

Introduction to the Course

How to read a play:

1. Pay attention to the list of characters, and carefully read whatever descriptions the playwright has provided.
2. Pay attention to gestures and costumes that are specified in stage directions or are implied by the dialogue.
3. Keep in mind the kind of theater for which the play was written.
4. If the playwright describes the locale and the furnishings, try to envision the set clearly. Pay attention also to the lighting.
5. Pay attention to whatever sound effects are specified in the play.
6. Pay attention, at least on second reading, to silences, including pauses within speeches or between speeches.
7. Of course, dialogue is the most persistent sound in a play. Pay attention to what the characters say, but keep in mind that (like real people) dramatic characters are not always to be trusted. Sometimes character may say what they honestly think but may not know what they are talking about. Try to read between the lines.

戲劇一直被認為是一種最具綜合性的藝術型式。亞里斯多德指出：「每一齣戲劇均包含了景觀(spectacular)、性格、情節、語法(diction)、音韻(song)與思想。」(Butcher trans., p.25)。漢密爾頓(Clayton Hamilton)亦從最通俗的定義指出：「一部戲劇，是設計由演員在舞台上，當著觀眾表演的一個故事。」(姚一葦，民 81，頁 15)。事實上，戲劇的表演就是將戲劇所包括的要素對觀眾的一種展演。其展演的型式是「劇場」，其內涵則是包括了：景觀的「視覺藝術」，音韻的「音樂」與「舞蹈」，以及人物思想、語言、故事情節的「人文」。同時具備表演者、文本或動作、導演、時間、空間及觀眾六項相互關聯的劇場要素。可見，任何一齣戲劇的展演，就是一種完整的「藝術與人文」統整模式。演出(performance)即是戲劇過程與結構呈現的型式。