

Nocturne Rationale

For my Drama Major Work Individual Performance, I have chosen Adam Rapp's masterwork in poetic realism, Nocturne. A play about the son in a middle -class family in Joliet, Illinois, whose life is forever changed after a single, tragic moment.

I have chosen to focus wholeheartedly on the underlying truth, the *super objective*, of the character that I portray. He is only known as 'the Son', a choice made by Rapp to highlight the only constant facet of his identity. The Son's super objective is to confess and deeply process his dark past. The *tragic, horrific, moment*: at the age of 17, at seven-thirty in the evening - whilst the sun was "a flaming orb in the sky" - the Son ran over his eight-year-old sister, decapitating her.

Upon first reading, I was overtaken by pity at the Son's detailing of the monstrous event, and his life of despondency to follow. It was only after following readings that I realised that my pity was evoked not only through Nocturne's plot, but that it was also sealed by Rapp's lyrical use of metaphor and visual imagery. The Son's monologue became visceral, it extended its way out of the paper. It was the piece's ability to clutch my heart that signaled to me that it was 'the one' - as I thought to myself, "Between grief and nothing I will take grief." A quote by William Faulkner, used as the epigraph of Nocturne.

My vision for this monologue is to create a character who has spent most of his life constructing walls between his inner turmoil and the outside world, in order to avoid feeling vulnerable. I will portray the Son, at the age of 32, as exaggerated, observant and academic, until certain insecurities penetrate his linguistic walls, and spurts of emotion pour out. This approach, that I devised by studying the *Stanislavski Method*, is based upon the Son's objective within the scene, to fictionalise what happened to his little sister, in order to desensitise himself from his trauma.

I experimented with form, as I chose to combine the first and second acts of Nocturne in order to incorporate a sense of the Son's sister; as a distinct visual image of her is carefully described in the second act. The Son will recreate his sister, become her before the audience, and will harrowingly imitate her voice and body as he explains what she looked like moments before the collision, with illustrative lines such as "her fingers as light and delicate as bird bones."

During the second half of my monologue, I will portray the Son at the tender age of 17, as he experiences the "collision", moment by moment. By experimenting with the Elements of Drama, including sound and rhythm, I will rapidly speed up, adding a nervous inflection into the way that the Son talks. As the accident becomes out of his control, as it ceases being his fictitious tale and he is overcome by the harsh, indisputable reality of what he did, his voice will sound increasingly infantile. Eventually he will sound emotionless, a ghost floating through the past. Until he recalls the police sirens that unleash the tsunami of fear, guilt and helplessness.

To conclude, it would be a thrilling honour to perform the reconstruction of Rapp's play, Nocturne that I have devised. And I hope that I have constructed a version of this work that mirrors the short yet indefensible summary of Nocturne by reviewer Terry Byrne, from the *Boston Herald*: "Achingly beautiful."

By Zara Upfold