Top Class Theatre Studies

Kate Dyer monologue transcript

*Hoods* by Angela Betzien.

Prescribed edition: Currency Press Pty Ltd, Strawberry Hills (NSW), 2017. ISBN   
978-0-86819-800-2  
Monologue from pp. 29-39.

[car door opens]

[car door slams shut]

[music starts]

He runs  
Dunlops flailing, failing, stripping him of speed  
Imagining Nikes like winged heels on heroes, flying free

Over the BP  
Where inside the attendant, Distended with boredom, Endures his graveyard shift.  
Chugging down Pepsi slush by the bucketfull.   
Sucrose kicks.

Flying.

Over the old woman, In her transparent night dress  
In her brick veneer. Frail as fear.  
Peeking through the louvres.  
Wrinkled hand poised on the telephone receiver  
[Gasp]

Flying

Over the park. Where kids are...SPINNING  
Bingeing goon under a tree  
Their fermented minds finding life's meaning in a cask wine. Laughing  
[laughter]  
...as they see him passing in the sky.  
[laughter]

Flying.

Over the underpass.  
Where an old man sleeps. Stinking of spirits.  
On a stained mattress. Crawling with fleas.  
Dreaming of a bed. A room. Clean sheets.  
[coughing]

Flying.

Over the knitted pattern of Christmas tree lights  
Woven like wool into streets

Then, with his telescopic vision.  
He pins a yellow bird. Shining bright.  
A night owl. Open 24 hours a night.  
Earthbound.  
He switches off, his surround sound aerial television. And descends.  
Back on the suburban grid of neon and bitumen.  
His Nikes flight ends.

Pause.

Headlights hunt them, Pin them to the bitumen.  
Long-haul Mack truck blares its horn.  
Screech of brakes. Time staaaaaaaaaaaaaalls.

Pause. Insert special feature.  
Replay.

7am yesterday.  
Kids. Munching cheese, TV, Recharging sucrose fuel. Cardboard Cartoon Cereal. Sugared sweet.

10am. Mum still sleeps  
Sporting a mother of a bruise on her left cheek.  
She wakes up in the ground-floor flat. Splintered door. Fist-punctured walls.  
Recalls. ARRRRGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHH.

This month’s rent due last week.  
On the way to school she finds a phone and calls…

She gets back to the one bedroom flat.  
Packs.  
Heaps her life into a Crazy Clark’s bag.  
Throws it in the car, slams the door...  
In the blistering heat.  
Falls asleep.  
And dreams of a life with more.

3pm. She picks the kids up. Drives to the supermarket.  
Tells the kids: Stay in the car

Stop.  
Enough of that day. Fast-track it back to the highway.  
Long-haul Mack truck blares its horn. Their fright speeds their flight. Turn left at the servo.  
Car hoons past blaring stereo through the dark.  
Back to the carpark.  
This is what happened.

Sun streaks golden across the sky.   
Folding up the dark like last night’s sheets.  
Flinging out the stars.

Jessie lags. Crumbling a salt and vinegar path.  
A connect-the-chips edible zig zag.  
But a stray dog gobbles up the Samboy path.

And when mum returns  
Finds only the bag from Crazy Clark’s.  
The car, empty in the carpark.

Meanwhile  
Outside a St Vinnie’s depot, Kids: "dial triple zero".  
Waiting. Near an overflowing green bin. Dumped with unwanted things. Broken couch. Stuffing torn out. Family of mice nesting in the springs.

[sirens]  
Siren sings.  
The baby. Cold and heavy, breath rasping.  
Survives the long night’s journey.  
Changing everything.

And in this ending  
All three are free  
Flying over the city  
On a flight path to Nan’s.

End Game.

[dog barking]  
[Train]  
A suburban train station.

[Interpretation Statement]

In my interpretation of *Hoods* by Angela Betzien I've used an eclectic mix of theatrical styles. Physical theatre is used as the Hoods character is a storyteller, with the power to fast-forward pause and rewind. Thus the physical aspects of a videogame is integral within my performance. Epic theatre is inspired by a series of real news stories about kids abandoned in cars.

Betzien's mission was to create powerful political theatre by telling stories of the voiceless and powerless within society. In *Hoods*, she highlights family violence and poverty.

I've also incorporated the convention of narration as my character Hoods speaks directly to the audience, highlighting issues of injustice. I've drawn attention to the episodic structure of the play, through the use of rewind sound effects. I also incorporate form theatre by performing in a minimalistic space and relying on my skills as an actor to transform time place and characters. Hip-hop is also included to highlight the rhythmic and rhyming language structure, the subculture of poverty, and the rough urban neighborhood. I include hip hop dance moves and music to accentuate this style.

The element of emphasis is used to focus on the didactic message of poverty and violence. My set depicts a wrecking yard as the dark crates emphasise poverty, and physically displays the obstacles and violent struggles of those disadvantaged within society. My costume is dark, old and worn to further emphasise the theme of suffering and powerlessness. The element of rhythm shaped my performance through the rhythmic delivery of lines, movement through the space and rapping soundscape.