“When an actor adds the vivid ornament of sound to that living content of the words, he causes me to glimpse with an inner vision into the images he has fashioned out of his own soul”\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{Constantin Stanislavski}

\section*{INTRODUCTION}

I return to this quotation from Stanislavski because our final pursuit is what he so vividly captures above. As a teacher, I push you towards honest co-articulation of text in order to encourage you to serve the text, character, and operative structure of the drama through your enunciation. Each sub-thought and thought in a dramatic piece, is a tactic towards achieving the character’s immediate objective and serving the over-arching super-objective. Now that you have seen several examples of co-articulated transcription of prosaic text, let us turn to the student-actor’s speech in performance and how you create an individualized palate of enunciative abilities.

Before embarking on your investigation, reflect on the following questions:

- Do you rush through complex thoughts without paying them the heed they deserve?
- Do you enunciate words laboriously at the forfeit of poetic meaning and tactical pursuit?
- Do you honor pronouns and simple words at the loss of more operative images?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it is time to start thinking about your \textit{career speech}. Career speech is a set of enunciative qualities that an actor must adapt their voice to in order to effectively portray a role. The Marriage between the actors speech and the the authors text should arise from actor-empathy for the material. Stanislavski puts it this way,

“…In ordinary life one says what one is obliged to, or what one desires to, for a purpose, to accomplish an end, because necessity or, actually, for the sake of some real, fruitful, pointed verbal action. …. On the stage it is different. There we speak the text of another, the author’s, and often it is at variance with our needs and desires.”\textsuperscript{12}


\textsuperscript{12} Building a Character. p. 118-119
This is the very core of empathy, where we put aside our personal, prejudices, ideologies feelings towards the content of the author’s words, and instead root ourselves in the circumstance, giving over our enunciation to the needs of the character and the author. Patsy Rodenburg puts it another way,

“…The great juggling act in speaking a text magnificently is the further marriage between two clear tensions in the text: the overall structure and style of the writing and your very own personal association to words and images.”

Finding your career speech does not necessarily mean fixing “problems” in pronunciation, but instead it means adapting the your personal enunciation to fit the role at hand, fashioning it from your own soul.

THE RAINBOW PASSAGE
The first part of this process is to document your own enunciation. To achieve this we will rely on the following text known as “The Rainbow Passage.” This piece of text is one of the standards used by Paul Meier at the International Dialects of English Archive© to document the lexical sets of English speakers all around the world. It is useful due to the rich variety of orthographically represented sounds and images.

“When sunlight strikes raindrops in the air they act as a prism and form a rainbow. The rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colors. These take the shape of a long round arch with its path high above and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon.” There is, according to legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People look, but no one ever finds it. When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.”

On the pages that follow, “The Rainbow Passage” will be referred to often, so you may find it helpful to type it into your word processor so that you can manipulate it as you like before recording yourself speaking it. One thing to keep in mind before you begin is that the rainbow passage is primarily intellectual information rather than dramatic text, so your objective as a speaker is to relay the information accurately while engaging your audience’s imagination.

STEP ONE
Divide the text into its primary thoughts and sub-thoughts

STEP TWO
Scan the text as described earlier and record yourself speaking the passage thought by thought, or sub-thought-by-sub-thought depending on the scansion.

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14 http://web.ku.edu/~idea/readings/rainbow.htm
STEP THREE
Listen to the recorded passage thought by thought and transcribe in pencil what you hear via the method explained in the previous chapter. You do not need to document each step, but be sure to subdivide it into metrical feet prior to scanning and transcribing it.

STEP FOUR
Read aloud from your transcription just as you have recorded it in IPA. What works, what doesn’t? What draws the audience into the world of the piece—the images, and actions—and what stands out as a poor transmission of information? Obtain feedback from an outside listener if possible.

STEP FIVE
Based on the feedback you obtained from your recordings or an outside listener, are there facets of your own personal enunciation skills that could be developed further?

Step five of this process is so important for the working stage actor. While the actor’s everyday enunciation might be fine for achieving an objective in life, on the stage oratory skills must be refined in order to reach the waiting audience. Return to Step Five and ask yourself the following questions again:

- Are you rushing through complex thoughts without paying them the heed they deserve?
- Are you enunciating words laboriously at the forfeit of poetic meaning and tactical pursuit?
- Are you honoring pronouns and simple words at the loss of more operative images?

If you still answered yes to any of these questions, it is time to think about what might be causing you to do so. For our purposes let us assume that there are three important genres of contemporary enunciation important for American Actors:

- shwuh’d enunciation
- heightened enunciation
- middle enunciation

While this is whittling-down is, indeed, an over-simplification of the variety and versatility of human capacity for speech, it is very important that the actor be aware of these common vocal habits. (Note: This is in no way meant to single out any specific dialect of American English, as examples of each enunciation type can be found in any region of the English-speaking world.)
Shwuh’d Enunciation
If you haven’t already guessed, this common enunciative quality is centered on the use of the shwuh. As you already know, the shwuh is the vowel sound made when the vocal apparatus is completely neutral, requiring very little muscular manipulation besides that which is needed for phonation. Those who speak with shwuh’d enunciation can be perceived as disengaged from their words and draw very little meaning from the structure from their enunciation.

[/læ.ʊz.ðə.ˈwɛəz.mɛʔ.tə.ˈwɛəz.ðə.ˈpɛ.bl.ʃə]/

While the above example is extreme, it is quite common in contemporary speech, and often accompanied by a great deal of glottal fry. Also notice how most of the word-terminal stop consonants have disappeared.

An actor should avoid this type of enunciation in their professional life unless it is absolutely necessary to the character or thought. Throwaway thoughts where the stakes of the tactic are quite low may actually benefit the operative structure of a piece through the use of this voice. However if your enunciation features a consistent sense of disengagement from the material, you risk the same disengagement from your audience.

Heightened Enunciation
Heightened enunciation is usually the result of upbringing, training, or sometimes, affectation. Many actors who use a middle voice in their everyday lives believe that they are required to heighten their use of language to this extreme when onstage, creating a barrier between the actor and the audience.

[/lɔɪ.ˈæz.ðɪ.ˈwɛəz.mɛɪk.tu.ˈwɔðz.ðɪ.ˈpɛ.бл.ลɛd.ʃə]/

Notice how all shwuh sounds have been replaced by crisper pure vowel sounds and the co-articulation between “like” and “as” have been removed while all the terminal sounds remain. As with shwuh’d enunciation, this is an extreme quality that can be used sparingly to great effect and affect. There are roles written that require this level of specificity from the actor, as a signifier of class, period, and personality. However, for most contemporary characters and many classical, this method of enunciation should be reserved sparingly for moments of great tactical need.

Middle Enunciation
Middle voice could have many names; “The realism voice”, Kristen Linklater’s “Natural Voice,” Patsy Rodenburg’s “Second Circle” or simply, “the actors voice”. It describes a style of enunciation based on the stakes of character circumstance and the need to speak. Words, thoughts, and imagery become tactics towards an objective. In the classroom I have likened this style of enunciation to a painting on an easel: the actor uses supporting words to hold up the dominant image or action.
This is the unaltered co-articulated transcription of the first sub-thought of sonnet 60 from the previous chapter. This is a good example of the middle voice, as the scansion and transcription honor the dominant image of the waves breaking on the shore, which sets up the simile/comparison of the next sub-thought:

/soʊ.ˈdu.ˈwɑ.ʃ.mi.ˈnts.ˈheɪ.ˈsn.ˈtu.ˈðɛ.ːɪnd/
STEP TWO

Go through the process of mapping out your character’s given circumstances, **objective hierarchy**, and tactics. Below is an example of one methodology of scoring a monologue towards such and end. Notice how each thought is assigned a tactic.

**An example score from Scrubs:**

**Elliot:** Of course I’m holding back, I’m insane you idiot. Remember the other day when you told me I had pit-stains, well I have cried every fifteen minutes on the half-hour since you told me that. I am racked with self-doubt, I have panic attacks, I’m claustrophobic, germ-phobic, phobia-phobic. I talk to myself, I talk to my cats, I talk to three separate shrinks about the fact that often my cats respond to me in my mother’s voice and, yesterday, when that stupid, pretty surgical nurse handed you a pair of latex gloves I almost killed the guy who’s leg I was stitching up because I couldn’t stop thinking about the two of you having sex on a box of steaks. Why a box of steaks? ’Cos my Dad had an affair with a female butcher and, as I mentioned before, I am insane. There, I opened up, are you happy?

STEP THREE

Scan the text as described earlier and record yourself speaking the passage thought by thought, or sub-thought-by-sub-thought depending on the scansion.

STEP FOUR

Listen to the recorded passage thought by thought and transcribe in pencil what you hear via the method explained in the previous chapter. You do not need to document each step, but be sure to subdivide it into metrical feet prior to scanning and transcribing it.

STEP FIVE

Read aloud from your transcription just as you have recorded it in IPA. What works, what doesn’t? What draws the audience into the world of the piece—the images, and actions? Refer back to your work with the “Rainbow Passage.” Based on the feedback you obtained from your earlier recordings or an outside listener, are there vocal tactics you could shift in order to create a more effective performance?
STEP SIX

Take a look at your transcription again. Record yourself again, this time reading aloud from your transcription and acting the entire piece, without isolating the thoughts and sub-thoughts. Where would your character objective benefit from a greater use of shwuh’d, middle, or heightened enunciation? Where would the intellectual information benefit from a clearer use of consonants? When would the emotional information benefit from fuller use of vowel sounds? Make the necessary adjustments to your transcription IN PENCIL and repeat the process. What have you learned about your own tendencies?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Notice how this approach to career speech uses the articulatory talents of you, the individual actor. By refining your personal enunciation through these descriptive phonetic techniques, co-articulation, married to operative and poetic sentence structure, allows you to fully embrace the drama of the story you have been given by the playwright or poet. As an actor and a human being, words are a gift that allow you to achieve anything. Use them wisely, and they will rarely fail you.