

**IDENTIFYING AND CLASSIFYING DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ACTING IN SELECTED
DEVISED THEATRE PRODUCTIONS**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Christelle Nortier, certify that the content of this dissertation, which I am submitting to the University of the Free State, is the result of my independent effort and that I have never submitted it to any other school for credit. I, Christelle Nortier, declare that I am submitting this dissertation for the first time at this school to receive a master's degree in Drama and Theatre Arts.



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Date: July 2023

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ABSTRACT

From a 'postmodern theatre'¹ perspective, the tendency among most when creating theatre on stage is often more toward devised theatre than a conventional theatre product. This study will focus on identifying and classifying different approaches to acting in selected devised theatre productions.

This research's primary point of departure was to determine the autogenous characteristics of each method of acting and to discover which acting style/styles work best or are most applicable to the devised theatre.

'Conventional theatre' follows a set number of acts. Generally, it adheres to Aristotle's theory of plot structure from the fourth century BC (335 BC), with actors reading dialogue on a thrust or proscenium stage. The genre and style of where the text originated are predetermined or suggested in the playwright's mind. Therefore, the director, as well as the actors, have a blueprint of what the play is intended to look like and how it played out during the process of creation by the playwright. This intent is reflected in various ways. Firstly, it is reflected in the dramatist's notes on acting, writing, characters, costumes, locality, stage lighting, and stage directions (Oddey, 1996:16). Horace approaches poetry from a practical standpoint instead of Aristotle's theoretical approach. Around 19 BC, 'Ars Poetica' of Horace is considered a core component of rhetoric literacy through his use of satires, epistles, and odes. 'Ars Poetica' attempts to create a sense of probability and coherence regarding artistic representation, including diction, dramatic characterisation, meter, poetic inventiveness, and the intended impact (Hajdu, 2014:28-42). In 1863, Freytag's technique allowed studies to visually examine a narrative and acknowledge the plot drama, similar to Aristotle's *Poetics* (335 BC). His plot is divided into five sections: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement. (Hajdu, 2014:28-42).

In contrast to conventional theatre, 'devised theatre' (frequently labelled as 'collective theatre') is an approach to theatre-making in which the text or (if it is a predominantly

¹ Postmodernism distinguished from Modernism during the 1960s. Postmodernism is a movement that allows questioning of established norms and, if necessary, be deconstructed and then suitably reconstructed, thus contributing to diversity by influence and relevance of cultural norms and values (Samuels, 2008:220).

physical theatre-based work) performance outcome develops from collaboration, often through a performing group's improvisatory work (Oddey, 1996:1-4).

The study of devised theatre and the exploration of various acting approaches can be linked by examining how postmodernism, a movement that questions established norms and cultural values, has influenced the evolution of theatre practices. Devised theatre, emphasising collaborative and improvisatory work, embodies the postmodern ethos of deconstructing and reconstructing traditional theatrical elements, including acting techniques. This intersection between postmodernism and devised theatre highlights the dynamic nature of contemporary theatre-making, where a diverse range of acting methods, from Stanislavski's realism to Brecht's epic theatre, can be adapted and integrated into this innovative and collaborative approach to creating performances. The approaches to acting, which will form the basis of the theoretical conceptualisation of this study, are based on the writings of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), Sanford Meisner (1905-1997), and Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971) on classical acting, (between the late 1800s and early 1900s), David Mamet (1947) and William H. Macy (1950-1984) on practical aesthetics, Lee Strasberg (1901-1982) on method acting and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), specifically on the Brechtian method (1964).

Three analytical case studies will be undertaken to analyse the applied acting methods to construct a reasonably mapped process that suits devised theatre best. The study contributes to the academic discussions concerning devised theatre and approaches to acting methods. The study also constructs an analytical framework for case study analysis, which could be employed by future studies that embark on similar studies or practitioners who aim to produce devised theatre productions within a contemporary, postmodern context.

The research aims to identify and classify different approaches to acting in selected devised theatre productions. This study's fundamental starting point is to identify each acting technique's autogenous traits and ascertain which acting style(s) or styles operate best in or are most appropriate for improvised theatre.

The study believes that devised theatre uses a combination of different acting approaches. By conducting three analytical case studies, the study proposes to evaluate the hypothesis to arrive at a conclusion either in favour or opposed to this statement.

Keywords: Acting styles, devised theatre, Aristotle, Horace, Freytag, practical aesthetics, improvisation, classical acting, method acting, Brechtian method

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SECTION A

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study is introduced in chapter 1 of the study. The research problem, problem overview, background information on the research design, problem statement, research questions, and study objectives are all included. The field and scope of the study were defined, along with its importance and value. A synopsis of the research design and technique of inquiry is also provided.

The research methodology and design that will be used in this study are discussed in this chapter. There is a contrast in devised theatre techniques that may be seen in the distinctions between conventional and devised theatre and a director's essential but problematic role. As Heddon and Milling (2007) state in their book *Creating Performance: A Critical History*, the director's role in creating practices 'complicates the notion of non-hierarchical work of democratic participation. To further develop and comprehend the function of the director and actor within a collaborative context, the study has come to this topic. The voice and body repeatedly came up as priorities as interpreters of not just text but also locality and story as the study developed the method and aesthetic first as an actor and then as a director. The interest in the physical instruments of actors led the study to investigate acting and directing training programs. As an actor, the study aims to develop believable, flourishing characters that influence the setting in which they are present. Audiences and fellow actors can express relatable humanity in this way. The researcher's interest in people, capacity to develop complex personae, and ability to live freely inside these structures of relationship with other actors and audiences are the sources of the characters created and the imagined worlds they inhabit. The researcher would like to argue that a close examination that results from understanding each person's journey produces a rare and unique reality. Sharing that singularity with an audience allows one to gain a new perspective on oneself and others.

1.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study will use a mixed-method approach that includes literature reviews within the

qualitative research framework. The project will develop an analytical framework for the case study analysis to recognise and categorise various performing styles in a few chosen created theatre productions. Instead of deductively testing a hypothesis, as described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016:17), an inductive reasoning approach will be used to develop concepts and theories. Inductive reasoning starts with particular concepts and progresses to more general ones. Data in the form of themes, categories, and subcategories concerning a particular practice component are the source of the findings for qualitative studies. All investigations are guided by discipline-specific data that enables the study to target their inquiry and analyse the results reliably and transparently (Nicholls, 2009:531-532).

This study may examine views, institutional cultures, and explanations for the successes and failures of treatments or practices in-depth thanks to the qualitative research methodology. This qualitative study aims to examine and comprehend the participants' experiences (Ramani and Mann, 2016:38). Instead of attempting to explain, the study seeks to comprehend. An activity, program, or process is carefully investigated in relevant case study research to characterise a particular occurrence of interest (Nieuwenhuis, 2014:70–75).

Productions at the University of the Free State are used to identify and categorise various acting methods in three different theatre shows using a case study methodology. A 'case study' is an investigation in which the program, activity, or event is thoroughly examined. This study qualifies as a case study since it examines the occurrence in its regular setting (Creswell, 2014:191). Utilising various data collection methods and sources is critical to the case study approach. The analysis can concentrate on one or two issues crucial to comprehending the system. Typically, data collecting comprises techniques like focus group interviews, documentation reviews, and nominal group interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2014:75-76).

The literature review includes a basic overview of traditional and devised theatre and the many acting styles outlined before. The digital footage of the three plays, *In the Dark* (2019), *Around* (2019), and *The Hate Crime Project* (2017), will be analysed to identify and classify different acting approaches from rehearsals and the final performances.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

From a postmodern² theatre perspective, the tendency when creating theatre on stage is often more toward devised theatre than a conventional theatre product. This study will focus on identifying and classifying different approaches to acting in selected devised theatre productions.

Conventional theatre originates from a written text and is often thought of as theatrical works that adhere to Aristotle's idea of plot structure from the fourth century BC (335 BC), follow a prescribed number of acts, and feature performers reading dialogue on a thrust or proscenium stage. The genre, style and the origin of the text, is predetermined, or suggested in the playwright's mind. Therefore, the director, as well as the actors, have a blueprint of what the play is intended to look like and how it played out during the process of creation by the playwright. This is reflected in various ways. Firstly, it is reflected in the dramatist's notes on acting, writing, characters, costumes, locality, stage lighting, and stage directions (Oddey, 1996:16). Compared to Aristotle's theoretical approach, Horace approaches poetry practically.

Around 19 BC, 'Ars Poetica'³ of Horace is considered a core component of 'rhetoric'⁴ literacy through his use of 'satires',⁵ 'epistles',⁶ and 'odes'.⁷ 'Ars Poetica' attempts to create a sense of probability and coherence in artistic representation, covering everything from the genre selection to the intended effect, dramatic characterisation, meter, and poetic innovation. (Hajdu, 2014:28). In 1863, Freytag's technique allowed studies to examine a narrative visually and acknowledge the drama in the plot, like Aristotle's *Poetics*. His five-part plot

² In the 1960s, postmodernism differentiated itself from moderatism. Postmodernism is a movement that promotes challenging accepted norms and, if required, their deconstruction and subsequent appropriate reconstruction, fostering diversity through the influence and applicability of cultural norms and values (Samuels, 2008:220).

³ Horace advised poets on composing poetry and theatre in the poem 'Ars Poetica', which he wrote in the early 20th century. 'Ars Poetica' is not a methodical treatment of theory; it covers a wide range of subjects, occasionally with sudden transitions and without drawing any conclusive logical connections between them (Hajdu, 2014:28).

⁴ An expression from ancient Greece that describes the investigation of and practical use of spoken, written, and visual language (Hajdu, 2014:28).

⁵ Sarcastic poetry that examines literary and human excellence (Hajdu, 2014:29).

⁶ An epistle is a letter written in poetry or prose and addressed to a specific person or group. Most writing is done to convey morality, philosophy, or love (Hajdu, 2014:29).

⁷ A poetic piece was written praising something or someone (Hajdu, 2014:29).

structure comprises five components: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

Devised theatre, often referred to as collective theatre, is an approach to theatre-making that differs from conventional theatre in that the text or, in the case of predominantly physical works, the performance outcome develops through collaborative and frequently improvisatory work by a performing group (DeLong *et al.*, 2015). The group is primarily made up of actors. However, other theatre specialists, such as visual artists, writers, and choreographers, may also play a key role in fostering collaboration. In fact, on many occasions, the subscription of collaborating artists may exceed professional specialisation. (Haagensen, 2014:59). This process of devising is similar to 'commedia dell'arte',⁸ 'street theatre',⁹ 'improvisational theatre'¹⁰ and 'physical theatre'.¹¹ The creative process involves a long period of creative work. The mentioned theatre forms focus on activities that entail physical, philosophical, and psychological concentration, allowing ideas to develop by using an embodiment of Commedia, miming,¹² and clowning,¹³ allowing the actors to create paintings, sculptures, stories, and music, which remains in a fixed or partly fixed form by the time a devised piece is presented (Oddey, 1996:125).

⁸ The French pantomime, in which actors would depict specific characters with predetermined features, is where the Italian theatrical tradition, which dates back to the 16th century, started. The actors' acrobatic motions and funny, violent confrontations made up most of the spontaneous performances, which were usually comedic. Each player's mask represented a distinct character that everyone in the audience would be familiar with. Commedia dell'Arte improved the social climate by reinforcing social norms, bringing city residents together across class and religious lines, and emphasizing the value of the street.

⁹ A theatrical performance that originated in the 1960s to call attention to a particular topic among members of a specific group.

¹⁰ Commedia dell'arte was a highly improvised dramatic form. As a result, improvisational theatre was influenced by commedia dell'arte during the 1800s. The audience is encouraged to participate in this theatrical experience by suggesting ideas and scenarios for the actor to portray.

¹¹ Physical body movement-based arts, such as dance, drama, miming, slap-stick, or clowning, are incorporated within the physical theatre. In the late 1800s, Hozden Swidecoft created physical theatre by expressing himself via movement.

¹² An ancient Greek and Roman theatrical style of indicating action, character, or mood solely by gesture, expression, and movement.

¹³ A theatrical technique for acting funnily or playfully.

The approaches to acting, which will form the basis of the theoretical conceptualisation of this study, is that of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), Sanford Meisner (1905-1997), and Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971) with classical acting, David Mamet (1947) and William H. Macy (1950) with practical aesthetics, Lee Strasberg (1901-1982) with method acting and Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) Brechtian method (1964).

'Classical acting' (1800s-1900s) is a principle combining body language, voice, personalization, improvisation, outside influences, and script analysis. It was discovered that Konstantin Stanislavski and Michel Saint-Denis were involved in the opinions and techniques of chosen classical performers and directors.

Stanislavski's system (1933) is a structured perspective in training actors developed during the first half of the 20th century. His system generates the actor's conscious thought through a psychological process that forces the actor to return to emotional experience and subconscious actions empathetically and incidentally. During rehearsal, the actor explores the inner reasons for establishing actions and the explanation of what the character wants to obtain at the given time.

Stanislavski's acting technique has structured methods to train actors. The comprehensive study incorporates the dramatic examination of concentration, voice, practical skills, and memory of emotion, rhythm, and observation. With the help of their emotions and experiences, actors may relate to the character they are playing, thanks to Stanislavski's technique. To create a more genuine picture of the character, the actor is made to adopt the viewpoint of the role (Benedetti, 2004:1-4).

Stanislavski's disappointment with his earlier investigation of 'Memory of emotion'¹⁴ (1933) led him to evolve an approach that would set off emotions uniquely.

¹⁴ He observed innovative and skilled actors, trying to establish common ground among them after attempting to explain his recent lack of vitality on stage. As a result, he began to develop concepts that he believed were responsible for these outstanding accomplishments. Stanislavski coined this phrase during his initial teaching efforts at Moscow's First Studio (1911-1916). Emotional memory necessitates an actor reproducing a former occurrence to regenerate the 'feelings' experienced. These sensations are then employed in the current acting circumstance to give the role of human depth and personal commitment. Despite his system's apparent success, Stanislavski thought it was losing integrity and needed to be re-established, so Stanislavski made a fundamental revision to his system between 1934 and 1938.

The basis of his new approach forces emotions to be stimulated through simple bodily actions. During Stanislavski's investigation, he noticed an opportunity between the behaviours (physical and psychological) of the actor's on-stage vocal and physical performance and psychological construction in characterisation. This was why the actor had already found a physicality unfamiliar and lacking in theatrical form because of the actor's emotional process. Stanislavski believed that the actor's bodily and psychological activities were interconnected. He came to the idea that physical activities may be used to inspire emotions (Stanislavski, 2008:195).

Reconnecting the actor with his emotional impulses and performing that is primarily motivated by instinct is the core idea behind the Meisner technique. When acting, the actor must put all his or her attention on the other actor, acting as though that person is in the scene. The actor is trained in the Meisner technique to 'live truthfully under imaginary circumstances' to express genuine emotion and natural human reactions with the utmost degree of accuracy, and to establish personally significant points of view concerning the written words (Adair, 2005:1-9). The most crucial point of the Meisner technique is for the actor to "get out of their head" to the moment when the actor is acting naturally in day-to-day situations. The Meisner technique uses a few well-established repetition exercises to compare the words to the primary emotion, emphasising the other actor as opposed to one's inner feelings or beliefs relating to the character. Since Konstantin Stanislavski's early teachings influenced the Meisner technique and Lee Strasberg's method, acting is commonly misunderstood (Adair, 2005:1-9).

In contrast, Practical Aesthetics, developed in 1984 by William H. Macy and David Mamet, is a practical acting technique that draws inspiration from various sources, including the philosopher Epictetus, Sanford Meisner, and Stanislavski. While the Meisner technique emphasizes the actor's presence in the moment, Practical Aesthetics incorporates elements from both Meisner and Stanislavski, alongside Epictetus's philosophical principles, to create a distinct approach to acting. A few characteristics of the technique includes specific exercises for repetition, flexibility, and script analysis similar to those found in the Meisner technique. The method focuses on the actor's body and involves breaking down a scene into four parts: the 'as if', the literal, the purpose, and the emotional. Furthermore, Patsy Rodenburg¹⁵

¹⁵ Rodenburg, a multifaceted British professional in voice coaching, acting, writing, and directing, has made notable contributions to the industry. She has been affiliated with esteemed institutions like the Royal Court Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Royal National Theatre, where she held the position of Head of Voice

The core tenet of Lee Strasberg's method of acting (1931-1982) is that actors should draw on their own life experiences to emotionally and cognitively connect with their roles. It is based on the Stanislavski acting style and other Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner methods (McAllister, 2018:105-106).

In the Brechtian method (1964), Bertolt Brecht created a style known as 'epic drama', where he focuses on the depth of indifferences rather than the emotional participation of an audience. The audience is tricked into thinking the activity on stage is real' under Stanislavski's system, which is in some ways in opposition to this (Martin and Bial, 2000:35). Brecht instructed his actors to create a sense of detachment from the characters they depicted. They were advised to disregard their personal emotions and inner thoughts and instead concentrate on adopting stylised external mannerisms such as gestures, intonation, facial expressions, and interactions with other characters. These artistic choices aimed to communicate the overall attitudes of one character towards another and serve as indications of their social relationships (Martin and Bial, 2000:35).

The selected productions that will be used in these case studies are *In the Dark* (2019), *Around* (2019), and *The Hate Crime Project* (2017). The reason for these choices is primarily due to their digital availability. The selected theatre productions will be discussed in the following process to analyse the applied acting methods to construct a reasonably mapped process that suits the best-devised theatre. The research will show that devised theatre combines different acting techniques. The research proposes to evaluate the hypothesis either in favour or opposed to this statement by doing three analytical case studies. This study attempts to discover which acting style/styles work best for or are most applicable to the devised theatre.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aims to identify and classify different approaches to acting in selected devised theatre productions. The fundamental starting point for this study is to determine the autogenous characteristics of each method of acting and to discover which acting style/style is most applicable to the devised theatre. Therefore, the primary research questions that will be looked into are:

- What are the prominent contemporary methods of acting for theatre makers?
- What are the processes involved in producing a devised theatre piece?

- How can specific acting approaches be identified in selected devised theatre productions?
- To what extent are specific acting approaches more useful/appropriate when developing a devised theatre production?

The study believes that devised theatre uses a combination of different acting approaches. By conducting three analytical case studies, the study proposes to evaluate the hypothesis to arrive at a conclusion either in favour or opposed to this statement.¹⁶

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Section A, chapter 1 contains an introduction to provide the reader a general idea of what the report covers, the backdrop to the study, the research problem, including the research questions, overarching goal and additional aims described, and the research design and methodologies that were employed were briefly discussed.

Section B, chapter 2 presents a literature review of devised theatre compared to conventional theatre. To explore any potential conflicts and tensions between conventional and devised theatre, this chapter will give a historical and theoretical backdrop for the examination of the collaborative process of twentieth-century devised theatre. Also in this chapter, the study will discuss the notion of the 'auteur' director and how, as new theatrical forms emerged in the twentieth century, the director began to be seen more as a creator of art than a text interpreter. The study will compare this to the notion that the actor's creative contribution was introduced along with the growth of actor training in the 20th century to draw attention to potential conflicts and inconsistencies between traditional and devised theatre. The evolution of the devising process should be seen as a method that acknowledges its connection to the text-based theatre rather than completely disconnecting from it. The director's intentions and the chosen form can be understood and achieved by closely examining the development of devising techniques and the roles played by actors within this structure, with the discussion of collaboration regarding the production process.

¹⁶ A link to the video recordings will be provided

Chapter 3 will consist of a literature study of different acting styles. The approaches to acting, which will form the basis of the theoretical conceptualisation of this study, those of Stanislavski, Meisner, that of classical acting, practical aesthetics, those of Strasberg and Brecht.

Section C will examine visual footage from the performances to determine how devised theatre and various performing trajectories are used throughout the final performances and the rehearsal phase. Three analytical case studies are presented to analyse the applied acting methods to construct a reasonably mapped process that suits devised theatre best within the selected case studies.

Chapter 4: The first case study is *In the Dark*. This devised theatre production was created by the cast working in collaboration with Chris Vorster as the director. *In the Dark* is a devised theatre production that explores and uses methods used in devising, such as a single theme, plot, and character. The narrative of this production follows anthropology students who visit caves as part of a field trip. The characters venture deep into a mysterious region haunted by the spirits of ancient cannibals. In search of specific rock paintings painted in human blood, they get lost, separated, and hunted.

Chapter 5: The second case study focusses on an adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde* (1897), entitled *Around*, directed by DeBeer Cloete and Dion van Niekerk. *La Ronde* is a play about sexual morality and the class ideology of its day through successive experiences between pairs of characters. *Around* can be seen as a devising piece even through adaptation as it developed from existing written material which still means that the play was workshopped, writing and forming ideas collectively. The pre-existing text leads to fascinating discussions and thoughts about issues that remain relevant today. From that perspective, the characters are modernised and put in a different environment. The narrative reflects the society of contemporary South Africa. Relatable characters take the stage, as it is revealed that they are part of a never-ending cycle of sex, addiction, and power.

Chapter 6: The last case study focusses on *The Hate Crime Project*, inspired by *The Laramie Project* written in 2000 by Moisés Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theater Company. The objective of *The Laramie Project* was to encourage discussion and opportunity for audiences to hear many different opinions from those most related regarding the murder of

Matthew Shepard. This devised theatre performance was developed by a group of third-year drama students from the University of the Free State under the direction of DeBeer Cloete and Dion van Niekerk, using current events and historical records. The story examines hate crimes in South Africa through the fictional instance of a corrective rape that took place in Heilbron, a small Free State town.

Section D, chapter 7 will provide a reflection and conclusion on the outcome obtained from the chapters, as mentioned earlier. The study contributes to the academic discussions concerning devised theatre and approaches to acting methods. The study also constructs an analytical framework for case study analysis, which could be employed by future studies which embark on similar research or practitioners who aim to produce devised theatre productions within a contemporary, postmodern context.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed study will take the form of a desktop/literature study. As such, human participation and ethical considerations have been minimised. Additionally:

- The researcher will plan, carry out, and present research by accepted norms of scientific competency and ethical research.
- The researcher will design the study to minimise the chance that the findings might need to be corrected.
- Only assignments for which the researcher has received the necessary training and preparation will be carried out.
- The researcher will obtain permission from the host institution (University of the Free State) and the General / Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) before conducting formal research, and will provide accurate information about the research before formally commencing with the proposed study.
- The researcher's study will not contain any fabricated data or fabricated findings. If the researcher finds substantial flaws in the data, it will be corrected by using the right tools.
- The researcher will not pass off significant pieces, components, or data from another work as her own.
- The researcher only accepts responsibility and credit for work that was conducted or to which she has contributed, including authorship credit.

- Principal authorship and additional publications will be attributed to appropriately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individual(s) concerned.
- If data has been published before, the researcher will not publish it or claim it as original. This does not prevent data from being published again as long as due credit is given.

1.7 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher offers insight into scholarly debates on devised theatre and approaches to acting techniques. The researcher also creates an analytical framework through the analysis of the case study and a literature review that might be used by future researchers conducting related research or practitioners attempting to create improvised theatre plays in a modern setting.

SECTION B: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2: DEvised THEATRE (COMPARED TO CONVENTIONAL THEATRE)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to deepen and refine the study's analytical focus by comparing and exploring the historical growth and connection between devised and conventional theatre. From a postmodern theatre perspective, the tendency when creating theatre on stage is often more towards devised theatre than a conventional theatre product. Postmodernism is a movement that allows questioning of established norms and, if necessary, be deconstructed and then suitably reconstructed, thus contributing to diversity by influence and relevance of cultural norms and values (Samuels, 2008:220).

This literature review will primarily focus on tracing the historical development of different contexts and objectives, particularly emphasising the history of devised theatre. This part of the study demonstrates how Aristotle (335 BC), Horace (19 BC), and Freytag (1863), three literary luminaries from different eras, have understood writing or poetry as a way of 'representation' in terms of necessities, style, and moral expansion. De Mendonca asserts that comprehending theatre structures as a series of fictional occurrences (plot) has been critical to acting theory. These structures allow actors to understand what is expected in performance regarding events. He also states that with the mentioned structures, playwriting theory has focused on identifying the fundamental characteristics of dramatic writing (De Mendonca, 2012:2). Early treatises on playwriting, such as Aristotle's "Poetics," established that the core element of theatre is the plot, emphasizing its significance in crafting fictional sequences of events. These foundational principles in playwriting also directly influence the realm of acting theory. Events, the heroes' moral character, the concept of enactment, or the rhetorical and poetic qualities of the text were other elements that became important. Later treatises preserved these categories but gave each one a different level of emphasis. The statement asserts that a core principle in acting theory is that theatre is about crafting and presenting a series of fictional events or a plot. This understanding is central to how actors approach their roles, interpret characters, and bring the story to life on stage or screen. It highlights theatre's artificial and creative nature, where actors and creators are responsible for bringing imaginary occurrences to life for the audience's engagement and enjoyment.

Rehearsal procedures that meticulously determine the sequence of characters' actions in a play due to psychological motivations are critical to modern theories and practices based on Stanislavski's concepts (De Mendonca, 2012:2).

Saltz concurs with De Mendonca with the idea of psychological motivations and the interplay between craftsmanship and emotion in theatre, stating that the possibility of writing either as craftsmanship or as an upheaval of sentiments is still a strategy for both enchanting and training and that this is not just what they have confirmed but also what they have polished as the main rule for their abstract creation, as traditional theatre is centrally concerned with the reproduction and interpretation of written texts. Devised theatre (also known as collaborative theatre) is a method of creating theatre in which the text or performance, if mainly physical activity, evolves from collaborative and often improvisatory work by a performing group (Saltz, 2001:299).

2.2 ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

The *Poetics* by Aristotle was composed and is one of the most significant works in the Western theatre¹⁷ tradition (335 BC). *Poetics* is the first Western work of dramatic theory to survive. In this work, Aristotle examines tragedy. *Oedipus Rex* is an example of one of Aristotle's tragedies (about 429 BC) that has persisted as the supreme dramatic work. Wray states that Aristotle's classic work on theatre explored some acting-related topics, and formal methodological books on the subject only started to appear in the late nineteenth century. Some theorists experiment with different acting strategies. *Poetics* studies the connections between character, action, and speech; provides examples of strong storylines, and analyses the responses the plays elicit from the audience (Wray, 2013:1). All of his laws are frequently connected to 'the Aristotelian drama'. Aristotle's work, *Poetics*, delves into numerous fundamental dramatic ideas, including anagnorisis and catharsis. Over the past century, Aristotle's examination has been instrumental in shaping countless writing guides for mediums like stage, screen, film, and television, establishing itself as a cornerstone in the field (Emenike and Friday, 2013).

¹⁷ The first time theatre completely separated itself from religious ritual to become an art form was in Greece in the sixth century BC, as the dithyramb was formed. Western theatre has roots in pre-classical antiquity and has existed up to the present

Though Aristotle's *Poetics* is an ancient treatise on theatre in which some elements germane to acting are discussed, formal methodological writings on the theory of acting began to appear in the late nineteenth century. Some theorists attempt various techniques as actors themselves and then report the results; others attempt to watch other performers and analyse the success and problems they see.

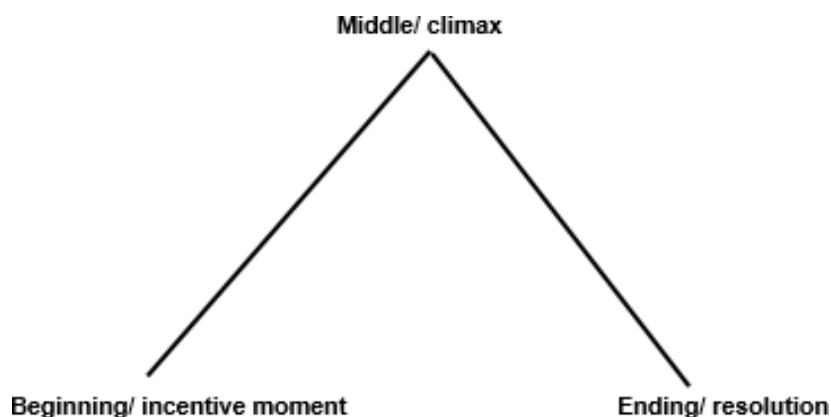
There is also variation in the style of techniques these theorists find helpful. Some, typically Russian and Western theorists, focus on psychological techniques supported by secondary physical training. In contrast, Eastern theorists tend to focus on physical techniques that, in turn, influence the psyche. The Greek philosopher Aristotle writes the earliest critical paper, *Poetics*, dealing with dramatic practice and theory. Between 384-322 BC, Aristotle reacted against Plato's theory, constructing his theory, *Poetics*. Plato argues that poetry represents essential appearances and is misleading and morally suspect; from the point of view of Aristotle, the world of appearances is not a transitory replica of changeless concepts. Therefore, Aristotle's approach to the occurrence of poetry is quite different from Plato's, as he is more interested in the scholarly test of shaping classes and orchestrating them into legitimate frameworks. As indicated by Butcher¹⁸ (1907:79), Aristotle accepted the fact that the substance of things lies not in the magical universe of thoughts but in actual things. As a result, Aristotle takes a philosophical approach to literature by examining poetry's inherent nature and structural elements rather than its historical origins. In Aristotle's view, his theory does not involve falsehood; instead, he posits that things possess nature and an essential principle of wholeness that transforms, transitioning from potentiality to actuality. According to Aristotle, this transition is a creative force that follows a purposeful direction.

As stated by Caldwell (2017:17), the Aristotelian rules included the concept of narrative. The beginning represents the initial motivating factor, and anything outside the boundaries of the game's context is irrelevant. The middle, often known as the climax, must be caused by previous events and must lead to subsequent events. The conclusion, or resolution, should be brought about by the preceding events but should only prompt other actions within the scope of the play. The reasons overshadow the consequences, and the conclusion should address or resolve the problem introduced during the motivating moment.

¹⁸ More current sources primarily rely on this source to demonstrate the study's applicability. Butcher gives Aristotle's *Poetics* a historical backdrop.

The cause-and-effect chain that runs from the point of inducement to the climax is referred to by Aristotle as complexity. He, therefore, styles the more instant cause-and-effect chain starting at the climax and ending at the resolution (Caldwell, 2017:17).

Aristotle's dramatic structure:



Bellinger¹⁹ states that within his three-part dramatic plot structure theory is the unity of time, place, and action. Aristotle offers the unity of time as the setting and duration of the play, unity of place indicating the general locality, and unity of action as a single set of events related as cause and effect, with the nature of Greek and all dramas. By this, Aristotle implies the occasions are primarily independent, bound together by internal need, each action driving unavoidably to the following with no external intervention (Bellinger, 1927:61).

Aristotle asserts that in episodic narratives, where the episodes or acts follow one another without an anticipated sequence, the only commonality among the occurrences is that they all involve the same character. He also states that writers should exclude similar events from their plots. If required, it should have a fated connection to the play's events (Bellinger, 1927:62).

Based on Bellinger, this aspect contributes significantly to a play's overall significance and impact. The more effectively a playwright can evoke and engage the audience's emotions, the higher the quality of the play. The plot itself can be either simple or complex.

¹⁹ More current sources cite the primary source to demonstrate the study's applicability. Bellinger lays the theoretical groundwork for Aristotle.

Complex plots involve crucial turning points and dramatic changes in intention and recognition, leading to a catastrophic outcome. These elements create surprising shifts in both the protagonist and antagonist. Aristotle describes a turning point as a moment when a character produces an effect contrary to their initial intention. At the same time, a change occurs when a character transitions from ignorance to knowledge, resulting in feelings of love or hate among the characters and leading to positive or negative outcomes. Aristotle argues that the best plots incorporate turning points and changes as essential elements within their cause-and-effect structure, culminating in a catastrophic event, which is the last occurrence in the play (Bellinger, 1927:63).

Although the development of verse was founded on the instinct of impersonation that is natural to man, the original poetical works were unrestricted improvisations, according to Butcher (1907:99). The basic organizational structure of poetry is centered on the formal and material foundations of literature. Aristotle outlines how the several poetical genres evolved toward the ultimate point in the laws of poetry and tragedy. As indicated by Butcher (1907:99) Aristotle justified the genesis of the various genres: poetry rapidly divided into two forms, namely epic and tragedy. Epic poetry and tragedy possess distinct differences in terms of structure. In epic poetry, the beginning and end of the poem must align metrically within a single viewpoint. This structure is fulfilled by poems of a smaller scale than ancient epics, and their length corresponds to a tragedy performed in one sitting. However, what sets epic poetry apart is its remarkable capacity to expand its dimensions. Unlike tragedy, which is limited to depicting actions and characters on stage, epic poetry's narrative framework allows for describing simultaneous events. If these events are relevant to the theme, they add significance and dignity to the poem. By shifting focus and incorporating alternative plotlines, the epic poem gains an advantage and enhances its effect. The repetition of similar experiences quickly satisfies the audience, an aspect where tragedies often fall short on stage (Butcher, 1907:99).

Dergis has a different opinion as he argues that Aristotle sees comedy and tragedy as beautiful sorts since they are 'more noteworthy and fairer in their structures' (Dergis, 2006:213). The tragedy is depicted as a portrayal of enthusiastic viewpoints to finish the activity which has size, in decorated discourse, with every one of its components utilized independently in the different pieces of the play, addressed by the artists and not by portrayal; this is cultivated through pity and fears the therapy of such feelings. Dergis states that the delight of what is addressed on stage derives from the audience's interaction with the sensations of sorrow and

dread with the tragic saint, as well as a sense of relief that such hardship has not fallen on them (Dergis, 2006:213).

As mentioned in Aristotle's *Poetics*, tragic events must necessarily follow one another, and the structure must have a beginning and a conclusion, with a primary dilemma that the protagonist must confront in between. Butcher argues that within the dramatic structure, two aspects can be found, namely complexity and disarray. As the knot is revealed during intricacy, the protagonist encounters difficulty, yet, the knot is undone during unravelling. Here, two scene types stand out: the reversal, which places the action at a fresh turning point, and the recognition, which denotes the protagonist's significant epiphany. Reversals should happen of the essence and expected cause of what happened before, which suggests turning points must be set up effectively. Problems should arise from a weakness in the protagonist. In the tragedy, this weakness will be his downfall (Butcher, 1907:95).

Both epic poems offer the outcome even without action; simply reading them reveals their power. Suppose it is unrivalled in any other regard, the insufficiency is neither inherent nor superior to it, for it contains all the epic characteristics. It may even use the epic meter, with the startling results providing the most realistic joys. (Butcher, 1907:96). Numerous forms and divisions of tragic and epic poetry can be distinguished with distinct causes that make a poem positive or negative: critics' complaints and reactions to these objections. Aristotle's treatise was inspired by the Greek poets whose works he was familiar with, but his general ideas and conclusions apply primarily to theatre. Aristotle created a basis for today's theatre knowledge as his theory narrows down action to moral action, to the exclusion of the production, and the plot serves as the foundation (Butcher, 1907:96).

As explained by Wise, Aristotle's narrative structure and literature are essential for the actor as it is seen as the groundwork. He gives the following example: The actor Polus' performance in the Sophocles play, *Electra* (in Athens during the fourth century BC) is considered the most famous example of purported acting in ancient Greece. As part of the plot, Electra must carry an urn that is supposed to hold Orestes' ashes and lament and mourn the destiny she imagined had befallen him. As a result, Polus donned Electra's mourning attire and removed his son's (recently deceased) urn and ashes from the tomb. Aristotle then embraced them as if they were Orestes and expressed genuine sorrow and unfeigned wailing rather than just the look of despair. This was not just acting but a true expression of pain (Wise, 2013:117).

Wise Rival acting traditions can be traced back to antiquity, with one emphasising the actor's voice, speech, and gestures and the other focusing on the actor's accurate emotional processes. As indicated by Aristotle, acting is 'the proper manipulation of the voice to express the various emotions', and it is generally acknowledged that the voice is the actor's best medium. Aristotle continued: 'Dramatic talent is an inherent gift and can scarcely be taught.' Wise states that proper diction fundamentals can be taught this way. Aristotle acknowledged that, unlike acting, diction can be taught, avoiding the standard error of believing that acting is solely good diction. He knew there was more to acting than diction, but he had no idea how. Based on Aristotle, outstanding acting comes from a tremendous natural speed of parts or a zeal coupled with insanity. With one of these, we easily shape ourselves to mimic any form; with the other, we are transported outside ourselves and become what we envisage (Wise, 2013:122).

2.3 HORACE'S 'ARS POETICA'

In 19BC, the Roman theorist Horace invented the art of poetry known as 'Ars Poetica'. He took a massive detour in the evolution of theatre by promoting a system of norms that had an oppressive influence on playwriting for about 2 000 years, becoming the most prominent exponent of classicism. According to Tracy²² (1948:104), rather than the theoretical method of his precursor, Aristotle, Horace approaches poetry from an advantageous position as a skill. 'Ars Poetica'²³ is undoubtedly not a methodical composition of theory: it is a graceful letter kept in touch with his companion Piso and his two children as a recommendation on a beautiful structure. It is an intriguing and exuberant excellent letter written in hexameter vers in a loose conventional manner

By offering a lyrical figure that speaks to many human concerns, Horace has encouraged readers to feel they are a part of the poet's circle, a friend they confides in. Horace composed 476 lines in a flexible conversational format. This term is viewed as a central part of 'Ars Poetica' as it meant to accomplish verisimilitude in creative portrayal, directing everything from the decision of type to style, sensational portrayal, meter, graceful innovation, and the planned impact (Tracy, 1948:105).

²² More researchers have examined this source, and based on their analyses and research, they have come to the same conclusions.

²³ Horace referred to it as 'Epistle to the Pisos', while Quintilian gave it the title 'Ars Poetica'.

Le Touze explains verisimilitude as the appearance of truth. When settings, conversation, and characters are depicted in a work of fiction, even though they are fictional, it is said to have verisimilitude. One of the primary functions of literature are to express a fundamental truth about human existence through the 'deception' of a made-up story. The audience must be prepared to believe the story they are hearing to immerse themselves in it fully. Verisimilitude is also one of the essential literary devices of fiction writing; Horace made use of this by writing both creative and critical pieces through the use of composed satires, epodes, odes, epistles, and his 'Ars Poetica' (Le Touze, 2017:11).

From the point of view of Frischer (1991:51-54), 'Ars Poetica' is not an efficient composition on analysis; the poems can be separated into three sections: the *poem* (topic), *poema* (structure), and *poeta* (the artist). Its principal subjects of conversation are verse, idyllic style, and dramatization. Horace had no place to consider verse a course of impersonation like Aristotle. Horace contended that more than simple impersonation is needed for an artist frequently utilise fiction and blend realities with extravagant. To him, the function of verse was both to charm and train: 'Artists want either to improve, to please, or to join the pleasing and the beneficial and that it is not sufficient for sonnets to have magnificence; they should likewise be satisfying and lead the audience's spirit whither they will.' (Frischer, 1991:51-54)

The theme of poetry should be straightforward from recognisable material and uniform, brimming with completeness. Frischer states that Horace chooses his subject admirably to see that neither words nor a clear game plan will bomb, for instinct is the premise and wellspring of suitable composition. Horace will consistently be associated with his hypothesis of great lingual authority. Excellent lingual authority, he says, can never be inside and out set up and fixed undertaking. Language in verse can communicate, yet man's insight, which verse exists to communicate, constantly changes since it consistently adds to itself. With the development of involvement, the language of the verse should keep pace in case it is to be genuinely expressive (Frischer, 1991:90-92). Frischer gives the following example: 'The language resembles a tree, and its words resemble leaves. Old leaves fall as the years pass, fresh leaves emerge, yet the tree stays as before. Horace's perceptions of wonderful phrasing resemble those of Aristotle'. Following Aristotle, Horace stresses the best selection of words and their effective plan in the piece. A writer is allowed to utilise both natural and new words. New words persistently continue going to the artist like new passes to the tree. The writer should only depend partially on the jargon of his archetypes; he should also coin new words.

Horace wanted the essayist to notice the rigid structures and shades of style in verse. He brought up some of the deficiencies of style. (Frischer, 1991:93-97).

Tracy (1948:106) states that the lyrical technique is 'presenting ideas through action, feeling, illustration, allusion, and anecdote, employing descriptive images, symbols, and allegories'. She also suggests that a didactic approach differs from a lyrical technique in several ways. The didactic method employs abstract and objective definitions, theoretical analysis, logical progression of arguments, and a strict focus on relevant evidence. On the other hand, Horace's lyrical style is characterised by its impressionistic, evocative, and sensual qualities, appealing directly to the senses (Tracy, 1948:106). The didactic approach is analytical, systematic, and intellectual, relying on conceptual frameworks.

In contrast, a lyrical exposition surprises the reader with the sudden introduction of critical concepts supported by examples or imaginative details. It swiftly transitions between thoughts and employs connecting words to summarise or emphasise the argument. These transitions, often expressed through contrasts, polarity, and exaggerated aspects, shape the overall meaning of a paragraph and influence its imagery and the use of proverbs to highlight the argument or provide a summary. These techniques starkly contrast with the formal procedures of exposition, which involve careful preparation, a gradual presentation of arguments, explicit marking of transitions, and validation through formal review and condensation (Tracy, 1948:107).

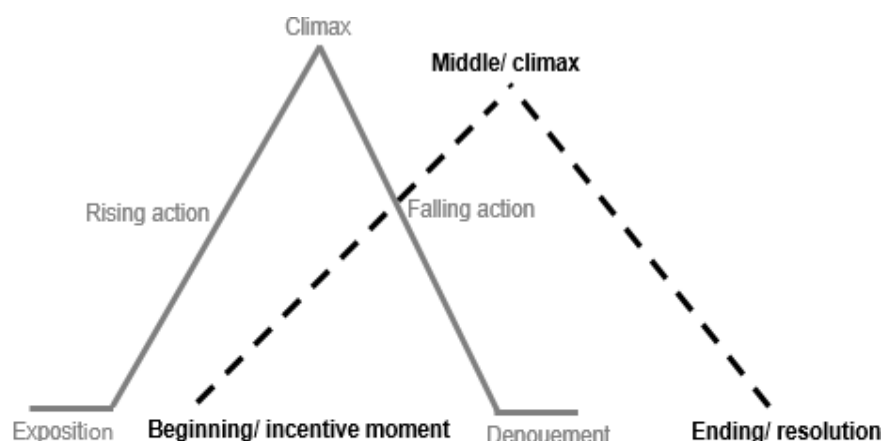
As explained by Faulkner (2007:218-234), Horace emphasizes the value of politeness in poetry and the need to combine the educational and the pleasing. He always compels poets to consider their audience and tells authors to either follow tradition or construct tales that make sense to them. In the 'Ars Poetica', Horace offers clear, actionable guidance on various topics, including translation, emotional affect, playwriting, soliciting critical commentary, and the conduct of a poet—Horace places particular emphasis on the importance of decorum in poetry. Horace influenced theatre makers to 'either follow tradition or make such myths as are congruous to themselves', he urges poets always to keep their audience in mind. Horace offers consistently helpful guidance in the 'Ars Poetica' on a variety of craft-related topics, including playwriting, emotional impact, translation, the perils of publication ('a word once sent abroad will never return'), soliciting critical criticism, and how to conduct oneself as a poet (Faulkner, 2007:218-234).

Faulkner states that this approach is essential for theatre makers as it is a systematic interpretation of poetry that reveals the significance of the fundamental components of drama; for example, the elements of character, source, genre, and language are interconnected with the notions of structure and storyline. The progression of dramatic theories throughout history can be observed, starting from a strict adherence to mythic narratives as outlined in classical treatises, then shifting towards a focus on the lyrical expression of individual characters' dilemmas in neoclassical theory, followed by an emphasis on portraying specific social types in the eighteenth century and culminating in the understanding of the plot as a reflection of characters' psychological experiences. The distinction between the two poets lies in their approaches to exposition rather than the technical or intellectual aspects of their thinking (Faulkner, 2007:218-234).

2.4 FREYTAG'S PYRAMID

In 1893, Gustav Freytag, a German novelist and playwright, acknowledged the dramatic elements as building blocks of a narrative structure. Freytag argues that these elements can be sketched as a pyramid diagram, hence the name *Freytag's pyramid*. His plot is divided into five sections: exposition, rising action, climax, decreasing action, and denouement.

Irvine (2014:54) agrees with Freytag and states that Freytag's pyramid offers a technique that allows studies/scholars to examine a narrative visually and to acknowledge the drama that occurs in the plot, like Aristotle's *Poetics*.



Dramatic structure by Aristotle

Dramatic structure by Freytag

Glatch and Mahoney also agree with Freytag, mentioning that exposition establishes the plot and introduces the setting, characters, and historical background. This event engages the audience to understand the meaning of where the storyline is going or what the main issue depicted in the story (Glatch and Mahoney, 2020:1). The plot will introduce connected situations about the root of the problem during this event. It will essentially lead to what he refers to as the 'rising action', an occurrence that develops tension within the critical events of the story because the entire plot relies on these events to bring up the climax and, eventually, the pleasant ending of the actual story. Consequently, prompting a struggle between characters is shown. An instigating event starts rapidly, building the rising action in one or a few phases toward the place of most significant interest. These events are, in general, the main pieces of the story as it determines the plot, climax, and ending (Glatch and Mahoney, 2020:1).

"Within this event, there is a state where the audience will anticipate the final suspense. Here, the main characters may have conflict with one another, their environment, or their character. This conflict is the most exciting part for the characters. The solution to the conflict is the turning point and usually the most emotional part of the story. The protagonist may take physical action or make a conscious choice that leads to the incident.

As stated by Glatch and Mahoney (2020:1), the climax defines the play, changing the hero's destiny. It involves events from the falling activity's finish to the account's genuine closure scene. (Glatch & Mahoney, 2020:1).

Card believes that, on the unwinding or loosening of the intricacies of a plot, Aristotle, Horace, and Freytag shared some common foci and statutes. Interestingly, while characterising this cycle, each has introduced new viewpoints into the traditional theatre. For each of them, the specialty of composing addresses man, nature, and fundamental factors of human existence. The portrayal of these significant issues are great whether they please readers or audience members by allowing them to see and experience other views while adding wisdom and information to their cognitive, emotional, and moral understanding. Therefore, their theories added to traditional theatre, whereas traditional theatre is another term used for conventional theatre (Card, 2010:2).

In conclusion, Freytag's pyramid is still relevant today and is widely used in teaching theatre,

film, and storytelling. It provides a helpful tool for artists, critics, and students to understand the basic building blocks of a dramatic work, and it can be adapted and expanded upon to accommodate the needs of different genres and forms of dramatic storytelling. Freytag's pyramid is an essential and enduring model of dramatic structure that continues to be valuable for artists, educators, and students who seek to understand the fundamental principles of storytelling and the elements of dramatic structure. Understanding Aristotle, Horace, and Freytag's views on acting theory provides knowledge and inspiration for actors, directors, and theatre-makers who practice conventional theatre.

2.5 CONVENTIONAL THEATRE

The *Poetics*' control over the fundamental notion of literature, performance, and various fields is at the heart of much work by Classicists.²⁴ It is beyond the scope of this argument. However, one of its consequences was the advancement of sensational structures, such

as Freytag's pyramid, which enhanced Aristotle's three-section structure for dramatisation with rising and decreasing examples of activity power. These narrative designs approach the story from an emotional and explanatory standpoint. The story is organised here by its impact on the audience. With its near-universal appeal, this dramatic approach to the story focuses on the plot: the undeniable level succession of the events crucial to an account. (Oddey, 1996:3-4).

Conventional, Western theatre stems from a written text. Typically, theatre plays follow a set number of acts and often adhere to Aristotle's notion of plot structure during the 4th century BC (335 BC), with actors reading dialogue during the rehearsals process on a thrust or proscenium stage. The genre and style of where the text originated are predetermined or suggested in the playwright's mind. Therefore, the director, as well as the actors, have a blueprint of what the play intends to look like and how it played out during the process of creation by the playwright. This reflects in various ways. This reflects in various ways like in notes on acting, writing, characters, costumes, locality, stage lighting, and stage directions (Oddey, 1996:6).

The state from which the content began in the psyche of the writer is as of now given. The director, just like the artists, has a sort of outline of what the play resembles and how it

²⁴ Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, were a few of these classicists. worked out during the dramatist's creation cycle.

Horace approaches verse from a reasonable point of view (as an art) as opposed to the hypothetical methodology of Aristotle. Around 19 BC, 'Ars Poetica' of Horace is viewed as a central part of the way of talking about education through his utilisation of parodies, epistles, and tributes as it tends to a broad scope of issues of specialty concerning the interpretation, enthusiastic effect, playwriting, and the type of writer (Hajdu, 2014:28).

In 1863, Freytag's strategy began, permitting specialists to inspect a story outwardly and to recognize the show that happens in the plot, like Aristotle's *Poetics*. His plot structure comprises five sections: work, rising activity, peak, falling activity, and result (Glatch & Mahoney, 2020:1).

2.6 COLLABORATIVE THEATRE (FREQUENTLY CALLED DEVISED THEATRE)

As indicated by Herman, Phelan, Rabinowitz, Richardson, and Warhol (2012:3), the mentioned theories' dramatic plot structures narrative may appear overly simplistic for the modern needs of many scholars, but it is precisely because of this simplicity that it has been valued for so long by those seeking a platform to start from. Anderson agrees when he states that the development of dramatic structures like Freytag's pyramid, which adds rising and falling patterns of action intensity to Aristotle's three-part structure for drama, is one of *Poetics's* many outcomes. However, the full extent of *Poetics's* influence on critical thought for literature, drama, and other fields is outside the proper scope of this dissertation (Anderson, 2015:8). According to Herman *et al.* these principles of the structure view the story from a dramatic, rhetorical standpoint. In this case, the story is organised based on how it will affect the reader. The plot, or the high-level sequence of the events essential to a narrative, emphasises this dramatic narrative approach, immediately appealing to a broad audience (Herman *et al.*, 2012:5).

Conventional theatre stems from a written text and is typically seen as theatrical performances with actors reciting dialogue on a thrust or proscenium stage with a set number of acts and typically follows Aristotle's notion of plot structure from the 4th century BC (335 BC). The genre from which the text originated in the playwright's mind is already given. So is the style of the performance predetermined or suggested by the genre style (Oddey, 1996:6). Oddey states that the director, as well as the actors, have a kind of layout of what the play

intended to look like and how it played out during the process of creation by the playwright. This reflects in various ways, such as the reflection in the dramatist's notes on acting, writing, characters, costumes, locality, stage lighting, and stage directions (Oddey, 1996:12). Hajdu means that in contrast to Aristotle, Horace views poetry from a practical point of view. Around 19 BC, 'Ars Poetica' of Horace is considered a core component of rhetoric literacy through his use of satires, epistles, and odes as it addresses a wide range of technical issues relating to playwriting, emotional effect, translation, and the poetic form (Hajdu, 2014:28).

Hancock argues that theatre is a collaborative creative form that conveys meaning through voice, movement, words, and visuals. The term 'devising' has been used for a very long time in the English language (Hancock, 2002:1). The phrase 'coordinated effort' is used more frequently than 'devising' in the United States (Heddon and Milling, 2006:2). Kjolner calls attention to another distinction; he clarifies 'coordinated effort' as an aggregate angle, while 'devising' features the innovative and imagining part of the interaction (Kjolner, 2009:208). Jackson has a different option when defining devised theatre; Jackson states that devised theatre is challenging to define due to its extreme diversity in terms of aesthetics, philosophy, and approach. The ways of coming up with ideas are numerous, only limited by one's creativity, and frequently different from project to project. Its form is flexible, diverse, fleeting, and frequently unrecorded (Jackson, 2006:5).

As explained by Saito (2015:1), devised theatre is challenging to characterise due to its extreme diversity in aesthetics, philosophy, and approach. The ways of coming up with ideas are numerous, only limited by one's creativity, and frequently different from project to project. Therefore, devising is closely linked to a historical context and can be identified as a term incorporating a wide range of practices, like performance art, political theatre, execution craftsmanship, and political theatre, to specify a couple. Heddon and Milling (2007:2) imply that the simplest way to understand composing is to see it as a collection of systems that emerged inside many dramatic and social fields, e.g., in local area expressions, execution artistry/live craftsmanship, or political theatre. Inside these fields, a scope of contriving measures developed comparable to explicit and ceaselessly changing social settings, personally associated with their snapshot of creation. Govan, Nicholson, and Normington (2007:7) additionally examine most devisers' systems and techniques to ensure they do not aim to create a comprehensive understanding of what devising is. They argue that design should be portrayed as assets of inventive procedures and cycles of experimentation. As indicated by Haagensen, this implies that devising neutralises having a perfect definition and

a solitary arrangement. Since formulating appears in various settings and is not viewed as one arrangement, technique, or structure, it is hard to give a definition or a portrayal that can incorporate every one of its practices and viewpoints (Haagensen, 2014:58).

However, many devised practices share some characteristics with devising (Haagensen, 2014:59). Any definition of devised theatre, according to Oddey, must also take into account the process of sharing an artistic journey through means and ways of collaboration, and multi-vision incorporating different convictions, educational encounters, and perspectives to changing global events, as well as the creation of an imaginative item (Oddey, 1996:160). Oddey states that the distinguishing characteristics of each group's process and final output involved making devised theatre a distinct genre worth considering. The significance of this theatre style is in its emphasis on a mixed interaction that calls for advancement, creativity, creative mind, risk, or more of each of them, a general group responsibility to the creating work (Oddey, 1996:160). When every professional company or group works independently with diversity, it is impossible to express any theory of how theatre is invented (Oddey, 1996:103). This is because of the character and eclecticism of the designing experience. Many organisations developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s to investigate various methods of producing theatrical performances (Oddey, 1996:2).

From the point of view of Oddey, when referred to as the dominant form, there are many different types of traditional theatre. Devised theatre is not always opposed to 'traditional' theatre. The direct relationship, message-based theatre, naturalism, and challenges with the widespread belief that another should carry one person's message, are all addressed in devised art. In devised theatre, the focus has switched from the author to the creative artist since it is more concerned with the overall construction of craftsmanship than the playwright's singular vision. Thus, a designed performance is frequently seen as a sub-genre of theatre

It is not created according to the recognized, accepted method of creating theatre for the playwright, director, and actors to perform (Oddey, 1996:4).

Devising was an option in contrast to earlier theatre creation methods with the director and dramatist establishments. Rather than progressive as starting point, they were conceiving offered cooperation of the creative interaction. 'Conceiving' as a community-oriented interaction offered new and revolutionary approaches to coordinating fine art in a politically appropriate and valuable manner. It acquired the manner of speaking utilised in political development: individual and aggregate rights, self-assurance, local area, cooperation, and equity (Heddon and Milling, 2006:12). As stated by Heddon and Milling the collaborative character of creating presented the possibility for numerous complicated representations and interpretations. As a result, the invention evolved into a model suitable for self-representation and a method of making visible what was previously hidden or unexplained. (Heddon Milling, 2006:17).

2.6.1 BEGINNING OF DEVISED THEATRE

The avant-garde is cited as the place where devised theatre first emerged. Parsons (2010) followed it back to the 1920s, while Heddon and Milling (2006) generally followed it to the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, it is suggested that the beginning of devising can be found in five diverse dramatic settings: inside the historical backdrop of theatre experts from the mid-1900; inside the practice of dramatisation instruction; from the setting of social execution; inside the avant-garde, and from the traditional theatre and well-known structures. As Parsons (2010:10) contends: 'any endeavour to build up a straight beginning of impact from prior dramatic developments is perilous' in that the extension is immense and the settings of the dramatic practice assume an important part in the emergence of new structures an important part in the emergence of new structures. Haagensen (2014:60) states that some chronicled highlights impact contriving rehearses today. This foundation likewise illuminates the arrangement regarding the inventive strategies for the situation concentrated in this examination.

According to Craig (1980:144), during the start of the 19th century, the significance of using and researching every aspect of the theatre was regarded as equally important. This viewpoint was a reaction to the text-based theatre and authenticity in fashion at the time. Craig argues that theatre should not solely rely on having a play to present; instead, it should eventually perform parts of its expertise. Craig emphasises the significance of researching all art forms, such as scenography, lighting, and puppetry. This technique expanded the quantity

and complexity of ideas and materials that make up the craftsmanship of the theatre (Craig, 1980:144).

Heddon and Milling state that contemporary devising can be unfathomably not quite the same as our archetypes; its essential elements were generated in the verifiable vanguard time frame during the 1920s, yet fundamentally formed in the neo-cutting edge time frame during the 1960s and the 1950s. To develop a stronger connection between art and life during this time, specialists started pushing the boundaries of conventional dramatic bounds and conducting numerous tests with execution-making techniques (Heddon and Milling, 2006:17).

2.6.2 THE PROCESSES INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING A DEVISED THEATRE PIECE

In devised theatre, the rehearsal process focuses on exploration and collaboration, where the director and actors work together to develop and shape the performance. As the investigations get more complex, the director must use compelling visuals and innovative ways to encourage the actors to push their boundaries and experiment with the material. This highlights the importance of a dynamic and flexible rehearsal procedure that can change as the performance's requirements and demands change (Milling and Heddon, 2015:17). Numerous studies (Syssoyeva and Proudfit, 2019; Oddey, 1996) show that a conceiving cycle ordinarily begins without a pre-composed text. As mentioned by Worthen, at the time, audience acceptance was used to gauge a play's production success rather than the scrupulousness of following the written script (Worthen, 1997:28). The main changes in the late 19th century concerning the methods and reception of theatre-making were expanding the publishing industry, the increasing marketing of plays to readers, and the subsequent professionalisation of the playwright. Devised theatre can begin from anything for example a group of people who establish an overarching plan to examine and explore various theatres about thoughts, images, ideas, subjects, or overt improvements that may include music, movement, text, articles, works of art, or development (Worthen, 1997:31).

Milling and Heddon (2015:18) have a different meaning; they state that the group creates atheatrical performance as they work on it rather than beginning with a pre-written text that must be interpreted. Oddey (1996:1) agrees with this statement as he confirms that a formulated theatre item is work that has arisen out of, and created by a gathering of individuals working in a joint effort. Conceiving is a method of creating theatre that enables a group of artists to be truly imaginative in sharing and creating a unique item that emanates from

gathering, modifying, and, once more, cooperating with people's varied experiences of the globe. Everyone who needs to find an accentuation in their work that supports intuition, promptness, and a gathering of thoughts has plenty of options. The incomplete experience of comprehension, culture, and environment are all topics covered in formulating. The method represents a series of sessions in which each group member's unique perspective of the world is captured in a series of images, which were later analysed and categorized. Members figure out themselves inside their social settings by examining, coordinating, and changing their encounters, dreams, exploration, creation, and experimentation. Devising is tied in with thinking, considering, and sharing thoughts, being inventive and unconstrained. It ties in with designing, adjusting, and making what one does collectively (Oddey, 1996:1).

Oddey also mentions that the devising process enables the artist to communicate concepts, ideas, and feelings using their voice, body, and imagination. The process comprises developing narratives and 'imagined worlds' conveyed via language, voice, dance, and other aural and visual components (Oddey, 1996:1). The creative process includes several steps, which are now and again iterative, rehashed, or repetitive. Regardless of whether stories are prearranged or made do, the inventive strategy in theatre starts with a creative mind; either independently or cooperatively, understudies seek after a thought through innovative investigation and request. The guidelines for theatre 'making' emphasize that theater artists make decisions as their thoughts are created. Regardless of whether for the advancement of content, plan, or character, understudies' insight into the inventive flow in theatre ought to incorporate an investigation of the 'how, when, and why' decisions get made (Oddey, 1996:1).

The inventive strategies ~~finish~~ with practices during which understudies rehearse and refine their thoughts just as they discover answers for plans and specialised issues. At the most punctual stages, theatre making includes progressing from reality to a fanciful somewhere else with 'directed help'. The unfurling of a directed show experience will occur continuously with breaks to assist youthful artists with contributing to the unfolding narrative and the interpersonal problems it raises.

As understudies gain experience, theatre making could involve writing plays, designing sets, costumes, and sound, participating in community cycles to create original theatre, or all of the above. Understudies conduct research, analyse data, make plans, compose, practice, change, and present their work as writers, artists, fashioners, and directors. Despite the level, the process of creating in theatre gives a vehicle to understudies to ponder significant parts of life

and, in the process, foster affectability to others' perspectives (Oddey, 1996:3).

The core process of creating theatre recognises that theatre work occurs in an intricate setting, including cultural, individual, and chronicled powers, all of which affect the other imaginative cycles of creating, performing, and reacting. The norms incorporate an expansive scope of associations that can be made, including creating accounts, individual experiences or beliefs, culture, other disciplines, and relevant research.

Elliott (2003:212) presents a distinct perspective on devised theatre, highlighting its departure from the traditional notion of form and content, which often involves power struggles, rivalries, or hierarchical parallels. Instead, devised theatre considers both the explicit and underlying elements of the adapted text. Furthermore, Eliot suggests that each art form shares grammatical, conceptual, and sensory positions within the rhetoric of the other. This broadens the staging concept by allowing for metaphorical theatrical expressions of concepts drawn from various media, including text. These theatrical metaphors can be conveyed through spoken language and physical movements without the literal replication of the original 'text'. Whether led by a director or a collaborative ensemble, the process necessitates developing a shared stage vocabulary, serving as a means of 'translation' (Elliott, 2003:212).

Oddey (1996:30) states that the primary process of interfacing in theatre perceives that theatre work occurs in an intricate setting, including cultural, individual, and chronicled powers, which affect the other imaginative cycles of making, performing, and reacting. The guidelines incorporate an expansive scope of associations that can be made, including creation narratives, individual experience, culture, different disciplines, and significant exploration. At younger ages, understudies distinguish likenesses between stories, characters, and feelings in a show to individual experience. Oddey also states that at more complex levels, understudies associate 'show' with culture and local area, join points of view in theatre work and explore what social viewpoints and individual convictions mean for how a theatre work is seen. Exploration is one more part of the centre cycle interfacing. Contingent upon grade levels, understudies may explore elective ways to deal with similar stories to advise inventive decisions or study a period where a show happens. At its centre, the associating guidelines guarantee that understudies investigate, perceive, and consolidate the many impacts that sway theatre work (Oddey, 1996:30-41). Elliott (2003:214) agrees with Oddey as they both assert the specific notion of where devising starts, through an unlimited

number of options, such as a thought, picture, idea, object, sonnet, piece of music, or artwork. Elliott provides the following illustration: In traditional theatre, everyone is aware that the play is, say, Hamlet by Shakespeare. The duration, setting, character count, stage directions, and narrative of a play are all established by the text itself. In contrast, devised theatre offers a spectrum of possibilities. At one end of the spectrum, there may be a relatively straightforward and accessible document, while at the other end, there could be a detailed diagram outlining the envisioned production (Elliott, 2003:214).

Decisions regarding the starting point and approach are crucial for devised theatre which stands in contrast to text-based theatre, where the script, no matter how abstract the subject matter, specifies and defines the parameters of the performance (Oddey, 1996:7). In chapter 2, the researcher explores the process of determining the initial steps and stimuli for creating theatre within a group. The researcher discusses various factors, such as form, content, and audience, and how they collectively influence the path to devising a theatrical production.

In contrast, traditional theatre selects artists based on specific jobs or roles rather than considering political, educational, or aesthetic convictions. However, in devised theatre, personal and collective politics play an implicit role, reflecting in creating a company statement or policy. Oddey suggests that participants and their life experiences contribute to both the creative process and the final product. A group statement or policy outlines a unique style, language, shared ideals, or a commitment to a theatrical outcome. Within a devised theatre group, there is flexibility for members to integrate and interchange ideas or roles within a project (Oddey, 1996:8). According to him this form of theatre provides broader opportunities and possibilities for all group members. Devised theatre encourages and facilitates new working relationships between the roles of writer, director, designer, technician, musician, and performer (Oddey, 1996:9). Text-based theatre typically operates within precise job specifications and defined roles, whereas in devised theatre roles, and responsibilities are not necessarily restricted or rigidly defined. Conventional theatre often compartmentalises tasks, assigning specific roles like acting or stage lighting to individuals. In contrast, devised theatre requires a group of versatile individuals with multiple talents. In conventional theatre, an actor's responsibility is limited to playing a specific character, following the playwright's original vision, the director's interpretation, and ultimately delivering the final portrayal. However, in a devised theatrical group, members may engage in administrative tasks or contribute to research and development with the audience (Oddey, 1996:10).

According to Heddon and Milling (2006:27), there are three strands regarding how devising was created: performances dependent on the visual expressions; performances about the actor, the political and local area-based strand; and making among craftsmanship and life the ordinary a tasteful encounter, a refracted picture of life. Using chance strategies freed 'affectability towards reality, prompting a consciousness of the unforeseen or "the incidental" '(Heddon and Milling, 2006:64). Chance strategies, like roulette, are still up in the air. The number of individuals was essential for the compositional action (Kaprow, 1965:177).

Kaprow²⁵ indicates that the goal was to erase old qualities and reveal new interactions to liberate humans from conventional and ongoing reasoning. In this way, the use of chance was a protest middle-class society based on reason and logic. Chance methods offered new important associations with 'theatre happening' by developing irregularity and 'mishaps' rather than customary explanatory structures which are presently not compared to the more significant advances in the public arena (Kaprow, 1965:177).

The position of the director in the creative process, as well as his or her connections with the actors and stage staff, diverge from typical Western theatre frameworks (Milling and Heddon, 2006; Oddey, 1996). Directors in creating theatre serve as the beginning study and collaborators for production, whereas directors in traditional theatre make the ultimate decisions (Oddey, 1996). In contrast to traditional directing, designing switches from interpretation to conceptualisation (Baldwin, 2009:1). However, the director remains ultimately accountable to ensure that the play is logical and enjoyable.

2.6.3 THE ACTOR'S EXPERIENCE IN A DEVISED THEATRE PIECE

Actors frequently take a more active part in the conception and development of a created theatrical production. They participate in improvisational sessions, offer suggestions, and help shape the outcome. The process can be dynamic and collaborative, creating a unique performance experience. During dress rehearsals and performances, actors may also need to adjust to alterations and variances in the script.

²⁵ Kaprow emphasises the historical foundations for devised theatre.

Jackson (2006:7) reveals that a hierarchical structure of director, playwright, written text, producer, designers, and actors exists in the established theatre. According to him, each creative team member has a role to play. The actor is not the designer, director, writer, or anything else. Each ensemble or cast member only attends rehearsal when they are required to do so. In other words, the designer may come to the read-through to present their sketches, then return for the build and tech.

Grotowski²⁶ agrees with this statement as he declares that though there is some collaboration inherent in the system, each continuant's contributions to the whole are defined by their artistic responsibilities in the speciality. Some fledgling companies in the 1950s believed that Stanislavskian procedures were too character-centred. Therefore, they turned to other types of actor training. Another point of view is that of a theatrical creator who sees the text as a kind of knife that allows us to open ourselves, transcend ourselves, find what is buried within ourselves, and create the act of confronting others (Grotowski, 1968:57).

To liberate and engage artists from the constraints imposed by directors, there has been a growing emphasis on nurturing the imaginative artist (Govan *et al.* 2007:29-40). Artists are recognised as autonomous creators instead of being seen as mere tools to fulfil a director's vision. This shift has increased interest in spontaneous invention, hobbies, and games. Viola Spolin, influenced by Nina Boyd's work, transformed theatre exercises into interactive games during the late 1950s. The purpose was to stimulate individual imagination and self-expression through improvisation on stage (Spolin, 1999:4). Spolin emphasises the importance of immediacy as a means of recreating and forging new experiences. Immediacy allows individuals to explore reality, breaking free from its constraints and enabling personal growth. It liberates us from the burden of references, old memories, and others' theories, fostering adaptability in the face of reality. Immediacy presents an opportunity for self-discovery, encounters with others, and imaginative expression (Spolin, 1999:4).

Spolin further asserts that theatre is a social practice open to everyone: 'Anyone can act, make do, and learn to be "stage-worthy" in the theatre'. (Spolin, 1999:3). Her book, *Improvisation for the Theatre* (1999), vividly portrays the aspirations of the innovative artist during that era.

²⁶ This particular source is utilised to learn more about the subject and provide historical context to support and inform the present study.

Its impact resonated with others, leading to the formation of theatre companies in the 1960s and 1970s. Heddon and Milling (2006:34) describe Spolin's work as 'one of the most influential postwar instructional texts for theatre training'.

Actors have long recognised the importance of fun and games in human development throughout life, and this belief has influenced numerous works. Heddon and Milling argue that the philosophy underlying improvisation and games contributed to the rise of devising in two significant ways. Firstly, improvisation assumed that artists possessed an inner creativity that had been suppressed, conditioned, and hidden. Secondly, it allowed artists to break free from the script's limitations and express their creativity through spontaneous creation (Heddon and Milling, 2006:30).

As explained by Auslander (1997:30), the exploration of the creative self, became a central focus for many devisers and theatre practitioners in the 20th century, and improvisation and games served as tools to facilitate the expression of the artist's creativity. He also notes that influential acting theorists such as Stanislavski, Brecht, and Grotowski all emphasised the self as an independent entity in acting, each in their unique ways (Auslander, 1997:30).

Auslander notes that there has been a shift from psychological character-based work, where actors receive instructions from directors and follow the text, to the emergence of the inventive 'complete' actor. These creative actors are characterised by their desire for self-improvement, freedom, and control in the creative process. The actor's self and body become primary sources for creation, and they seek to establish new connections between themselves and the audience (Auslander, 1997:4). Lehman describes this new approach as prioritising presence to representation, where the actor's personal experiences become the main inspiration for creating theatre in a fresh form. Lehman (2006:109) reveals that there has been a shift in performance and theatre practices towards prioritising presence over representation, emphasising the communication of personal experience. Artists have sought to establish authenticity and genuineness in their performances by drawing from their individual experiences. Haagensen (2014:74) supports Lehman's perspective, likening this shift to the rise of individualism in society, which emphasises personal autonomy and artistic freedom. In the 20th century, artists aimed to liberate themselves and the audience through their performances, particularly in early political theatre movements.

Jacques Copeau, director and artist from 1879 to 1949, sought to revolutionise French theatre by rejecting naturalism and introducing an alternative approach focused on the artist and their physical body and improvisation (Evans, 2013:3). Copeau considered the artist the central element of theatre, an 'absolute artist' rooted in bodily awareness and expression (Callery, 2001:11). His influence extended to Étienne Decroux, Michel Saint Denis, and Jacques Lecoq, who explored the physical potential in actor training and emphasised the artist as a creator (Evans, 2013:3). Saint-Denis, a French artist and filmmaker from 1897 to 1971, emphasised the artist's significance, stating that 'everything ultimately depends on the person, the artist' (Saint-Denis and Baldwin, 2009:112). Saint-Denis distinguished between two types of artists: the 'artist/translator', who works with a text, and the 'artist/improviser', who creates without a script. In his acting training program, he highlighted the importance of spontaneity for individual artists and group improvisation, viewing the self as a creation (Saint-Denis and Baldwin, 2009:164). Copeau and Decroux called upon artists to take responsibility for the creative process.

Artists in the 20th century have endeavoured to establish authenticity and truthfulness in performance by devising individual experiences. This notion aligns with the progression of individualism in society, emphasising personal freedom and artistic liberty. Artists aimed to liberate themselves and the audience through their performances, a crucial aspect of early political theatre as exemplified in the final strand. There are several ways to help actors move beyond predictable or habitual performance styles and reach new levels of creativity and expressiveness. These methods include physical exploration, improvisation, character analysis, emotional connection, script analysis, and ensemble work.

These are just a few examples of ways to help actors move beyond predictable performance styles and reach new levels of creativity and expression. Remembering that every actor is unique and may respond differently to different methods and techniques is essential. The following chapter will go into acting styles in depth.

SECTION B:

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF ACTING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

For this particular research focus, six acting techniques were identified on the grounds of their varied approaches and the multiple tools applied in each. Regardless of the similarities in these acting styles, it is essential to deliberate on each acting style's distinguishing aspects to identify an existing acting technique/style or construct a composite acting style most appropriate for devised theatre.

The following acting techniques/styles will be examined:

- 3.1.1 Classical acting: This style draws inspiration from ancient Greek traditions and the works of Shakespeare in the Renaissance period. Therefore, classical acting focuses more on poetic language, verse and rhetoric metre, exaggerated gestures, and movement.
- 3.1.2 Stanislavski's system: It focuses on developing a believable inner life for a character. It emphasises the actor's psychological and emotional preparation, encouraging him to understand the character's thoughts, motivations, and objectives in depth, using the 'magic if'.
- 3.1.3 Meisner technique: This method embraces living truthfully in the present moment and responding genuinely to fellow actors. It strongly emphasises present-moment awareness, spontaneity, and emotional authenticity in acting. The Meisner technique aims to focus on truthful reactions and genuine emotional responses.
- 3.1.4 Practical aesthetics: Here characters are made real by the actors focussing on their bodies and the physicality of the character. The emphasis is on movement and physicality.
- 3.1.5 Method acting: The primary focus of Lee Strasberg's method is to utilise personal experiences and emotions to imbue a character with depth and authenticity. The emphasis rests on the actor's capacity to access his memories and feelings, enabling him to craft an actual and realistic performance.

Brechtian acting method: Brechtian acting is centered on the creation of a theatrical

approach that is deeply political and instructive. Its primary objective is to intellectually engage the audience, urging them to critically analyse social and political matters rather than become emotionally immersed in the narrative. Brechtian actors intentionally keep a physical detachment from their characters, purposefully avoiding emotional connection. They utilise stylised and exaggerated techniques, such as gestural and vocal distancing, to break the illusion of realism and prompt the audience to reflect on what they are witnessing. The ultimate aim is to stimulate thinking, inspire social transformation, and cultivate a discerning consciousness of the world.

While each method has its unique approach, the shared objective is to assist actors in portraying characters with integrity and truthfulness.

A vast number of factors come into play when creating a production, in whatever style. When an actor plays a character, she tries to connect with the emotions and behavioural patterns of the scripted character. An actor might wish to examine at least one way to deal with acting to foster a singular way of dealing with character advancement. Actors might observe others to create reality in their scene work. Unique ways to deal with acting can regularly direct the actor's decision and her way to deal with character improvement.

Regarding material choice, social and family conventions can commonly shape the actor's level of comfort with texts and limit or illuminate the actor's choices. After experimenting with numerous character development methods, an actor will frequently select one to work with that will best define the character, his or her relationships within the scene, and his or her aim. The production concept of a director can also purposefully steer an actor toward one style or another. Acting tactics can impact how an actor approaches a character, resulting in various performance styles based on personal abilities.

Konijn states that for centuries, actors have strived to make their characters as trustworthy as possible so that the audience no longer sees the actor but believes the actor is a character. The focal issue in the debate is the connection between the person's and the actor's feelings. In acting emotions, actors are regularly triggered by such suggestions (Konijn, 2000:3).

In the quest for the most suitable acting approach for specific theatrical styles and based on

preliminary research, six approaches to acting are identified in this study. These approaches to acting, which will form the basis of the theoretical conceptualisations, are based on the writings of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), Sanford Meisner (1905-1997), and Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971) on classical acting, (between the late 1800s and early 1900s), David Mamet (1947) and William H. Macy (1950-1984) on practical aesthetics, Lee Strasberg (1901-1982) on method acting and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), specifically on the Brechtian method (1964).

3.1.1 CLASSICAL ACTING (1800s-1900s)

Classical acting (which had its prominence in the 1800s-1900s) refers to a principle that combines physical and vocal expression, imagination, personalisation, improvisation, external cues, and script analysis. Classical performers and directors, Konstantin Stanislavski and Michel Saint-Denis, had similar perspectives and practices (Classical Acting 2022:1). Acting styles in the early 19th century tended to be focused on exaggerated movements, gestures, epic effects, epic dramas, physical comedies, pranks, and extravagant costumes (Rebhorn, 2018:389). Rebhorn states that from the mid-19th century, more naturalistic acting styles became popular, and actors were expected to have more consistent character expressions. The works of the time were more frequently derived from contemporary social life, such as marriage and family concerns, socio-economic class, and related issues (Rebhorn, 2018:389). Since the 1930s, French actor, director, and playwright Michel Saint-Denis has had a lasting impact on the evolution of theatre with ideas on how to train actors. Saint-Denis taught at the academic institution of the Royal Shakespeare Company as co-director.

As explained by Baldwin, Saint-Denis wanted a connection between the mythical Sophocles of Greece and modern Europe. The examples Baldwin examined included the destructive power of irrationality in *Oedipus of the Gods* and fate in the 20th century's fascism. According to Baldwin, Saint-Denis created subtle similarities with a combination of styles such as classicism and modernity. His vision of poetic theatre expanded to include specific, realistic texts such as Chekhov's work. In performing these works, he presented their poetic nature more subtly and emphasised the nature of their atmosphere (Baldwin, 2009:21).

This playwright's vision of poetic theatre did not significantly impact the unique rehearsal

methods of the time but impacted one of the various traditional techniques of more recent times. In the first rehearsal process, Saint-Denis, actors, and designers worked together to organise a discussion to improvise themes and characters, following Saint-Denis's technique. The rehearsal process was used for stylistic aspects. Unlike some later versions of collective creation, directors were present at every stage of the work (Saint-Denis and Baldwin, 2009:164). His acting technique put a great deal of emphasis on improvisation, both by individual actors and by groups, and regarded the actor's embodied self as a tool of creation. In his script, he advocated 'acting'. This meant the theatre had to be developed exclusively by the actors on stage, not by the script (Saint-Denis and Baldwin, 2009:164). His ideal actor would be one who created his own work (Leabhart, 2018:7). These theatrical pioneers' works set the ground for further investigation of theatre to develop all elements of theatre (as opposed to text-based theatre). They each researched and built a new position for actors as physically creative actors and creative process controllers rather than as dominant director's instruments (Leabhart, 2018:7).

In conclusion, classical acting refers to a style of acting based on the traditions and techniques developed in ancient Greece and continued through the works of Shakespeare in the Renaissance. It emphasises language, vocal control, and physical presence to bring a character to life. Classical actors aim to convey emotions, thoughts, and motivations through gestures, movement, and facial expressions, as well as through their words. Classical acting also strongly emphasises character development, requiring actors to create fully-realised and complex individuals through their performance. This acting style is often seen as more formal and structured than other approaches but can also be compelling and expressive. Based on the above discussion, follows an overview of the most prominent techniques or tools utilised in classical acting:

3.1.1.1 Verse and rhetoric: Plays often incorporate poetic language and rhetorical devices in classical acting. Actors must develop skills in understanding and delivering verse, including the 'iambic pentameter' commonly found in Shakespearean works. Mastery of rhetoric enables actors to convey the meaning and emotional nuances of the text effectively.

3.1.1.2 Breath control and vocal projection: Classical texts often require actors to project their voices to ensure clarity, especially in larger venues. Techniques for breath control, such as diaphragmatic breathing, help actors maintain vocal power and endurance. Vocal training focuses on articulation, clarity, and resonance, ensuring that words are well-enunciated and

effectively reach the audience.

3.1.1.3 Gesture and posture: Classical acting uses specific gestures and postures to convey meaning and enhance character portrayal. Actors study and incorporate historically appropriate gestures and body language, including hand gestures, facial expressions, and overall physical comportment.

3.1.1.4 Emotional control and subtlety: Classical acting calls for emotional control and restraint, allowing subtle shifts in expression and nuanced performances. Actors learn to convey emotions through subtle changes in facial expressions, vocal inflections, and body language, maintaining dignity and composure.

3.1.1.5 Character archetypes: Classical plays frequently feature archetypal characters representing broader human traits or virtues. Actors must understand and embody these archetypal qualities convincingly while bringing individuality and depth to their characters.

3.1.1.6 Stage movement and blocking: Classical plays often involve specific stage movement patterns and blocking conventions. Actors must move gracefully on stage, navigating the space while maintaining proper alignment and spatial relationships with other actors.

These tools provide the basis for classical acting techniques, enabling actors to breathe life into the rich language, historical context, and dramatic nuances of classical texts on stage.

3.1.2 STANISLAVSKI'S SYSTEM (1933)

In contrast to classical acting, Konstantin Stanislavski founded a ground-breaking acting school that stressed character psychology as a fundamental element of effective performance. Stanislavski was one of the earliest theorists to focus on the importance of an actor's internal self when presenting a role. Instead of teaching actors how to depict emotion physically, he taught them how to follow methodologists like Aristotle, who would have also referred to their approaches as realistic characters' psyches. Remember that although Stanislavski's novel tactics were part of the earlier Realism Movement, the classification of exaggerated gestures developed by focusing on how real people behave. Stanislavski's idea was ground-breaking because he wanted to imitate the psychology that motivates individuals rather than simply the way they move (Wray, 2021:3).

Stanislavski's system (1933) is a structured perspective in training actors that emerged during the first half of the 20th century. As indicated by Hart, the Stanislavski system generates the

conscious thought of the actor through a psychological process that forces the actor to go back to emotional experience and subconscious actions, empathetically and incidentally. The actor explores the inner reasons for establishing actions and the explanation of what the character wants to obtain at the given time and circumstance (Hart, 2020:2).

This literature review examines concentration, voice, practical skills, the memory of emotion, rhythm, and observation. Hart (2020:2) states that by connecting with the character the actor is portraying, Stanislavski's approach uses the actor's emotions and experiences. The earlier Stanislavskian idea of fellowship was additionally an essential piece of the formation of dynamic examination. As demonstrated by Merlin, connection is defined as irradiation or energy exchange between stage partners. Merlin expresses that fellowship permits actions to originate from an inward passionate association. However, the actors' consideration situation is coordinated outwards towards different actors rather than inwards towards the self, allowing the actors to attain a better level of listening and reacting to the present moment (Merlin, 2003:1).

Stanislavski's disappointment with his earlier investigation of the Memory of Emotion (2003) led him to evolve an approach that would set off emotions differently. The basis of his approach contrived emotions to be simulated through simple bodily actions (Stanislavski, 2013:141). During Stanislavski's investigation, he noticed an opportunity between the physical and psychological actions in the process of characterisation. He thought that the actor's physical and psychological activities were linked. This prompted him to conclude that physical actions could motivate emotions (Stanislavski, 2013:141).

As stated by Moore²⁹, Stanislavski's memory of emotion is the central aspect of his techniques; he did not want his actors to simply recreate an emotion. Stanislavski desired that his actors feel the emotion (Moore, 1984:3). Easty agrees with Moore as Easty states that Stanislavski's acting style is based on reliving a former incident to the point of, or even constructing a new event, to elicit feelings that you may not have felt before (Easty, 2012:1). Moore states that the motivation behind this strategy is not to lose yourself in the scene. The second one loses oneself, one gets away from the part not requested from you as an actor.

²⁹ Moore provides a deeper understanding of the history and development of a particular subject, than more recent sources.

Moore further notes that in a scene, to experience the character's/role's emotions, the actor must put himself in the character's shoes (Moore, 1984:9). Stanislavski urged performers unable to connect with the character's emotional condition to reach into their own memories and rely on a comparable personal experience (Moore, 1984:13).

According to Moore, Stanislavski did not believe an actor could honestly produce truth and reality onstage. However, an actor could believe in the potential of an occurrence, which inspired Stanislavski to construct 'magic'. The actor can then ask himself, 'What would I do if I were in this situation?' (Moore, 1984:25). This component adds natural reactions to the story's events (Moore, 1984:26). Stanislavski also recognised that the 'imagine a scenario where" approach may not always result in the best portrayal. 'What would I do?' may be a different question from 'What would the character do?' Within the magic of Stanislavski, he advised actors to train their bodies and voices in preparation for the physical and emotional demands of a part, and he employed improvisation as a primary technique to allow the performers to explore their inner emotions. Stanislavski intended the actors to delve deeply within themselves to create the role, and improvisation is an essential component of this rehearsal process (Stanislavski, 1989).

As indicated by Stanislavski (2008:31), truth on stage differed from the truth in everyday life. This was an essential variable in acting, especially in authenticity, where the actor's goal was to create the natural world's presence or truth in front of an audience (Stanislavski, 2008:53). With Stanislavski's approach, like with most other venue acting systems, an actor does not believe in the truth of the events in front of an audience but rather in their creative fabrication. Indeed, an actor who believed he was the role would be severely delusional and would need psychiatric help. This then represented the challenge of creating the presence of reality for the onlooker at the time. Stanislavski devised magic as a solution to this dilemma. The character's goals influenced the actor's actual activity decisions. Through the goal of the incredible if, an actor could make sound dramatic decisions that appear authentic, valid, and trustworthy to the audience. As explained by Stanislavski, 'the actor who was able to cause the audience to believe in what he/she needed them to believe, accomplished a beautiful truth' (Stanislavski, 2008:53).

Stanislavski defined 'picturesque truth' as beginning on the level of original and imaginative fiction (Stanislavski, 2008:54). Stanislavski, according to Moore, was the ultimate observer.

He advised his understudies to pay close attention to others, focusing on their actual traits and characters (Moore, 1984:9). As stated by Moore, this relates to the character's motive. Stanislavski encouraged his performers to think about things such as, 'Why does the character move to this part of the stage?' or 'Why is this character saying this?' Some behaviours are self-evident and straightforward to explain. The actor must extensively examine the text to identify the purpose behind a character's words and actions (Moore, 1984:30).

In conclusion, by using Stanislavski's technique, actors can return to their comfort zone of using their innovation. Although complex, one of the fundamental objectives of the Stanislavski system was to depict acceptable, normal individuals in front of an audience. Stanislavski's acting technique within the context of devised theatre can be recognised and categorised by its focus on truth, personal experience, sensory exploration, physicality, vocal expression, and emotional preparation.

From the discussion above follows a summary of the key aspects identified in Stanislavski's system:

3.1.2.1 Emotional memory: Actors draw upon personal experiences and memories to evoke authentic emotions and deliver truthful performances. Actors achieve heightened authenticity by tapping into their own emotional reservoirs and connecting them to the character's circumstances.

3.1.2.2 Given circumstances: Understanding and exploring the character's background, environment, relationships, and overall circumstances. This include factors such as the character's social status, historical period, and personal history. Through thoroughly understanding these circumstances, actors make informed choices aligned with the character's motivations and objectives.

3.1.2.3 Character objectives and super-objectives: Character objectives are reached when identifying the character's goals and intentions within each scene throughout the play. Super-objectives are the overarching desires or motivations that drive the character's actions and choices. By comprehending these objectives, actors infuse their performances with purpose and drive.

3.1.2.4 Subtext: Recognising the underlying thoughts, emotions, and intentions that inform the character's dialogue and actions. Subtext encompasses the unspoken elements that influence the character's behaviour. Actors learn to read between the lines and effectively

convey subtext, adding depth and complexity to their performances.

3.1.2.5 Physical actions: The character's physicality and actions express their inner life. Stanislavski stressed the significance of physical actions in revealing the character's emotions, intentions, and relationships. Actors engage in detailed physical actions to portray a particular character.

3.1.2.6 Relaxation and concentration: Cultivating a state of relaxation and focused attention to access the creative and emotional dimensions of the performance. Actors employ techniques to release bodily tension, quiet the mind, and enhance concentration. This enables them to be fully present in the moment and respond organically to their surroundings.

3.1.2.7 Imagination: Harnessing the power of imagination to immerse oneself in the character's world. Actors participate in visualisation exercises, sensory exploration, and imaginative work to stimulate creativity and bring vibrant life to their performances.

3.1.2.8 Ensemble work: Stanislavski emphasised the importance of the ensemble as a collective, where actors support and respond to one another on stage. This cultivates authenticity and organic interaction among the performers.

These are critical tools associated with Stanislavski's approach to acting. Actors who embrace these techniques will be able to develop a deeper understanding of their characters, deliver truthful performances, and establish profound connections with their audiences.

3.1.3 THE MEISNER ACTING TECHNIQUE (1940)

Sanford Meisner, an American theorist who taught his variations on Stanislavski's ideas, was a hugely influential methodologist. Meisner acted as a company member at the Group Theatre with Stella Adler and under Lee Strasberg's instruction. However, when the Group Theatre dissolved soon after Adler travelled to Paris to study with Stanislavski, Meisner adopted more of Adler's beliefs. Adler claimed that when he returned to America, Stanislavski had lost interest in emotional memory and argued to instead think of 'performing the activity' (Wray, 2021:5). Meisner asserted that Stanislavski rejected the concept of emotional memory in his later years after agreeing with Adler. Meisner strongly emphasised using one's imagination, engaging in actual action, and interacting with and responding to one's acting partner (Wray, 2021:5).

Based on his technique, the actor must concentrate on the other actors, as if he or she is

living in the moment. Meisner's acting technique educates and trains actors to 'live truthfully under fictitious circumstances' to develop personally meaningful points of view to written words and to express spontaneous human reactions and authentic emotion with the most sincere sense of truth (Adair, 2005:133).

According to Shirley (2010:199), the Meisner technique includes the what, where, and why aspects that are often fundamental to students' training, while others see it as an add-on to Stanislavski training that should be introduced once that aspect is fully ingrained. A few Meisner acting technique repetition exercises are employed to compare the words to the principal emotion, with a significant focus on the other actor instead of one's inner emotions or views about the character. Because both arose from Konstantin Stanislavski's early teachings, Lee Strasberg's 'method' acting is frequently confused with the Meisner technique (Shirley, 2010:199). The Meisner technique has three key components: emotional preparation, repetition, and improvisation. These parts all work together to assist actors to, instead of relying on memory or practice, notice their scene accomplice and remain present and to move the actor's consideration away from their reluctance and onto the other actor in the activity (Shirley, 2010:201). As demonstrated by Shirley, the Meisner technique involves much improvisation, which allows you to react without thinking. Actors who use Meisner's style of improvisation act as the characters would on instinct and emotional connection. Through improvisation one can inject spontaneity into a scenario and respond in character rather than depend on scripted dialogue.

Both Stanislavski and Strasberg, according to Shirley (2010:213), used a technique known as 'memory' (Strasberg called it, affective memory), in which actors use their own experiences to represent their roles as authentically as possible. Meisner strayed from this idea and created a style based on 'the truth of doing'. Method acting depends on exploiting internal sources for character development, including memory and emotional recollection. On the other hand, the Meisner style concentrates on exterior hotspots for motivation, with performers responding to their fellow actors and their behaviour (Shirley, 2010:213.)

In conclusion Meisner offers actors a comprehensive approach to developing truthful and authentic performances. This technique emphasises active listening, spontaneous responses, and emotional truth. By focusing on repetition exercises, emotional preparation, and impulse-driven choices, actors using the Meisner technique cultivate a deep connection

to their scene partners and the present moment. The Meisner technique encourages actors to rely on their instincts, respond truthfully, and maintain a complete presence in each moment. By actively listening and genuinely reacting, actors cultivate a heightened sense of authenticity and responsiveness in their performances, whether on stage or in front of the camera. Emotional preparation allows actors to tap into their emotional experiences, resulting in grounded and resonant portrayals.

Here is a summary of the above-mentioned crucial acting tools found with the Meisner technique:

3.1.3.1 Repetition: Repetition exercises serve as the cornerstone of the Meisner technique. Actors engage in a back-and-forth exchange, repeating phrases or statements while focusing on observing and responding truthfully to their scene partner. This exercise helps actors remain present, listen attentively, and establish an authentic connection with their scene partners.

3.1.3.2 Active listening: The Meisner technique places significant emphasis on active listening. Actors learn to genuinely hear and respond to their scene partner's words rather than anticipating or preplanning their lines. Active listening enables actors to stay in the moment, remain open to spontaneous reactions, and create truthful and organic interactions.

3.1.3.3 Emotional preparation: Meisner actors participate in vigorous preparation exercises to access and connect with their emotional truth. They draw upon personal experiences or imaginary circumstances to evoke genuine emotional responses that align with the scene or character. Emotional preparation helps actors develop emotional depth and authenticity in their performances.

3.1.3.4 Instinct: The Meisner technique encourages actors to trust their instincts and respond spontaneously to circumstances. Actors tap into their natural inclinations by staying present and open to impulses, making authentic choices in the moment. This approach fosters authenticity and avoids pre-planned or forced performances.

3.1.3.5 Characterisation: Meisner actors strive to understand their characters' perspectives and objectives in a scene. They also explore personalising the situations or relationships within the scene, drawing on personal experiences to add emotional realism and depth to their performances.

3.1.3.6 Physical behaviour: The Meisner technique underscores the importance of physicality and behaviour in portraying characters. Actors pay attention to their physicality and the

physical behaviour of others, using observation and response to inform their character choices. This helps create grounded and authentic characters on stage.

3.1.3.7 Improvisation: Meisner actors engage in improvisation exercises to stimulate creativity, spontaneity, and imaginative exploration. Improvisation encourages actors to trust their impulses, make bold choices, and develop a sense of freedom and playfulness in their work.

3.1.4 PRACTICAL AESTHETICS (1984)

Practical aesthetics³⁰ (1984) is an acting technique initially formulated based on the philosophy teachings of Epictetus³¹, Stanislavski, Sanford Meisner, and the work of David Mamet³² and William H. Macy³³. A few characteristics of the technique include specific text scrutiny, flexibility, and repetition exercises similar to those found in the Meisner technique. In essence, the technique is based on the actor's physicality and the method of dissecting a scene in four steps, each comprising the following elements: the literal interpretations, character needs, necessary actions, and 'as if'-constructs (Lehmann-Haupt, 2012:2). Patsy Rodenburg³⁴ describes practical aesthetics as having a presence onstage when your energy connects to the world, and you receive energy back from that connection. This presence requires physicality and emotion (Rodenburg, 2007:3). Ian Watson³⁵ defines Eugenio Barba's³⁶ intention in developing theatre anthropology as 'a systematic study of conventional theatre (Barba, 1979:161) to understand the origins of the actor's presence.

³⁰ During the summers of 1983 and 1984, Vermont hosted NYU acting classes led by playwright David Mamet and actor William H. Macy. In these summer courses, the practical aesthetics-acting approach developed.

³¹ A Greek philosopher who advocated Stoic ethics and lived in the first and early 2nd century. He was renowned for both his superb teaching methods, and the coherence and the force of his moral philosophy.

³² An American author, dramatist, and actor.

³³ An American actor.

³⁴ British voice instructor, actress, playwright, and theater director Rodenburg also directs plays. She worked as Head of Voice at the Royal National Theatre after having ties to the Royal Court Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

³⁵ Ian Watson, a theatre director, and author, offers the most thorough and organised analysis of Eugenio Barba's work

³⁶ An Italian playwright and theatre director living in Denmark. He founded the Odin Theatre and the International School of Theatre Anthropology, both of which have locations in Holstebro, Denmark.

Barba observed that controlling the actor's presence was a common principle in many Eastern practices. This uniqueness can be attributed to two key factors: using learned body techniques to break the actor's habitual responses and establishing guidelines that govern energy use during performance. As mentioned by Barba, these elements are crucial aspects of the actor's toolkit beyond everyday behaviours.

There are strategies for identifying one's unconscious default presence setting and establishing the behaviours that will allow the actor to become consciously present and honestly notice every situation. Acting coach Patsy Rodenburg developed the concept of the Three Circles of Presence. What is intriguing is how her theory translates (Rodenburg, 2007:3). Rodenburg states: 'Presence is the energy that emanates from you and connects you to the rest of the world.' This means you have the most significant impact on people when you are present. (Rodenburg, 2007:3).

As indicated by Rodenburg, individuals have a relaxed and grounded vocal presence in the first circle. This circle represents a natural and authentic vocal state where the voice is connected to the body and breath, allowing for a sense of ease and openness in communication (Rodenburg, 2007:17). This allows the actor to introvert his/her energy, which means the focus is on the inside, where the actor is on autopilot and unaware of the necessary details (Rodenburg, 2007:17). Circle one absorbs the energy of others and attracts external stimuli inward. The actors should pay more attention to the perspectives of others or be considerate. The actors are more introspective, thoughtful, and sometimes withdrawn from the world. People who usually live in circle one may be physically and vocally hidden, the effects of which are diminished by crouching postures, shallow breathing patterns, and weak voices (Rodenburg, 2007:18).

The second circle represents an expanded and energised vocal state. In this circle, individuals consciously increase their vocal energy, projection, and resonance. It allows for a stronger and more assertive vocal presence, suitable for larger performance spaces or when a performer needs to command attention (Rodenburg, 2007:21).

Rodenburg states (2007) that it is a circle of connections; it is a one-way street where you voluntarily react and communicate with others, influencing and connecting without barriers and impressing or imposing your will on them. You are in the flow or the zone; you are alive

now. You listen to others and hear what they have to say. It positively affects trust and relationships (Rodenburg, 2007:22). The second circle represents the perfect balance. It is a powerful mutual energy of genuine connection that focuses on a particular object or person and moves, absorbs, and emits in both directions.

The third circle represents the highest level of vocal intensity and power. In this circle, individuals access their full vocal potential, projecting their voice with maximum energy and impact. The third circle is often utilised in performances that require heightened emotion, larger audiences, or dynamic storytelling (Rodenburg, 2007:19).

In conclusion, by understanding and practicing the three circles, performers can consciously choose and modulate their vocal energy and presence to suit the demands of different performance contexts. The technique helps actors develop their vocal range and expressiveness and effectively communicate their intentions and emotions. Patsy Rodenburg's three circles provide performers with a practical and accessible vocal exploration and control framework. By mastering the first, second, and third circles, individuals can expand their vocal range, connect with their audience, and create impactful performances. The researcher is of meaning that Patsy Rodenburg's practical aesthetics offers a unique approach to acting that focuses on the integration of voice, body, and imagination. Here is a summary of the above-mentioned essential acting tools found in Rodenburg's approach:

3.1.4.1 Breathing and vocal quality: Rodenburg emphasizes the significance of breath as the foundation of voice production. Actors learn to engage their breath, harnessing its power and range fully. Through breath control and vocal exercises, actors develop a resonant and expressive voice, enabling effective communication and emotional engagement with the audience.

3.1.4.2 Presence: Rodenburg highlights the importance of presence and energy on stage. Actors learn to cultivate a solid physical and vocal presence, projecting their energy and intention into the performance space. By heightening their presence, actors captivate the audience and establish a connection with them.

3.1.4.3 Physicality: Rodenburg encourages actors to engage their imagination to embody characters and inhabit different physicalities. The concept of the 'imaginary body' allows actors to explore and experiment with different movement, posture, and gesture qualities,

bringing versatility and authenticity to their performances

3.1.4.4 Archetypes and universal qualities: Rodenburg explores archetypes and universal qualities in human behaviour. Actors learn to recognise and embody these archetypal qualities, such as strength, vulnerability, or authority, to create relatable and resonant characters. By tapping into these universal qualities, actors create performances that transcend cultural boundaries and connect with audiences on a deeper level.

3.1.4.5 Dramatic energy: Rodenburg emphasises the importance of the actor's interaction with the audience and other actors. Actors learn to engage in a dynamic energy exchange, connecting and responding to the energy of their scene partners and the audience. This exchange adds depth and authenticity to their performances, creating a compelling and engaging experience for the viewers.

These tools form the core of Rodenburg's practical aesthetics, enabling actors to develop a solid vocal presence, physical grounding, imaginative versatility, and a deep connection with the audience and their fellow performers.

3.1.5 LEE STRASBERG'S METHOD ACTING (1931-1982)

Lee Strasberg's³⁹ method of acting (1931-1982) is predicated on the premise that actors should use their own experiences to relate emotionally and cognitively with their characters. It is based on Stanislavski's acting method in conjunction with other techniques including those of Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner⁴⁰ (McAllister, 2018:105). As explained by McAllister, Strasberg identified limitations in the Stanislavski system and encourages the actors to rather expand and strengthen their connection to the subject by creating emotional experiences of the character in their lives (McAllister, 2018:106).

According to Hodge, Strasberg devised a technique in which the actors create characters through realism by drawing on emotional and cognitive, affective, and sense memory (Hodge, 2010:134). As stated by Cohen (2010), affective memory utilises both the actor's experience and her creative mind, consolidating both the experience and the exhibition of the feeling, a more secure, however not idiot-proof, strategy for accomplishing the feeling effectively.

³⁹ An American actor, director of theatre, and film, acting teacher, and acting coach.

⁴⁰ An American actress and acting teacher.

The actors should draw upon their encounters to observe a feeling, taking that which they need to depict to the audience. Sense memory exercises are used to recall and reactivate sensory memories from one's life, sounds, sights, tastes, smells, and feelings – being able to feel the physical pain of that moment. To accomplish this, he must 'appeal to the unconscious and the subconscious,' and through relaxation the performer would activate his body by removing blocks of tension, becoming more open to whatever he needed to do later, so it was essentially a way of awakening and preparing the body to act while having control over it (Cohen, 2010:14).

From the point of view of Cohen (2010), while method acting is similar to Stanislavski's method, Strasberg took it a step further by introducing the substitution strategy, which goes beyond relying solely on emotional memory. The substitution technique directs the actors in fully immersing themselves in the characters' experiences. Instead of simply portraying the character on stage, the actor temporarily assumes the character's role for a significant purpose. During this time, the actor sets aside his everyday routine and fully embraces the character's life, which may involve different relationships, occupations, and perspectives on daily life matters and concerns. Once the performance is over and the actor is offstage, she returns to her regular life, unaffected by the experiences while portraying the character.

As explained by Hodge, method acting emphasises portraying authenticity and striving to replicate reality as closely as possible, in contrast to conventional acting methods that rely more on exaggerated emotions. Actors are trained to convey precise emotions and gestures, cultivating a natural and unassuming stage presence. Instead of simply displaying emotions, Strasberg's approach advocated actors to tap into experiences they felt. It suggested that actors fully immerse themselves in the characters' lives and circumstances to understand and authentically convey their thoughts and feelings to the audience. However, this practice was later questioned, as some actors took it to extreme lengths, endangering their lives to recreate their characters' experiences fully. It is known that many actors struggled to separate themselves from their characters even when they were not performing, pushing themselves to the limits of their roles (Hodge, 2010:136).

Stella Adler (1901-1992) had the unique privilege of personally engaging with and being taught by Stanislavski, and she came to realise that even he had revised his early ideas.

Building upon Stanislavski's framework and Strasberg's acting method, Adler developed her technique that diverged from Strasberg's and aligned more closely with the principles put forth by Stanislavski (Hodge, 2010:136).

According to Hodge, Adler's strategy focused on performers relying on their thoughts rather than delving further into progressively painful memories and experiences from their own lives. Adler recognised that an actor's imagination was their most impressive and significant instrument (Hodge, 2010:140). This type of strategy tests the actors' ability to be directly connected to and focused on their accomplices rather than themselves.

Hodge states that Adler proposes that the actors' motivation should originate from the world of the play itself while maintaining confidence in their performance. She emphasises that the ultimate goal of contemporary acting is not merely to act but rather to delve deep and convey the truth of the play from within (Hodge, 2010:155). Refraining from focusing on delivering lines without considering the authentic actions can be detrimental. Thus, the actor must uncover actions beneath the words by embodying physical actions, expanding their repertoire of actions, personalising the material, interpreting the play through their perspective, and authentically executing the actions while seeking alignment with the playwright's ideas or intention (Hodge, 2010:155). Although Adler and Strasberg differed in accentuation and strategies, both agreed on the importance of honest conduct and self-investigation, either mental or sociological. Strasberg defended the mental approach of acting, relying on the actor's memory, whereas Adler defended the sociological method, claiming that players were supposed to draw on the play's provided conditions (Hodge, 2010:155).

In conclusion, follows a summary of the above-mentioned essential acting tools associated with Lee Strasberg's approach to acting:

3.1.5.1 Emotional memory: Strasberg emphasised using emotional memory, similar to Stanislavski's approach. Actors draw from their experiences and memories to evoke genuine emotions and create truthful performances. By tapping into their emotional reservoir, actors can bring depth and authenticity to their characters.

3.1.5.2 Sense memory: Strasberg introduced the concept of memory, where actors recall sensory details and experiences to enhance their performances. This includes remembering physical sensations, smells, tastes, and sounds associated with a particular event or

experience. Sense memory helps actors create vivid and sensory-rich performances.

3.1.5.3 Physical actions: Strasberg developed a technique called the 'method of physical actions', which focuses on the character's outward behaviour. Actors study and embody their characters' physical mannerisms, gestures, and movement patterns to create a more complete and believable portrayal.

3.1.5.4 Substitution: Strasberg introduced the technique of substitution, where actors substitute their own experiences and emotions into the character's circumstances. Actors can generate authentic emotions and reactions by finding parallels between their own lives and the character's situation.

3.1.5.5 Relaxation and concentration: Strasberg emphasised the importance of relaxation and concentration in acting. Actors learn to release tension in their bodies and focus their attention on the present moment. This enables them to present and respond to the scene partners and circumstances fully.

3.1.5.6 Inner motivation: Strasberg encouraged actors to explore and understand their characters' underlying motivations and desires. By delving into the character's inner life, The actors can make choices and portrayals rooted in the character's unique perspective and objectives.

These tools are integral to Lee Strasberg's approach to acting, allowing actors to access deep emotions, create truthful performances, and bring a heightened sense of reality to their characters. Actors can deliver compelling and authentic portrayals by utilising emotional and sensory recall, embodying physical actions, and exploring inner motivations.

3.1.6 BRECHTIAN METHOD (1964)

German director Bertolt Brecht was another 20th-century theatrical artist whose methods impacted acting to a great extent. Wray (2021:5) states that Brecht did not place as much emphasis on realism as Stanislavski did; in his opinion, this condescended the audience into an escapist attitude and excused them from any serious consideration. As stated by Wray, Brecht advocated a particular approach to acting that diverged from traditional, naturalistic styles. Brecht believed that actors should not simply imitate or mimic characters but rather portray their activities and actions more detached and reflectively (Wray, 2021:5). Brecht favoured techniques discouraging audiences from becoming emotionally invested in the play, encouraging critical analysis and introspection.

Additionally, Brecht was a playwright and director rather than an actor. Brecht thought making the audience leave a performance with a fresh perspective was essential. Separation of actor and character is one of the fundamental elements of Brecht's works: open interaction with the audience interaction with society through satire (Wray, 2021:5).

Bertolt Brecht created a style known as 'epic theatre', where the focus is on the depth of indifferences rather than the emotional participation of an audience. This is in stark contrast to Stanislavski's approach, which persuaded the audience that the activity onstage was 'real' (Martin and Bial, 2000:35). Brecht instructed his actors to separate themselves physically from their characters. They were instructed to set aside their personal emotions and inner lives and instead focus on employing stylised external actions such as gestures, intonation, facial expressions, and stage arrangements. These deliberate actions convey broader social relationships and attitudes between characters rather than relying on the actor's emotions (Martin and Bial, 2000:35).

As indicated by Martin and Bail, Brecht devised different emotional procedures to convey his message. Brechtian epic theatre theory encompasses techniques such as the alienation effect, gestures, didacticism, breaching the fourth wall, narration, and song use (Martin and Bial, 2000:41). The fourth wall is a non-existent divider isolating the audience from the activity on the stage. This divider stays unblemished in practical creations, and the actors must recognise that they are watched. The audience is eyewitnesses who are adapted to accept that the universe of the play is 'genuine'. It is a willingness to accept some far-fetched situations. Martin and Bial state that Brecht, like most dedicated audiences, needed to upset the notion of the fourth divider. 'Breaking the fourth wall' involves the characters directly addressing and recognising the audience, regardless of whether they break character or perform with a knowing awareness of being seen. The characters and their behaviours are not real, and the audience is aware that they are watching a work of fiction. This is the theory behind it. The procedure interfaces back to his meaning of epic theatre. The audience is forced to confront the action, make decisions, and participate; this is achieved by removing the fourth wall (Martin and Bial, 2000:41).

As mentioned by Brecht, the purpose of the theatre was to engage the audience intellectually and emotionally, encouraging critical thinking and social awareness. He sought to distance

the audience from becoming too emotionally invested in the characters and the story, instead urging them to analyse and question the social and political implications presented on stage.

In Brecht's concept of the 'alienation effect' (or *Verfremdungseffekt* in German), he aimed to break the illusion of reality by establishing a sense of separation between the audience and the performance. This strategy was intended to prevent the audience from becoming passive observers and instead prompt them to think critically about the presented themes and ideas. In line with this approach, Brecht encouraged actors to portray characters as social beings engaged in activities rather than trying to inhabit and fully become those characters. He emphasised the importance of actors conveying the characters' actions, gestures, and intentions rather than relying on emotional identification or psychological realism. Brecht's ideas revolutionised the theatrical landscape, challenging traditional notions of acting and encouraging a more self-aware and socially engaged approach. His theories continue to significantly impact contemporary theatre, with his emphasis on critical thinking, social commentary, and the portrayal of activities rather than strict character imitation still being influential today. According to Mumford (2008:52), Brecht comprehended that compassion in the auditorium was significant. He likewise perceived that a lot of it could turn a group of people near-sighted and weary. Strangely many Brechtian hypotheses and Stanislavski's techniques cover or possibly appear somewhat related. The contrast lies in the actor's consideration encompassing the rehearsal process. For instance, how the individual fits inside the general social remark of the piece. Brecht zeroed in on isolating one's contemplations and activities from personal individual opinions. Completely turning into the individual is specific; however, utilising one exhibition to say something about the character's activities is another (Mumford, 2008:52).

In conclusion, Brechtian theatre, developed by playwright and director Bertolt Brecht, is characterised by its distinct style and political intentions. Here is a summary of some of the above-mentioned essential acting tools identified with Brechtian theatre:

3.1.6.1 *Verfremdungseffekt* (Alienation effect): Brecht aimed to create a critical distance between the audience and the events on stage, encouraging them to engage intellectually rather than emotionally. The alienation effect uses various techniques to disrupt the

audience's identification with the characters and the narrative, such as a direct address, breaking the fourth wall, or self-referential theatrical devices. This allows the audience to observe and analyse the social and political themes presented in the play.

3.1.6.2 Gestures: Brecht emphasised using gestures, which refers to actors' physical and gestural language to represent social and political attitudes or behaviours. Actors embody broad, exaggerated gestures and physical postures to convey the essence of a character or a social archetype. The purpose is to highlight the societal and ideological forces that shape human behaviour rather than focusing on individual psychology.

3.1.6.3 Historical and political context: Brechtian actors must understand the historical and political context in which the play is set. They must be aware of the social and economic structures, class conflicts, and political ideologies that influence the characters and their actions. This awareness informs the actors' portrayals and allows them to convey the play's underlying social and political commentary.

3.1.6.4 Epic theatre and narrative structure: Brechtian theatre often employs an episodic or non-linear narrative structure. Actors must be skilled in transitioning between different scenes or episodes, emphasising the breaks and shifts in the story. They may also employ montage, placards, or projections to provide factual information or commentary within the performance.

3.1.6.5 Critical consciousness: Brechtian actors are encouraged to maintain a critical consciousness and engage in intellectual analysis of the characters, themes, and social issues portrayed in the play. They must communicate ideas and concepts clearly and effectively, conveying Brecht's intended didactic purpose.

3.1.6.6 Ensemble collaboration: Brecht emphasised the importance of ensemble work and actor collaboration. Rather than focusing on individual performances, the ensemble works together to create a collective, collaborative energy on stage. This allows for a collective exploration of the play's themes and encourages actors to support and respond to each other's performances.

These acting tools aim to break the illusion of realistic representation and engage the audience intellectually, promoting critical thinking and social awareness. By employing techniques such as the alienation effect and gestures and focusing on the historical and political context, Brechtian actors can create performances that provoke thought, encourage social analysis, and challenge traditional theatrical conventions.

3.2 CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter, a visual summary of the most important acting tools that each of these above-mentioned acting techniques gave actors to be able to work with are constructed as follows:

The distinction between internalisation and externalisation is important when theorising about characterisation because it relates to the overarching ways in which actors approach and portray their characters' thoughts, emotions, and actions. It provides a backdrop for highlighting different approaches to creating a character on two distinct levels; Internalisation provides the emotional truth and psychological depth, while externalisation brings the character to life on the stage or screen, making their thoughts, emotions, and actions visible and audible to an audience.

Improvisation, imagination, memory, vocal quality, and gesture, with physicality and movement are elements that encompass both internalisation and externalisation techniques. While improvisation, imagination, and memory are primarily associated with internalisation, they also have externalisation aspects. Internalisation allows actors to authentically connect with the character's inner life and emotional truth, which then informs their externalised expressions brought forward through vocal quality, gesture, physicality, and movement, which in turn relates to the previously mentioned internalisation aspects.

By combining both internalisation and externalisation, actors achieve a balanced and layered performance. They internalise the characters' depth and complexity, drawing upon their own emotional resources, and then externalise those internalised aspects through visible and audible means to engage the audience and convey the characters' journey effectively (Stanislavski, 1989, 1989a, 1989b; Strasberg, 1990, 2000; Meisner and Longwell, 1987; Chekhov, 2002; Adler, 2000; Cohen, 2017).

	INTERNALISATION			EXTERNALISATION		
	Improvisation	Imagination	Memory	Vocal Quality	Gesture	Physicality and Movement
Classical acting (1800-1900s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personification • External stimuli • Emotional control and subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personification • External stimuli • Emotional control and subtlety • Character archetypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External stimuli • Emotional control and subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse and rhetoric • Breath control and vocal projection • Character archetypes • Emotional control and subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exaggerated movement • External stimuli • Gesture and posture • Emotional control and subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exaggerated movement • External stimuli • Gesture and posture • Stage movement and blocking • Emotional control and subtlety • Character archetypes
Stanislavski's system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration • Memory of emotion • Magic 'if' • Relaxation and concentration • Ensemble work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magic 'if' • Observation • Given circumstances • Character objectives and super-objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Memory of emotion • Character objectives and super-objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythm • Observation • Subtext • Relaxation and concentration • Ensemble work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Subtext • Physical actions • Ensemble work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical skills • Observation • Natural movements • Subtext • Physical actions • Relaxation and concentration • Ensemble work
Meisner's technique (1940)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional memory • Active listening • Physical behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Physical behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional memory • Repetition • Active listening • Emotional preparation • Instinct • Improvisation • Physical behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition • Active listening • Emotional preparation • Instinct • Improvisation • Physical behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition • Physical mannerisms • Active listening • Emotional preparation • Instinct • Physical behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition • natural movements • Active listening • Emotional preparation • Instinct • Improvisation • Physical behaviour
Practical aesthetics (1984)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence • Dramatic energy • Archetypes and universal qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence • Dramatic energy • Archetypes and universal qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicality • Archetypes and universal qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing and vocal quality • Physicality • Archetypes and universal qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical actions • Presence • Dramatic energy • Archetypes and universal qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicality • Presence • Dramatic energy • Archetypes and universal qualities

Lee Strasberg's method acting (1931-1982)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional memory • Sense memory • Relaxation and concentration • Inner motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external experiences • Physical actions substitution • Inner motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional memory • Sense memory • Substitution • Inner motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional memory • Substitution • Relaxation and concentration • Inner motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense memory • Physical actions • Substitution • Relaxation and concentration • Inner motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External experiences • Physical actions • Substitution • Relaxation and concentration • Inner motivation
Brechtian method (1964)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External actions • Emotional memory • Gestures • Historical and political context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gestures • Historical and political context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External actions • Emotional memory • Gestures • Historical and political context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narration • Historical and political context • Epic theatre and narrative structure • Critical consciousness • Ensemble collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alienation effect • Historical and political context • Gestures • Epic theatre and narrative structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External action • Alienation effect • Gestures • Epic theatre and narrative structure • Critical consciousness • Ensemble collaboration

As performance scientist, Richard Schechner said: '*I do not think the creative process of escaping acting goes beyond discussion and analysis, and I do not think analysis destroys creativity*' (Schechner 1964:211).

This discussion aims to not restrict the acting method for devised theatre productions, but rather to enhance and strengthen the approach to the creation process. The components of an acting performance are drawn from all involved in performing, including actors, and the director. There seems to be a general mechanism of action in that there is a realistic view of how acting tasks should be performed in shaping the character. These views are reflected in four aspects of acting that emerged from analysing the actor's reaction. These four aspects include physicality, voice, emotion, and characterisation. These four aspects of acting are always interrelated and are often developed and honed through training, practice, and experience. They are essential for actors to understand and master to create convincing and dynamic performances.

However, when considering the production of specific theatrical sub-genres, the choice might fall upon a favourable acting style as discussed in this chapter. Whether it be conventional or devised theatre as particular sub-genres or productions typical of certain movements such as Absurd theatre, Realism, or Expressionism, for instance, particular style features could be more applicable or considered more suitable for a particular production. In many cases,

directors and actors choose an acting style where task emotions and the application of technical skills are prominent to play their characters. This means that actors recognise the importance of bringing genuine emotions to a performance and having the technical skills to execute the demands of a role.

In contrast, others may place less emphasis on it. This highlights the individual nature of acting as well as directing and how actors and directors may have different approaches and priorities regarding creating characters for particular creative outputs. The following case studies will demonstrate the applicability of the different acting styles by discussing the acting tools used within each devised theatre production. Ultimately a case will be made for the most appropriate style for devised theatre productions. From the foregoing, it would be possible to successfully speculate about the applicability of aspects from several of the discussed acting styles.

For instance, it seems most likely that some of the fundamental tools generated from Stanislavski's method can be adapted and integrated into devised theatre's collaborative and innovative processes, resulting in compelling and captivating performances.

In analysing method acting, it is evident that some relevant tools could be used in devised theatre. As mentioned in the previous chapter, devised theatre is a performance created collaboratively by actors, directors, and other artists. The techniques and approaches to developing the material in a devised production could benefit from perspectives applied in method acting. In a devised theatre piece, method actors may use their personal experiences and emotions to bring depth and authenticity to their characters, just as they would in a traditional play. However, the collaborative nature of devised theatre can allow for more experimentation and innovation in using method techniques as the actors and creators work together to create something truly unique.

With great success, directors and actors could also adopt Brechtian techniques, especially in devised theatre productions as Brechtian acting can be identified and classified in devised theatre by its use of the alienation effect, its focus on political consciousness, epic storytelling, and physical and vocal exploration. These elements can be adapted and incorporated into the collaborative and innovative processes of devised theatre to create powerful and impactful performances that encourage the audience to think critically about the world around them.

Devised theatre often incorporates a wide range of acting styles and techniques and through the discussion of the case studies it will become evident that a particular style, or even in combination or revised application, several elements in the six acting styles prove to be valuable tools in the process of creating a devised theatre production.

SECTION C: CASE STUDIES

In an attempt to reflect on the most preferred methods of characterisation that could be employed when constructing a devised theatre production, the processes of creation will be deconstructed to identify how suggested methods of acting come to the fore as theatrical aids in creating plot, structure, action, characters and more. Therefore, the goal of these case studies is to discuss the specific occurrences of all possible approaches to acting in the devised theatre production. In essence, the approaches to the acting styles contributing to this process of creating the theatre production are highly underestimated. The reason is that directors and actors often implement it instinctively. The theoretical approach of identifying these acting styles could assist in a more focused assessment of the director, actors, and production.

CHAPTER 4: *IN THE DARK*

The devised theatre production ⁴²*In the Dark* was created by a cast working in collaboration with Chris Vorster as the director. The narrative of this production follows anthropology students who visit caves as part of a field trip. They venture deep into a mysterious region haunted by the spirits of ancient cannibals. In search of specific rock paintings painted in human blood, they get lost, separated, and hunted. This production's whole theme and aim was to make the audience aware of what is happening in real life. The spirits were created on physicality and vocal sounds, allowing them to become characters in their own way allowing the 'realistic' characters to feed off their energy and give the characters that much-needed emotions. The characters are students, representing different kinds of people going on a journey to experience different things or to find themselves; the spirits become a metaphor for the things people get surrounded with in life. The play allows the audience members to create scenarios of what the spirits represent in their individual lives, as the characters are written in a way everyone can relate to.

As mentioned in chapter 2, the absence of a text at the start of the process is a significant element of devised theatre. When starting a devised piece, there are a few narrative alternatives. The cast could begin by collaborating on a general topic, an existing story, or autobiographical information. As styles overlap, blend, change, and reconfigure, all theatre continuously falls into one of two categories: realism or stylisation. Individual artists will continue experimenting with and cooperating on traditional and innovative levels. Collaboration is a unique type of theatre, using inspiration from any given place or time in creating a debut production. This style is in direct contrast to conventional theatre, where the text spreads out the plot, direction, characters, and details of the final performance. In conventional theatre the playwright and director were in the foreground; they had the overarching purpose of 'serving the play' – the play written by the playwright and directed by him. The result was text-based theatre. What adheres to conventional educational requirements? Although there is an opportunity for an individual translation of the general view and type of the piece, the rehearsals are restricted by what has effectively been chosen by the writer. In devised theatre, formulating is limitless, in which anything can be delivered

⁴² Link to *In the Dark* footage: https://ufsacza-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/r/personal/dampiesls_ufs_ac_za/Documents/Stella/THE%20HATE%20CRIME%20PROJECT%20mp4.mp4?csf=1&web=1&e=ce4Qs2

on any subject or point, taking thoughts from any piece of life and creating a new 'thing', and new idea, a new production of which the finished result is devised theatre, as mentioned earlier. Devised theatre encompasses creating new works or reinterpreting existing dramatic texts by groups of theatre practitioners, often in collaboration with visual arts, emerging technologies, and other performance forms like music and dance. In contrast to conventional theatre practices, devised theatre is often connected to live and performance art, emphasising a multidisciplinary and experimental approach (Heathfield, 2004; Goldberg, 1988, 2004; Wark, 2006)

In the Dark can be classified as a devised theatre production as it explores and uses methods used in a devising process, such as a single theme, plot, and character. As mentioned in chapter 2, devised theatre productions are created collaboratively by a group of performers, often without a traditional script. As a result, the approach to acting in a devised production can vary widely depending on the specific needs and goals of the production. However, certain characteristics are more readily present in the approach to acting in a devised theatre production.

Following will be a discourse analysis of selected stylistic acting choices:

4.1 CLASSICAL ACTING

⁴³Here are a few instances of classical acting that can be found in *In the Dark*:

4.1.1 Character development: This is one of the most crucial aspects of classical acting, which might be helpful in a newly written production. To create complex, multifaceted characters that feel fully realised, actors may employ traditional methods like psychological analysis, the development of a character's background story, and examining their goals and challenges. Classical acting is renowned for emphasising emotional realism and depth. The researcher's role in the particular production was that of the assistant director. The following discussion is from the basis of observing the creation process. Implementing the tool of exploring emotional realism and depth has shown to be helpful for the actors who dealt with challenging, emotionally charged material. As explained in the synopsis, the actors could

⁴³ The researcher was the play's assistant director, and therefore, she could observe the whole process.

draw from their own emotional experiences to add authenticity to their characters by employing traditional techniques like emotional memory and sensory memory. This characteristic was used as all actors had different frames of reference.

While observing the actors, some experienced fear of the dark or fear of being in enclosed spaces; this sensory connotation was then used for building their characters. Some of the actors did not have the same experience, which meant they reacted differently, thus influencing the dynamics between the actors and the characters, and eventually the dynamics between the characters. The director encouraged the actors to delve deep into their personal experiences and fears during the rehearsal process. Some actors revealed their genuine fear of the dark and being in enclosed spaces, while others did not share the same experiences. The director decided to utilise this disparity to create contrasting dynamics between the actors and their characters, enriching the performance with authenticity and diversity of responses. This worked very well as the actors were placed in an enclosed dark cave making the acting and environment very realistic throughout the play.

4.1.2. Vocal and physical control: Classical actors are trained to use their voices and bodies precisely and deliberately to convey meaning and emotion. This often involves mastering complex vocal techniques such as projecting, articulating, and modulating the voice and developing a keen awareness of physical posture, gesture, and movement. In this production, the actors used a combination of vocal and physical control, conveying the depth and intensity of the characters' grief convincingly, creating an immersive performance for the audience. This aspect of acting is a crucial tool for portraying characters effectively. By skillfully manipulating their voices and bodies, actors can bring emotions to life and profoundly engage audiences. The actors in *In the Dark* brought emotions to life, demonstrating the immense power of live theatre. The audience became active participants in the characters' emotional journey, moved by the authenticity and intensity of the performances. The placement of some of the actors in different places in the auditorium engaged the audience making them feel as if they are in the cave with the characters, and making the audience more aware of the careful craft of voice and body manipulation; the actors unlock the universal language of emotions, transcending barriers and forging a deep connection between the stage and the audience. On the other hand, the actors that portrayed the spirits made more use of physical control rather than vocality.

4.1.3. Textual analysis: Classical acting requires a deep engagement with the language and

structure of the play. Actors must understand the text's nuances, including its rhythm, meter, and rhetorical devices, to bring it to life on stage. In *In the Dark*, actors constantly talked about each developing new scene, time and again picking up on reoccurring nuances even if their characters were not in that particular scene. Throughout the rehearsal process, the entire cast observed and took notes.

4.1.4 Rhythm: In this production, the spirits had a rhythm based on their vocal sounds and movements. The actors also employed rhythm to emphasise the characters' emotional state and the intensity of the conflict by using silence. This allowed contrast between the spirits and actors. The following exercises allowed actors to explore rhythm and silence as powerful tools for expression in this devised theatre production. It encouraged them to be attuned to the nuances of timing, pacing, and dynamics, enhancing emotional depth and impact in their performances. By incorporating rhythm and silence, this production creates tension, anticipation, and release, capturing the audience's attention and immersing them in the unfolding theatrical experience.

In the process of exploring individual rhythm differentiations, the entire group could be asked to individually explore their individual rhythm within the space, after the group rhythm exercise. The actors could be asked to experiment with their body movements, sounds, or vocalisations, focusing on their unique rhythm. Actors should be encouraged to be aware of the subtleties in their rhythm, and play with different tempos, accents, and pauses. The connection between their rhythm and emotional state should constantly be emphasised, allowing the rhythm to reflect their inner worlds.

4.1.5 Meter: In this production, the meter adds to the play's thematic content as it allows the actors to become part of the rhythm of the play. In one of the scenes, a group of spirit characters portrays their enclosing of the human characters, but the actors cannot see them; the audience can. The scene is performed with a specific meter, utilising a structured pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables to create a rhythmic foundation that echoes the theme. This is achieved by the vocal noises and embodiment of the spirits and through the lines spoken by the other characters. The use of meter becomes a tool that guides and drives the movement through the scene.

4.1.6 Metaphorical devices: In this production, the spirits become metaphorical as their movements draw comparisons between seemingly unrelated happenings. This also brings vivid imagery to their performances. At the beginning of the play, the group of characters known as the spirits are present on the stage. These spirits then become alive as the actors enter the cave; this represents various emotions, memories, or psychological states. Rather

than portraying them as literal beings, they are embodied through metaphorical and symbolic representations. All spirits are characterised by distinct physicality and movement that metaphorically reflect their essence. The costuming and visual elements further enhance the metaphorical nature of the spirits and connect the human characters to the overall consciousness of the play without textual instruction.

4.1.7 Emotionally restrained performance: Classical acting is often characterised by a more restrained approach to emotion than other acting styles. Rather than relying on outward displays of emotion, classical actors often convey complex emotions through subtle gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections. Classical acting techniques frequently require rigorous voice and movement training, which may be extremely helpful in creating theatrical productions where actors are expected to develop their body language and vocal expressions as fundamental tools in creating their characters. The physical and vocal control that the actors *In the Dark* needed to express themselves fully and effectively as newly established characters, can be developed through the above-mentioned classical training tool. This was developed in the rehearsal process and was achieved through physical warm-ups, movement exploration, vocal training, and collaborative rehearsal sessions through which actors enhanced their expressive capabilities and brought depth and authenticity to the dynamics of the group throughout their performances. The actors used the embodiment and tone of voice that suited their characters best. The actors portraying the spirits excessively used exaggerated movement since they had no vocal lines. In comparison, the actors who played human roles did not necessarily use this aspect. Overall, using these two classical acting tools gave each character the ability to find a distinguishing individual personality within the bigger group. It contributed to establishing rich, multifaceted characters.

4.2 STANISLAVSKI'S SYSTEM

Stanislavski's acting approach was also identified. The Stanislavski approach strongly emphasises the actor's internal experience of a character's emotions and motivations. In a devised theatre production, actors used this technique to explore the inner lives of their characters and create a more nuanced and authentic performance. The Stanislavski method employs a characteristic called the memory of emotion to give the actor a more realistic emotional experience. In this production, actors used this characteristic to draw on their emotional experiences and give their characters a sense of authenticity in a created play. This was created through the following individual exercises:

In reflection and exploration, dedicated time was provided for actors to reflect on their emotional experiences and memories. This was done through guided exercises or journaling prompts that encouraged self-reflection. Actors delve into their emotional journeys, identifying specific moments, relationships, or experiences that resonate with the themes and characters of the created play. This exercise is repeated as characters grow, and actors must constantly be reminded of their individual characters' development against the developing plot's background.

During rehearsals, time for emotional exploration was created for actors to embody their characters and explore constant emotional development. It allowed actors to tap into their emotions and repetitively draw upon their experiences to bring depth and truth to the growing performances. Actors are encouraged to use their emotional responses as a foundation for character development. The responses are then adapted and shaped to fit the characters' circumstances and the play's narrative, becoming an ongoing process. Guidance and support to help actors navigate the fine line between personal vulnerability and the safety of their emotional well-being is constantly provided.

4.2.1 The 'magic if' technique: The magic if technique involves actors asking themselves, 'What would my character do if she was in this situation?' This approach was used for the actors to develop empathy and understanding for their characters, enhancing the authenticity of their performances. The magic if inspired actors to explore hypothetical scenarios related to their characters. This exploration can provide valuable information, allowing actors to gain insights into their characters and deliver more genuine performances. The actors experimented with different scenarios in the rehearsal process; from there, the actors understood and shaped their characters constantly. Strategic sessions were scheduled to facilitate collaborative investigations into potential situations. Improvisation was another helpful tool, enabling actors to create dynamic and layered performances by using the magic if to explore different circumstances and possibilities for their characters. By drawing from their own emotional experiences, actors added a sense of authenticity to their portrayals, offering both themselves and the audience a more authentic emotional experience. Internal question sessions were scheduled to stimulate ongoing reflections on possible experiences within the given circumstances.

4.2.2 The creation of a given circumstance: In a production, given circumstances deserve enormous focus in the constant dynamic process of creation. Given circumstances are the

specific details and conditions that actors use to understand their characters and the world they inhabit within a play or scene. These circumstances provide context and shape the choices actors make in their performances. Here are a few examples of given circumstances that were used in this production: Background and history of characters; the relationship between characters; the period and physical location of the story; and objectives and obstacles that occur for every character. This was done through the creation process of writing the text; as the text was developed, new ideas developed. As the rehearsal progressed, the text was shaped even more with new ideas that the actors brought to the stage.

4.2.3 Personal experiences and sense memory: Overall, Stanislavski's approach to acting emphasises the importance of emotional and psychological realism, collaboration, and the use of personal experiences and sense memory to create a sense of authenticity in the performance. It has significantly influenced modern acting techniques and remains a widely used approach to acting today. In this production, technical aspects such as lighting, sound, a smoke machine, and the set pieces added to the sense of memory. This was important in the production of *In the Dark* as the actors were driven through these aspects to reach their believable characters. Lighting was used to establish the tone and atmosphere of each scene. Different lighting colours, such as blue, amber, and white, lighting intensities, and different angles evoke specific emotions or create a particular ambiance that supports the themes and narrative of the production. Lighting was also used to guide the audience's attention to specific areas of the stage and the auditorium, highlighting the crucial moments and characters. The lighting was also used symbolically to represent abstract concepts and metaphors. For example, using contrasting lighting to represent the inner conflict of a character or utilising shadows to convey a semiotic reference to the spirits. No artificial sound was used in this production; the sound came from the actor's vocality. This technique helped the actors to internally connect to the character and ambiance of the production. A smoke machine was used at the beginning of the play to create an atmospheric effect, adding depth and texture to the visual elements on stage. The symbolic representation was that of fog, dust, or hidden truths. It pulled the actors into the setting in a deliberately realistic way.

This visually communicated the abstract ideas and enhanced the metaphorical aspects of the production, contributing to the overall impact and immersive experience of this devised theatre production, enhancing the storytelling, atmosphere, and emotional resonance for both the actors and the audience.

4.2.4 The importance of ensemble work: Stanislavski believed that successful performances

resulted from the entire ensemble working together rather than individual actors striving for individual excellence. As a result, his approach emphasised the importance of collaboration and ensemble work. In this production, the actors used this aspect as they used group discussions, collaborated, and performed warm-up sessions together. All these aspects added to the timing and rhythm of the play. The timing and rhythm of the play were created as a unified group through exercises in the warm-up process. In the warm-up process, the ensemble group had to find a collective sense of timing and rhythm. They stood in a circle as a group, experimenting with pauses, accelerations, or decelerations in their movements and vocalisations, mirroring the ebb and flow of vocal sounds and lighting changes.

4.3 MEISNER'S TECHNIQUE

4.3.1 Improvisation: One of the most important aspects of Meisner's strategy is improvisation as a tool for developing emotional and psychological authenticity, which adds to Stanislavski's given circumstances and magic if in the performance. Improvisation helps the actors create authentic and engaging performances that resonate with the audience. This happens because improvisation arises unplanned from thought and action that cannot be veiled by prior planning. This valuable tool was identified in this production by improvising scenes and interactions regularly; actors responded truthfully and spontaneously to their environment and towards other actors within the scenes. This tool proved to be adequate for the actors when exploring characters in depth, allowing them to create authentic and engaging performances that resonated with the audience. This was established in the play as the actors invited the audience into their journeys inside the cave.

4.3.2 Active listening: Meisner's technique emphasises the importance of active listening and being fully present in the moment. An example of this could be identified when the actors employ active listening to genuinely engage with the interview material and respond spontaneously to their fellow actors during scenes. This allows for authentic and organic interactions, capturing the essence of the documentary-style format.

4.3.3 Repetition: This technique involves two actors repeating a phrase or action to each other until they find a truthful and spontaneous response. By focusing on the moment-to-moment interaction between actors, repetition can help actors create authentic and engaging performances. This tool was used in multiple scenes to urge the actors to drive their characters forward and create a sense of overall urgency, especially when characters took their actions into the auditorium.

4.3.4 Emotional preparation: Meisner believed that actors should focus on their emotional preparation to create a sense of authenticity in the performance. This involves identifying the character's emotional life and using personal experiences and sense memory to connect with those emotions. In this production, this was used to create deep emotional connections between actors. This was achieved in rehearsals as the director talked them through vigorous exercises, for example: The actors needed to recall personal memories, such as sense memories, to evoke specific emotions and then apply those emotions to the given scene or character. If a character in the scene was experiencing anxiety, the actors might tap into their memories of anxiety and channel that emotion into their performance. These exercises helped actors tap into their emotional experiences and respond truthfully to their scene partners. By creating this deep emotional connection between actors, the performances were authentic and engaging, resonating with the audience on a deep emotional level. This was achieved during rehearsals and recalled as the actors prepared for the performances.

4.3.5 The importance of specificity: Meisner believed specificity was essential to create a sense of authenticity in the performance. This involves focusing on specific details of the character's situation and using those details to inform the emotional and psychological choices in the performance. In this production, this aspect was used as the actors focused on adding specific detail when they were, for instance, climbing into the cave. Not only did it contribute to the actors' transition into characters influenced by space, but it also created truthful anticipation in the minds of the audience. Furthermore, these tangible identifications assisted the actors in handling consistency.

4.3.6 Use of the imagination: Meisner believed that imagination was a powerful tool for creating authenticity in the performance. He encouraged actors to use their imaginations to create vivid sensory experiences and fully inhabit the play's world; this aspect also relates to Stanislavski's magic if. In *In the Dark*, the actors could not recall certain emotions or some actors had never necessarily been in similar situations; therefore, they used their imaginations so they could play the scenario and emotions truthfully. This was achieved throughout the rehearsal process through the actors asking the director and fellow actors questions on unfamiliarities, and the whole cast talking about these unfamiliarities for all cast members to orientate themselves towards better understandings.

4.4 PRACTICAL AESTHETICS

4.4.1 The use of language and communication: Patsy Rodenburg's practical aesthetics is an

approach to acting that emphasises the connection between an actor's voice and body to create authentic and emotionally impactful performances. This aspect focuses on the clarity and intentionality of the language. This was used in the production as it involved working with the actors to understand the nuances of the text and to develop a clear and consistent vocal delivery that conveyed the piece's intended meaning and emotional tone throughout. This technique was also applied through the use of breath and physicality, specifically with regard to the spirits. This aspect was used before every rehearsal and performance. The actors did vocal and physical warm-ups as well as breathing exercises, for example: Doing tongue twisters or consonant-vowel combinations during the warm-up process help considerably with articulation. The complexity can gradually increase. The actors must pay attention to the tongue, lips, and jaw placement to ensure clear and distinct articulation. This exercise helps develop vocal dexterity and promotes clear communication. Before every rehearsal and performance, all actors need to stand feet shoulder-width apart and relax their bodies. In that position, the actor takes deep breaths through the nose, feeling the air filling the lungs. As one exhales through one's mouth, it releases any tension or stress, allowing one's breath to flow smoothly and thoroughly. This deep breathing exercise needs to be repeated several times, focusing on expanding breath capacity and finding a sense of groundedness and presence.

4.4.2 Presence and physicality: Rodenburg believes that an actor's voice and body are intimately connected and that by focusing on presence and physicality, actors can create more powerful and emotionally resonant performances. For example, in this production, actors portraying the spirits were tasked with creating physically demanding movement sequences. By utilising Rodenburg's approach to gain presence and physicality, actors were better executing these movements while still maintaining vocal control and emotional connection to their characters. The actors portraying human characters focused on deepening their breath to sustain their energy and presence. Through these techniques, actors developed a deeper understanding of their characters, and the emotions that drive them, leading to more robust and engaging performances for the audience. This involved working with the actors to develop a physical presence and to use their bodies to convey the emotional and psychological states of the characters. The actors used physical gestures, language, and movement sessions, separate from the production itself, so that actors, in character, can establish themselves with a focus on language, movement, and listening skills. The actors achieved results with regard to this aspect of Rodenburg by using the following exercises in rehearsals: The actors practiced moving freely in the space and responding spontaneously to prompts or stimuli, allowing the actors' bodies to follow their instincts and impulses, exploring different levels, tempos, and movement qualities.

Practising scenes or interactions without relying on spoken language allowed the actors to communicate non-verbally. The actors were encouraged to focus on using their bodies and physicality to convey meaning, emotions, and intentions. This showed that communicating effectively only through gestures, facial expressions, posture, and movement is possible.

4.4.3 Listening and responding: Rodenburg's technique emphasises the importance of active listening and responding in performance. This technique was used by encouraging the actors to listen to each other and respond actively at any given moment; the performance became more dynamic and responsive to the audience's needs too. In rehearsals, the following exercise helped the actors to achieve this:

Pairing up with a scene partner and engaging in a random conversation helped the actors with active listening by entirely focusing on the partner's words, body language, and emotions. Full attention is needed without interrupting or formulating responses in the minds of the actors. Actors needed to respond genuinely and authentically based on what they had heard and understood.

This exercise helps develop deep listening skills and fosters a more responsive and connected interaction. The practical aesthetics technique was valuable for the actors and directors working on this production. By focusing on the clarity and intentionality of the language, the physicality of the performance, and the importance of active listening and responding, the performance can become more engaging and impactful for audiences.

4.5 LEE STRASBERG'S METHOD ACTING

4.5.1 Sense memory: Lee Strasberg's method acting is a technique that emphasises the importance of emotional recall and sense memory to create realistic and truthful performances. In a newly written, devised theatre production, Strasberg's approach was valuable for actors in creating emotionally engaging and authentic performances. One way in which Strasberg's method of acting was applied in this production, was through emotional recall. Strasberg believed that actors could access the emotions of their characters by tapping into their memories and experiences. For example, actors were tasked with creating a character that has experienced being stuck in a cave. The actors had to draw on their trauma memories to create a more emotionally authentic performance. By recalling their own emotional experiences, the actors were able to more accurately portray the emotional depth and complexity of their characters; this was done by having individual sessions with the actors, doing the following exercise: The actors engaged in the senses by focusing on the sensory

details of their surroundings. The actors closed their eyes and took a few deep breaths to centre themselves. Through this, they gradually brought attention to each of the senses, one by one. Noticing the sounds around them, the smells in the air, the temperature on their skin, the taste in their mouths, and the textures they could feel, enhanced their perceptual connections. This exercise helped develop a heightened sensory awareness, allowing the actors to access sensory details when creating and performing their characters.

4.5.2 Improvisation: Strasberg's approach emphasises the importance of improvisation and spontaneity in performance. This can be particularly relevant where actors may need to respond at any moment to unexpected situations or changes in the performance. This aspect was used in *In the Dark* by encouraging actors to stay present and engaged in the moment; Strasberg's approach assisted in creating a dynamic and responsive performance that was also attuned to the audience's needs. Another example that adds to the sense of memory is that the actors were tasked with creating a character with a strong emotional connection to a specific location: a cave, in this production. The actors had to focus on the sensory details of the location to recall the emotions associated with it, for instance, the different reactions when being in a dusty place. By using their senses to connect with the memory, the actors created a more emotionally resonant performance, such as what dust feels or smells like and what reaction the actor experienced being trapped in a dark cave for a long time.

4.6 BRECHTIAN METHOD

4.6.1 Alienation: The Brechtian method is characterised by its emphasis on alienation, which aims to make the audience aware that they are viewing a performance rather than reality. This strategy is accomplished by breaching the fourth wall illusion and informing the audience that they are witnessing an event using techniques such as a direct address, songs, and narration. In *In the Dark*, the fourth wall was broken as specific scenes took place in the auditorium, which means it was a direct address towards the audience. The direct address forced the audience to be involved in the production. The actors addressed the audience directly, asking questions and making statements that challenged their preconceptions about the discussed topic. The actors broke the fourth wall throughout the production and directly addressed the audience several times. They provided contextual information, delivered commentary, and intentionally reminded the audience that they were witnessing a theatrical performance. This technique disrupts the illusion of realism and prompts the audience to think critically about the themes and issues presented. Another way Brechtian alienation was

implemented was when distinctive physicality was created by the spiritual characters rather than fully embodying realistic characters. Through the use of and focussing on gestural and symbolic qualities of characters in the performances, a sense of theatricality and distance was created, preventing the audience from becoming emotionally immersed in the performance.

4.6.2 Unconventional characterisations: The Brechtian method can also challenge traditional storytelling and character development forms. Because of the need to emphasise the theatricality and artifice of the performance, actors experimented with non-linear narratives, multiple perspectives, and unconventional characterisations. This aspect was used to create a more dynamic and engaging performance that challenged audience expectations and encouraged them to think critically about the themes and ideas presented in the play. The spirits had no spoken dialogue and only communicated through sounds, which helped create a non-linear narrative, allowing the audience to create their individual resemblance with the content of the production.

4.6.3. Social and political engagement: The Brechtian method can create a more socially and politically engaged performance. By encouraging actors to be aware of the social and political context of the play and to use the performance as a platform for critical reflection and dialogue, the performance can become more socially relevant and impactful. This aspect of Brecht was not implied in this production. Overall, the Brechtian method was still valuable in creating a thought-provoking and engaging devised theatre production.

To conclude this case study, a visual summary of the most crucial acting tools that contributed significantly to the creation of a devised theatre production will follow at the end of chapter 3.

CHAPTER 5: *AROUND*

The second case study will focus on an adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, titled *Around*, directed by DeBeer Cloete and Dion van Niekerk. *La Ronde* is a play about sexual morality and the class ideology of its day through successive experiences between pairs of characters. The original text features ten love scenes involving different couples; the setting is Vienna in the 1890s. There are ten characters, and they appear in two related situations (counting the last one as adjacent to the first). The prostitute and the soldier are the first characters in the play. The soldier and the parlour maid features next, and so on, until the play circles back to the prostitution in the first scene. The spread of syphilis was the original subtext of Schnitzler's play, but most contemporary adaptations emphasise portraying individuals in vulnerable situations.

Around was developed through collaborative improvisation and experimentation rather than standard scriptwriting. Therefore, *Around* can be seen as devised theatre even though it was developed from existing written material. It becomes a new entity that was workshopped, written, and collectively created by reconfiguring thematic structures and semiotic constructs as a brand new creative output. The pre-existing text leads to some exciting insights and discussion of aspects that are still relevant today, such as exploring the nature of human desires. From that point of view, the characters are modernised and put in a different environment. The new narrative reflects the modern South African society. Relatable characters take the stage, as it is revealed that they are part of a never-ending cycle of sex, addiction, and power. Each scene flows effortlessly into the next, giving the characters and actors a sense of continuity and unity, and its circular design encourages a sense of community ownership.

5.1 CLASSICAL ACTING

As mentioned in chapter 3, classical acting methods typically refer to a set of techniques actors use to portray characters in classical plays, particularly those from Greek and Shakespearean traditions. These techniques often focus on vocal and physical training, a deep understanding of the text, and an emphasis on naturalism and emotional truth in performance. However, the researcher could not identify or classify prominent classical acting tools implemented in *Around. La Ronde* and later the creation of *Around* was influenced by

Modernist and Expressionist theatre, which emphasised experimental techniques and rejected Naturalism. The play's circular structure, which creates a sense of unity among the characters and actors, could be seen as an early example of the collaborative and experimental characteristics that would later become central to Avant garde theatre.

5.2 STANISLAVSKI'S SYSTEM

The following characteristics of the Stanislavski system were identified:

5.2.1 Psychological Realism: One of the critical characteristics of Stanislavski's approach to acting is the emphasis on psychological realism. In this production, Stanislavski's psychological realism is employed to delve deep into the characters' emotional journeys, revealing their inner conflicts and vulnerabilities. In *Around*, each character's actions and choices in their sexual encounters can be analysed in terms of their psychological motivations. Actors using the Stanislavski system would delve deep into understanding the characters' desires, fears, and insecurities, which shape their behaviour throughout the play. The production creates a compelling and psychologically rich experience for the audience through meticulous character development and a focus on truthful portrayal. Actors would be encouraged to analyse the characters profoundly and explore their motivations and emotions to create a sense of truth on stage. The production places significant emphasis on establishing the given circumstances of each character in the play. The actors explore the characters' backgrounds, relationships, and societal roles. They consider social class, gender expectations, and personal histories to create their performances. This attention to the characters' circumstances enhances psychological realism and provides a solid foundation for their actions and interactions within the play. Inner monologues also add to psychological realism. During rehearsals, the actors develop detailed inner monologues for their characters. These internal dialogues cultivate an understanding of the characters' thoughts, motivations, and desires, allowing for more nuanced and psychologically truthful portrayal. The actors use these inner monologues as inspiration and guidance, bringing a depth of inner life to their performances.

5.2.2 Magic if: The concept of the magic if is a fundamental principle of Stanislavski's acting system. It involves the actor imagining what they would do in the same circumstances as their character, allowing them to create a sense of truth and emotional authenticity in their performances. In *Around* the play's exploration of the sexual and psychological relationships

between its characters could be seen as an early example of the type of psychologically driven narrative that would become central to the development of Stanislavski's system. In terms of the magic if, the play's circular structure and its depiction of characters engaging in sexual encounters with each other could provide a basis for actors to imagine themselves in the same circumstances as their characters. For example, the actor playing the role of the prostitute may use the concept of magic if to imagine how she would feel and behave if she was in the same situation as the character, engaging in a sexual encounter. The actor could create a powerful and convincing performance by placing himself in the character's shoes and using his imagination to create a sense of truth and emotional authenticity. For actors to engage truthfully with characters opposite them in scenes, an intensified approach to the magic if could be followed: Actors could imagine themselves in the roles opposite them for a deeper understanding of their own reactions to that opposing character. As mentioned, the given circumstances add to the understanding and development of the character, making it possible to incorporate the magic if much earlier in the process. Another way could be through the scene or character they were working on, eliciting a specific emotion relevant to a personal memory. The actor's eyes are closed to vividly re-imagine the event's details, including the people involved, the setting, and the emotions experienced. Allowing themselves to fully immerse in the emotional state of that memory and then transfer those emotions into their character's circumstances, helps in creating a real-life character.

This exercise helps one access genuine emotions and infuse them into one's performance.

5.2.3 Sense memory: This technique involves recalling sensory experiences from the actor's life to evoke emotions and create a sense of truth on stage. In *Around*, actors could use sense memory to imagine themselves in the same circumstances as their characters and create emotional authenticity in their performances. For example, each scene in *Around* carries atmosphere and mood. Actors can use sense memory to recall personal experiences or environments that evoke similar atmospheres. If a scene has a sombre and melancholic tone, the actors can tap into memories of loss or sadness to create the appropriate emotional atmosphere. By connecting with their sense memory, the texture of the floor beneath their feet, the scent of perfume in the air, the sound of elegant music, and the taste of champagne the actors can create a vivid and believable world for themselves and the audience.

5.2.4 Ensemble work: Stanislavski emphasised the importance of ensemble work in his approach to acting. Actors would collaborate to create a cohesive and unified performance and support each other on stage. An example of this is identified as *Around* featuring a circular

structure and interlocking relationships between its characters. The play can be seen as a provocative play that explores themes of desire, power, and social dynamics through a series of interconnected sexual encounters. Therefore, the ensemble cast, with the directors, has to discuss the themes and different characters, so that all actors can have the same understanding, connections, and chemistry among the characters by rehearsing and exploring the scenes that involve multiple characters.

5.2.5 Relaxation and concentration: Another vital element of Stanislavski's approach applicable to the devised theatre is the use of relaxation and concentration techniques to help actors stay focused and present on stage. This is essential in *Around* as the play requires actors to navigate complex emotional and sexual dynamics between characters, also keeping their focus as they move from the auditorium into their scenes. The actors can achieve this by focusing on their objectives to drive their characters' actions and intentions. They identify their characters' objectives in every scene and concentrate on them intensely. By concentrating on their characters' objectives, the actors create a sense of purpose and urgency in their performances, heightening the dramatic tension and providing clear motivation for their actions against the backdrop of many different views, values, and beliefs in all the other scenes as parts of a much bigger whole. Actors can focus on their breathing, allowing it to become slow and steady, grounding themselves in the present moment. This practice could help the actors achieve a state of relaxation and mental clarity, allowing them to fully inhabit their characters and respond truthfully to the unfolding events of the play.

5.3 MEISNER'S TECHNIQUE

The Meisner technique can be utilised in *Around* to bring depth and authenticity to the characters' relationships and interactions. Here are some ways in which Meisner's technique can be applied:

5.3.1 Emotional preparation: Actors using the Meisner technique would engage in thorough emotional preparation for their characters. They would explore their characters' desires, motivations, and emotional lives, enabling them to bring truth and authenticity to their performances. In *Around*, every scene involves two characters engaging in a romantic or sexual encounter. The actors could have prepared individually by recalling personal experiences or memories related to the scene's emotional content. This would help them tap into the emotional truth of their characters and create a more authentic performance. This

emotional preparation can help actors delve into the complex emotional dynamics of the characters as they navigate sexual encounters and relationships. As the play progresses and characters move from one scene to the next with different partners, actors could utilise emotional preparation to smoothly transition from one emotional state to another. This allows for a seamless flow of emotions and reactions throughout the performance.

5.3.2 Repetition and active listening: Repetition exercises, a cornerstone of the Meisner technique, can be employed to develop a sense of authenticity and connection between actors. Through repetition, actors can focus on actively listening to their scene partners and responding spontaneously at every new moment. This approach can enhance the organic flow of the characters' interactions in the play and foster genuine connections. In *Around*, characters engage in intimate encounters with each other, often involving physical gestures and actions. Actors could utilise the repetition technique to explore and refine these physical interactions. By repeating the same action or gesture while focusing on their partners' responses, actors can deepen their connection and create a more authentic and organic exchange. This approach allows them to respond spontaneously and naturally to their partners while heightening the emotional and physical dynamics of the scene. Active listening is crucial in capturing the nuances and subtext within the text. Actors can use this technique to fully absorb their scene partners' words, tone, and emotional cues, responding truthfully at any given moment. For example, in a scene where two characters engage in a heated argument, active listening can convey the escalating tension and contribute to authentic responses. By actively listening to their partner's words and intentions, the actors can respond genuinely and unscripted, heightening the dramatic impact and creating a more believable exchange. Exercises that might have been used in rehearsals before performances are the following: Pairing up with a scene partner, and standing facing each other. Start by mirroring each other's physical movements. For example, if one person raises their arm, the other should mirror that movement. Focus on observing the partner's actions and responding in the same way. Add emotional nuances to movements as the exercise progresses, incorporating Meisner's repetition technique. Listen actively to a partner's physical and emotional cues, and respond authentically.

Another exercise is to sit facing a scene partner and choose a simple word or phrase, such as 'I love you' or 'I am sorry'. Take turns repeating the phrase back and forth, focusing on maintaining a connection and listening closely to how the partner delivers the words. Actors need to pay attention to tone, inflection, and emotional shifts. The repetition should become

a genuine exchange, allowing a partner's delivery to influence the responses.

5.3.3 Moment-to-moment authenticity: Meisner's emphasis on moment-to-moment authenticity encourages actors to stay present and respond truthfully to impulses and the circumstances unfolding on stage. This approach allows for natural and spontaneous reactions, enhancing the realism and believability of the characters' encounters and interactions in *Around*. Here are a few examples: Meisner's technique would encourage the actors to listen and respond to each other's every single action and specific words in the seduction scene between the count and the young girl giving them the chance to respond intuitively. By staying fully present and engaged, the actors can convey their characters' genuine emotions and reactions, creating a more realistic and authentic portrayal of the intimate process revealed in this particular scene. In the scene where the actress and the count engage in a romantic encounter, Meisner's moment-to-moment authenticity can heighten the tension and chemistry between the characters. By focusing on the subtle nuances of their interaction, the actors can create a sense of spontaneity and unpredictability, making the audience feel as though they are witnessing a genuine tangible connection unfold in front of them. When the soldier and the young wife meet, Meisner's technique can be used to explore the power dynamics and emotional shifts within their encounter. By being fully present and responsive to each other's actions, the actors can tap into their characters' underlying emotions and intentions, allowing for a more nuanced and authentic portrayal of their interaction. In the scene between the young wife and the husband, moment-to-moment authenticity can be employed to reveal their relationship's complexities. By staying in the moment and responding truthfully to each other's words and actions, the actors can convey the underlying tensions, desires, and frustrations between the characters, making their interaction more layered and authentic.

5.3.4 Subtext and emotional substitution: Through Meisner's technique actors learn to explore the subtext of their lines, focusing on what is honestly being communicated beyond the literal words. In *Around*, this technique can help actors uncover the underlying emotions and intentions in their characters' dialogue, bringing depth and complexity to their performances and enhancing the underlying theme of vulnerability and human desire. Additionally, emotional substitution can evoke genuine emotions by connecting the character's shifting circumstances and emotions with personal experiences or memories. This aspect of Meisner's technique could be applied in rehearsals by all actors so they could understand their character, as subtext involves delving into a character's underlying motivations and thoughts, going beyond the surface-level dialogue. For example, in the scene

where two characters are engaged in flirtatious banter, the actors might explore what each character truly wants from the interaction instead of simply delivering lines. Are they seeking validation, power, intimacy, or trying to hide vulnerability? By understanding the subtext, the actors can imbue their lines with layers of meaning and create a more nuanced and emotionally rich scene. Emotional substitution involves finding personal connections to a character's emotions by drawing from the actor's own experiences. The actor substitutes their own emotions for those of the character to evoke authentic reactions. This technique could be influential in the creation of *Around*, where vulnerable emotions and desires are central.

5.3.5 Relationship development: The Meisner technique strongly emphasises developing relationships between actors. This can be particularly beneficial in *Around*, as the characters' encounters and relationships form the play's core. Through the following exercises in rehearsals, actors could establish trust, intimacy, and a strong connection with their scene partners.

Actors could create a detailed backstory for their characters' relationships, including how they met, their history, and the significant moments they have shared. This exercise helps establish a strong foundation and deepens the understanding of the relationship dynamics, enhancing the authenticity of the performances.

Actors could furthermore perform a scene using only emotional exchanges. They communicate solely through emotions without relying on words. This exercise could help actors focus on non-verbal communication, body language, and the emotional energy between characters.

Utilising the Meisner technique in an adaptation of *Around*, actors can bring emotional truth, spontaneity, and depth to the characters' interactions, enhancing the authenticity and impact of the play.

5.4 PRACTICAL AESTHETICS

Patsy Rodenburg's practical aesthetics can be employed in *Around* in several ways. Here are a few possible examples:

5.4.1 Voice and breathing: Rodenburg's approach strongly emphasises voice and breathing to develop a deep connection between an actors' emotional life and their vocal expression. In *Around*, actors could use voice and breathing to explore their characters' emotional and psychological dynamics, allowing them to embody their desires, motivations, and emotions

fully through their vocal utterances. Rodenburg emphasises the importance of voice projection to ensure it reaches the audience clearly and effectively. In *Around*, dialogue plays a significant role; actors can use voice exercises and techniques to project their voices to the back of the theatre without straining or losing clarity, for instance:

Short phrases or sentences could be repeated several times, emphasising a different word or syllable to explore different vocal qualities. The actors must experiment with varying pitch, volume, rhythm, and tone to convey different meanings and intentions with the exact words. Rodenburg's approach to breathing helps actors develop a strong connection between their voices, breathing, and emotions. *Around* explores the complexities of human relationships and desires. Voice control serves characters as representational instruments of deepest emotions, desires, and needs. By consciously controlling voice and breathing actors can enhance the intensity and subtleties of their characters' performance. The following exercise can be used during warm-up to help achieve this:

The actors sit or stand comfortably and take a few deep breaths to relax. Then inhale slowly and deeply through the nose, counting to four, holding the breath for a count of four, exhaling slowly through the mouth, counting to eight. The actor repeats this pattern, gradually increasing the inhalation, holding, and exhalation count, aiming for a smooth, controlled breath cycle.

5.4.2 Physical presence: Another critical aspect of Rodenburg's approach is a physical presence. Actors are encouraged to develop a strong awareness of their bodies and to use physicality to communicate their characters' emotions and intentions. In the play, actors could use physical presence to create a sense of physical intimacy and sexual tension between their characters while also conveying the psychological dynamics at play. Here are a few practical examples: In *Around*, actors can embody this principle by firmly planting their feet on the ground, creating a stable base. This grounded stance can help actors portray their characters with strength, stability, and conviction. Actors could also experiment with physical gestures, movements, and postures that align with their characters' personalities, emotions, and relationships. By incorporating intentional physical choices, actors can bring a heightened physical presence to their performances, making their characters more vivid and engaging for the audience. Spatial awareness is of great importance and actors could utilise this principle by being conscious of their spatial relationships with other actors during the interlocking scenes. They can adjust their physical proximity, body language, and use of space to reflect the dynamics of the characters' relationships, creating a visually compelling and emotionally charged performance.

5.4.3 The three circles: Rodenburg's approach also emphasises the importance of the three circles: the inner circle, which represents an actor's private emotional life; the outer circle, which represents the actor's public persona; and the middle circle, which represents the interface between the two. The actors could use the three circles to create a layered and nuanced performance, allowing them to fully embody their characters' emotional lives while also navigating the complex social dynamics of the inner circle:

The inner circle is characterised by intense focus and introspection. Actors in the inner circle might exhibit deep emotional vulnerability or be engrossed in their thoughts and feelings. In *Around*, this could be demonstrated when characters share their innermost desires, fears, or secrets during encounters. For example, if a character confesses his true feelings or exposes a hidden aspect of his personality, he would be operating in the inner circle.

The outer circle: The outer circle represents a more extroverted and expressive state. Actors in the outer circle tend to be larger-than-life, energetic, and actively engaged with their surroundings.

The middle circle: The middle circle balances both the inner and outer circles. It embodies a sense of groundedness, authenticity, and active listening. Actors in the middle circle genuinely connect with their scene partners and respond empathetically to the situations. In *Around*, this could be exemplified when characters engaged in more intimate conversations, revealing their vulnerabilities while maintaining a sense of groundedness and authenticity.

It is important to note that while the three circles can offer insights into character dynamics, they are not rigid categories, and actors may transition between them depending on the circumstances of the scene. The three circles can be helpful for actors to deepen their understanding of their characters and enhance their overall performances. In *Around*, the focus could be on developing aspects true to the middle circle for the actors to move closer to portraying the thematic essence of vulnerability and desire, and inner human needs.

5.5 LEE STRASBERG'S METHOD ACTING

Lee Strasberg's technique, also known as method acting, can be utilised in *Around* to deepen the actors' emotional connections to their characters and enhance the realism of their performances. Here are some ways in which this technique can be applied:

5.5.1 Emotional memory: This technique strongly emphasises the use of emotional memory. Actors would draw upon their own experiences and memories to connect with the emotions of their characters. In *Around*, actors could utilise emotional memory to access their characters' complex emotions, desires, and conflicts during the intimate encounters depicted in the play. Let us consider the scene between the reverend and the wife. In this scene, the reverend and the wife meet and engage in a romantic encounter. The actors could use the emotional memory technique to tap into their memories and emotions related to love, desire, or vulnerability to bring truthfulness and depth to their performances. By connecting with those emotions and bringing them into the development of their characters, the actors could create more authentic portrayals of their characters' emotional states.

5.5.2 Sense memory: This acting tool encourages actors to engage their senses and create a vivid sensory experience to evoke emotions and create truthful performances. Actors can use sense memory to recreate the physical sensations associated with the characters' experiences in *Around*, such as touch, smell, taste, and sight. This can contribute to a more immersive and authentic portrayal of the character. Here are some examples:

When characters are embracing or holding hands in an intimate moment, sensations of gentle touch or caress during a romantic encounter can be created when the character feels the texture of an object or the warmth of another person's skin.

The scent of perfume or cologne worn by characters can evoke attraction or create a particular mood, as can the smell of flowers or grass in outdoor scenes. The scent of food being cooked or consumed, such as a character enjoying the aroma of freshly brewed coffee can create a tangible connection between physical sensations and emotions.

More examples include characters sharing a meal and commenting on the flavours of the food. Descriptions of the taste of a particular dish, like a character savouring a delicious dessert could easily connect to the bitter taste of disappointment or regret that characters may experience during their interactions.

Detailed descriptions of characters' physical appearances, clothing, and facial expressions could also enhance visible correlations such as observations of characters' body language, gestures, and movements during their interactions.

In *Around*, the sensory experiences may not be as explicitly portrayed as in a novel or a film. Sense memory becomes the tool through which the actors strengthen their focussed dialogue and psychological aspects.

5.6 BRECHTIAN METHOD

Here are a few aspects that can be successfully utilised in the creation of characters in *Around* as a devised production:

5.6.1 The alienation effect: *Around* maintains a certain level of detachment by presenting the characters as archetypes rather than fully developed individuals, focusing more on the social commentary and behavioural patterns rather than the psychology of individual characters. An example is addressing the audience directly as the actors are placed in the audience, breaking the fourth wall. *Around* employs a circular structure in which characters engage in sexual encounters with different partners. This constant interchange of roles disrupts the audience's emotional investment in individual characters, highlighting the interchangeable nature of human relationships and challenging conventional ideas of love and intimacy.

5.6.2 Multiple perspectives: *Around* had a multi-perspective approach to storytelling, presenting different viewpoints and challenging the audience's preconceived notions. Each scene showcases a new encounter between characters, offering multiple perspectives on relationships, sexuality, and societal norms. This fragmentation allows the audience to see different facets of human interaction and questions traditional notions of love and intimacy. These Brechtian theatrical approaches could be successfully utilised by the actors to connect with their audiences. The awareness of structural choices supporting the thematic essence of the play will help actors to use such structures as aids in creating the required character presence. Here are a few examples in *Around*:

Around consists of ten interrelated scenes, each depicting a sexual encounter between two characters. The circular structure of the play allows for multiple perspectives by presenting the same events from different angles. Each scene builds upon the previous one, creating a chain of interconnected stories. The circular structure goes as far as to engage with the set design as a visible platform to comment on the overarching theme.

In every scene, the focus shifts from one character to another, giving equal weight to both participants in the encounter. This shifting perspective disrupts the traditional narrative hierarchy and invites the audience to consider different viewpoints and experiences.

Characters from previous scenes often reappear in subsequent encounters, establishing connections and relationships between them. This technique highlights the interdependence and consequences of human interactions, emphasising the larger social context beyond individual stories.

The various social classes, professions, and gender dynamics throughout the play are contrasting. By presenting diverse perspectives, the actor invites the audience to critically examine each encounter's power dynamics, societal norms, and prejudices.

To conclude this case study, a visual summary of the most crucial acting tools that each of these acting methods mentioned above, as well as techniques that gave actors the ability to work successfully, will follow at the end of chapter 3.

CHAPTER 6: THE HATE CRIME PROJECT

The last case study will focus on *The Hate Crime Project*⁴⁴, inspired by *The Laramie Project* written in 2000 by Moisés Kaufman of the Tectonic Theater Company. The objective of *The Hate Crime Project* was to encourage discussion and provide an opportunity for audiences to hear many different opinions from those most related to murder victim Matthew Shepard. The creation of this devised theatre production started with recent events and historical documents by a group of third-year drama students from the University of the Free State, directed by DeBeer Cloete and Dion van Niekerk. *The Hate Crime Project* is a documentary-style drama in which the narrative addresses hate crimes in South Africa through a fictitious instance of collective rape in the small Free State town of Heilbron.

Bicknell (2011:30-33) claims that a tested technique to start the creative process is to adapt an existing fictional story. Artists start with a narrative they already know and reorder the plot or change the characters' expectations as they create. What is developed is a composition that the audience is familiar with, but the outcome will still surprise them. This type of performance can go in one of two directions: either the actor sticks closely to the original plot, risking creating an overly literary, reverent, and possibly protected play, or he adapts it more liberally, risking changing its emphasis, rewriting some of the text, and creating an entirely new creative output. (Bicknell, 2011:30-33.)

The students, alongside directors DeBeer Cloete and Dion van Niekerk, collaborated on how the text would be applicable in a South African context. The aim was to find relevance and motivation to adapt the play to a South African context. This process offers a guideline for the creative flow while noting thoughts on devising a beginning stage, creating material, and structuring and planning the performance. Devised theatre submits functional suggestions for use in practice. Not only does the new narrative become important, but the structure, the plot, the set, and even the particular style of the production engage in conversation with the message beyond the word-narrative.

⁴⁴ Link to the footage: https://ufsacza-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/r/personal/dampiesls_ufs_ac_za/Documents/Stella/THE%20HATE%20CRIME%20PROJECT%20mp4.mp4?csf=1&web=1&e=ce4Qs2

In *The Hate Crime Project*, various acting styles can be employed to support the actors in their attempted portrayal of the characters and how they convey the themes and emotions within the narrative.

6.1 CLASSICAL ACTING

The Hate Crime Project draws heavily from documentary-style storytelling and verbatim theatre and focuses on portraying real people and their experiences rather than employing the stylised techniques associated with classical acting. The play is constructed as a series of interviews and monologues, where the actors portray multiple characters and share their perspectives on certain events.

6.2 STANISLAVSKI'S SYSTEM

Stanislavski's acting techniques, particularly his system of realistic acting used to enhance the authenticity and depth of the characters can be applied to the performances in *The Hate Crime Project*. Here are some aspects of Stanislavski's techniques that were identified in the portrayal of characters:

6.2.1 Given circumstances: *The Hate Crime Project*, which is a docudrama based on several events and actors portraying a few different characters, the actors needed to grasp the context, social dynamics, and historical background of the Free State town. This understanding allows them to make informed choices about how their characters would have reacted to the events unfolding in the play. There are several practical examples of given circumstances that actors can utilise, such as real-life characters, social dynamics, and media influence:

The events in *The Hate Crime Project* is not based on a specific event that happened in South Africa. Actors should therefore first study the individuals they portray, research their backgrounds, personalities, and relationships within the original given context. Actors must comprehend the relationships between various characters and groups, such as university students, members of the community, law enforcement, and the media within their newly created context. This understanding will help actors develop authentic interactions and conflicts within the new play.

The media played a significant role in shaping the narrative and public perception of the newly

created scenarios in *The Hate Crime Project*. Actors should examine the impact of media coverage and how it affects the characters' lives, opinions, and actions. This understanding will allow them to accurately portray the media's influence on their characters' behaviour and emotions within the newly created narrative.

6.2.2 Magic if: Here are some practical examples of how the magic if can be applied in *The Hate Crime Project*:

The magic if can help actors empathise with the characters they are portraying, especially those whose beliefs or actions differ from that of the actors, by asking themselves, 'What if I were in their shoes?' or 'How would I feel if I were this character?' Through this exercise actors can develop a deeper understanding of the motivations and emotions of the characters, allowing for more nuanced and truthful performances.

Actors can use the magic if to connect with the emotions experienced by the characters during the events portrayed in the play. By asking themselves, 'What if this happened to me?' or 'How would I react in this situation?' actors can tap into their emotional reservoirs and bring authentic and relevant emotions to their performances.

The magic if can explore different choices and actions the characters could make in a given situation. By asking themselves, 'What if I made a different decision?' or 'What if I took a different course of action?' actors can broaden their understanding of the characters and their possible motivations. This can lead to more nuanced portrayals that go beyond surface-level interpretations.

The magic if can be used to establish personal connections between the actors and the characters they are portraying. By finding similarities or shared experiences with the characters, actors can bring a sense of authenticity and personal investment to their performances. This can help create a deeper connection between the actor and the audience, enhancing the impact of the play's themes and messages on a personal level.

6.2.3 Objectives: Stanislavski emphasised the importance of identifying characters' objectives (goals) and tactics (actions) they employ to achieve those objectives. Actors can analyse their characters' objectives in every scene, understanding what their characters want and what drives them. They can then determine their characters' tactics to pursue their objectives, creating dynamic and engaging interactions on stage. For example, *The Hate*

Crime Project's objective is to challenge prejudice and promote tolerance. Another central objective is to specifically challenge prejudice and promote tolerance of hate crimes. The characters aim to change the community's mindset and create a more accepting and inclusive society. The tactics that the characters use to challenge prejudice could be the organising of public events and protests, delivering impassioned speeches, and sharing personal stories and experiences. They may also directly confront individuals with prejudiced beliefs, engaging in conversations that aim to change their perspectives and promote empathy. Knowledge of these probable tactics provides substantial barometers for actors to conduct their actions.

6.2.4 Subtext and inner monologue: Stanislavski's technique explores the subtext – the underlying thoughts and emotions – beneath the spoken words. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors can explore the inner monologues of their characters, understanding what remains unsaid and what is implied. By delving into the subtext, the actors can add depth and complexity to their performances, revealing the internal struggles and conflicts of the characters. For example, during a scene where a character speaks about acceptance, the subtext may reveal underlying feelings of fear, prejudice, or personal struggles with their identity. It directs the actor toward relevant interpretation and character portrayal. For example, in the scene where two characters are having a seemingly casual conversation about their day, the subtext could reveal that one character is secretly in love with the other. The dialogue might revolve around mundane topics, but the actor conveys the character's hidden emotions and desires through subtle glances, hesitations, or changes in voice tone. In another instance, a character may reveal their innermost fears and insecurities during a soliloquy. The characters might confess their doubts, struggles, or conflicted feelings to the audience, providing insight into their internal world.

6.2.5 Ensemble dynamics: Stanislavski believed in the importance of ensemble work and the interaction between actors on stage. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors can focus on building a cohesive ensemble, supporting and responding to each other's performances. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the ensemble can engage in ensemble improvisations or scene studies to deepen their understanding of the relationships between the characters and the dynamics based on prior acquired knowledge regarding all relevant given circumstances. They can collaborate to create a cohesive and interconnected portrayal of the people affected by the tragedy. This technique allows for a more empathetic and nuanced portrayal of the real-

life individuals depicted in the play. This can be done in the rehearsal process and warm-ups by doing the following exercises:

In pairs or small groups, have actors take turns playing each other's character. This exercise allows actors to better understand their characters by embodying them from a different perspective. By exploring the character through the lens of another actor, they can uncover new nuances, motivations, and possibilities for their performances.

Actors could create improvised scenes or scenarios that relate to the themes or situations in the play. These improvised scenes will allow the ensemble to explore these scenes in character, responding to each other's actions and improvising dialogue. This exercise encourages actors to be spontaneous, discover new facets of their characters, and develop a deeper understanding of their relationships with other characters in the ensemble.

6.3 MEISNER'S TECHNIQUE

The researcher is of the opinion that *The Hate Crime Project* is not typically associated with Meisner's acting technique. Elements of the approach can, however, be observed in the actors' performances. The Meisner technique's emphasis on active listening, emotional preparation, and truthful reactions can be applied by the actors to enhance their portrayal of the interviewees and create a sense of authenticity in their performances.

6.3.1 Active listening: This allows for authentic and organic interactions, capturing the essence of the documentary-style format. Practical examples of active listening within the play can be identified. Here are some instances: During the interview scenes, actors, in character, would actively listen to the interviewees' words. They listen attentively, reacting to shared information and responding with genuine emotions like shock, sadness, or anger. This active listening allows the characters to inhabit the moment and respond truthfully. The play features scenes where various community members gather to discuss the events and issues. Within these group discussions amongst actors, active listening can be demonstrated by characters attentively hearing and responding to one another's perspectives and experiences. They show genuine curiosity, empathy, and engagement with each other's words, fostering a sense of connection and understanding.

Another example is that throughout the play, characters engage in dialogues, sharing their thoughts, emotions, and personal stories. Active listening by the actors can be observed in how characters respond to each other's words, showing genuine interest and reacting authentically. They actively process the information, allowing it to influence their perspectives and emotional responses, leading to dynamic and nuanced interactions.

6.3.2 Emotional preparation: The Meisner technique encourages actors to prepare for their performances emotionally. In this production, the actors can engage on a personal emotional level to connect with the interviewees' emotions. By tapping into their emotional experiences, they can find genuine emotional responses that resonate with the characters they depict. *The Hate Crime Project* deals with complex and intense emotions; actors can cultivate emotional availability to fully engage with the text and the characters' emotional journeys. This requires a willingness to be vulnerably affected, and respond genuinely to the emotions unfolding in every scene. This preparation can be done in rehearsals or before performances. In the exercise for preparation, actors recall personal experiences or imagine hypothetical situations that evoke specific emotions. They then perform a simple task or engage in a scene while accessing those emotions. This exercise helps actors connect their emotional truth to their characters and performances.

While the Meisner technique may not be explicitly applied in every aspect of *The Hate Crime Project*, its principles of active listening, emotional preparation, and truthful reactions can inform the actors' approach and contribute to the authenticity and depth of their performances.

6.4 PRACTICAL AESTHETICS

Patsy Rodenburg's practical aesthetics, which focus on voice, presence, and communication, can be applied in various ways when producing *The Hate Crime Project*. Incorporating these elements of practical aesthetics can enhance the actors' vocal and physical performances, deepening their connection with the characters and the audience. Here are some examples of how Patsy Rodenburg's practical aesthetics can be employed:

6.4.1 Vocal expression: Rodenburg's techniques emphasise the power of the voice as a tool for communication. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors can employ vocal exercises and techniques to explore their characters' range connected to emotional depth. They can work on breath control, resonance, articulation, and vocal dynamics to bring clarity and emotional nuance to their spoken lines, ensuring their words resonated with the audience. Actors can

Experiment with different tones, pitches, and rhythms to differentiate their characters and convey their unique personalities and emotions relating to real-life situations. They can modulate their voices to match the mood and intention of each scene, using softer, gentler tones for moments of vulnerability or louder, more assertive voices for moments of confrontation or urgency. This can be an applicable aspect when the actors portray different characters in a docudrama which requires a specific approach to vocal dynamics.

6.4.2 Presence and connection: Rodenburg's practical aesthetics emphasise being present in the moment and establishing a solid connection with others on stage. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors developed a heightened sense of presence, actively listening and responding to their fellow actors during scenes within the docudrama genre. This connection focus can enhance the ensemble work's authenticity and foster a more profound emotional engagement with the docu-material. Connecting with their script material, actors can strive to develop a profound understanding of the script, its themes, and the real-life events it depicts. They can invest emotionally and intellectually in the material, allowing it to shape their performances and bring a sense of truth and authenticity to their portrayals. By developing a solid connection with the text material, actors can effectively convey the complexities and nuances of the characters and their real-life stories. Connection with the ensemble, which features the ensemble cast, actors can work on developing a solid connection with their fellow performers. They can actively listen, responding authentically to each other's words and actions and create a sense of ensemble cohesion. This will enhance the overall quality of the performances and allow for a more powerful and cohesive portrayal of the characters and their specific relationships. This can be achieved in rehearsals by using the following exercise: Engage in ensemble-building exercises that foster a sense of trust and collaboration among actors if they were to be in similar real-life situations. These can also include trust falls, group improvisation, or physical coordination exercises. Building a solid ensemble connection creates a supportive and cohesive environment, allowing actors to connect more effectively on stage. These exercises were effectively applied during the rehearsal process. Nevertheless, during the initial phase of the creation process, they had to be done more frequently until the ensemble started establishing a stronger cohesion.

6.4.3 Physicality: Rodenburg's techniques also address the importance of physicality and gesture in conveying character and emotion. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors can utilise physical exercises and movement work to embody the interviewees they portray. They need to pay attention to their posture, gestures, and physical mannerisms to create distinct and believable characterisations. This physical exploration can add depth and authenticity to their

performances. Actors can use their bodies to transform and inhabit different characters in *The Hate Crime Project*. This can be achieved through changes in posture, movement qualities, gestures, and vocal choices. Each character should have a distinct physicality that reflects their personality, background, and emotional state. Actors can use their body posture to reflect their character's internal state. For example, a confident and dominant character may demonstrate an upright and open posture, while an insecure or submissive character might show a more closed-off or slouched posture.

Different characters can exhibit distinct movement qualities that align with their personalities and emotions. For instance, a character who is energetic and impulsive may use quick and dynamic movements, while a cautious and deliberate character might move slowly and thoughtfully.

Actors can use gestures to express their characters' thoughts and emotions indirectly. Subtle or exaggerated gestures can convey underlying intentions, conflicts, or desires. For example, characters may nervously fidget with their hands to show anxiety or clench their fists to convey suppressed anger.

Actors can manipulate their voices to reflect their characters' inner worlds. Tone, pitch, pace, and volume variations can convey different emotions, intentions, and thoughts. A character hiding something may have a hesitant or strained voice, while a confident character may have a commanding and assertive voice.

Each character should have a distinct physicality that reflects their personality, background, and emotional state. This can involve considering factors such as body language, facial expressions, and overall movement styles to create a cohesive portrayal that aligns with the character's traits.

This could be a valuable tool as physicality can enhance the audience's understanding of the characters and their emotional journey. This can involve using movement and gestures to express inner thoughts, emotions, or physical actions. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors can explore gestures that reflect the unique qualities and mannerisms of the real-life individuals they portray.

6.4.4 Breathing and relaxation: Rodenburg emphasises the connection between breathing and relaxation in achieving vocal and physical freedom. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors

could have incorporated breathing exercises and relaxation techniques to ground themselves and access a sense of ease and openness in their performances. This can enhance their emotional availability and create a more authentic and connected experience for the audience. It is a fundamental technique that can benefit actors in various aspects of their craft, including character development, emotional expression, vocal performance, and stage presence. Here is how abdominal breathing can be exercised: The actors find a comfortable seated or standing position. Place one hand on the abdomen, just below the navel. Take a slow, deep breath through the nose, allowing the abdomen to expand as the lungs are filled. Exhale slowly through the mouth, feeling the abdomen contract. Repeat this deep breathing pattern, focusing on the rise and fall of the abdomen with each breath. Let your breath become calm and steady.

Actors can engage in relaxation exercises before rehearsals or performances. These exercises might involve stretching, shaking out tension, or guided visualisation to release any physical or emotional blocks and create a state of readiness for the performance.

With progressive muscle relaxation, the actor starts by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position. Begin with the toes and gradually work through your body. Tense each muscle group for a few seconds, then release and relax. Move from feet, legs, and pelvis to abdomen, chest, arms, and neck to face and scalp. Focus on the sensation of relaxation and letting go as tension is released from each muscle group.

Through Patsy Rodenburg's practical aesthetics, actors can develop a deeper understanding of their characters, strengthen their vocal and physical presence, and foster a stronger connection with their fellow actors and the audience.

6.5 LEE STRASBERG'S METHOD ACTING

Lee Strasberg's method of acting, which places a strong emphasis on emotional memory and the use of personal experiences to inform performances, can be identified and applied to the actors' work in *The Hate Crime Project* in the following ways:

6.5.1 Emotional memory: Strasberg's technique involves drawing on personal emotional memories to evoke genuine emotions in performances. In *The Hate Crime Project*, actors can utilise emotional memory to connect with the emotional experiences of their characters. By tapping into their past experiences, they can bring authenticity and depth to their portrayals, allowing the audience to connect with the characters on a deeper level. Actors can relate to

the characters' emotional journey in the play by finding common ground with their own experiences. They can explore personal connections to themes such as prejudice, injustice, or loss and use those emotions to inform their portrayal of the characters. This is an essential process in docudrama seeing that the overarching referential system is one of involvement by characters, actors, and audience. This process can be done in the rehearsal progress and before performances by using the following exercises:

This exercise allows actors to explore their emotional reactions in a safe and private space. They select a personal memory or experience and recreate it in their imagination, focusing on the emotions associated with that memory. By allowing themselves to experience and express these emotions privately, actors can draw on them later when performing scenes that require similar emotional intensity.

This exercise involves mentally preparing before a scene or performance by connecting with the character's emotions. Actors take time to reflect on their personal experiences and memories, selecting ones that align with the character's emotional journey. By emotionally preparing themselves, actors can bring a deeper understanding and authenticity to their performances. For example, actors engage in physical warm-up exercises, such as stretching, movement, and vocal warm-ups. Warm-ups help release tension, activate the body, and create a receptive state for emotional exploration. Physical warm-ups can also support the actor's ability to express emotions physically and vocally. Another example can be that the actors engage in concentration exercises and mindfulness techniques to bring their attention fully to the present moment. The actors will be allowed to be more receptive to their emotions and the emotions of their scene partners. By cultivating focus, actors can create a deeper connection with their characters and the circumstances of the scene.

Strasberg's method also emphasises the use of sense memory, where actors recall sensory experiences from their own lives to enhance the realism of their performances. In *The Hate Crime Project*, actors can utilise sense memory to recreate the physical sensations, sights, sounds, and smells associated with the characters' experiences. This technique helps actors immerse themselves in the world of the play and create more fully realised characters from a relevant, true real-real-life storyline.

Taking a specific emotion or feeling, such as joy, sadness, or anger, and associating it with a particular sensory experience strengthens the actors' portrayal and belief in their characters. For example, to evoke a sense of joy, the thought of a specific taste or smell strongly linked to a joyful memory, helps recall that sensory experience whenever it is needed to access that emotion of a character. An example would be for actors to use their imagination to create vivid sensory experiences. Actors could close their eyes and imagine themselves in a specific

environment. Engage all senses to make the imaginary experience as detailed and objective as possible. Focus on that imagined environment's sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures to connect them with the character's experiences. Another technique involves substituting personal experiences from an actor's life with the character's circumstances to elicit authentic emotional responses. In *The Hate Crime Project*, actors could apply this technique to connect with the characters' specific situations and emotions. By finding personal connections and substitutions, actors can bring a heightened sense of truth and depth to their performances. For example: Embodying the emotions of a real-life event since *The Hate Crime Project* is based on an actual event, not necessarily one relating to the actors' frame of reference, as said before. Actors can use this technique to tap into their personal experiences of loss, grief, or injustice to bring a genuine emotional response to the characters they portray. By connecting with their emotions, they can create a more authentic portrayal of the characters' reactions to the events unfolding in the play. Personal connections in the play could also add to affective memory as the actors connect with these themes on a personal level. They can tap into their own experiences or observations of discrimination, intolerance, or social injustice to bring an authentic emotional response to their characters' narratives. Emotional recall and triggers are personal tools that actors use to tap into their own experiences and emotions, allowing them to bring authenticity to their performances. Here are some general examples of emotional recall and triggers that actors might use:

Experiment by finding triggers that can evoke specific emotions. These can be objects, images, music, or certain words or phrases. Create a list of triggers for different emotions, and practice accessing those emotions when needed by incorporating the triggers into preparation or warm-up routines.

Actors could recall a past event or situation that evoked a strong emotional response. It could be a happy moment, a painful experience, or intense anger or fear. Actors should allow themselves to fully relive that emotion, letting it flow through their bodies and notice how their bodies respond physically to the emotion, and use that as a reference point for connecting with similar emotions in the acting process.

These examples illustrate how actors can draw upon their experiences and memories to evoke authentic emotions. It is vital for actors to approach emotional recall with care and to establish a safe and supportive environment to process and channel these emotions effectively. It is important to note that while incorporating Strasberg's method of acting, actors should still respect the real-life individuals and events depicted in *The Hate Crime Project*. The goal is to bring authenticity, depth, and emotional truth to the characters while maintaining the integrity of their stories and experiences.

6.6 BRECHTIAN METHOD

The Hate Crime Project is a contemporary documentary-style play that focuses on presenting real people and their stories, which aligns more closely with naturalistic or realistic acting styles. However, certain Brechtian elements can be incorporated into the production to create a distancing effect and provoke critical thinking from the audience. Here are some examples of how Brechtian acting methods could be applied in the adaptation of *The Laramie Project*:

6.6.1 Alienation effect: Brechtian theatre aims to create an intellectual and emotional distance between the audience and the events on stage. Examples of the alienation effect in *The Hate Crime Project* are breaking the illusion of reality and reminding the audience that they are watching a theatrical performance. Actors directly address the audience; they use narration or self-reflexive techniques to disrupt the narrative flow and encourage active engagement. Seeing that *The Hate Crime Project* is based on interviews enhancing the alienation effect, the play can be staged in a documentary-style format, with actors portraying the interviewees directly addressing the audience. This breaks the illusion of naturalistic performance and reminds the audience that they are witnessing a constructed representation of actual events, thus adding to social and political awareness. Actors often play multiple roles to emphasise that characters represent broader social types rather than fully developed individuals. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the same actor can portray different characters throughout the play, blurring the boundaries between them. By blurring individual identities, the production emphasises the broader social context and the interconnectedness of the portrayed people and events. This technique makes the audience aware that they are watching a performance and encourages them to analyse the characters and their perspectives critically.

6.6.2 Epic theatre structure: Brecht's concept of Epic theatre, which emphasises episodic storytelling and non-linear narrative structures, can easily be applied in *The Hate Crime Project*. The play could be organised into distinct episodes, each exploring different perspectives or political events related to real-life stories. This structure allows for a broader examination of the themes and issues while highlighting the storytelling's collective nature. In *The Hate Crime Project*, projections could be used to display images or news headlines related to the case, emphasising the media's role in shaping public opinion. By juxtaposing these media representations with the characters' testimonies, the play could highlight the influence of the media and prompt the audience to question the reliability of the information.

6.6.3 Multiple perspectives and conflicting narratives: The different characters share their perspectives on the events, revealing the community's complex web of opinions and attitudes. This approach challenges the audience to question their assumptions and encourages critical thinking.

Actors could switch between different characters throughout the play, blurring individual boundaries and emphasising their symbolic or representative nature. This technique invites the audience to focus on broader social issues rather than become emotionally attached to specific characters. For example, the ensemble collaborated to create and develop scenes, characters, and themes collectively. This involved improvisation, experimentation, and open dialogue to shape the final production. The ensemble collectively took responsibility for the overall success of the performance. They collaborated on decision-making, blocking, and the artistic direction of the play.

The actors were encouraged to leave their characters and share their reflections or provide additional information. Breaking the fourth wall broke the illusion of naturalism and encouraged the audience to reflect critically on the events and their implications. For example: During certain moments, characters in the play could break away from the scene and directly address the audience. This can involve speaking directly to the audience or acknowledging their presence through eye contact and gestures.

Characters could also use direct addresses to share their inner thoughts, feelings, or motivations with the audience. This allows for a deeper understanding of the character's perspective and can create an intimate connection between the character and the audience. Another technique that the actors used to break the fourth wall was by engaging in spontaneous or scripted conversations with the audience. This involved asking for opinions, inviting participation, or seeking direct interaction.

These techniques were applied in *The Hate Crime Project* and blurred the line between the audience and the performers, creating a sense of immediacy and breaking down the traditional boundaries of theatrical conventions. They allowed for direct communication, a shared experience, and the potential for the audience to influence, be influenced, or be a part of the narrative.

6.6.4 Gestures: Brecht's concept of gestures refers to the physical and behavioural gestures that reveal social and political relationships. In *The Hate Crime Project*, the actors can adopt distinct physical and vocal gestures to represent different characters. This exaggerated physicality allows them to create a sense of social and political commentary, emphasising the underlying issues and conflicts portrayed in the play. The characters can express their opinions and beliefs about homosexuality, hate crimes, and justice. These conflicting

viewpoints provide a multi-dimensional portrayal of the community's response to the murder. By presenting these differing perspectives, the play encourages the audience to question their biases and preconceptions, mirroring Brecht's desire to provoke critical thinking and reflection. By incorporating these Brechtian techniques into *The Hate Crime Project*, the theatrical experience challenges the audience's preconceived notions, encourages critical thinking, and fosters a sense of social and political awareness.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The entire scope of Stanislavski's system can provide a substantial basis for a profound method of acting specifically for devised theatre. Here the reference to aspects such as memory of emotion, his magic if, ensemble work, emphasis on given circumstances together with character objectives and super-objectives, utilising subtext and the importance of physical actions, are foregrounded.

However, important tools from Meisner's technique are beneficial to Stanislavski's system, such as the focus on active listening, emotional memory, emotional preparation, the importance of instinct, improvisation, and repetition together with Stanislavski's memory of emotion and physical actions.

Strasburg's technique further strengthens the respective aspects in Stanislavski's system, specifically the additional focus on sensory memory, internal and external experiences, physical actions, inner motivation, and external actions together with the emphasis on historical and political context for building a narrative as well as establishing characters.

Finally, the Brechtian acting method contributes to character building and structuring the plot in devised theatre with a specific focus on elements of epic theatre, a cornerstone in preparing a narrative and appropriate characterisation in devised productions. These elements include emphasis on external actions, emotional memory, historical and political context, narration, epic theatre and narrative structures, critical consciousness, and ensemble collaboration.

Creating a devised theatre production requires a collaborative approach between the actors, director, and other creatives. Therefore, various acting approaches can be seen to be relevant and valuable for creating a devised theatre production. Ultimately, the most relevant acting

approaches for creating a devised theatre production will depend on the specific needs and goals of the production. This is the case with all theatre productions as it's essential to acknowledge that the suitability of acting approaches for a devised theatre production, as with all theatre productions, ultimately hinges on the particular requirements and objectives of the production. A combination of different techniques proved to be helpful in creating a performance that is engaging, truthful, and relevant to the themes and ideas explored in the production.

SECTION D

CHAPTER 7: REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has proven that devised theatre employs a variety of acting techniques. The creation processes are considerably more intricate and creative than the established narratives of writers, directors, and scholars lead us to assume. Initially, one might have high expectations in searching for the perfect acting approach to devised theatre. One anticipates different practitioners (and their skills) to give accurate titles and nomenclatures. Time and again, Stanislavski emerge as a point of convergence for many thinkers, directors, and performers. In confirmation of this statement, the inevitable recurring usable approach in these three case studies was Stanislavski's easily adaptable acting method. Nevertheless, valuable aspects from Meisner, Strasberg, and Brecht's methods, were further foregrounded.

7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

7.2.1. WHAT ARE THE MOST PROMINENT CONTEMPORARY METHODS OF ACTING?

Actors and directors have, since the turn of the 20th century, been pushing the present conventions of what was expected of them. Acting has been around for a long time but has constantly evolved. Because of the always-changing cultural environment, performances can be performed through various means.

As seen in chapter 3, certain conventions of Stanislavski's system are used throughout all the other acting methods. Therefore, it is safe to say that his influence on all the other acting methods was noteworthy. Stanislavski's acting method stems from classical acting and is still used by actors worldwide today. This is seen in chapter 4, where the performances of *In the Dark*, *Around*, and *The Hate Crime Project* made abundant use of Stanislavski's conventions. Given the above-mentioned, it is safe to say that the Stanislavski system is the most prominent contemporary method of acting.

Stanislavski's method is the most widely regarded approach to acting (Hart, 2020:2). As stated above, his style is based on classical acting techniques, in that, an actor must feel the character's emotions every time they come onto the stage. Stanislavski's approach compels the actor to think, act, and behave as if they were the character, becoming one with them and going into detail about how a character might act in various scenarios and seeking actual psychological causes for the character's behaviour. This is accomplished by the use of his 'magic if'. You live your life when you are abruptly thrown into the situations shown on stage. Forget about the audience; that is the fourth wall; you are simply living your life with these seemingly trivial happenings then something offensive occurs unexpectedly. Inner emotions come into play when one asks: 'What if this were to happen to you? What do you do? What would you think, and how would you act?'. To a great extent, most of the acting tools suggested by Meisner, Rodenberg, Strasberg, and Brecht, and even in classical acting methods, are precisely or in an altered version present in the extended scope of Stanislavski's system.

7.2.2. WHAT ARE THE PROCESSES INVOLVED IN PRODUCING A DEVISED THEATRE PIECE?

Devising a theatre work is a collaborative process in which the entire creative crew of a production crafts a show. There may be a script as a beginning point, but there is sometimes no script to begin with. The director makes the blocking, music, stage design, wardrobe, and makeup decisions if a script exists. A created, devised theatre piece permits numerous streams of inspiration to flow in a setting traditionally dominated by a single person: the director. In the case of creating theatre, the director functions as a catalyst, allowing ideas to arise from the minds and hearts of actors and designers. It encourages a collaborative approach because so many people's ideas are present and exploited within the greater ensemble. As demonstrated through all three case studies, the bulk of devised theatre plays is concerned with generating a show that focuses on a more central concept or theme. Pieces can be inspired by a tale given by a performer during a rehearsal, newspaper articles, or a television or radio news broadcast. Scene ideas can be generated through improvisation games, viewpoint exercises, and group brainstorming. It can begin with any concept.

The study found that the main processes involved in producing a devised theatre piece are collaboration, allowing each individual to develop ideas and creativity, and understanding the

theme and stylistic choices used to make a successful, devised theatre piece.

7.2.3. HOW CAN SPECIFIC ACTING APPROACHES BE IDENTIFIED IN SELECTED DEVISED THEATRE PRODUCTIONS?

The study believes that devised theatre uses a combination of different acting methods. The acting methods depend on the stylistic choices made throughout the devising process. In devised theatre, externalisation, as well as internalisation, find their expression in aspects such as improvisation, imagination, memory, vocality, and physicality and movement. Improvisation is a powerful actor training and rehearsal tool, serving many goals. It can respond to unexpected situations quickly. It can be used to analyse the emotional depth of a situation or to explore and generate theatrical possibilities. Finding theatrical potential is a skill in and of itself that necessitates unique acting abilities and attitudes. It essentially implies welcoming and examining all options. The idea is to uncover fresh and surprising theatrical possibilities rather than to find polished methods for stage-specific features of the work. It is vital to make this clear to the performers so that they are free to explore somewhere they have never been before and may set aside any need to look good that would otherwise restrict them within the limitations of their known world.

Effective improvisation necessitates an increased level of preparedness for the actors. The key to this readiness is a comprehensive pre-performance warm-up for the body, voice, mind, and imagination. Being prepared, however, is insufficient. The actor must also be responsive, meaning he or she must be able to respond creatively to various shifting stimuli. They must be able to respond quickly with non-standard responses regulated by habit or conditioning, judgment, values, preconceptions, taste, self-consciousness, anxiety, shyness, and thought and behaviour patterns, all obstruct the discovery of new and creative ways of responding. Effective improvisation needs to be regulated by applicable acting tools. The tools identified in the three case studies equip the actors with the required skills to be effective in devised theatre.

7.2.4. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE CERTAIN ACTING APPROACHES MORE USEFUL/APPROPRIATE WHEN DEVELOPING A DEVISED THEATRE PRODUCTION?

Character development is something that happens over time. There is no fixed approach for an actor striving to discover a character; nonetheless, if favourable conditions for the work are created, the search is likely to be fruitful. Text is frequently used to stimulate character work: having someone else's words in your mouth will take you directly to how someone will think and behave. However, what if you do not have a set text, and the characters and the text still need to be created or grow into existence? We are forced to develop acts, events, and connections to discover who the people are and where they fit in. However, the creation process or berth of this improvisational exercise is built on a set of methods and toolsets allowing actors to do work with any given circumstance and character being created. This leads back to all the acting methods discussed in chapter 4. A mixture of these acting methods and tools were identified by analysing the most used or applied methods for the particular type of theatre.

7.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, exploring acting techniques in devised theatre is a dynamic and multifaceted field that offers rich artistic expression and collaboration possibilities. Throughout this study, various acting techniques and their application within the context of devised theatre proved relevant.

Devised theatre, with its emphasis on collective creation and the collaborative process, presents a unique platform for actors to engage in the development and realisation of a theatrical piece. By integrating different acting techniques, practitioners can navigate the challenges and opportunities arising during devising.

The Stanislavski system, focusing on psychological realism and character development, provides a solid foundation for actors to connect with their characters, explore the emotional depth, and engage with the given circumstances of the devised work. This technique can help actors create authentic and nuanced performances that resonate with the audience. Other techniques found in classical acting, the methods of Meisner, Rodenberg, Strasberg, and the Brechtian approach to acting offer additional tools for actors to explore and expand their range

of expression in devised theatre.

It is crucial for actors and devising practitioners to approach these techniques with an open mind, adaptability, and a willingness to experiment. The devised work's specific objectives, themes, and stylistic intentions should inform the choice of techniques.

Moreover, the success of a devised theatre production relies on effective communication, collaboration, and the ability of actors to respond to the ever-evolving nature of the creative process. Mastering these techniques equips actors with the skills to navigate the challenges of devising, including integrating multiple perspectives, negotiating divergent ideas, and creating a cohesive ensemble.

As the field of devised theatre continues to evolve and expand, actors and researchers need to explore and innovate with new techniques and approaches. By engaging in ongoing training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and reflective practice, actors can contribute to advancing and evolving devised theatre as a vibrant and transformative art form.

This study aimed to identify and classify different approaches to acting techniques that can enhance and enrich the theatre-making process. Hopefully, it is a foundation for further exploration and opens up new avenues for experimentation and artistic discovery in the exciting realm of devised theatre.

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