**Monologues**

**What are monologues?** Simply—Places in a novel, film, play, etc. where only one character speaks in a dramatic scene.

* Different kinds of situations in a play where only one character speaks
* A soliloquy – a kind of monologue. Talking to oneself. An internal reflection of a character’s emotional state.
  + *From the Latin solus (alone) and loqui (to speak)*
  + Variations such as a dream state, an altered state
* Monologue – can be a direct address to the audience such as an urgent call to action
  + Or to other characters (the audience within a play) who remain silent
  + Or to an implied but not visible second character or multiple characters present
  + *From Greek monos (alone) and legein (to speak)*
* Other storytelling traditions with solo speaker such as many Yukon First Nations stories told by a single master storyteller, often epics.

Characters vs plot – different writers approach in different ways – there is not one right way.

Identifying a character’s strongest desires, dreams, obsessions will in turn support building a plot and dramatic action and tension.

**Writing Exercise: Obsessions Brainstorm**

* A way to warm up, tap into deep strong emotions and use as a source of writing material. This comes from playwright, director Brian Quirt who is the director of Banff Playwrights Lab and AD at Nightswimming Theatre in Toronto.
  + 2MIN. FAST! Write all of the things you’re obsessed with this afternoon; big things, little things
  + Use this list as a source of writing material for writing exercises
  + Circle an obsession you’re drawn to. Write a short monologue about it in anyone’s voice – yours or a character’s
  + Variations: Choose one obsession or one object and write a monologue about it
    - Look over your list – is there one or two you think might have potential to develop in a character?

**Character Sketch – Exploring your monologue character**

This class already has experience building characters. You’ll want to have a character in mind for your monologue or to create one.

Creating memorable characters, giving them flesh and blood and soul and spirit and passion, making them real and vivid, with all their strengths and human flaws.

Cree author from Manitoba, Tomson Highway, writes plays, novels, music. He says:

“We should fall in love with every single character.” Every character, from a brief walk-on to the nastiest villain, needs complexity. “Infuse a character with soul, a living breathing spirit.”

Create a short character sketch. This could be in point-form, phrases, or sentences. It could be a character you’re already working with or a new one.

Explore, delve into the character’s:

* deepest passions and dreams
* nightmares, fears, obsessions
* likes and dislikes, how they feel about themselves
* quirks
* personality details such as their favourite colour, food, Netflix show, animal, memory, socioeconomic history, culture, gender, sexual orientation, music, religion, and more.

For example, Christine is a young woman not happy with her life and relationship so she thinks a big trip to the mall and getting pregnant there will make her life better

**Exercise: Write a short monologue** in one character’s voice based on one of these obsessions.

**Building your character**

What is your character’s greatest dream?

What is their greatest fear?

Variations: Create a Things People Do List – most intriguing, curious, unusual, odd, daring, puzzling things someone has done. You, people you know, the universe. Circle one. Write a monologue about it.

**Writing Your Monologue**

Award-winning Canadian playwright Judith Thompson says, “A monologue is a complete play in itself in two to four minutes.”

Choose a character which you are interested in exploring.

Write a monologue of 1-2 pages which explores a moment of transformation in your character’s life.

There are a few things to think about as you write your monologue:

* Why does your character need to tell their story at this time?
* Are they speaking to anyone in particular? Or is this an internal monologue reflective of the character’s emotional state?
* What is the action of the character? Do they want something specific – from the audience or from another character?
* Where are they in time and place?
* What are the circumstances of their life that have led them to this moment?
* Explore how truthful your character is to themselves and to others and when they are I denial. What is your character willing and able to reveal? What are they concealing, consciously or sub-consciously?