Concorde flew over with its deafening roar. “That,” he cried, at the top of his voice and with a fine ‘Irving’ gesture, “is what has happened to Greek drama; that is Greek Drama!”

From Edward Gordon Craig to the Directors of the Royal Shakespeare Company, all lament the loss of Style. Theatre belongs to a world of fantasy; when it is not fantasy then it is only pretending to be real. That is not its place. We pay our money and sit ourselves down in order to go somewhere. There is so much talk about paying millions to go to the moon where for twenty pounds in the theatre you can go to a real magical land. Even if the story and setting looks contemporary, actors can always lift it into the realm of imagination; making our mundane existence magical in the speech and movement of theatre.
TWENTIETH STUDY
THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

The Four Temperaments: Melancholic, Phlegmatic, Sanguine, and Choleric.
The four temperaments are now sometimes recognized, but not so seriously as back in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century and before. Read Shakespeare and they are all there, distinctly. The recognition and study of the temperaments has long faded from our social life. I feel they have a place not only in the work of drama and the actor, but also in everyday social life. In our time the temperaments have gradually been worn down to a level of anxiety, we could even say fear, that dims our inner life, and of course the outer life, in such a way that we all seem to express ourselves in the same way; disguising the individual essence of the temperaments.

If the four temperaments were to be brought back to our awareness then they may freshen our speaking and behaviour. The fact that previously they were related to aspects of nature helps us ground our speaking. Fire-Choleric, Water-Phlegmatic, Air-Sanguine, and Earth-Melancholic. For the actor, the temperaments could be helpful signposts pointing toward characteristics of their role. It would give support to the skillful acting of today and increase our ability to observe accurately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INNER AND OUTER ACTIVITY IN THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS</th>
<th>Activity and Interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>MELANCHOLIC:</td>
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<td>PHLEGOMATIC:</td>
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<td>SANGUINE:</td>
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Below is a scene written to illustrate the more obvious qualities of the four temperaments.

TEMPERAMENTS SCENE

CHOLERIC: Now, what’s going on here? We are meant to have the stage prepared by Thursday midday. Look at it. For god’s sake, what have you been doing for the past two weeks? I can’t for the life of me see what you have been doing. The place looks the same as it did when I left.

PHLEGMATIC: Now, hold on, hold on! There had to be a lot of discussion. We had to be sure that we were going about things in the right way. What with all the planning, allocation of jobs to each member of the group. Jobs that were suitable to their temperament. Then of course, the tea break, coffee break, lunch break, these are important moments in the rhythm of the day.

SANGUINE: Anyway we’ve still got plenty of time. Two whole days! I can’t see what you’re worried about. I could do it all myself in an afternoon. It only needs a bit of sorting out. Let’s do it now and stop talking. It will be done by lunchtime.

MELANCHOLIC: It will take all night. I know it will. We’ll all get overtired and ill and then the company arrives next week and we will find that we needn’t have rushed at all. This dust gets in my lungs; I can hardly breathe. We should have been provided with masks and overalls, protection against infection by a dust laden atmosphere.

CHOLERIC: God, all this whining and whining drives me mad. If you had spent as much time working as complaining, the work would have been done by now.

PHLEGMATIC: Never! There is over a month’s work here unless you want slave labour.
SANGUINE: I’m not a slave, I am a free man. I don’t even have to be here. I could be anywhere else. I could be in Jamaica, or Florida, or at home, in my own room. Not stuck in this cold theatre arguing with a bully.

MELANCHOLIC: I have been bullied all my life. From when I was only a child. I remember there was a little boy who would hit me with a stick and a little girl that would pull my hair and I would cry and cry and stand, all alone, and no one would pity me, no one would care. Even the teachers would look away and the children would laugh…

CHOLERIC: Please, stop! Stop! Don’t go on.

PHLEGMATIC: Why not? It’s a fascinating story. I could listen for hours to such stories.

SANGUINE: Hey, how about going into town and having some fun somewhere? We’ve all been stuck in this theatre for a week. We need a break; I need fresh air.

CHOLERIC: Get out! Get out! All of you! I’ll do the whole job myself. We used to work all night when we had to finish the scenery. All night and then all the following day. Work and work. We were tired but were satisfied with the success of our work. Satisfied to see it done. Completed! So go!

Finally here is a selection of speeches that in someway contain the qualities of the different temperaments. There is one Shakespeare and one modern speech for each temperament, for actors and actresses.
KENT  A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

OSWALD  Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

KENT  What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you: draw, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger, draw.

Drawing his sword

OSWALD  Away! I have nothing to do with thee.
KENT Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father: draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf by Edward Albee

GEORGE You see, Martha, here, stops just when the going gets good … just when things start getting a little rough. Now, Martha, here, is a misunderstood little girl; she really is. Not only does she have a husband who is a bog … a younger-than-she-is bog albeit … not only does she have a husband who is a bog, she has as well a tiny problem with spirituous liquors – like she can’t get enough … and on top of all that, poor weighed-down girl, PLUS a father who really doesn’t give a damn whether she lives or dies, who couldn’t care less what happens to his only daughter … on top of all that she has a son. She has a son who fought her every inch of the way, who didn’t want to be turned into a weapon against his father, who didn’t want to be used as a goddamn club whenever Martha didn’t get things like she wanted them. Lies? All right. A son who would not disown his father, who came to him for advice, for information, for love that wasn’t mixed with sickness – and you know what I mean, Martha! – who could not tolerate the slashing, braying residue that called itself his MOTHER, MOTHER? HAH!!
ANTONY If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Caesar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii:
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

The Sea by Edward Bond

EVENS I believe in the rat. What’s the worst thing you can imagine? The universe is lived in by things that kill and this has gone on for all time. Sometimes the universe is crowded with killing things. Or at any rate there are great pools of them in space. Perhaps that’s so now. At other times it falls out that they’ve killed everything off, including each other of course, and the universe is almost deserted. But not quite. Somewhere on a star a rat will hide under a stone. It will look out on the broken desert and from time to time it will scatter out to feed on the debris. A shambolling, lolloping great rat - like a fat woman with shopping bags running for a bus. Then it scuttles back to its nest and breeds. Because rats build nests. And in time it will change into things that fly and swim and crawl and run. And one day it will turn into the rat catcher. I believe in sand and stone and water because the wind stirs them into a dirty sea and it gives birth to living things. The universe lives. It teems with life. Men take themselves to be very strong and cunning. But who can kill space or time or dust? They destroy everything but they only make the materials of life. All destruction is finally petty and in the end life laughs at death.
SANGUINE

ACTOR

(A Midsummer Night’s Dream Act 2 Sc I)

PUCK The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling;
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But, they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Teeth & Smiles by David Hare

SARAFIAN I can’t tell you the beauty of this profession. Years ago when I was young. It was full of people called Nat and Harry and Dick in brown suits and two-tone shoes. With thick chunky jewellery as if someone had splattered hot melting gold over their bodies with a watering can, and it had set in great thick blobs. And golden discs on the walls. And heavy presentation ballpoint sets, on their desks. Would sell you their grandmother’s wooden leg. Nat did sell his grandmother’s wooden leg, after she died, admittedly.
And they muttered the totem phrases of the trade like, ‘Tell him I’ll get back to him.’ There was no higher compliment an initiate could be paid than to be taken out for pickled brisket and beetroot borscht, ‘The real money’s in sheet music. My son.’ And they snapped great white fingers around the piano and used words like ‘catchy’ and ‘wild’. And the artists… the artists bore no connection to the world I knew. When Nat traveled he carried them in the back of a van with a sliding glass compartment between him and them so he wouldn’t have to listen to their conversation. He talked about installing sprinklers, as in Buchenwald. It was organized crime. Really. Those days. That’s what interested me. The blatancy of it. The damnfool screaming stupidity of popular music. I loved it.

PHLEGOMATIC

ACTOR

(Two Gentlemen of Verona Act 2 Sc III)

LAUNCE Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping; all the kind of the Launces have this very fault. I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured dog that lives: my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear: he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog: a Jew would have
wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father: no, this left shoe is my father: no, no, this left shoe is my mother: nay, that cannot be so neither: yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance on't! There 'tis: now, sit, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I am the dog: no, the dog is himself, and I am the dog--Oh! The dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father; Father, your blessing: now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping: now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother: O that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her; why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

The Body by Nick Darke

BODY When I was alive, towards the end of my life- by the way I'm dead right now, I died, close on five minutes ago- I had a fear of yawning. Got to figuring I yawned too hard the skin round my lips, when they opened wide, would peel right back over my head and down my neck and turn me inside out. I started to yawn when I was sixteen, back home, when I was bored. I know that other
healthy guys when they hit sixteen start to do other things than yawn. But believe me, where I came from there was little hope of that. And yawning was the next best thing. One day my paw caught me yawning. He said Son join the Marines. I said Paw I’m bored. He said the Marines will sure kick the shit outta that. So. I enlisted. First thing they do is cut my hair off. Which kinda makes me uneasy cus by now I’d reached neurosis point about this skin-peeling business, and I figured the only thing which would stop the skin from shooting right back over the top of my skull when I yawned was the hair. Figured it might hold it in check long enough for me to yank it all back into place. But on my first day… had my head shaved… believe me, I kept my mouth tight shut. But, by the end of my training at boot camp on Parris Island, I was a highly tuned killing machine, prepared to be sent to any part of the world, get shot up and die protecting the free world from the onslaught of Communism. Paw was right. Sure kicked the shit outta yawning.

**CHOLERIC**

**ACTRESS**

*(A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act 2 Sc II)*

TITANIA These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer’s spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb’d our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck’d up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Have every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperture we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The chiding autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.
MARI Well, some might say I’ve got what I deserve. But that’s the problem, I’ve never had what I deserved. I was more than this dump I had to live in. In fact, my energy itself could have burnt this place down years ago, four times over with fireworks for ever. I was more than what I married. Your father, your father kissing me with his parlour lips. I had health and breasts and legs. I strode. When I got behind your pram I propelled it about a hundred miles an hour. The air was full of the sound of wolf whistles, deafening. He was shambbling somewhere behind, a beanpole Chaplin. But you, you were always his. It was always you and him, you and him all the time, doing quiet things, heads bent together, listening to the records. Driving me mad, my energy could have burnt this house down four times over, and you two tilted into books, listening to the radio shows, playing board games in front of the fire. Fuck it. And now I’m dancing on my own grave and it’s a roasting tin. My house gutted, my last possession gone. My last chance charred. Look at me up to my ankles in char. (Looking at the thick soot over the floor) In fact, this is my soul leaking over the floor here, soot itself. I’m going to scoop handfuls up and spread it over you. Your head, you see, was the match head of this. (Indicating everything) What’s up, cat got your tongue?
MELANCHOLIC

ACTRESS
(A Midsummer Night’s Dream Act 3 Sc II)

HELENA O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.
MAM  We were the first couple in this street to install an inside toilet. You could say we were pioneers in that department. Then everybody else followed suit. \((Pause)\).

When we first came there was all that having to go down the street. I never liked that. \((Pause)\). Mr Craven’s not been well. He’s on tablets. The aftermath of being run over. One of these hit and run drivers. Are you motorised? Practically everybody is nowadays. Without a car you’re static. It was after his accident he started imagining things. Someone was trying to kill him. Dr Sillitoe’s got him on tablets for depression. It’s not mental, in fact it’s quite widespread. A lot of better class people get it apparently. I’m surprised I haven’t had it because you’re more at risk if you’re sensitive, which I am. More than Dad anyway. Only it’s not mental. Health is a great gift. He reckons he’ll be better once we get into these horrible new flats, but I have my doubts. They’re not the high flats. Not the multis. They’ve discontinued those. It’s a maisonette. They’re built more on the human scale. That’s the latest thing now, the human scale. Still, I’ve no need to tell you that, if you’re from the Housing.

**Sanguine**

**ACTRESS**

* A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act 2 Sc I

**Titania**

Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,

Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following,--her womb then rich with my young squire,--
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

The Ruling Class by Peter Barnes

GRACE I always get first night nerves. Any good performer does. You have to be keyed up to give a good show. I’ve done it all, from Stanislavski to Strip. Never think I once worked as a stripper, would you? It’s true, as God is my witness- no, you weren’t there, were you J. C.? Greasy makeup towels, cracked mirrors, rhinestones and beads. What a world. I sang “This Can’t Be Love”. Funny, I did the same act later at the ‘Pigalle’ for twice the money without removing a stitch. Of course, some women can strip without taking their clothes off. Nobody could call me undersexed but I could never get worked up watching some man strip down to his suspenders and jockstrap. Where’s the fun? I suppose some people just enjoy the smell of a steak better than the steak itself. If my mother could see me now- it’s what she always wanted for me- the Big Time. She never forgave Dad for being born in Clapham. Guess she found it hard to settle down to civilian life after being in a touring production of ‘Chu Chin Chow’. Nobody need worry about me fitting in. All I have to do is play it cool. I can cock my little finger with the best.
PHLEGOMATIC

ACTRESS

(A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act 1 Sc 1)

HELENA

How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured every where:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.
ROSEMARY Now my grandfather was a farmer- in point of fact, farming goes back even farther than him… His name were Albert Chapman- but as I say the Chapmans as farmers go back farther- oh, I can’t say how far. But it was always around here- the edge of Fenland- where the silt begins to start. Flat as the fen, but the soil’s nowhere near as black. Very good for bulbs… Anyway, it’s on account of the farming in my forebears that me and Terence is still here. Only it ain’t been a farm house for ever such a long time, well, since Albert Chapman’s time, because he lost the farm itself to the Chorleys. Got into some trouble and sold up to them… My dad was Harold Chapman and he never were a farmer. He were on the waterways first, and when they closed them down- though not without my dad and others giving up a fight- he went on the railway. That were 1927… If he were alive now he’d be ninety-seven, but he died when he were my age- that’s sixty. He seemed ever so old to me at the time- must have been the work. It were when he were on the railway that he were my dead husband Horace’s boss- that were how I met him. His people come from Scotland, so he were on his own. Anyway, so this used to be a farm, but my grandfather were careful enough to keep the house. So, that’s why it’s bigger than it should be given what my Terence earns, and why we’re stuck out here in the middle of all these Chorley fields. No end of times they tried to shift us… Terence works on the railway like both our dads- Harold Chapman and Horace Daley.
TWENTY-FIRST STUDY
SIX FUNDAMENTAL GESTURES

The ancient Greek neophytes were taught the Six Archetypal Gestures in what were called the ‘Mystery Schools’. These, they believed, were the fundamental gestures of existence in this world. Every gesture in life contains something of these archetypal gestures. Under extreme conditions in life, sometimes the pure gesture appears. I have found that, for acting, these gestures carried out on a regular basis as exercises strengthen the movement and expression of your gesture and voice.

The Six Gestures are: Effective, Thoughtful, Sympathy, Antipathy, Feeling Forward Against Hindrances, and Withdrawing onto One’s Own Ground.

Effective
Gesture: Pointing.
Speech: Metallic.
To experience Effective: Soldiers search blindly for documents. They search effectively but with no thought.

Thoughtful
Gesture: Holding oneself. (i.e. hand on chin, hands on hips, touching face, crossed arms, hands together, etc.)
Speech: Slow, circling sound.
To experience Thoughtful: Our effective soldiers are ordered to think or ponder on where the documents may be before they effectively recommence their search, which could be slower if they are thinking whilst they do it.

Sympathy
Gesture: Hand on the upper arm of the person for whom you have sympathy.
Speech: Soft
To experience Sympathy: Admiring a statue, walking round and studying it.
Antipathy
Gesture: Push away, kick away.
Speech: Hard
To experience Antipathy: Notice at the base of statue it says “Plastic; Made in Birmingham” You push the statue over.

Feeling Forward Against Hindrances
Gesture: Feeling forward with palms of the hands upturned.
Speech: Vibrating voice.
To experience Feeling Forward: Early Russian peasants seeing their first tractor and daring to approach it.

Withdrawing onto Your Own Ground
Gesture: Cutting away with the hand in a diagonal.
Speech: Abrupt
To experience Withdrawing: Tourists entering a market place and being hassled by merchants to buy their goods, but ignoring them.

There is a seventh gesture that belongs to our time and that is ‘Indecision’.

Indecision
Gesture: Static
Speech: Slow
To experience Indecision: Trying to choose which cup you like best in a charity bazaar.

The knowledge of these gestures supports your acting and gives you strength and presence on the stage. I don’t think Laurence Olivier knew of the six gestures; however, Sir Tyrone Guthrie’s description of him is a good example of being Effective: “Laurence Olivier is never dull. The voice, however, has more the quality of brass [Effective] than that of strings. And even now, after many years of intense cultivation and ceaseless practice, it is the vigour and brilliance of his tone that impress. Sweetness does not come
so easily. I have never been able to understand those critics who are not aware of the immense musicality that infuses all his performances – a rare sensitivity to rhythm, colour, phrasing, pace and pitch.”

This group of duologues, which includes the Indecision gesture, starts us off. The second group of duologues is written in a more contemporary style, and does not include the Indecision gesture.

**Effective and Thoughtful Gestures into Speech**

**Effective** You, come here! *(Man steps forward)* You see before you the very person that has made a fool of you. Doubt not that you have at last found him. See, guilt written on his face – his whole manner betrays him. Look at his coat, his sleeve, collar; his very style of dress proves him a traitor.

**Thoughtful** Now, now, now, you do deduce too, your thoughts go beyond the facts. I will admit, there is something in his manner, which, perhaps… *(Studies him)* yes, I would agree, his style of dress is not to our liking, but then, are we to condemn a man for the cut of his clothes?

**Effective** My Lord, I do not in this way intend to condemn a man, but I can provide you with further facts of the case. These facts will, at a stroke, banish your doubts as to the treacherous nature of this man. Bring the paper, the scroll, the four items of evidence and the documents we spoke of …

**Thoughtful** I cannot in such haste peruse documents, scrolls, items of evidence and the like … let me address our prisoner first and hear his story.

**Effective** I apologize for my haste, my Lord and wait upon your pleasure.
Antipathy and Sympathy Gesture into Speech

Antipathy  I will not hear it; I will not; speak not nor indicate by look or gesture the nature of your news. (Moves away) O! How I loathe it all, this clamour of men at arms, their voices ringing through the night, as they shout of the glories of a warring life. Vile, pestilential cutthroats, the filth of the roadside collected on the boats of Mars, glory in their uprising.

Sympathy  O lady, hear me, and bear with softer thoughts the news I bring. Your master returns, bourne by his men on a litter, wounded, sick, but seeking to hasten home, fearful that any delay, wasting his strength, may stretch to eternity.

Antipathy  O God, that icy steel should be thrust into his flesh, I feel the wounds bite deep and weep in anger at the hateful iron’s power, that, now gone, leaves but the cringes flesh unhealed.

Sympathy  Peace, Lady; the wound is closed and brings a double healing. He and you, close knit again shall be healed in soul and body and lose this anguish in the flow of time.
**Drawing-back and Indecision Gestures into Speech**

**Drawing-back**  
No, I do not wish to deal in this matter further. It is not for me. My way of life must remain different, opposite, to your chosen path. We must go our separate ways.

**Indecision**  
Then I …… what …… what can I do?

**Drawing-back**  
I sympathise but will not help.

**Indecision**  
You see …… with your influence …… somehow …… we might have…

**Drawing-back**  
I know, I am well aware of the part I was intended to play; but I must refuse; and now, if you please ……

**Indecision**  
But we have gone so far …… and now ……..

**Drawing-back**  
Please, consider this interview ended. You know my mind. Kindly leave.

**Indecision**  
(Moves to go, turns to shake hands, decides not to and leaves decisively).

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**Feeling Forward Gesture into Speech (Monologue)**

O, how can I tell her, how can I tell her the news, how explain? How can I begin, yet tell her I must, I must get to her room and tell her, but how can I start? Perhaps she will guess, even as I walk into the room. O, why should I have the task, why should it be me? Now I have reached the door. Shall I knock or just walk in? How can I begin, how start, what shall I say? Shall I shout it out, shout in her face the dreadful news, or whisper in her ear and then flee. Glad to be gone, not to see, not to witness. O, she is coming; the door is opening.
2nd Group

Effective (E) and Thoughtful (Th)

E. Stop it! Don’t try it on! Just cut it out! Enough is enough! I warn you! If you try once again to persuade people against my better judgement, I’ll do you an injury. So watch it …… and stop it!

Th. O now, for heavens sake, what an attitude to take. Let’s use a bit of thought, shall we? Let’s think this through. Time is on our side. There is room for discussion. I have no wish to persuade you. When I think back… what I was trying to do was to see the situation from all sides … I was trying to see every aspect of the case.

E. Well don’t! That isn’t what is required. You must grasp the situation, clearly and firmly and make an instant decision. This is the art of active living. Grab the nettle before it can sting!

Th. No…no. On the contrary. You must approach the nettle, if you so wish to use such a metaphor, with caution, consider this and that … the pro’s and con’s … consider every –

E. I’ve no time for such meanderings! Grasp the situation firmly and decide!

Th. You won’t even listen to what I have to say ………

E. You take too long.

Th. You are too impetuous… you attack ideas, not create them. You force events, not shape them. You stamp your mark on life rather than offer suggestions, which gives the impression of thoughtless action.

E. You are all think and no do! I’m weary of you.

Th. I fear for you.

Feeling Forward (FF) and Withdrawing onto Own Ground (W)

FF. Is there no way in which we can reconcile our differences?

W. No. If there were, there would be no need to ask the question.

FF. I cannot believe that our association has finally reached its conclusion.

W. I not only believe it but am determined that it shall be so.
FF. Let us try, once again, to find a way to resolve these misunderstandings.
W. I would rather not. I am very busy and do not consider our time would be well spent.
FF. Had friendship no value? Even the memory of a friendship must have some place in your thoughts?
W. No!
FF. Tell me of one practical deed, that I can do, that would help us towards a better understanding.
W. Leave me alone!
FF. I am serious.
W. So am I.
FF. I am trying to find a way out of this situation.
W. There is no way out.
FF. It’s too stupid!
W. Agreed.
FF. It’s too easy.
W. Nothing is easy.
FF. You are not being helpful.
W. That’s true.
FF. Then I must leave. *(Hesitates and then goes)*

**Sympathy (S) and Antipathy (A)**

S. O! What a beautiful painting.
A. Cheap rubbish!
S. The delicate colouring conjures a fresh world of dreams before the vision.
A. Childish daubing. It should not have been displayed.
S. Then what of this one. A gentle pastoral scene lovingly depicted.
A. Sentimental realism. A photograph could have done better. Though I hate photographs.
S. But, doesn’t it awake memories of childhood? Of peace? Of days of calm?
A. You are a pitiful ass! Your critical faculties are none existent. Your judgements have all the effectiveness of a damp sponge.

S. I admire your certainty, but I suspect it is only possible to be so certain because you refuse to let impressions work upon you.

A. Nonsense! My impression of you, has worked upon me.

S. I understand how you feel.

A. You don’t. Goodbye.

S. Your leaving like that is sad.

In the following Commedia scene remember that they would, in the early days, perform on a market place in the open air. So speak and use the gestures as strongly as you can.

**Commedia Scene of Six Gestures**

**Pantalone:** *Effective*; **Maid:** *Feeling Forward*; **Brighella:** *Thoughtful*; **Sailor:** *Antipathy*; **Suitor:** *Withdrawing*; **Camilla:** *Sympathy*.

Pantalone: Where is my daughter? Where is she? Where is she hiding? Has she performed some misdeed, which now she seeks to hide from me? Has she been wicked, frivolous? Proving herself unworthy of her honourable father’s care? Where is she? Is she deaf, blind or crippled that she does not come running at the sound of my voice, my command? My very presence must impel her to come forward! To appear! To become visible! *(Silence)*

Apparition of my daughter, where art thou?


Pantalone: You must!

Maid: O Sir, Sir! She is … I know. I warrant. I, I saw! I guessed! I learnt! Foresaw it! She is sir …In love!

Pantalone: In love? In love? Does this madam, vaporize her? Has she, like a Genie, retired into a lamp? Is the alchemy of love, like death – form’s very dust-maker? Has she been puffed like a cloud into the air?
Maid: O Sir! She has indeed. Yes, indeed. Gone Sir! Fled!

Pantalone: Gone? Fled? When love flees it is with a guilty face and seeks to conceal the shame that false passions bring.

Maid: Not false sir … but true! Like twin larks, mounting to heaven they flew with song so sweet as to delight the cruellest heart.

Pantalone: They? They, you say? They? Then not alone to hide her shame but some sharing devil has fled with her. Together they must blush and counter-blush their shame. But I will find them out. Brighella! Brighella!

(Enter Brighella)

Listen! Bung-eared ancient. Find this daughter of mine. Scour the city, the harbour, from palace to slum. Let your rheum eye rove and pry … but this time in service of your master. For if you fail; then every gift and favour that I have bestowed on you, every gem and treasure, coin and pleasure that has fallen from my blessing hand into your grasping claw, shall, on the instant, be retrieved and you shall leave my service as impoverished as when you first crept into my kitchens. I wait upon your return for one hour when I will expect to see you with my daughter. Later we will punish the slave that stole her. (EXIT)

Brighella: Did you mark those noble lines? “Every gem and treasure, coin and pleasure that has fallen from my blessing hand into your grasping claw.” I have only received blows from his blessing hand. Treasures I can do without. Why should I bestir myself? His daughter’s suitor has paid me well to sheath my senses’ weapons and make harmless ears, eyes and lips. But if as now, he threatens that I would lose all if I fail to find the girl, my golden coin is but little recompense for loss of all my domestic comforts.

Enter a Sailor

Sailor: Hey Brighella. What a game! What is the seafaring trade coming to … our sailing has become a trade for tailors and fancy dancing masters. Spit and damn I say! Lord blast with four winds every land-born lover. A pale lady, turned gaunt and twice her age by the smell of tar, beseeches me to return to you and collect – spit and damn – I can’t say it. Beseeched me to return to you and collect – a packet of sewing needles. That she may embroider her
young lover’s silken pants with their joint initials. Cut and thrust and slit me throat! When ships do take aboard passengers, the fair trade of sailing is like to slip a notch and lose its name as a manly trade.

Brighella: Peace! Why waste your blather when there is no sail to fill. Curb your towering rage! No doubt when upon your voyage you are becalmed, your noble talent of windy talk may serve to drive your ship to harbour. ‘Til then, speak to me with reason and name me your ship on which these two lovers are perched.

Sailor: She be named ‘The Four Winds.’

Brighella: Ha! Now, listen to me carefully. Return to your ship ……

Enter Pantalone

Pantalone: What Brighella! Still here? Jump to it Man! Remember my words. Find my daughter or you will lose all! All! Everything! Not a stitch of clothing will I leave on you, but naked I will fling you into the street.

Sailor: Oooooooo!

Brighella: (Soothing) My lord. As though through airy spaces has come whispering a spirit messenger. Breathing sweet zephyrs of urgent news.

Pantalone: Well! Well!

Brighella: As the fair singing of distant Sirens beckons the lonely sailor to join them in their harmony ……

Pantalone: Well? Well?

Sailor: What about my needles?

Brighella: So Mercury, nay Cupid, has fluttered to me and shot an arrow of potent tidings…

Pantalone: Well? Well? Well? Well?

Brighella: …and revealed that the good merchant ship well laden with a rich cargo of treasure…yet, treasure not to the liking of every man. Since the good ship ‘The Four Winds’…

Pantalone: The Four Winds! So, they are aboard ‘The Four Winds!’

(EXIT)

Brighella: (Still talking, not having noticed Pantalone’s exit) Yes. The Four Winds bearing treasures of every kind from the silks of … (she notices that
Pantalone has gone)

Sailor: Are you going to give me that packet of needles damn and blast it!

Brighella: (Looking after Pantalone) I have the feeling that the needles will cease to be
their most urgent need.

(Enter suitor with Pantalone’s daughter)

Suitor: (To Sailor) Quick man! Lend me your hat and patch. In return, receive my
handsome headgear and fancy coat. Noble fellow! You will be rewarded for
this (aside) in heaven. Camilla, my own treasure, bend low, for my eye
suspects that your shapely skirt resembles a sailors bag.

Camilla: Indeed, I resemble no such thing.

Suitor: Quick your father returns! Bend down and hide behind yourself. Come
fellow! Stand beside this bag (to sailor). Brighella! Catch him before he escapes!

Sailor: I cannot see without my patch!

Brighella: He has not escaped sir.

(Enter Pantalone)

Pantalone: (To Sailor) So! Preparing to go to sea, were you! But fell into the arms of
my faithful and trusty servant instead of the arms of my faithful and trusting
daughter! Where is she? Where have you hidden her?

(Snatches suitor’s hat off sailor’s head) Lo! What a ruffian! Dear God. What
mad whim caused my child to see her lover in this rough-hewn husk? How
could my beautiful daughter choose such a rogue? O the shame! I would let
her elope. I would let her run from home. If it had been with a gentleman.

(Sobs)

Suitor: (Removing hat and patch from his eye) Sir! If I find her and bring her safely
to your side, may I marry her?

Pantalone: Dear boy. Marry her a hundred times, only save her from this wretch.

Sailor: Wait until I get my patch back, then by God, you’ll pay for your lip!

Camilla: (Standing up) O Father. Dear Father, such words awaken in my heart the
echo of a lost love. My love for you, that was but a memory until now. In
this moment, the years fall away and the love of your daughter returns to her
Father. O dear Father. You are transformed and have become a shining
prince reborn from an old toad.

Suitor: Sir. My future entreats you. Bless her with your good wishes and welcome your new son!

Pantalone: I do! I do! Whoever you are! Though later, I will try and discover what this is all about. It ends too like a play.

I have chosen six speeches from Shakespeare’s Hamlet that have something of the six qualities of the archetypal gestures. As now the term ‘Actor’ applies to both women and men, so please both sexes work with these speeches.

**EFFECTIVE**

Act 3 Sc II.

*Enter HAMLET and Players*

HAMLET  Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a rumbustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

First Player  I warrant your honour.
HAMLET  Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion
be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the
action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep
not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is
from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the
first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the
mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of
the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone,
or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful
laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the
censure of the which one must in your allowance
o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be
players that I have seen play, and heard others
praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely,
that, neither having the accent of Christians nor
the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so
strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of
nature's journeymen had made men and not made them
well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

First Player  I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us,
sir.

HAMLET  O, reform it altogether. And let those that play
your clowns speak no more than is set down for them;
for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to
set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh
too; though, in the mean time, some necessary
question of the play be then to be considered:
that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition
in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. (Exeunt Players)
HAMLET    To be, or not to be: that is the question:
    Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
    The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
    Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
    And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
    No more; and by a sleep to say we end
    The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
    That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
    Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
    To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
    For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
    When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
    Must give us pause: there's the respect
    That makes calamity of so long life;
    For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
    The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
    The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
    The insolence of office and the spurns
    That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
    When he himself might his quietus make
    With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
    To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
    But that the dread of something after death,
    The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
    No traveller returns, puzzles the will
    And makes us rather bear those ills we have
    Than fly to others that we know not of?
    Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
    And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.--

SYMPATHY AND ANTIPATHY

Act 3 Sc IV

HAMLET Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?
You cannot call it love; for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! Where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutiny in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn
And reason panders will.

FEELING FORWARD
Act 2 Sc II

HAMLET Now I am alone.
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suitting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this; the play 's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

*Exit*

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**WITHDRAWING**

*Act 2 Sc II*

**HAMLET**

No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

**HAMLET**

Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

**GUILDENSTERN**

What should we say, my lord?
HAMLET Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROSENCRANTZ To what end, my lord?

HAMLET That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

ROSENCRANTZ [Aside to GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

HAMLET [Aside] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.--If you love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late--but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to
me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.
What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason!
How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how
express and admirable! In action how like an angel!
In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the
world! The paragon of animals! And yet, to me,
what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not
me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling
you seem to say so.

INDECISION

Act 4 Sc IV

HAMLET How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? While, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Finally here are some examples of Modern Monologues that have the qualities of the six gestures. Nothing is absolute, so to speak, for one can find in one Monologue many different qualities, but in these choices the particular gesture pervades.

**EFFECTIVE**

**ACTOR**

*Sergeant Musgrave’s Dance by John Arden*

**MUSGRAVE** No! Let her wait up there. I said: wait! … Now then, who’s with me!
Twenty-five to die and the Logic is worked out. Who’ll help me? You?
*(He points to Walsh)* I made sure that you would: you’re a man like the
Black Musgrave, you: you have purposes, and you can lead. Join along with my madness, friend. I brought it back to England but I’ve brought the cure too- to turn it on to them that sent it out of this country - way-out-ay they sent it, where they hoped only soldiers could catch it and rave! Well, here’s three redcoat ravers on their own kitchen hearthstone! Who do we start with? These? (He turns on the Mayor) ‘Loyal hearts and true, every man jack of us’ (To the Parson) ‘Draw thy sword with gladness.’ Why, swords is for honour, carry ‘em on church parade, a sword’ll never offer you three hundred and fifty bullets in a minute- and it was no bright sword neither finished his life in a backstreet! (He points to Billy, and then at the Constable) Or what about the Peeler? If we’d left it to him, you’d ha’ been boxed away to barracks six or eight hours ago! Come on now, let’s have you, you know I’m telling you truth!

ACTRESS

Sexual Perversity in Chicago by David Mamet

JOAN What are you doing? Where are you going? What are you doing? You stay right there. Now. What were the two of you doing? I’m just asking a simple question. There’s nothing to be ashamed of. (Pause) I can wait. (Pause) Were you playing ‘Doctor’? (Pause) ‘Doctor’. Don’t play dumb with me, just answer the question. You know that attitude is going to get you in a lot of trouble someday. Were you playing with each other’s genitals? Each other’s- … ‘pee-pees’…? Whatever you call them at home, that’s what I’m asking. And don’t play dumb, because I saw what you were doing, so just own up to it. (Pause) All right… no. No, stop that, there’s no reason for tears… it’s perfectly… natural. But… there’s a time and place for everything. Now… no it’s all right. Come on. Come on, we’re all going in the other room, and we’re going to wash our hands. And then Miss Webber is going to call our parents.
ASTON  I used to go there quite a bit. Oh, years ago now. But I stopped. I used to like
that place. Spent quite a bit of time in there. That was before I went away. Just
before. I think that… place had a lot to do with it. They were all… a good bit
older than me. But they always used to listen. I thought… they understood
what I said. I mean I used to talk to them. I talked too much. That was my
mistake. The same in the factory. Standing there, or in the breaks, I used to…
talk about things. And these men, they used to listen, whenever I… had
anything to say. It was all right. The trouble was, I used to have kind of
hallucinations. They weren’t hallucinations, they… I used to get the feeling I
could see things… very clearly… everything… was so clear… everything
used… everything used to get very quiet… everything got very quiet… all
this… quiet… and… this clear sight… it was… but maybe I was wrong.
Anyway, someone must have said something. I didn’t know anything about it.
And… some kind of lie must have got around. And this lie went round. I
thought people started being funny. In that café. The factory. I couldn’t
understand it. Then one day they took me to a hospital, right outside London.
They… got me there. I didn’t want to go. Anyway… I tried to get out, quite a
few times. But… it wasn’t very easy. They asked me questions, in there. Got
me in and asked me all sorts of questions. Well I told them… when they
wanted to know… what my thoughts were. Hmmmn. Then one day… this
man… doctor, I suppose… the head one… he was quite a man of…
distinction… although I wasn’t so sure about that. He called me in. He said…
he told me I had something. He said they’d concluded their examination.
That’s what he said. And he showed me a pile of papers and he said that I’d got something, some complaint. He said… he said just that, you see. You’ve got … this thing. That’s your complaint. And, we’ve decided, he said, that in your interests there’s only one course we can take. He said… but I can’t… exactly remember… how he put it… he said, we’re going to do something to your brain. He said… if we don’t, you’ll be in here for the rest of your life, but if we do, you stand a chance. You can go out, he said, and live like the others. What do you want to do to my brain, I said to him. But he just repeated what he’d said. Well, I wasn’t a fool. I knew I was a minor. I knew he couldn’t do anything to me without getting permission. I knew he had to get permission from my mother. So I wrote to her and told her what they were trying to do. But she signed their form, you see, giving them permission. I knew that because he showed me her signature when I brought it up. Well, that night I tried to escape, that night. I spent five hours sawing at one of the bars on the window in this ward. Right throughout the dark. They used to shine a torch over the beds every half hour. So I timed it just right. And then it was nearly done, and a man had a… he had a fit, right next to me. And they caught me, anyway. About a week later they started to come round and do this thing to the brain.

**ACTRESS**

*La Turista by Sam Shepard (Faber)*

SALEM  When I was about ten I think, little boy, I’d just returned home from a car trip to the county fair with my family. My father, my mother, my sisters and brothers. We’d just gotten home after driving for about two hours, and it had just gotten dark, but none of us had spoken for the whole trip. Are you listening? It was the same as though we’d all been asleep, and we drove in the driveway, and my father stopped the car. But instead of any of us getting out right away like we usually did we all just sat in the car staring ahead and not speaking for a very long time. I was the first to get out and start walking
towards the cement steps that led to the porch and I could hear my family behind me. My father, my mother, my sisters and brothers. And I could hear their feet following me up the stairs to the porch right behind me. Very silent. I was leading them sort of and I was only about ten years old. I got to the top of the stairs and I was standing on the porch. I was the first one there and I turned to see them and they all looked right at me. All staggered because of the steps, and all their eyes staring right at me. I saw them like that just for a second, and then do you know what I did little boy? I spit on the very top step just before my father stepped down. And just as he stepped on that little spot of spit that had nothing dirtier in it than cotton candy and caramel apple, my whole family burst into noise like you never heard. And my father took off his belt that he’d just bought at the county fair. A black leather belt with a silver buckle and a picture of Trigger engraved on the front. And my father took one more step to the top of the porch with the belt hanging down from his right hand and the buckle clinking on the cement. Then he swung his arm around slowly behind his back so that the belt dragged through the air following his wrist and came back so fast that all I could hear was a crack as it hit my ankles and knees and I fell. Then they were silent again and waited there on the steps until my father put the belt back through the loops and buckled the buckle and hitched his jeans up over his hips. Then they all went into the house in a line. My father first, my mother second, my sisters and brothers third. And I stayed there in a ball, all rolled up, with my knees next to my chin and my hands rubbing my ankles. And I felt very good that they’d left me there by myself.

SYMPATHY

ACTOR

Translations by Brian Friel

HUGH The road to Sligo. A spring morning. 1798. Going into battle. Do you remember, James? Two young gallants with pikes on their shoulders and the
Aeneid in their pockets. Everything seemed to find definition that spring - a congruence, a miraculous matching of hope and past and present and possibility. Striding across the fresh, green land. The rhythms of perception heightened. The whole enterprise of consciousness accelerated. We were gods that morning, James; and I had recently married my goddess, Caitlin Dubh NicReacctain, may she rest in peace. And to leave her and my infant son in his cradle - that was heroic, too. By God, sir, we were magnificent. We marched as far as- where was it?- Glenties! All of twenty three miles in one day. And it was there, in Phelan’s pub, that we got homesick for Athens, just like Ulysses. The desiderium nostrorum - the need for our own. Our pietas, James, was for older, quieter things. And that was the longest twenty three miles back I ever made. (Toasts Jimmy) My friend, confusion is not an ignoble condition.

ACTRESS
Speed-the-Plow by David Mamet

KAREN He puts his hand on the child’s chest, and he says ‘heal,’ as if he felt he had the power to heal him, he calls on God… it’s in here … something to the effect that if ever in his life he had the power, any power, that now is the time…list … (she reads) ‘…in that lonely place, the low place, the tramp, under the bridge, he finds him. Faced with his troubles, and pours out his heart.’ We hear the rain, and we see, in his misery, it is forgotten, wet, cold… and the problems which assaulted him: they do not disappear, but they are forgotten. He says: years later: it did not occur to him ‘til then that this was happiness. That the thing which he lacked, he says, was courage. What does the Tramp say? ‘All fears are one fear. Just the fear of death. And we accept it, then we are at peace.’ And so, you see, and so all of the events… the stone, the instrument, the child which he met, led him there … in his … yes, you see – I know that you see – and that’s, that’s to me, that’s the perfection of the story, when I read it … I almost, I wanted to sit, I saw, I almost couldn’t come to you, the weight of it…(Pause) You know what I mean. He says that the
radiation … all of it, the planes, the televisions, clocks, all of it is to the one end. To change us – to, bring about a change – all radiation has been sent by God. To change us. Constantly. To this new thing. And that we needn’t feel frightened. That it comes from God. And I felt empowered. (Pause) Empowered.

ANTIPATHY

ACTOR

Skylight by David Hare

TOM You see good in everyone now! How comforting! Of course. But if I could be reborn as anyone, I’m not sure Julie Andrews would be my first choice. I mean, Kyra, please! As you’d say: let’s be serious! You must know what’s happening. Jesus Christ, just look at this place! I mean, it’s screaming its message. For instance, I tell you, look at that heater! Sitting there fulfilling some crucial psychological role in your life. There are shops, I mean, you know, shops, proper shops that exist in the street. These shops sell heaters. They are not expensive. But of course they are not what you’re looking for. Because these heaters actually heat! You accuse me of being a monster. You say that I’m guilty. You tell me that I’m fucking up the life of my horrible son. But the difference is at least I admit it. At least this evening I took that on board. But you! Jesus! It’s like talking to a moonie. I’ve not set off like some fucking missionary to conduct some experiment in finding out just how tough I can make my own life.

ACTRESS

Fashion by Doug Lucie

AMANDA You, of course, would know all about the people and what they want. With your intimate knowledge of them. From your Channel Island tax haven and
your pied-à-terre in Bloomsbury. I think, if you were to be completely honest, you’d have to say that you’re making educated guesses based on self-interest and innate prejudice. Oh, I know those are the perfect qualifications for membership of your little club, the Sunday pontificators, but they’re sod all to do with the real world. God, we used to go to church to be preached at and told what was wrong and what was right. Now we just open the paper and up pops the pulpit and there’s little Eric Bright telling it how it really is. You and your little chums, all barking away together.

D’you know what you make me think of when you’re on the soap box? D’you know what I see? I see good lunches. Fine wine. And great fat cigars. You’re the self-appointed loudhailers for a government that’s turned this country into a land fit for Rupert Murdoch. It amazes me that you’ll all give credence to this dim-witted country cow, who, by some freak of nature, is now a Member of Parliament, for Christ’s sake, and yet you pour all the shit you can on the idea, just the idea, of socialism. Well, it’s not the people who are scared of socialism, it’s you. Because it would drop your lovely lunch in you lap, and stick your great fat cigar up your arse. You want politics, sister? I’ll give politics. Not my husband’s soggy labourist crap. That’s just Tory paternalism with a collectivist face. Thanks to their silly soft-centre deference we still live in one of the most class-ridden, tradition-bound societies in the modern world.

FEELING FORWARD

ACTOR

A Place with the Pigs by Athol Fugard

PAVEL Suppose I’m wrong, Praskovya…? Suppose my innocent faith in human nature, my trusting belief in the essential goodness of our comrades hearts…. is a big, big mistake. That instead of forgiveness and understanding, when they hear my story… maybe… just maybe… they will hate and despise me. See in
me and my moment of weakness ten years ago, a reminder of their own weaknesses… weaknesses they do not wish to be reminded of. Because you are certainly right about one thing, Praskovya Alexandrovna… that is not an assembly of saints out there clearing their throat for the singing of the anthem. Oh, most certainly not. If the truth were known about some of our respectable comrades out there, I wouldn’t be the only one pleading for mercy today. My theory about the elevation of their thoughts and feelings on to a higher plane is dependent on there being enough basic humanity left in them to allow that to happen. But as you so perceptively pointed out, Praskovya, knowing some of them, that amounts to asking for a small miracle. Stupid! Stupid! Stupid! I’ve been in here so long, I’ve forgotten what human nature is really like. Compassion and forgiveness? I stand as much chance of getting that from the mob out there as I do from these pigs…. I can’t. It’s no good, Praskovya… I just can’t. I won’t get a fair trial. They won’t even give me a hearing. The moment I appear they’ll throw themselves on me and tear me apart like a pack of Siberian wolves.

**ACTRESS**

*Shakers Restirred by John Godber*

**NICKY** I know they are jealous of me. I don’t blame them, no one wants to stay here. It’s funny though, now I can escape, I’m bloody scared to death. Nine months, it’s a long time, what if I don’t make any friends? What if I get seasick, or food poisoning, or get lost somewhere in a forest and have to live with a tribe of Eskimos and never come home again? I know I’m being stupid. My mind’s gone haywire. But deep down I’m a panicker, I can’t help it, but I am. And I know it’s what I want, but in reality it’s frightening leaving it all … your mum, your dad, your mates. I’m excited as well, though don’t get me wrong. I wouldn’t forgo the opportunity, it’s a chance in a lifetime: travel, freedom, celebrity. Oh yeah, I’ve definitely got to go! But the actual job? I wouldn’t tell the others but more than anything I’m apprehensive about that. I’ve got to lose
some weight for a start, some of the costumes are ever so small, sequins and all
that stuff, but there is some topless as well. It’s classy, it’s all part of the
dancing. But it’s getting over that first time, isn’t it? Then I’m sure I’ll be all
right. You see, to be honest it took me about four days to get them out when we
went to Ibiza and then I laid on my front. I suppose I thought they’re all right,
even though I’m not Bridget Neilson. And they did look at them, so if they
were awful they wouldn’t have had me. Like I said, I’m sure I’ll get used to it.
It’s all the excitement, it makes you nervous. I don’t know black from white.
But I’m sure it will be brilliant, I’m sure it will. I mean, the world will be my
oyster, I can’t believe it! That’s the thing though, isn’t it? What do you do
when a dream comes true? What do you dream of then?

WITHDRAWING

ACTOR

Enigma Variations by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt

ABEL ZNORKO Look, I think we’ve said all that needs to be said. You’ve told me
that Helen’s married and that she’s kept it from me for twelve
years, well, fine! And now I even know her husband, a very
presentable, very upright man, a positive orgy of propriety. And
that’s fine. And I now know why she doesn’t write to me any
more. And that’s fine too. I think we can usefully bring down the
curtain. I think… that I don’t find all this all that amusing any
more, if it’s all the same to you. Actually, push comes to shove I
was being more truthful than I thought when I told you that my
book was pure fiction. Actually, I was pretty near the mark. That
woman has come entirely out of my own head, she never existed.
It’s the most imaginative novel I’ve ever written and I don’t even
know it.
ACTRESS

Oleanna by David Mamet

CAROL Why do you question your suspension? You believe in what you call freedom of thought. Then, fine. You believe in freedom-of-thought and a home, and, and prerogatives for your kid, and tenure. And I’m going to tell you. You believe not in “freedom of thought”, but in an elitist, in, in a protected hierarchy which rewards you. And for whom you are the clown. And you mock and exploit the system which pays your rent. You’re wrong. I’m not wrong. You’re wrong. You think that I’m full of hatred. I know what you think I am… You think I am a frightened, repressed, confused, I don’t know, abandoned young thing of some doubtful sexuality, who wants power and revenge. (Pause) Don’t you? (Pause) …. I did not come here, as you are assured, to gloat. Why would I want to gloat? I’ve profited nothing from your, your, as you say, your “misfortune”. I came here, as you did me the honour to ask me here, I came here to tell you something. (Pause) That I think… that I think you’ve been wrong. That I think you’ve been terribly wrong. Do you hate me now?
TWENTY-SECOND STUDY

SOUND ADVICE

GESTURES IN THE SOUNDS

The sounds of consonants and vowels all have an activity, or gesture, of their own and what the actor needs to do is sense this activity in the sound. Fundamentally, I am restating the knowledge that the whole body is a ‘listening organ’.

Here is a list of sounds and their effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern Terminology</th>
<th>Ancient Terminology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLOWN SOUNDS</td>
<td>FIRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. CH. J. SCH. S. F. V.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We receive strong impressions through the hearing of the intoned blown sounds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPACT SOUNDS</td>
<td>EARTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. T. B. P. G. K. M. N.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>By intoning the impact sounds we can almost see them placed in space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIBRATING SOUND</td>
<td>AIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. (rolled R)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should feel the vibrating sounds in our arms and hands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAVE SOUND</td>
<td>WATER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should feel the wave sounds in our legs and feet.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This illustrates that the whole body reacts to sound. You may query the impressions that are suggested here but give it time, consider it a theory that through your own observations you may be able to verify. There is nothing you can do about it but sense these elements in your speech.
Exercise: Take the list above and intone each of the sounds, trying to sense their nature.

Words are mainly built up of ‘Form into Flow’ or ‘Flow into Form’, and here are a few of the simplest examples to begin to sense how a word is living gesture. These simple examples are just a beginning, which may inspire you to search further.

**Impact Sounds (Earth) through diphthongs in water sounds**
Dew dales,
Clear cool bales,
Go gales,
Glow dales,
Blow low.

**Impact sounds (Earth) with Fire sounds**
Both troth with bliss of kiss,
List, the mauve dish.

**Impact sounds (earth) beginning and ending the word**
Dead, gone, left the bed,
Gaunt, dank, grip with mud or blood.

**Blown sounds (fire) into Impact sounds (earth)**
Fog, sounds that sing,
Songs that flame,
And fame that shames.

In modern days, words have been left only with the intellectual meaning. We need to change our frame of mind and find meanings that lie in the sounds themselves; it is a sensory understanding, which leads us to find that the sounds in a word can support the intellectual meaning. This is poetry; it is not only what you say, but also the words that you choose.
Exercise: By speaking the word let the sounds affect you; try to let the meaning come from the sounds. For your own amusement, judge which words express themselves best in sound alone.

WORD INTO MIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIN</th>
<th>DARK</th>
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<tr>
<td>SAD</td>
<td>DOOM</td>
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<td>PRIM</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>FRAIL</td>
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<td>GRIM</td>
<td>MALICE</td>
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<td>TRIUMPH</td>
<td>FAIL</td>
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<td>HARD</td>
<td>SWEET</td>
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<td>SOFT</td>
<td>SOUR</td>
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<td>FLAT</td>
<td>Craggy</td>
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<td>STEEP</td>
<td>SMOOTH</td>
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<td>STICK</td>
<td>SHARP</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOBILE</td>
<td>BLUNT</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUT</td>
<td>SLIP</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRIKE</td>
<td>CLING</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOLD</td>
<td>THROW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEND</td>
<td>LIFT</td>
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</table>

The following verses, written by Barbara Bridgmont, are artistic exercises, but also perhaps give us a picture of how lively and dramatic the English language can be, and leave us free to indulge in the sounds.
Build us a boat with oaken timber,
To bear us over the turbulent sea,
With bold high bows to brave the billows
And bring us back to the harbour quay.

Many the men his homeland remembers
Many the memory mingled with dreams.
As the mists of the morning melt on the mountains
We long for our meadows and murmuring streams.

Down from the headland, down to the shoreland,
Drag the dark timber from wood to the strand,
Dig deep the ditches and drive hard the wedges
To build a foundation where the framework may stand.

No one can know what dangers are near us,
None has the knowledge of natures’ ends
Now each man in his own strength noble
Nature’s strength to his own need bends.

Racing the tide and writhing the breakers
Thrashing the rocks and crashing in foam
Reeling the rain eddies rolling the cloud wracks
With these we shall wrestle to reach our home.

Plank by plank our vessel is moulded,
The long lithe lines of her, clean and strong
Little by little our hearts are lightened
To swell and flow in jubilant song.

Dig through the gravel, carve out a gully
That goes from her keel to the great grey sea.
Then gallops the water to gallantly greet her,  
From grip of her groundings to set her free.

“Ich” sighs the breeze as it moves in the grasses.  
“Ich” the wind whispers to leaves on high.  
“Ich” say the shingle and sand as the keel slides.  
“Ich” welcome the waves as the prow-sprays fly.

Free of the land and facing the ocean,  
Joyful the hearts on fire for home.  
Now flash the oars through the fish-full furrows  
And drive her forward over the foam.

See her sweep through storm and sunshine,  
The steersman’s eye on the stars’ steady guide.  
Swirling sea against muscle and sinew –  
Days, nights, weeks, as we southward ride.

Ahead the horizon heaves from the waters  
In headlands familiar to heart and eye.  
A hail from the helmsman, a shout from the oarsmen –  
Haven of home-all hopes held high.

Triumphant now, we toil-worn travellers  
Tread once more the streets of the town.  
Tears and laughter of welcome greet us.  
Tales shall be told till the sun goes down.

Now shall the boys bring flowering branches,  
And drums be beaten and bells be rung,  
And the banquet feast be brought and eaten,  
And the song of the blue-bright sea be sung.
SILENT INTONATION

Around 1998, during a speech training class, the brilliant clown and mime Marcello Magni suddenly said, “Every sound has a gesture”, then he proceeded to go through the alphabet showing me a gesture for each sound; it was completely out of his own invention, yet remarkably similar to an art of movement called Eurythmy. Another student, having just finished being fairy queen in a pantomime, shouted; “Yes, and every sound is a being”.

Exercise:
Let us practice and perform this first mime.

Enter an old church
It is dark and dirty
You see a light glimmering
A ghostly figure seems to approach
It is your reflection in a large mirror

Now perform the mime again but silently intone the suggested sounds in the right hand column.

Enter an old church  Ah.
It is dark and dirty  Ae.
You see a light glimmering  Ee.
A ghostly figure seems to approach  O.
It is your reflection in a large mirror  U.  Ah.

I must confess I toured for three years with a mime company and silently pawed the air with a measure of success, until one day I came across the following quote by the philosopher Rudolf Steiner; “Of course, you cannot perform mime or gestures without inwardly intoning a vowel or consonant. You cannot be inwardly silent.” When I did silently intone a sound, which I thought appropriate, I must confess I felt complete,
supported, and curiously relaxed. Silent intonation does have an effect. The sounds I have chosen are not gospel. Choose your own story and change the mimes. These studies need not be rushed.

Do the same exercise with these other two mimes, first silently, then with the vowels, and then the consonants. Of course, you can also invent your own mimes and find the appropriate sounds.

P. Enter a flat Ah.
G. It has been burgled Ae.
T. A favourite statue is broken Ee.
L. Try to mend it O.
R. You sense someone is in the flat U.
W. You see a letter from a friend Ah.
N. You hesitate Ae.
R. You are curious and open it Ee.
B. It begins well and then… O.
V. Disappointment. U.

In order that the gesture of sound could become an absolute reality, a movement or dance form was created by the Philosopher Rudolf Steiner, called Eurythmy, or in clearer terms Visible Speech. A performance would consist of an actor, at the side of the stage, reciting a poem, and one or more Eurythmists moving to his voice. The Eurythmists expect to be impelled by the power of the speech to move them. So you can imagine the power and freedom required of the voice.
TWENTY-THIRD STUDY
SOUND AND SENSE

In this exercise we will move more towards drama. I have taken a vowel or consonant and let their sound inspire the speeches; also I have tried to add something of the fundamental mood of the sound into the meaning. With a bit of luck the exercise should illustrate itself. Before each speech you can intone the vowel or consonant.

VOWEL AND CONSONANT MOODS

Ah. Look, there, afar, see, approaching,
Like a mist, a low lying cloud,
That swiftly travels over the earth.
Ah! How it comes to overwhelm.
What magic spell is woven here,
That brings this midnight to the stars?

B. Bind and bend yourself about,
Protect with cloak our lonely forms,
And again, let not the darkness
Penetrate the folds, hold, fold your cloak,
Let not the black wind,
pluck the garments from our backs.

M. Move through this mist with a certain care,
With measured tread and firm resolve,
Undaunted by this mystery – the unknown –
That, which may or may not be.
Come mould your thoughts to calmer forms.
Ay. Stay! Step not a pace further,
   Let fear hold us firm, let the strength of our suspicions,
   The doubt we share, act as a shield,
   A strong defence, against that which awaits us there.

D. As this dense and dark thing draws near,
   I stand secure, bound to this solid earth.
   This gives me strength to endure what should daunt me.

Ee. But we must penetrate the mist,
   And seek to discover its meaning.

D. I have forebodings, draw back and stand firm.

Ee. See! I do not fear,
   But erect prepare to meet whatever the mist reveals.

D. There and there, those objects there!

Ee. Now I see them –
   O how my keen desire bids me to perform deeds.

O. O let me fold you in my cloak, hold you near,
   Protect you, O do not turn away.

N. No! Now is the moment when I must stand alone.

O. Alone! Who is alone? It is I that am alone!

N. Nearer and nearer comes the storm.
O. O my son. Return to your loved ones, your home.
   Do not go. Do not go!

N. Never. Into this night I step. In I step.
   In I step!

O. Foul darkness overwhelms him.

R. Terror grips my heart!
   I cannot help but tremble as the storm approaches.

U. Be resolute. This cruel wind shall not move us.

R. O I am freezing. Let us return.

U. No. We must go on through it.

R. O this raging wind is carrying me away.

U. Stoop low and with your shoulders push.

Next exercise: A group of actors stand in a circle with one of them in the centre. Each
member of the circle, in turn, directs his line to the one in the centre, tuning in to the
given vowel or consonant. Technically, you repeat the scene various times with a
different person in the centre, and a different person giving the first line, until everyone
has spoken all the lines.
Ah. Now I begin to understand.
Ae. I must say you have a nerve.
O. My dear fellow, you are putting on a bold face.
Ee. I can see that he [she] is upset.
U. You are all so cruel; leave him [her] alone.
Ee. Yes, leave him [her] in peace.
O. For pity’s sake, be finished now.
Ah. So I am to suffer treason within our circle.
U. No, I did not say that.
O. Only have pity.
Ee. Let him [her] go free!
Ae. And escape, you must be mad, take no notice of these weaklings.
Ee. What does he [she] have to say?
N. Nothing, he [she] will say nothing!
D. He [she] dare not.
F. Fear prevents him [her].
K. So cruelty will kill him! [Her]
M. His [her] silence moves me to compassion.
Ee. It is the silence of innocence.
G. Of guilt.
F. Of fear.
D. Of despair.
R. Release him [her]; let him free.
G. And forget him [her].
T. That’s it, exile him [her] and forget him.
D. It shall be done.
By running these exercises fairly regularly your taste of sound will improve. Of course, in reality, the script comes first and the playwright or actor find what they feel are the appropriate sounds to support it. When working on a speech, or play it can sometimes take weeks of rehearsal before you find the sounds and feel comfortable with them.

**Exercise:** Find your own sounds to support each line of the following scene. You may need to run it many times before you find the sounds. Two actors could play this scene very simply from the sense, but if you are to become aware that each line has, maybe ever so slightly, a particular tone, your understanding of the line becomes sharper.

A. What the devil is that?
B. What?
A. That – over there.
B. What – Floating.
A. Yes, floating.
B. Part of a boat?
A. Or old clothing.
B. Or a man.
A. You think so?
B. I know so … it is a man.
A. Dead, do you think he is dead?
B. We must rescue him.
A. But he may be dead.
B. Dead or alive we should go to him.
A. Swim to him?
B. If we can.
A. Alright, let’s do that.
B. Both of us?
A. Yes, both of us.
B. We could take each arm and pull him shore.
A. It would need both of us.
B. Right – let’s do it.
A. Here, take my coat.
B. What for?
A. I don’t need it.
B. Nor do I – here take mine.
A. What for?
B. I need to free my arms for swimming.
A. Put it on the beach with mine.
B. Right.
A. Not on top of mine – at the side.
B. But it will get wet on the damp ground.
A. So will mine.
B. But if I lay mine of top of yours….
A. Look, a movement.
B. O my God – in we go.
A. In we go.
B. Yes in we go – go in then!
A. You.
B. No, you.
A. Look its moved again.
B In we goooo……!
A. Riiight……!

(They start swimming … they arrive)
A. A bundle of old clothes.
B. God, I’m tired.
A. What?
B. I’m tired.
A. Back … we must get back.
B. I’m too tired.
A. So am I.
B. Hang on to the clothes.
A. Yes, hang on.
B. Hang on.
A. Hang on.

Finally you can turn to previous scenes like Othello, Macbeth, The Seagull and so forth, and begin to add in what you would consider the right supporting sounds for the scene and the characters.
TWENTY-FOURTH STUDY
THE TEXT IS YOUR TEACHER

If you train your vocal instrument before you even begin to work with real text, as in elocution, then by the time you come to tackle a real text you may well find your speech sounds mechanical. If, on the other hand, from the very beginning you choose texts that place demands upon your speaking then your ambition to master the text becomes your teacher. Speeches and poetry can influence your voice, if you train your voice too much, then a slight mechanical quality will influence the poems.

Now these five speeches were designed to place a demand on your speaking where, as we mentioned before, the text becomes your teacher. The five speeches are based on the five vowel sounds. It is an opportunity to find one’s voice, and the strength of one’s voice. An advantage, or disadvantage, in live theatre, is that one has to speak up and ‘reach the redhead boy at the back,’ as it used to be described. Every weakness, error, faulty inflection, pure or impure tone is revealed. The larger the theatre, the more you can wince at what you are doing. When you mutter, as in other media, it’s not so much of a challenge, but if you can say, as Hamlet does to eight hundred people, “Now I am alone.” with conviction. Then – You are an actor my son.

Exercise: Use your voice to the full with the following five speeches. And, of course, continually let the speeches resound with the chosen vowel. Imagine yourself in a palace and your voice echoing down a vast empty corridor. Give it all you’ve got, and listen to yourself.
Ah Mood

Out of what dark feelings, that brood in the solemn depths, a shadow of pallid thought – false and vexed, between light and darkness as Grecian columns, lit by the ancient sun, their moving shadows like steps to infinite doom progress.

False forms fantasised from downcast shadows of ambition – beguile the reach of a tense grasp – bewitched through long corridors of illusion, until the path ends and one floats – the soul unwinding as a veil of phantasms – of shining passions – of tearful laughter and smiling woe – unwinding dance of the fluttering past.

Ah, unwind, unwind and float the sad tapestry before the eyes of the gods – doleful harvest of revealing lines – the beings gaze uncomprehendingly upon the sad progress.

The vivid tangle of deeds and thoughts convolute into the abyss – a sinking trail of silk that was a life.

Ae Mood

Teeth clenched – the face a mask of tension – muscles aching with concentrated venom – his brain fixed and stretched with resentment, he paced; his eyes a dull pain. Reason abandoned – wrenched from the firm grip of sensibility, he glares empty-eyed – seeing only his inner frenzy… witnessing the world as an empty scene bereft of sense. A two dimensional cut-out from a tawdry show, a pantomime with him as a lost ‘Othello’ roaming the stage, confusing the drama – a mocked and gawped-at spectre. His drama, remote from the mimic’s scene – a wretched tragedy in a comic’s setting.
**Ee Mood**

The sting of the seeking eye, spells for the victim, a withering glance, to shrink the warmest soul into a pitiful shadow of its self.

The eye, that compelling organ of vision, can pierce through the tumbling darkness of lies and pin, hidden in wriggling obscurity, the truth.

No words need support the eye of truth that speaks its eloquent message of radiant perspicacity – a flash of knowledge, recognition, resolve, reason – darting in single beams its authority.

**O Mood**

O the folly of the wind that whispers foolish fancies, ominous tempests, through the ear. The doting mind, open to secret suggestions, blown into the skull by angelic Zephyrs, haunts the corridors that channel thoughts and distorts the follies into god given glories.

Thus springs potent imaginings, some good, some gross, the happenings of fevered growth of spontaneous observations, spring – loaded for dialectic interpretations, yet sprung from the seed of fancy.

How can man control his whirling wisdom that unsettles integrity, defiles with impunity and denies community, flow out and wither, rather than inwardly nourish to over-flowing the objective contrast between the cerebral and blood imbued act.

O, the folly of the wind, inwardly prying into the earthly brain. Let peace overflow the fold of matter, encompassing thoughts, and cool the heated brow.
U Mood

Oo! The foolish thoughts that spill through the sieve of sheltered pools of stagnant restraint, conventionally looped like a noose to strangle the new sanity.

Oo! The tight anguish of fruitless moods contrite and remorseful yet secretly spruced into new forms that lifting the clot of old duties shines forth as life renewed, the new food of nourishment, making fruitful, fruitless twigs, blossoming from the perished bud. The stupid, stewed and foolish face of bland rules, is loosened like the mask of Eurydice to reveal the joy and anguish of truth.

The following speech from Shakespeare’s King Lear seems to me to have this U Mood.

King Lear
Act 3 Sc IV

EDGAR Who gives any thing to poor Tom? Whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, and through ford and whirlpool o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold, – O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: there could I have him now, – and there, – and there again, and there.
Dr Wolfgang Ernst, a Greek scholar and Speech Teacher, commented on Stanislavsky: He started a school where “the simple way of speaking” was taught. To speak “naturally, as in real life” was the ideal, and to this day the world is full of schools and theatres employing “Stanislavsky’s methods”, apparently quite unaware of the fact, that at the end of his life he was faced by a great problem. This is what he writes, in his book “My Life in Art”:

“…… As I look back I realize that many of my acting methods or shortcomings … are due to the fact that I have not mastered speech, which alone can give me what I need and which alone can express what is going on within me. When I realized inwardly that beautiful and lofty speech was one of the powerful means of expression on the stage, I became very happy. But when I tried to make my speech more beautiful, I saw how hard that was and became afraid of the difficult task before me. It was then that I really saw that we spoke badly and ungrammatically not only on the stage, but in life too; that our trivial and simple speech in life was inadmissible on the stage; that simple and beautiful speech demanded a science that had its laws. Only I did not know them ……… I resumed my quest ……… It seemed as if I had lived in vain, for I had learned nothing along the false path I had taken in art ……”

“We need a foundation in our art, especially in our art of speech and recital …… I thought this foundation should be sought for in music. Speech and poetry, after all, are music and song …… Music helped me to solve many problems that had been racking my brain, and it convinced me that an actor should know how to speak. Isn’t it strange that I had to live almost sixty years before I understood … this simple and well – known truth – a truth that most actors do not know.”
TWENTY-FIFTH STUDY
FORM – FLUENCY – COVERING – PHRASING

The four fundamental characteristics of speaking on the stage are: Form, Fluency, Covering, and Phrasing. These qualities are required in all stage speaking; though often it is necessary to work specifically on one of the characteristics. This depends upon the role, or the style of the whole drama (for instance Restoration drama), the quality of a speech or scene, and finally the need, perhaps, to change the quality of the actor’s personal speech characteristics.

FORM

Form and Clarity are important, the two sounds that have these forming qualities are ‘M’ and ‘S’. Exercises with ‘S’ and ‘M’ would quickly develop a sense of rounded movement in the phrases:

Many the men his homeland remembers
Many the memory mingled with dreams.
As the mists of the morning melt on the mountains
We long for our meadows and murmuring streams.

See her sweep through storm and sunshine,
The steersman’s eye on the stars’ steady guide.
Swirling sea against muscle and sinew –
Days, nights, weeks, as we southward ride.
FLUENCY

It speaks for itself. To bring fluency into your speaking, the water sound ‘L’ can be used as an exercise:

Plank by plank our vessel is moulded,
The long lithe lines of her, clean and strong
Little by little our hearts are lightened
To swell and flow in jubilant song.

COVERING

I believe this characteristic of covering is not spoken of in elocution and yet it is most helpful. When the action of the play demands from the actors a voice which perhaps takes them towards shouting we have this idea of covering the speech so that it never blares out or becomes antipathetic to the audience; there is a great skill in speaking dramatically and loudly in a play and yet not push the audience away. The ‘B’ sound has a holding and surrounding quality:

Build us a boat with oaken timber,
To bear us over the turbulent sea,
With bold high bows to brave the billows
And bring us back to the harbour quay.

PHRASING

Or sentence-shaping. Our sentences need to be complete with a beginning, middle and end. The cutting quality of ‘K’ brought into a speech exercise develops a sense for the sentence:

Quick is the keen eye of the cruel hunter
Calculating is his cold method of creeping near
Calm is the antelope, calm and clear
His eye gleaming coolly then flicks with fear.
Below are one Shakespeare and one modern speech for actresses and actors that may be suitable to illustrate the quality of sounds to link with the four qualities of expression:

FORM ‘M’ ‘S’

ACTRESS

The Merchant of Venice

Act 4 Sc I

PORTIA  The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
            It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
            Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
            It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
            'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
            The throned monarch better than his crown;
            His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
            The attribute to awe and majesty,
            Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
            But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
            It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
            It is an attribute to God himself;
            And earthly power doth then show likest God's
            When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
            Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
            That, in the course of justice, none of us
            Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
            And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
            The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
            To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
            Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
            Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.
DOTTY  And our tutorials descended, from the metaphysical to the merely physical… not so much down to earth as down to the carpet, do you remember? That was the year of “The Concept of Mind” and Archie bagged “The Problem of Mind” and Ayer bagged “The Problem of Knowledge”- and “The Concept of Knowledge” might have made you if you had written it, but we were still on the carpet when an American with an Italian name working in Melbourne bagged it for a rather bad book which sold four copies in London, three to unknown purchasers and the fourth to yourself. He’d stolen a march on you while you were still comparing knowledge in the sense of having-experience-of, with knowledge in the sense of being-acquainted with, and knowledge in the sense of inferring facts with knowledge in the sense of comprehending truths, and all the time as you got more and more acquainted with, though no more comprehending of, the symbolic patterns on my Persian carpet, it was knowing in the biblical sense of screwing that you were learning about and maybe there’s a book in you yet-
PORTIA  I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
   Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
   I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
   There's something tells me, but it is not love,
   I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
   Hate counsels not in such a quality.
   But lest you should not understand me well,--
   And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,--
   I would detain you here some month or two
   Before you venture for me. I could teach you
   How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
   So will I never be: so may you miss me;
   But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
   That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
   They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;
   One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
   Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
   And so all yours. O, these naughty times
   Put bars between the owners and their rights!
   And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
   Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
   I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
   To eke it and to draw it out in length,
   To stay you from election.
The Clink by Stephen Jeffreys

BEATRICE I see his face. A piece of parchment scratched on by a child and left out in the rain. The mud of London’s fields spattering over his eyes and nose. Mud on my boots. After killing, every action so loud. I tug at a broken nail, the rip of it deafens me. Again and gain I feel the jolt of the pistol in my hand. The ease of it. The ecstasy… I have snapped a link in the chain of being, a small snip to a link and now the chain is sundered, and what is outside the chain? They told me hell, and they told me falsely. I killed but I am not in the furnace. I am in the thrilling region, the realm of ice where the air is dizzy…. I have their secret! I know the secret the men have, that they carry with them, which gives them power! The swords on their hips, their furtive pistols. Killing is exciting, it is power. You knew that from your slave days and yet you kept it from me… Now I am delivered. I am no longer one who waits, looks on and nods agreement. I change the face of the earth. I squeeze a trigger and the world is changed. There is nothing I cannot do!… I am a killer. I am one of them… They put a prayer book in my hand and told me God would see my every sin. But I have done the worst, the final sin and am not seen. I have not put myself in prison, I have burst out. You talk of freedom here on earth, freedom of the body, when I speak of my eternal soul…
QUEEN MARGARET

Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland,
Come, make him stand upon this molehill here,
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.
What! was it you that would be England's king?
Was't you that revell'd in our parliament,
And made a preaching of your high descent?
Where are your mess of sons to back you now?
The wanton Edward, and the lusty George?
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,
Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with the blood
That valiant Clifford, with his rapier's point,
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;
And if thine eyes can water for his death,
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.
Alas poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee, grieve, to make me merry, York.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?
Why art thou patient, man? thou shouldst be mad;
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport:
York cannot speak, unless he wear a crown.
A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:
Hold you his hands, whilst I do set it on.

_Putting a paper crown on his head_

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!
Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair,
And this is he was his adopted heir.
But how is it that great Plantagenet
Is crown'd so soon, and broke his solemn oath?
As I bethink me, you should not be king
Till our King Henry had shook hands with death.
And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,
And rob his temples of the diadem,
Now in his life, against your holy oath?
O, 'tis a fault too too unpardonable!
Off with the crown, and with the crown his head;
And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

_The Cagebirds by David Campion_

**WILD ONE**

Listen to me! All of you! You could be free. All of you! Must I be caged because you lack willpower? I have no right, do I? No right to commit such an outrage. I come bursting in- actually I was tossed in, but let that pass. I come hurtling in, and within minutes turn your comfortable, satisfied, non-communicating, slave society upside down. I tear down the paper screens you built so carefully. I blew great gusts
through the hot-house air. I shatter your fragile Sunday quiet. No, I
didn’t. I only tried. I didn’t succeed. I couldn’t succeed, because you’re
not alive. You can’t be alive, because if you were, you’d be charging at
that door with me. This very minute. All shoulders together. Boom!
Thud! Pow! Crash! But there you sit! I haven’t the right to stir the dust.
I’m the Wild One who doesn’t belong. Ignore her. You have to ignore
her, because if you didn’t you’d either have to break out or break down.
I’m sorry. No, I’m not, but it’s an accepted figure of speech. I’m sorry,
but if you don’t like me, you’ll have to do the other thing. I’m sorry,
but I’m the Wild One, and the cage hasn’t been built that can hold me.

PHRASING, SENTENCE, ‘K’

ACTRESS

Richard III

Act 4 sc 4

QUEEN MARGARET

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,
And now I cloy me with beholding it.
Thy Edward he is dead, that stabb'd my Edward:
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
Young York he is but boot, because both they
Match not the high perfection of my loss:
Thy Clarence he is dead that kill'd my Edward;
And the beholders of this tragic play,
The adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
Only reserved their factor, to buy souls
And send them thither: but at hand, at hand,
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray.
To have him suddenly convey'd away.
Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I prey,
That I may live to say, The dog is dead!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O, thou didst prophesy the time would come
That I should wish for thee to help me curse
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad!

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;
The presentation of but what I was;
The flattering index of a direful pageant;
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;
A mother only mock'd with two sweet babes;
A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,
A sign of dignity, a garish flag,
To be the aim of every dangerous shot,
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?
Where are thy children? wherein dost thou, joy?
Who sues to thee and cries 'God save the queen'?
Where be the bending peers that flatter'd thee?
Where be the thronging troops that follow'd thee?
Decline all this, and see what now thou art:
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;
For one being sued to, one that humbly sues;
For one that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;  
For one commanding all, obey'd of none.  
Thus hath the course of justice wheel'd about,  
And left thee but a very prey to time;  
Having no more but thought of what thou wert,  
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.  
Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not  
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?  
Now thy proud neck bears half my burthen'd yoke;  
From which even here I slip my weary neck,  
And leave the burthen of it all on thee.  
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance:  
These English woes will make me smile in France.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**  
O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,  
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

**QUEEN MARGARET**  
Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;  
Compare dead happiness with living woe;  
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,  
And he that slew them fouler than he is:  
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:  
Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**  
My words are dull; O, quicken them with thine!

**QUEEN MARGARET**  
Thy woes will make them sharp, and pierce like mine.
Apart from George by Nick Ward

PAM  It’s taken me this long… He’s gone a very funny colour… Hanging from a pipe… Water pipe in the kitchen, as if to say he meant it… I had to take him down. Weren’t half heavy… I laid him on the floor, till they took him away… This is what I’ve been thinking… Can’t help what I think can I? Anyway can’t undo it… I don’t know… I don’t… There was so many things straight after, like who to call, what to do, who to turn to, what to say… Then there was the funeral, with the family and everyone watching… Is it any wonder I haven’t known what to think? Not to myself. Not at all… ‘Why’d’e do it, Pam? Why’d’e do it…? Family were the worst, then there’s the neighbours, they can’t let you alone with it, which is what you want… With all the business of it and not being left alone, I haven’t had time to think.

FORM ‘M’ ‘S’

ACTOR

Henry VI Part III

Act 3 Sc II

GLOUCESTER  Ay, Edward will use women honourably. Would he were wasted, marrow, bones and all, That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring, To cross me from the golden time I look for! And yet, between my soul's desire and me-- The lustful Edward's title buried-- Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward, And all the unlook'd for issue of their bodies, To take their rooms, ere I can place myself: A cold premeditation for my purpose!
Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunder s him from thence,
Saying, he'll lade it dry to have his way:
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;
And so I say, I'll cut the causes off,
Flattering me with impossibilities.
My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,
Unless my hand and strength could equal them.
Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;
What other pleasure can the world afford?
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
And deck my body in gay ornaments,
And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.
O miserable thought! And more unlikely
Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!
Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part,
Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.
And am I then a man to be beloved?
O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And, whiles I live, to account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home:
And I,—like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way and straying from the way;
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out,—
Torment myself to catch the English crown:
And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.
Translations by Brian Friel

HUGH The road to Sligo. A spring morning. 1798. Going into battle. Do you remember, James? Two young gallants with pikes on their shoulders and the *Aeneid* in their pockets. Everything seemed to find definition that spring- a congruence, a miraculous matching of hope and past and present and possibility. Striding across the fresh, green land. The rhythms of perception heightened. The whole enterprise of consciousness accelerated. We were gods that morning, James; and I had recently married my goddess, Caitlin Dubh NicReacctain, may she rest in peace. And to leave her and my infant son in his cradle- that was heroic, too. By God, sir, we were magnificent. We marched as far as- where was it?- Glenties! All of twenty three miles in one day. And it was there, in Phelan’s pub, that we got homesick for Athens, just like Ulysses. The *desiderium nostrorum*- the need for our own. Our *pietas*, James, was for older, quieter things. And that was the longest twenty three miles back I ever made. *(Toasts Jimmy)* My friend, confusion is not an ignoble condition.

**FLUENCY ‘L’**

**ACTOR**

**A Midsummer Night**

Act 5 Sc I

**HIPPOLYTA**  ’Tis strange my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

**THESEUS**  More strange than true: I never may believe These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover and the poet  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,  
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.  
Such tricks hath strong imagination,  
That if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;  
Or in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

**Humble Boy by Charlotte Jones**

**FELIX** At the root of everything we believe, I believe- a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of the size of an atom, so many noughts it would dazzle you- the perfect Planck length- there is a loop or a filament of energy- what we call a string- which is the fundamental building block of the universe. And these strings are stretched like the strings on a violin and they’re vibrating to and fro. I know they’re there- the strings, the superstrings- and that they will bring everything together into a perfect super-symmetry- the jittery, frenzied world of quantum mechanics and the gentle, curving geometry of gravity. You see, we
know the rules for the big things like the cosmos and we know the rules for the small things like the atom, but the rules don’t agree- it’s the superstrings that will bring the forces together. The superstrings will give us a quantum theory of gravity- that’s what I want, what we all want… You know, I’m so close, I can hear them! I can hear the little vibrating strings inside my head. Even though I can’t prove absolutely that they’re there, I can hear the patterns they’re making, like they’re ringing in my ears. I’ve just run out of the maths. The equations don’t exist for what I can already sense. The excitation modes- the ringing has too many layers… I can’t… hold all the notes, all the variables, all the harmonies in my head. But one day soon, I hope, I’ll have it, the mother of all theories, a unified field theory. The theory of everything. And once I’ve done that- I’ll be able to rest.

COVERING ‘B’

ACTOR

Henry V, Prologue

Chorus  O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
        The brightest heaven of invention,
        A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
        And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
        Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
        Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
        Leash’d in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
        Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,
        The flat unraised spirits that have dared
        On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
        So great an object: can this cockpit hold
        The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance;
Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i’ the receiving earth;
For ’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o’er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history;
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Claw by Howard Barker

NOEL  Ludovic Kennedy! I call to you across the spaces from this Christ-knows-where!
Can you hear me, Ludovic? Thick, oily hair, with intellectual silver strands in it,
sensitive fingers knotted for Hanratty on ‘Panorama’. A good man fighting for
the underdog… Well, help me, Ludovic! Briefly I arrived here in the dead of
night, in a van with sealed windows. The journey could have been an hour,
maybe two- they took my watch- anyway that places me within a radius of fifty
to a hundred miles away from London, it should be relatively easy to find me if
you looked! To be out of here, I would never grumble no matter what I went
through. I’d have an amputation. I’ve always said I’d rather die than have a leg
missing. Well, I hereby take that back. To be out of here I would lose an arm
and a leg as well. No, two legs and an arm. I would be legless to be out of here.
Because I have this feeling I will never be out of here. And no one will hear me.
And no one is wondering where I am. And no questions are being asked. And
I’m not missed. And my name is not on a newspaper that’s blowing across the
Common as I dreamed it was last night, and two kids playing football don’t pick
it up and say “It’s him! Four eyes!” because they’d seen me exercise my dog
round there, my dog which has probably died of hunger in the flat. My home!
My ordinary nothingness! I would fall down on the grass and kiss it no matter
how many dogs had shit on it. I would lie there rolling in it and it could piss with
rain and yobbos could beat me silly under the railway arch, and spit on me from
passing trains, I wouldn’t care, my common, my scrubby little patch of grass!

PHRASING, SENTENCE ‘K’

ACTOR

Much Ado About Nothing

Act IV Sc1

FRIAR FRANCIS

Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long
And given way unto this course of fortune.
By noting of the lady I have mark’d
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenor of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

As You Like It
Act II Sc I

DUKE SENIOR  Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
'This is no flattery: these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.'
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in every thing.
I would not change it.
HENRY

I was blind. I was blind and so I took a walk. I took a walk along the harbour. I took a walk along the harbour and I met a man from Derby. Derby? I said, I have never considered Derby. And you will never consider it, said he. Then the man from Derby showed me the probabilities. The man from Derby showed me the probabilities of a life beyond the harbour’s horizon. Beyond the horizon to a place we are able to access only with our fear. I took a walk with this man. I took a long and treacherous walk with this man from Derby. All around the harbour. And it was dark. And it was such a clear black night sky that even if I were not blind I could not see which foot I put forward. I could not measure the progress we had made. And I said to this man from Derby: but how is it that I fear not the lack of probability? How is it that I fear not the ability to see my one foot move ahead or behind the other?
TWENTY-SIXTH STUDY

TWO SCENES
MARCHING ORDERS

Here are two simple scenes where we can begin to employ and practice what we have learnt to date. You rehearse the scenes, and try to distil each character first into a sentence, then a word, and finally into three or four sounds and one fundamental gesture. Begin to sense the character’s gestures, tone of voice, attitude, and mood as created by the script. With all these elements and your own ambition create your phantom, or character.

As Joan Littlewood said, “there is no right and wrong in art”, so feel free to express what you wish, and feel free to choose any sounds, sentences, words and gestures you think suitable. I have also, at the end, analyzed the scenes myself but only to illustrate the process.

To refresh your memory on this process kindly refer to studies 9 (Speech Gestures) and 16 (Character Sounds).
David and Clifford

David: Clifford. How good it is to see you again. Do come in. Don’t stand outside.
Clifford: (Enters limping with a stick)
David: Hurt your leg?
Clifford: Yes, David old lad. I hurt my leg. In fact it hurt so badly they had to take it off.
David: O God, I’m sorry. Here take this chair.
Clifford: You don’t have to do that. The rest of me is still capable. (He sits) So this is the little cottage you’ve told me so much about in your letter.
David: Yes. (Silence) It’s simple and primitive.
Clifford: And safe David – safe. While we fight a bloody war you – you sit here safe.
David: (Sighs) O no – not that – not the heroics. You can’t forgive me can you, for being an objector.
Clifford: No. It’s not being an objector that infuriates me. If you had been shot for your beliefs – that would be something – it’s not your beliefs – it’s you. Missing all the fun David – the death, the fear, the hate, the pain, the legs, the arms, – the fun David, missing all the fun and sitting here safe and smug – no pain, no fear, no dread, no anguish, no loneliness, no confusion, no answers, no questions – the nothingness of it. You’re missing the party, the lanterns, fairy lights, the laughter and the blood.
David: (Quietly) Clifford you should have been an actor.
Clifford: (Quietly) That’s right David – my leg is strapped up behind me – now we are back in the dressing room I needn’t pretend anymore. (Lifting trouser leg) help me David to get my real leg back.
David: Clifford! What do you think it is like here – alone, safe as you say, with only a battalion of thoughts to struggle with … my personal war against doubt, fear, shame, hopelessness and confusion?
Clifford: Then you are not happy?
David: Dear God. Not that I would be any good in a war. I’d be hopeless. I suppose I could have been a stretcher-bearer or something. Anyway I’m out of it. I
hate it all – but being out of it can be worse than being in the thick of it – and you with your leg – or lack of it – well, I don’t feel sorry for you – (shouting) I envy you – I envy your pain, your wound, your rotten badge of courage.

Clifford: Courage? Courage! I screamed like blue murder. I howled and hollered until one of your stretcher-bearer types collected me. I was terrified, angry and bewildered – like a child.

David: (Quietly) Thank you Clifford. Thank you. I know what you say is not true … but thank you.

Clifford: But it is true. Listen, I didn’t cut my own leg off. It was blown off. It was nothing to do with me. I happened to be in the way of a passing piece of metal. You at least made your own bed of nails. You’re the hero – you and you alone created your own unhappiness – mine was, so to speak, thrust upon me.

David: But I am safe Clifford, you are right – I am safe.

Clifford: (Quietly) Safe to suffer.

David: Yes, that about sums it up.

Clifford: Would you join the war now if you could?

David: No – but I am not happy Clifford.

Clifford: I suppose that remark is meant to satisfy me.

David: Do what you like with it.

Clifford: Let’s forget it. Let’s forget this leg. You’re my brother David. I admire you. I always have. My prowess at sport. My fame as a womaniser. My rapid rise in the army was all arranged by me to put you down. I deserve the loss of this leg. Yet, I still used this accident, to put you down.

David: I admired you so much. I knew I couldn’t compete. So I walked away from everything.

Clifford: (After silence) Yes, I will have that whisky you offered me.

David: O sorry David, I’ll get it.
Clifford I feel is extrovert and fearful. He perhaps lives in a sentence something like, “Where am I – you don’t frighten me – come and get me if you dare.” This could be translated into the words “Deathly Dare”, or simply “Death”. So we have the sounds ‘D’, ‘Er’; and a possible hidden gesture of ‘pushing away’.

David I feel is introvert and fearful. His sentence could be, “Please let no one find me – leave me in peace – let me steal away.” We could tune into the words: “Selfish Peace” or the sounds ‘S’, ‘P’, ‘Eh’ (as in sell). The hidden gesture could be ‘raised hand’ (admonishing).

Stella and Mother-in-Law

Mother: O, come in dear. How nice of you to spare the time for a visit. I thought it would be an opportunity, now the men have gone out, for both of us to have a nice cosy chat.

Stella: Why do we need a cosy chat?

Mother: Well, I thought it would be nice.

Stella: I’m sorry Mrs James but I am not very good at such things.

Mother: (Laughing) O you don’t have to be good at chats, leave that to me. Now, do sit down dear. Standing there like that makes you look awkward.

Stella: I really don’t see: - O alright.

Mother: Now, we both love John – and so in a way we have both learnt to share him.

Stella: Mrs James, that isn’t quite the case.

Mother: It is very much the case. That is why I wish to contribute to the happiness of your marriage.

Stella: There is very little you can do.

Mother: O no, you are very wrong.

Stella: (Standing) Mrs James. John and I are something new. Our being together makes a new situation, to which the old situation of mother and son cannot contribute.

Mother: You are wrong Stella – the old situation, as you call it, can never fade. That
will always be there.

Stella: O no. I can’t bear it. Not already. Not before we are even married. I can’t battle with it.

Mother: You must battle with it, as you so charmingly describe mother love. You have to reckon with me.

Stella: It’s just not fair.

Mother: Stella. Do sit down. We must try and remain friends, for we have a long journey to make together ……

Stella: (Silent)

Mother: (Quietly) … and the sooner you accept that, the better for all of us. For John, for me and of course, for yourself.

Stella: (Silent)

Mother: Don’t you agree Stella? Stella you must answer me when I talk to you.

Stella: Love is a destructive thing.

Mother: Now, what does that mean.

Stella: What I said. You are destroying my love for John.

Mother: O Stella. I wouldn’t want to do that … but it is important that we understand each other.

Stella: Is it? Do we have to? It would be best if John and I went away – forever.

Mother: If you did such a thing – I would find you both –

Stella: O yes. You have little else to do. That would be a kind of play therapy for you – treasure hunt.

Mother: I think you have said enough now. Your hate is hurting. I only hope you confine your venom to myself. I would be happy to suffer, as long as I could protect John from you.

Stella: (Silence) There is an old Japanese saying; “He who raises his voice has lost the argument.” I must remember that. I must learn to handle this situation differently. Would you get me some tea, please?

Mother: Certainly my dear. (Stares at her for some time). I’ll get it.
Mother I feel is challenging and fearful. Therefore the mood could be expressed in, “Get out of there. I can see you. Get out or I will seek for you, for ever.” A word to tune into could be, “Seek”. The sounds that support her character could be, ‘S’ ‘K’ ‘G’ ‘Eh’. The hidden gesture could be, ‘pointing’.

The Girl I feel is threatened. The following sentence could be used, “Beaten but not broken. Beware madam, behave madam, I will not bend to your will.” And the words could be “Better be brave”, or simply “Brave”. The sounds ‘B’, ‘Ay’ (as in cave), and ‘V’. And the hidden gesture of ‘clenched fist’.

With these indications I hope you begin to discover another world, which becomes so familiar to you that to not transform your character, acting, and study of the play into some kind of sound and sentence, would be to leave out a vital part of your art.
FINISH THOUGHTS

We’ve all seen fine acting springing from extremely accurate observation and a genuine understanding of a situation, but just as a painter can create his paintings from the experience he has of the colours, and over the years the colours tell him all about themselves; the same applies to the professional actor. Through his inner perception of the true quality of human sound, out of the periphery, he can bring a new impulse to drama.

When the impulse for our work springs from a deeper knowledge of the individual sounds, a love for these sounds, an understanding of the space and the approach out of the periphery arousing an ‘entheos’ in the union of actor an audience, then that other quality or reality appears and fills the theatre; THAT IS DRAMA.

I can’t go further, but you can. And I feel I am but the pointing figure in this little woodcut by Gordon Craig.
VOCALISM - WALT WHITMAN

Vocalism, measure, concentration, determination and the divine power to speak words.
Are you full-lung’d and limber-lipp’d from long trial? From your vigorous practice, from physique?
Do you move in these broad lands as broad as they?
Come duly to the divine power to speak words?
For only at last after many years, after chastity, friendship, procreation, prudence and nakedness,
After treading ground and breasting river and lake,
After a loosen’d throat, after absorbing eras, temperament, races, after knowledge, freedom, crime,
After complete faith, after clarifyings, elevations and removing obstructions,
After these and more, it is just possible there comes to a man, a woman, the divine power to speak words;
Then towards that man or that woman, swiftly hasten all, none refuse, all attend,
Armies, ships, antiquities, libraries, paintings, machines, cities, hate, despair, amity,
Pain, theft, murder, aspiration; form in close ranks,
They debouch as they are wanted, to march obediently through the mouth of that man or that woman.

Oh what is it in me that makes me tremble so at voices?
Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or her I shall follow,
As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps, anywhere around the globe,
All wait for the right voices;
Where is the practiced and perfect organ? Where is the developed soul?
For I see every word uttered thence has deeper, sweeter, new sounds, impossible on less terms.
I see brains and lips closed, tympanis and temples unstruck,
Until that comes which has the quality to bring forth what lies slumbering forever ready, in all words.