It is better not to read verse at all, than read it in the way which is considered lawful, requisite and patented in the sense of poetry and musicalness. Rhythm does not consist in stressing iambs and anapests. I cannot bear the marchlike beating out of rhythm. I want to sleep when I hear the reading of verse in a solemnly monotonous voice with chromatic tones crawling up. I cannot bear vocal leaps to the terza or quinta with a fall at the end of each line to a secunda. There is nothing more vulgar than a made, sweetish, quasi-poetical voice in lyric poems, which rises and falls like waves during a dead calm. What can be more terrible than the female readers at concerts, those tender, posing, soulful young ladies in light gowns who read from a pink velvet-bound book dear verses like: "Little star, little star, why are you so still?"

Constantin Stanislavsky: MY LIFE IN ART "Meridian

Warland.

What is the proper approach to spoken poetry? I don't think it's an approach which is based entirely on diction or elocution or articulation or any of the other by-products of a speech class. Not that these things aren't important - they are, but in themselves they're simply not enough to sustain spoken poetry for very long. And we don't want an approach that just uses the text as a springboard for any sort of personal pyrotechnics.

I think what is needed is intelligence and a willingness on the part of the actor to confront the written text itself, to find out exactly what the poet had in mind and why he chose this particular way of saying it. Now, this takes considerable' humility and a profound respect for the text. It means that the actor must stop worrying about the sort of impression he's making up there on the stage, and begin to concern himself with the shape and the form of the words he is saying. Only in this way will he begin to achieve some sort of approach to spoken poetry.



POETRY	ACTING
PULLINI	AL. I INC

Name	

Date_____

FIRST BEAT:

FOCUS - PRIMARY

SECONDARY

SECTIONS TO CHECK IN TEXT:

OTHER COMMENTS:

WILLIAM BACKARD

We do not go back to our classics simply out of respect for the past. We do not vant to be congealed by our respect. By looking at the Greeks, the Spaniards, the Elizabethans, by looking at Shakespeare as well as at the Chinese and Japanese theatres, we are trying to find resources for our modern world, for our modern art, our modern theatre. We are trying to rediscover secrets of composition, of construction, of language, we are trying to rediscover what is meant by form in order that we may express substance: for modern realism needs new instruments with which to reach the heart of reality. We want to develop realism, not to kill it. There is only one theatre and it is in constant evolution as time goes by.

Michel St.-Denis

THEATRE: THE REDISCOVERY OF STYLE

Theatre Arts Books

Wordarbard.

I mean the one true theatre, the age-old theatre, the theatre of the Greeks and Elizabethans, a theatre that could dare to boast -- without committing a farcical sacrilege -- that it is a legitimate descendant of the first theatre that sprange, by virtue of man's imaginative interpretation of life, out of his worship of Dionysius. I mean a theatre returned to its highest and sole significant function as a Temple where the religion of a poetical interpretation and symbolical celebration of life is communicated to human beings, starved in spirit by their soul stifling daily struggle to exist as masks among the masks of the living.

Eugene O'Neill

DOGMA FOR THE NEW MASKED THEATRE

Wontahans.

The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse. It is not for me, but for the neurologists, to discover, why this is so, and why and how feeling and rhythm are related. The tendency, at any rate, of prose drama is to emphasize the ephemeral and superficial; if we want to get at the permanent and universal, we tend to express ourselves in verse.

T. S. Eliot: "A DIALOGUE ON DRAMATIC POETRY"
SELECTED ESSAYS

On Carband.

Don't Let anything go — you Look at that speech and you say: "I do that rather well, the vowels are a L L well turned and my body Looks good and the audience is impressed" — but then you get offstage and you say, "What the bloody hell is that speech all about?" — Please don't let us think that these people say these things naturally, that it is all a lot of beautiful sound — the images have got to be so utterly real to you, that you're able to say them and feel them and be them, and the audience is able to say, what an extraordinary thing!

John Blatchley
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

On Parkand

Moreover, and above all, do not be in a hurry to reach the meaning. Approach it without forcing and, as it were, imperceptibly. Attain the tenderness and the violence only by the music and through it. Refrain for as long as possible from emphasizing words; so far there are no words, only syllables and rhythms. Remain in this purely musical state until the moment the meaning, having gradually supervened, can no longer mar the musical form. You will finally introduce it as the supreme nuance which will transfigure your piece without altering it. But first of all you must have learned your piece.

Paul Valery: ON SPEAKING VERSE
THE ART OF POETRY / Vintage V194

Contaile

Drama in Greek meanJs "Action". Action is the greatest gratification life is offering to us. Action is Life itself ... When affliction gnaws away at our heart, when we are falling victim to gloomy depression and we sense ourselves smothered under a dire suffering of isolation, when we feel disgusted at the sights of a dismal world, then we go to the theatre ... Therefore, the burden of responsibility incumbent on the intelligentsia of every country is a heavy one. I am referring to the elite, to the class of militant scholars who constitute the leadership entrusted with this responsibility. It is upon these people that the up-lifting of the theatre, or its eventual decadence and its total and lasting "eclipse," may depend,

Dimitri Rondiris GREEK TRAGEDY THEATRE

con Pahand.

I feel actors have to accept the responsibility of their profession, which is that they are Looked at, and therefore they should be perfect ... Actors, alas, when they approach a Shakespearean part, do not sit down and ask, "What do these speeches mean?" -- they just get the general sense, and if it calls for a little bit of chaos, then they can work it up. But I'm sure you will accept and know this meaning is essential to any play that you work on, and for a play like a Shakespeare play which is so rich and so complicated, you cannot in all honesty do it without studying it ... All this illustration, as if Shakespeare hadn't made his points well enough, so that he has to be helped along!! -- it's so unhumble!

John Blatchley, ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE

Workard

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One must love theatre too much to love theatre enough, If the play is a success, the playwright alone gets the credit. If it is a flop, then, naturally, the stage director alone will be responsible. I would like to insist once again on the respect we must have for the works, for their authors and for the audience. This respect is shown by the strictest obedience to perfect memory.

Robert Manuel COMEDIE-FRANCAISE.

(on Tarband

- 1. Write out the text on a separate sheet of paper. Mark off all the various poetic devices image, sound, voice. Draw transition lines across the page, creating separate beats. Circle any "reality" words (truth / beauty / justice) for substitutions.
- 2. As far as possible, try to withhold your own interpretation from the text. So far you are not ready to "interprete" it -- remember that relaxation and familiarity with the form of the text are the most important things. LET THE TEXT TELL YOU.
- 3. DO THE TEXT ALONE, ALOUD, MANY MANY, MANY TIMES.

This is the most important single step of all, and it cannot be done Filently or intellectually. You must try to get the very rhythms of the text into your own bloodstream, all the sight and sound and sense values.

4. Get up and focus the text -- locate specific image areas outside yourself --choose contact sources. If you are speaking the text to someone (primary focus), choose where that person is --and if you refer to other image areas (secondary focus), choose where those areas will'; beT

Do this as you walk through the text, just as you would walk through the blocking of any ordinary play -- only remember that you are not yet acting.

5. AT LAST: begin to ask all the acting questions: what do I want, what are the obstacles to my getting what I want, what are my given circumstances, my physical life, &c &c &c.

In the words of the French poet Valery: "as the final nuance, ask about the meaning of the text."

Remember that the challenge of a poetic text is to say what you see and see what you say.

Walan Packard