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Drama: Performance Essay
Grade 12 Task 2.2
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An actor's job is to fully represent the character they are playing and to convince their audience that character is real by engaging them and drawing them into the story. This applies to major roles and smaller parts, as all roles combine to create a successful production. This essay aims to illuminate various acting techniques/mechanisms to fully embody the character being portrayed. The specific character that this essay will aim to portray through acting techniques is Vladimir from the play "Waiting for Godot".

Firstly, most importantly, it's important to understand a background of the character you're trying to bring alive. Given Circumstances: These are all the specifics of the character, any facts you can extract from the script. Given circumstances include everything from the character's background to the time and place of the story and the structure of the staged world. Given circumstances are essential because they determine what actions are possible for a character to perform.

Stanislavski's point, specifically, "Given Circumstances", ties in well with how one would envision their character to assess what energy their character would give off. So, in context to the play "Waiting for Godot", we are introduced to an apparent philosophical/religious man. This is reflected through Vladimir constantly reminding Estragon that they must wait for Godot. In acting this out, Vladimir should be excitable about this topic, and it should show in his acting. He should speak fluently with confidence as Vladimir's character radiates his knowledge and passion about this subject of philosophy. Seeing a background to the character already sets goals as to how one should act out their character...in this instance, Vladimir should look and speak confidently, while on the other hand, his friend, Estragon, should do the opposite and reluctantly listen to his "absurd" proposal. This is one example of where context can aid in bringing your character to life. Knowing these small and insignificant details can really help you to bring your character to life through context, visualisation and emotional memory (to help connect the actor to their role).

Secondly, another big point about of Stanislavski's 10 clarifies the importance of objectives or, similarly, circles of attention. As much as context aids the actor to properly fulfil their acting role by letting him/her to *see the bigger picture*. To further elaborate, we could look at examples from the play. The reader is introduced to Estragon taking off his boot. Then later we are met with a dialogue between Vladimir and Estragon who jokingly contemplate suicide and the methods they would use. These examples are puzzling at first glance, but one could formulate many different ideas from these occurrences. The way objectives would play into this would be by the actor asking himself/herself whether these situations affect your performance. What could these scenes possibly mean? Do they hold any intrinsic value? What matters more? Estragon taking off his boot, or the meaning behind him casually contemplating suicide. We then take a step back to examine the genre, and in this case, it is Absurdism...so as an actor it would be important to note that everything ties in together some way or another to all hold one meaning. A potential connotation about absurdism could be that life has no intrinsic value, so how would one act this out? It, in a way, throws all convention off the table as nothing really means anything, so acting it out would be close to realism as where you would, as the actor, suitably find a tone. Most importantly, one would have to change tones so it could confuse the audience and it will keep them on edge. So, for example, when Vladimir and Estragon talk about suicide, you as an actor would need to be just as casual in your dialect/dialogue as them. Overall, your message/mission would be to illuminate the basis of absurdism and not give anyone a definite meaning to anything.

Lastly, stating the most obvious, I would add that one needs to know their lines months before.

This allows the actor to completely immerse their selves into their piece and really get to know more about their piece. This allows to explore different moods, different tones and allows the actor to really get into their character. The actor is then enabled to fully wear the "skin" of their character and naturally, all the Stanislavski points will be used. Since absurdism is so complicated it only makes sense for one to learn their lines a long time before performance, and that will allow for the best chance for the actor to reach their full potential.

In conclusion, with reference to the points above, acting technique and making your character come *alive* links a lot in with the 10 points from Stanislavski's system. It requires discipline and

hard work. Immersing yourself into the life of your character and envisioning is one of the main steps in the process. This allows then for further inspiration to come naturally once your vision is clear.