Top Class Theatre Studies

Laura Pryor monologue transcript

*Hoods* by Angela Betzien.

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Monologue from pp. 29-39.

He runs
Dunlops failing, flailing, 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
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, when 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 room. A bed. Clean sheets.

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 to 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 stalls.

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.
And 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.
She falls asleep.
And dreams of a life with more.

3pm. She picks up the kids. 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, to the carpark.
This is what happened.

Sun streaks golden across the sky.
Flinging out the stars like last night's sheets.

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 car, empty in the carpark.

Meanwhile on the phone
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.

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.

A suburban train station.

[Interpretation Statement]

Through the production roles of acting and directing, I interpreted the character of the Hoods in Angela Betzien’s Australian Gothic play *Hoods*. In my interpretation of the Hoods, I chose to stay true to the original context of the script, with the setting being mid-90’s Australia. To effectively communicate this, I used an Australian accent, and used the reference of familiar Australian brands within my set design.

In my interpretation, the Hoods are representative of society and how we like to comment on people and their lives. To highlight this, I characterised the Hoods as rather suspicious and curious. I also chose to transform into some of the different characters mentioned in the monologue. This aimed to symbolise how the hoods attempt to empathise and understand the lives of these other characters. This aids with the development of one of my chosen themes, voyeurism.

My performance was in the style of eclectic theatre with aspects of […] theatre and Australian gothic. I used simple props and costume that allowed my transformations of time, place and character to be effectively made. The themes I’m choosing to highlight are:

* Consumerism, and the idea that consumerism is a state of mind. This is shown through the ‘poison’ labels on my set, and the recurring referral to greed through movement and dialogue.
* Violence and abuse. This is specifically seen through my chosen moments of pathos through the vulnerable character of the mum. This aims to evoke sympathy from the audience.
* Poverty. As well as being displayed in the dialogue of the monologue, this theme is also highlighted through my old-looking costume, with the exception of my shoes, which act as a symbol of what the Hoods aspire to, which is high class luxury.

I chose to incorporate theatre composition elements of: rhythm, through the poetic flow of my dialogue; and the element of contrast, through the use of the different moods that I aimed to create throughout the performance.

As Hoods is a rewrite, specifically catered for high-school kids, of the play *Kingswood Kids*, I decided to have my implied audience being mid-teenage kids. As a result of this, I ensured that my performance was quite engaging but also conveyed an important political message.