

ACTING FOR THE CAMERA

THEA 4310

FINAL PAPER

(minimum of FIVE pages)

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YOUR IN-CLASS EXERCISES THIS SEMESTER: The Slate, Bite & Smile, Commercial, Spokesperson, PSA, Testimonial, Film Monologue, TV Scene, Corporate Scene, Film Scene, Ear Prompter

- **What are some of your overall biggest “take-aways” on the craft of film acting this semester? Name at least three.**

My first take away from the act of film acting is how important it is to be able to quickly recover emotional from a previous scene you have done. In both my film monologue and my stage to camera monologue, I was invested so heavily into the characters, that I was unable to come out of it quickly and come back for the rest of class. I was present physically but not mentally. I learned that in film, I could film that emotional scene and then have to go straight into a shot from the beginning of the film, so I need to learn how to step back, recover, and be able to jump back into the scene quickly. This can also apply if I start calm and end up emotional, what happens if I have to shoot from the beginning?

The second take away is how big theatrical acting does not work on the camera. Another way of saying that acting for film is acting under a microscope. I learned from the Birdman monologue that my natural tendency is to go theatrical when I have a tense piece and as we say in my three takes, the big theatrical just does not work as well as a more veiled performance. Smaller is usually better in other words.

The third take away is how important organic exploration is for film. I really never saw the point of doing three takes and doing the same thing over and over

again in each of the three takes. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, so why would I have the same performance in three takes. This is seen in my birdman final takes. I started big, and then veiled it, then veiled it again. All three takes were very different, and I used the most out of my time. I used the time I had for takes efficiently. I learned how important it is to explore in each take, otherwise you are just wasting time.

- Which exercise(s) were most educational for you? Why?

The performance that was most educational for me was the Film Monologue. It was less educational about film acting itself, but really educational about myself as an actor. I found out for the first time that my tendency is theatrical, and this was the exercise that really made me realize how important veiling is for the camera. It was disturbing watching my first take of the monologue because it just seemed so jarring but watching my third take I realized just how effective veiling can be. It really does seem like I am not doing anything but as in the book, that is exactly what we are after.

- Which exercise(s) came easiest to you? Why?

The exercise that came easiest for me was the corporate scene. I think the reason was that because I was paired up with a less confident actor, I really had to take charge of the scene and because I was so focused on cue pickup camera work, and arranging times to rehearse, I never really had the opportunity to “act”, I was just talking as I would normally talk. This really cemented in my brain the idea that “doing nothing” was exactly what we were after as actors. After performing I thought to myself, “that was horrible, you were just on autopilot” but once I watched the reels, I really enjoyed my work. So I guess that scene came the easiest because the whole time I was not really thinking about it and I was pretty happy with the result.

- Which exercise(s) were most challenging? Why?

The most challenging exercise was the spokesperson scene. I really did not enjoy this one. I felt like the whole time I was not talking or acting like a human being and I felt really uncomfortable with the words in my mouth. This by far took the longest to record and it was stressful trying to get a successful take. I think I struggled because I was trying to copy the two people, I saw in class do it and everything I have seen in commercials. Nothing about it was organic and it was by far my least successful performance. I hated doing it at the time and I definitely hated watching it back because I was able to really think about how generic and painfully bland it was. However, I took this to heart and throughout the rest of my pieces, I actively tried to make everything my own and be as organic as possible. I also stopped watching other actors do the scripts I was doing.

- At which exercises(s) did you feel most successful? Why?

The exercise that I felt was the most successful was my Birdman monologue, it was just straight up the best acting I did in the class. But I have already talked about it enough, so I want to talk about my second most successful which was the bite and smile. I really think that I was successful in this because of how relaxed I was. Because of this I was really just able to have fun and be myself on camera. It was a really fun exercise to start with and it really set the precedent of how fun the rest of the class would be. I was really successful with this also because my takes were really unique and had strong choices. This is seen with me kissing the box at the end of the shot. No one told me to make 4 movements but the camera kept rolling and I kept acting and something really cool happened because of it.

- What is your analysis of where your personal WORK ETHIC is in preparation for a career as a young broadcast professional? This includes your punctuality, reliability, preparation, attitude, knowing your lines, your ability to meet deadlines, promptness in responding to emails, etc. Knowing that these areas can keep you from a job or from

representation...or even get you FIRED from a job...where do you stand at this point in your training?

I think that my work ethic is one of my strengths as an actor. Will I sometimes wait until the last minute (this paper), I never half-ass it and I put 100% of my effort into everything thing I do. This is just me in life. I always do everything do the best of my ability. I always turn in work on time, I am never late, I always show up and I am always extremely prepared. Preparation is another one of my strengths when it comes to work ethic. I put in the work to put myself in a position where the acting becomes the easy part. If I work hard enough in my preparation, the acting requires significantly less energy. I really cannot see a situation where I would be fired for my work ethic. I can see being fired because of my temper or my ability, but never my work ethic.

- **What are your greatest strength(s) as a camera actor?**

My greatest strengths as a camera actor are my work ethic and preparation which I mentioned above, and my intensity. I really think that I bring an intensity to all of my roles that require it that is really special. This is seen in both my film monologue and my stage to camera piece. The intensity I bring to the table is something that I am really proud of and I think that it is something that I should continue to work on throughout my career. With this intensity, it sets me apart from other actors because I do not think that a lot of people can match my intensity. Now they probably are able to act it better than me, but that is not because of their intensity. I think that I get so deep into the minds of characters that I lose myself in them and I am unable to think as Parker when I am acting, which is something that I think is really cool. In other words, my intensity is my ability to be so emotionally invested in characters that I lose myself in them. Now this can be dangerous in the long term but it sure is fun in the present so we'll see what psychological harm it does to me later.

- **What are the area(s) on which you need to work as a camera actor?**

The biggest area I need to work on as an actor is effective script analysis. I like to think that I have a really high work ethic and I work really hard on each of my performances, but most of the time, I jump straight into the acting and research after reading a script for the first time. I really should be reading the script 3/4/5 times before I even begin to act. I just get too excited about a character and I just start journaling and doing research instead of just taking an hour and breaking the script down into beats. This is really seen in my film monologue. Going into our rehearsal I was so worn out from going at such a high level/same plane the whole time, that I was giving a horrible performance. It was not until we sat down, broke the script into beats and then begin to act, that I was giving an effective performance. This is when I realized how much I need to improve script analysis wise. I also need to work on my self-confidence.

- What was your response to Michael Caine's text and video?

My main take away from Michael Caine's book is really a bunch of small technical things that were reinforced through our work sessions. This is what I really enjoyed in the book and the class, specific things that we can do to be the most successful in the class. For example, not blinking and placing your eyeline as close to the lens as possible without looking into the lens. These are very small technical things that improve our performances immensely and are completely independent from our ability as an actor. I could not believe just how many small technical things there were in the book that I would have never thought of and they are obviously extremely important. I'm sure would have picked this up as I went on through the industry but being able to do these things from the very beginning is such an advantage.

- Was there any particular colleague(s) whose work/growth impressed you in general this semester? For what reason(s)?

I think Logan's growth was the most impressive this semester. I have worked with him in voice, fundamentals, realism, and now acting for the camera, and he has improved immensely. He started out really reserved, which is not a bad thing as a personality trait because I am also reserved,

but as a performer it does not work. He started out reserved and really developed into a really strong analytical actor. I think this is what impressed me the most because I assume he was also really smart when it comes to his analysis, but the way he was able to change of the course of the semester and really show that analysis in his work is really impressive. It is really hard to make that big of a change so quickly and he did it wonderfully.

- Was there any particular performance(s) by one or more of your colleagues that stand(s) out to you as memorable? For what reason(s)?

Nikki's stage to camera exercise was amazing. I truly think that she is the best actor in this class and her performance when she brought it down to the film part was just amazing. It really shows just how effective it can be to use the camera as a tool in your performance instead of a means of production. As I said before, whenever someone is able to effectively veil their performance in a close up, all of the emotion that was previously theatrical is all conveyed through the eyes on film and Nikki has great eyes. She was able to take all of her external emotions and release it through her eyes. This is what wowed me.

- What clip(s) from the Amazing Performance Presentations (excluding your own) left the strongest impression on you? Why?

I think just because I love the movie, Nikki's Joker clip left the strongest impression on me. I base so much of my acting off of Joaquin Phoenix and I really love watching everything he does. I really enjoyed that she did not show the overplayed clip that someone in the class showed, because I think there were other parts of the movie that were just better and more intense. I really resonate with the amount of research Phoenix does for his roles and this is super evident with Joker, just based off of his laugh. I found a clip where someone with the same condition was laughing and it was carbon copy from what was seen in the Joker. This is amazing and tells me exactly what I need to do to be a successful actor.

- **Please feel free to offer any other comments you might have that were not covered by these questions.**