普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材

新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材（修订版）

总主编　戴炜栋

英美戏剧：作品与评论

British and American Drama: Plays and Criticisms

主编　朱雪峰　胡　静　刘海平

第3版

Third Edition

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总 序

我国英语专业本科教学与学科建设，伴随着我国改革开放的步伐，得到了长足的发展和提升。回顾这30多年英语专业教学改革和发展的历程，无论是英语专业教学大纲的制订、颁布、实施和修订，还是四、八级考试的开发与推行，以及多项英语教学改革项目的开拓，无不是围绕英语专业的学科建设和人才培养而进行的，正如《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》提出的英语专业的培养目标，即培养“具有扎实的英语语言基础和广博的文化知识并能熟练地运用英语在外事、教育、经贸、文化、科技、军事等部门从事翻译、教学、管理、研究等工作的复合型英语人才。”为促进英语专业本科建设的发展和教学质量的提高，外语专业教学指导委员会还实施了“新世纪教育质量改革工程”，包括推行“十五”、“十一五”国家级教材规划和外语专业国家精品课程评审，从各个教学环节加强对外语教学质量的宏观监控，从而确保为我国的经济建设输送大量的优秀人才。

跨入新世纪，英语专业的建设面临新的形势和任务：经济全球化、科技一体化、文化多元化、信息网络化的发展趋势加快，世界各国之间的竞争日趋激烈，这对我国英语专业本科教学理念和培养目标提出了新的挑战；大学英语教学改革如火如荼；数字化、网络化等多媒体教学辅助手段在外语教学中广泛应用和不断发展；英语专业本科教育的改革和学科建设也呈现出多样化的趋势，翻译专业、商务英语专业相继诞生——这些变化和发展无疑对英语专业的学科定位、人才培养以及教材建设提出了新的、更高的要求。

上海外语教育出版社（简称外教社）在新世纪之初约请了全国30余所著名高校百余位英语教育专家，对面向新世纪的英语专业本科生教材建设进行了深入、全面、广泛和具有前瞻性的研讨，成功地推出了理念新颖、特色明显、体系完备的“新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材”，并被列入“十五”国家级规划教材，以其前瞻性、先进性和创新性等特点受到全国众多使用院校的广泛好评。

面对快速发展的英语专业本科教育，如何保证专业的教学质量，培养具有国际视野和创新能力的英语专业人才，是国家、社会、高校教师共同关注的问题，也是教材编撰者和教材出版者关心和重视的问题。

作为教学改革的一个重要组成部分，优质教材的编写和出版对学科建设的推动和人才培养的作用是有目共睹的。外教社为满足教学和学科发展的需要，与教材编写者们一起，力图全方位、大幅度修订并扩充原有的“新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材”，以打造英语专业教材建设完整的学科体系。为此，外教社邀请了全国几十所知名高校 40 余位著名英语教育专家，根据英语专业学科发展的新趋势，围绕梳理现有课程、优化教材品种和结构、改进教学方法和手段、强化学生自主学习能力的培养、有效提高教学质量等问题开展了专题研究，并在教材编写与出版中予以体现。

修订后的教材仍保持原有的专业技能、专业知识、文化知识和相关专业知识四大板块，品种包括基础技能、语言学、文学、文化、人文科学、测试、教学法等，总数逾 200 种，几乎涵盖了当前我国高校英语专业所开设的全部课程，并充分考虑到我国英语教育的地区差异和不同院校英语专业的特点，提供更多的选择。教材编写深入浅出，内容反映了各个学科领域的最新研究成果；在编写宗旨上，除了帮助学生打下扎实的语言基本功外，着力培养学生分析问题、解决问题的能力，提高学生的思辨能力和人文、科学素养，培养健康向上的人生观，使学生真正成为我国新时代所需要的英语专门人才。

系列教材修订版编写委员会仍由我国英语界的知名专家学者组成，其中多数是在各个领域颇有建树的专家，不少是高等学校外语专业教学指导委员会的委员，总体上代表了中国英语教育的发展方向和水平。

系列教材完整的学科体系、先进的编写理念、权威的编者队伍，再次得到教育部的认可，荣列“普通高等教育‘十一五’国家级规划教材”。我深信，这套教材一定会促进学生语言技能、专业知识、学科素养和创新能力的培养，填补现行教材某些空白，为培养高素质的英语专业人才奠定坚实的基础。

戴炜栋

教育部高校外语专业教学指导委员会主任委员

国务院学位委员会外语学科评议组组长

前　言

《英美戏剧:作品与评论》是为我国英语专业本科生编写的英语戏剧教材[1],融戏剧导论、剧作选读和评论范例为一体,旨在帮助学生掌握戏剧基本知识,培养对英美戏剧的兴趣,提高欣赏、分析、评论剧本的能力。学时设计为一学期。

本教材最早出版于1990年,当时已历经近十年课堂试用,2004年为适应时代变化和读者需求又修订再版,至今已三易其稿。和第二版相比,第三版收录的剧本、评论和有关资料更新至2009年,并大幅改写了“戏剧导论”部分,更新了附录中的英美戏剧简目。为了严格控制教材长度,剧本量从第二版的十篇减少至八篇,英国戏剧和美国戏剧各四篇,其中割舍了萧伯纳的《皮格马利翁》(*Pygmalion*)、阿瑟·米勒的《推销员之死》(*Death of a Salesman*)、贝克特的《哑剧I》(*Act Without Words I*)和玛莎·诺曼的《晚安,妈妈》(*'night, Mother*),新增了苏珊—洛里·帕克斯(Suzan-Lori Parks)的《美国戏剧》(*The America Play*)和约翰·尚里(John Patrick Shanley)的《怀疑》(*Doubt*)。奥尼尔的《毛猿》(*The Hairy Ape*)和田纳西·威廉斯的《玻璃动物园》(*Glass Menagerie*)则分别替换为《琼斯皇》(*The Emperor Jones*)和《欲望号街车》(*A Streetcar Named Desire*)。第三版原计划增加品特剧作《哑侍者》(*Dumb Waiter*),因版权费用昂贵最终未能收录,但仍增添了关于此剧的作者简介、课后习题和评论,以便读者自行研习。此外,编者对所选长剧进行了适当删节,目的是一方面让授课教师有时间组织课堂讨论,如期完成教学任务,另一方面让课业日益繁重的学生能够如期完成课前阅读量[3],以取得更好的教学效果。

第三版剧目遴选主要依据下列原则:

1. 英美重要剧作家的代表作。入选剧作既是体现戏剧一般共性的经典作品,又各具时代、国别和个人特色,便于以由点及面的方式,勾勒出英美戏剧的历史演变概貌,呈现不同历史时期的英美文化景观。
2. 戏剧主题的深刻性、普遍性和当下性。所选作品有助于改善当代中国大学生的认知结构,并能够与其产生情感共鸣,激发他们的学习兴趣,引导他们对家庭、社会、文化、人生等问题深入思考。
3. 戏剧风格的多样性。所选剧目既有悲剧、喜剧、悲喜剧,也有现实主义、唯美主义、表现主义、象征主义、叙事剧等各家各派作品,以便介绍不同戏剧类型和流派及其表现手法。
4. 所选剧目的新鲜感。以20世纪以来的英美戏剧为重点,尽量避免我国其他文学或戏剧教材多次选录的剧目。
5. 戏剧语言的晓畅度。考虑到英语专业本科阶段的教学目标,尽量择取规范的现代英

1. 本教材第一版、第二版也曾多次用于英语专业研究生的英美戏剧课程。
2. 现在不少学校的课程阅读量有所增加,但学生一学期必修、指修和选修的课程数依然很多,加上学生各种课外(包括与求职相关的)活动大增,学生能用于每门课程的阅读时间相应减少。

语作品，使学生在学习戏剧的同时，习得地道的英语。因此，编者对《琼斯皇》通篇使用的不规范英语进行了适度改写，并在第一场以注释的方式提供一定数量的原文加以对照，使学生既能知晓原作自然主义的语言风格，又不过多受到非规范英语的影响。教材同时提供免费下载原剧的网址。

6. 适合课堂表演或舞台演出。[1] 戏剧是文学，也是舞台艺术。排演片段或全剧时，演员需细读台词并揣摩人物心理，琢磨戏剧动作，从而加深对作品的理解。为此，我们为每个剧本推荐了较好的舞台演出或电影改编影像资料，供课堂内外使用，也可分析比较原作与电影改编的异同，引导学生认识戏剧与电影的不同表现手段，扩大戏剧学习的外延。

但在更新的同时，第三版教材仍维持了自初版以来一直坚持的诸多特色。删节长剧时，尽量无损原剧的完整结构，所有删节均反复斟酌，慎之又慎，所删段落代以详细的情节概要，并在概要中引用原作的名言佳句，籍此在最大程度上保留原剧风貌。[2] 每篇剧作后仍附有思考题，涉及戏剧本体和文化语境等方方面面，引导同学对剧本进行深入讨论；为鼓励独立思考，评论选读安排在本书第三部分，而非紧随各篇剧作之后。所选评论力求经典，或采取典型的批评视角，或在学术界具有一定影响力；评论所持观点各不相同，甚至相互矛盾，以帮助同学们认识多角度解读同一作品的可能性。

《英美戏剧：作品与评论》从初版到现在曾得多人热情相助。第三版编者尤其感谢以下人士的帮助：美国加州大学洛杉矶分校的戏剧教授兼剧作家 Carol Sorgenfrei，她对剧目的选择提出了可贵建议；美国俄克拉荷马基督教会大学教师、知名文学翻译和媒体撰稿人方柏林先生，他为新增内容提供了丰富资料并帮助编者联系版权；南京大学博士生郑小倩，她为 *The America Play* 做了详细注解；南京大学博士生曹步军、郑小倩和硕士生吕雯娟、陈丽琼，他们参与了新版的部分文字录入工作。我们还要感谢所有使用本书前两版并提出意见的各校老师和同学，以及试用第三版并提供反馈的南京大学英语系 08、09、10 级本科生、南京审计学院英语系 05、06 级本科生和苏州大学 08、09 级研究生。另外，我们要向上海外语教育出版社的谢宇、许高和王冬梅女士表示真挚的谢意，倘没有她们的耐心等待和细致校编，本书第三版不可能问世。

在古罗马诗人奥维德的长诗《变形记》里，记载了两百五十多个关于变形的故事，但始终不变的是永恒的灵魂。我们的新版《英美戏剧》也是如此。在随着时代的迁移几经变形之后，我们希望能够保存并向读者传递的，是戏剧的真与美，这正是莎士比亚、奥尼尔等戏剧大师至今还能跨越时空打动我们心灵的原因。是为序。

编者

2010 年冬

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1. 演出作为一个集体再创造的过程，寓教于乐，是本科生学习戏剧的有效途径。与本教材同期出版的姊妹篇《英美戏剧：作品与演出》从舞台实践出发，为学生排演英语戏剧提供多方面的具体指导。
2. 剧情梗概参考了 Cliffnotes、Sparknotes 和 Bookrags 三家提供的学习资料。

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INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

Why Drama?

On a festive morning in the spring of 429 BC, a play named *Oedipus Rex* was being staged on the south slope of the grand Acropolis, Athens. About 17,000 people were watching from the open, stone-carved seats of this so-called Theatre of Dionysus. When the great king on stage plucked out his own eyes, the hillside echoed with a deep sigh that saddened the Acropolis. The playwright, Sophocles, thus won another award in playwriting competition of the city-state of Athens.

Two millenniums later, on April 20, 1610, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was being performed by his company "The King's Men" at The Globe Theatre in London. Dr. Simon Forman watched the production and would later record what he saw. He was especially impressed by the banquet scene and sleepwalking scene, which he regarded as highlights of the play. Dr. Forman was just one of the 3,000 spectators who flocked to The Globe to see the performance on this ordinary afternoon. Meanwhile, in other parts of the city, people were enjoying plays staged at other famous theatres such as The Swan, The Rose and The Hope.

Four more centuries passed. On November 1, 1920, when night fell and lights went up at the 200-seat Provincetown Playhouse on Macdougal Street, a play called *The Emperor Jones* began its first performance in New York. It was written by Eugene O'Neill, a young American playwright. The opening night was an immediate success; the audience refused to leave even after repeated curtain calls. Early the next morning long queues grew at the box office. Receiving favorable and exciting reviews from both *The New York Tribune* and *The New York Times*, the play later moved to a bigger Broadway playhouse and even traveled to Paris, Berlin, London, Vienna, Stockholm, Buenos Aires, and Tokyo, to list just a few.

These fascinating plays were works of drama, a tradition that has come down to us from many centuries back. It is a heritage shared by all human beings: dramatic performance used to have a golden time in almost all cultures. In our time, however, the percentage of people going to theater has dropped considerably since the emergence of movie, radio and television. Statistics show that about 22.32 million viewers in 2004 watched one episode of the TV series *Desperate Housewives*, whereas stage plays would have by far fewer audiences. The total number of tickets sold for the 44 Broadway theaters and 91 Off-Broadway theaters in the entire 2007–08 season in New York was 17.74 million.[1] The more recent innovation of the Internet seems to have made drama even more dated. Who would go to the theatre to watch a play when they can make entertainment come to their living room by pressing a button on the remote control or just with a click of the mouse? Indeed, why drama?

We might find it a tough question to answer, if drama were just for entertainment. But good drama always means much more than entertainment. To great playwrights, some of whom are represented in this anthology, drama is a means of probing honestly and courageously for the meaning of life and mystery of existence. A tremendous proportion of the greatest ideas conceived by human mind

1. New York theatres are generally divided into Broadway, Off-Broadway, and Off-Off-Broadway. Generally, a theatre is classed as a Broadway Theatre if it has a minimum of 499 seats. Broadway theaters are commercial. A theatre is said to be Off-Broadway if it has less than 499 seats and more than 99 seats. An Off-Off-Broadway theatre generally has less than 100 seats. Most of the Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway theatres are non-profit. A theater season usually refers to the period from September to May of the following year.

have found their expressions in this form of literature and art. Drama has exerted a great influence on human civilization for thousands of years. To those with true insight, the heritage of drama and theater commands deep respect. To some extent, even "new" media such as movie and television rely on the "old" form of drama. The things that excite, that move, that cause laughter and tears have hardly changed.

A significant advantage that drama holds over its technically advanced rivals lies in its liveliness, intimacy and interaction. Humanity in its diversity has made both the content and medium of the art. When performed, drama leads to direct communication between the actor and audience; it is therefore an immediate way of experiencing what it means to be human. This sharing of live human experience reaches a level beyond any mechanical medium, be it movie or television. A movie or a television play cannot be modified by the viewer, but a stage play is forever in the making when performed before an audience, whose response helps shape this and future performances. In this sense, drama is the most human of all the art forms.

Let's embark on our journey of understanding drama by, first of all, probing its nature.

The Nature of Drama

What is drama? Drama is a form of literature to be read on page like poetry and fiction, but in most cases it is also meant to be performed on stage. A playwright almost always has a keen awareness of performance. The English word "drama" derives from the Greek term *dran*, meaning "to do" or "to act." A dramatist undertakes the task of writing a play and presents it as a blueprint for acting in the theatre.

The English word "theatre" comes from the ancient Greek term *theatron*, which meant "seeing place," referring to the hillside area where Greek citizens gathered to watch plays or sacrifices at annual religious festivals. Now the term "theatre" applies to any space where a performance is staged before an audience. It also refers to various aspects of a stage production, especially directing, acting and designing. As such the two words, "drama" and "theatre," are often used interchangeably.

Because of the dual nature of drama, plays have been created and interpreted differently from works of other literary genres. Drama, epic poetry and fiction all have their origins in the art of storytelling; a dramatic work, however, has to tell the story within a reasonable length so that the audience can see it played out in one sitting. The relatively short duration of a play and constrained space of a stage would discourage a wide time scope and frequent change of locations, and would demand unified action and limited number of characters.

What distinguishes drama most drastically from other literary genres is the issue of narration. It is through a narrator's point of view that epic poets and novelists tell their story, describe their character and discuss their idea. Dramatists, however, usually rely on characters rather than the narrator to tell a story. A dramatic character's thoughts, feelings and psychological conditions are translated into the concrete and tangible, into dialogue and action. It is through their characters' words and gestures, furthermore, that the dramatists find a way to express their ideas. The immediate communication between character and audience makes drama more vivid than other literary forms.

The absence of narrator also means that readers of drama generally have more work to do on their own than readers of fiction or poetry. This limitation can also been seen as an advantage. Drama readers can make full use of their imagination, perception, and experience to interpret a play. They can visualize the play as a theatre performance, seeing it enacted in their mind's eye as if on a real stage by real actors moving, talking and gesticulating. Moreover, the absence of authorial description, discussion and narration in a play offers its readers a greater opportunity to make their own judgment.

The Elements of Drama

Aristotle (384 BC –322 BC), a great Greek philosopher and the first European literary critic, saw drama as composed of six elements. In his *Poetics* (350 BC), he listed these elements in the order of importance as he viewed them: plot, character, thought, diction, music, and spectacle. Today the six elements still make a useful starting point for our discussion of drama.

1. PLOT

Aristotle placed **plot** at the top of his list because it provides the basic framework of dramatic action. Plot is basically another term for structure, or the incidents that happen in a play and the way in which those incidents connect. The plot of a play is different from the story of a play. Plot is the way a story is told. Different ways of arranging the same story yield different plays. The strongest plot, according to Aristotle, is the **involved plot**, such as that of *Oedipus Rex*, a play written by the Greek dramatist Sophocles (c. 496 BC – 406 BC). In this play, each action flows out of some preceding action, and the very struggle of the tragic heroes or heroines to free themselves becomes the force that destroys them. The weakest plot, Aristotle believed, is the **episodic plot**, where one event follows another but shows little or no causal effect. Sometimes a good play may use an episodic plot, however. In Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* (1938), for instance, events symbolize different stages of human life rather than parts of a coherent, logical action.

The plot of a dramatic work typically has to do with **conflict**. Conflict is the thing that makes a play dramatic. The two opposing sides are usually represented by two characters — the protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is the central character in a play, who struggles to achieve an objective. The antagonist, usually a personification of some social, natural, or supernatural force, keeps frustrating the protagonist's efforts to reach that goal.

To write a play, the first thing a dramatist has to do is establish what is going on, what has happened and who is involved. This is done through the technique of **exposition** — exposing the dramatic situation before main action begins. The information should be provided clearly and slowly enough, so that the audience can absorb it and relate it to subsequent scenes. Exposition may continue far into the play as the past is revealed, the present explained, and characters introduced or revealed.

A playwright should not only furnish the audience with background information but also prepare them for future developments. He or she does this by **foreshadowing**, carefully providing the reader with clues in early parts of the play in order to make the subsequent action credible. Moreover, foreshadowing helps build suspense and create tension. Playwrights generally value **suspense** more than they do **surprise**. While a play may use the unexpected, good craftsmanship requires that the chain of events be foreshadowed.

Once a playwright has provided sufficient background information to hold the audience's attention, he or she proceeds to **complication**, that is, development of the dramatic action by making it more intense or more complex. The complication starts with a **point of attack** — the moment upon which the sense of balance is disturbed for the first time in a play. Take George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1913) for example. When Professor Higgins announces that he can pass the flower girl off as a duchess after three months of training in phonetics, the play reaches its point of attack and the course of action is triggered.

The point of attack is followed by **rising action**, which involves plotting and counter-plotting till the sequence of confrontations leads to **climax**. At the climax the plot reaches its peak of intensification and the conflicting forces clash for the last time. It is also the turning point, after which nothing new should be added. The climax should therefore appear very late in a dramatic action.

Then everything returns to a state of balance in the **falling action**. The play comes to its conclusion, or **denouement**. Bodies are removed, lovers embrace, and everybody goes home.

A great number of plays follow the exposition-to-denouement routine in plot construction. These plays have been given the label "**well-made.**" Since popular theatre favors such action-oriented structures for the sake of entertainment, the term "well-made" has long suffered critical distaste. Many serious plays are also "well-made" in structure, however, as we will see in some of the plays collected in this textbook.

The millenniums-old western drama has witnessed a great variety of plot patterns. Greek tragedy, for instance, featured a tightly-knit simple structure. Medieval plays had loose episodes bound together by a single theme. The Elizabethan drama often involved several sets of characters in overlapping situations. The Naturalists attempted to avoid any semblance of structure in their "slice-of-life" plays. Modern experimental trends, such as expressionism, theatre of the absurd and epic theatre, had little regard for disciplined, formulaic plot.

2. CHARACTER

Aristotle triggered off an endless argument when he listed plot as the most important element of drama. Many critics and playwrights have since argued that character is the most important. The two elements should not be seen as mutually exclusive, however; for, in the last analysis, plot is character in action.

The theatrical aspect of drama exerts a great influence on the art of playwriting. A playwright often selects a few incidents, which can be presented on the stage during a short period of time and with a limited number of settings. Traditionally, the playwright has to let characters present themselves through their own speech and behavior. Characters of a play are usually less complicated than those of a novel, so that the audience will be able to understand their motivation when watching the play staged.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, under the impact of new developments in psychology, playwrights became more and more concerned with characters of rich inner life and complex motivation. Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906), August Strindberg (1849 – 1912) and Anton Chekhov (1860 – 1904) — the three masters of modern western drama — created characters that bear the stamp of real life. Many dramatists have since contributed to a gallery of plausible characters with subtle, complicated motivations.

A playwright can portray a character from four perspectives. The first is appearance. Since the physical qualities of the actor playing the character can leave an immediate impression on the audience, a modern playwright often has a specific image of the character in mind and describes his or her appearance in considerable detail. Second, a character can be delineated through his or her speech. The choice of words, the manner of speaking, the quality of voice, all these tell the audience something about the character. A good playwright takes great trouble to write a revealing dialogue. Third, a character can be portrayed through his or her action. One's external action gives us clue to his or her inner motivation. Sometimes the playwright gives a misleading or ambiguous clue about the character but gradually reveals the truth as the play progresses. In the opening scene of Ibsen's *A Doll House*, for instance, Nora's initial appearance and behavior suggest a doll-like character; the impression nevertheless changes during Nora's subsequent course of action. For drama, action is a fundamental technique of characterization. Fourth, the audience can know about a character through other characters' descriptions or comments. Sometimes the playwright has the other characters talk ambiguously or controversially about the main character. At the end of Arthur Miller's *The Death of a Salesman* (1949), for example, the salesman Willy Loman is desciibed in four different versions, respectively by his wife, his two sons and their neighbor Charlie. In some cases it is the writer's intention to leave the audience in confusion, but a more common practice is to reveal something true about a character through the speech of another.

Characterization has much to do with a play's style. A realistic play, for instance, tends to feature **round**, or **three-dimensional**, **characters**; an anti-realistic play, on the other hand, usually has **flat** or **stereotyped characters**. The round characters are neither wholly good nor wholly evil; they are human, therefore convincing. A character can be further categorized as **dynamic** or **static**. A dynamic character changes or develops as the play progresses, whereas the static character remains the same throughout the play.

3. THOUGHT

The third element, thought, refers to **the reasoning aspect of drama**. Thought, however, is more than the intellectual content; one's reasons for behavior are often bound up with one's emotions. Characters in drama make subjective decisions under pressure, caught in conflicting emotional entanglements. In this respect, dramatic actions resemble one's experiences in life, with **the complex network of feelings and meanings**.

In addition to the rationale for a character's individual action, thought also refers to a play's **theme** or themes, summarizing the moral or indicating the symbolic meaning of the whole play. A given play may elicit a variety of interpretations from critics and audiences. Except for didactic purposes, dramatists seldom make an explicit statement of their theme. Medieval writers were straightforward about the moral message in their play, but many modern playwrights hate to suggest a clear-cut solution to the problems raised in their plays. They provoke thought rather than persuade the audience to adopt a certain viewpoint or action.

4. DICTION

The fourth element of drama Aristotle enumerated is diction, which means the language of a play, or words that its characters speak. The playwright writes dialogues, and sometimes monologues, to advance a plot, portray a character or get a laugh.

The language of a play should be as lucid as possible; spectators of a theatrical performance cannot turn back to a previous page or ponder on any implicit line for a long time. The criteria of simplicity and economy aside, speeches in a play should capture the spirit of the dramatic time and suit the speaker's personality. A good playwright aims at appropriate language rather than beautiful but meaningless words. Spoken language is also a form of action. It not only articulates clashing wills, but also changes the relationship between characters and moves the dramatic action forward.

5. MUSIC

Music here refers to all the **auditory aspects** of a play, including sound effect and the tonal pattern of spoken words. Many modern playwrights, such as Bernard Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Samuel Beckett, had a keen ear for the expressiveness of sound. They made telling use of sounds or silence to enhance the mood of their plays. In O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, the haunting tom-tom of African drums throughout the play not only enables the audience to share Jones's intensifying sense of fear, but it also assumes the role of an invisible force that drives the title hero to his death.

6. SPECTACLE

The last Aristotelian element of drama is spectacle, which refers to all the **visual aspects** of a production — scenery, lighting, costume, make-up, and the blocking of actors.

The style of spectacle has varied over the centuries. The ancient Greek and Elizabethan dramas barely required any representation of locale, but stage plays were rich in spectacle for striking costumes and choreographed movements of the performers. The seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries cultivated a passion in theatre for pictorial spectacles that feature elaborate settings. The late nineteenth century witnessed the highlighted importance of spectacle in production; a cult of Darwinism inspired playwrights to regard environment as the conditioning force in human behavior. Spectacle came to serve as an indispensible device to relate characters to the social environments they live in.

Sometimes the spectacle of a play is so impressive that it dwarfs the performance of the actors. Most playwrights agree, however, that the visual aspects of a production should do no more than provide the play with a proper physical or psychological environment and create the atmosphere it needs.

The Types of Drama

1. TRAGEDY

Tragedy is the oldest genre of western drama. According to Aristotle, tragedy is "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude." The tragic heroes suffer intensely and perhaps die, but tragedy is not what many of us think it is — a sad play that ends unhappily. The roots of tragedy have nothing to do with sadness. It came down to us from the ancient Greek *tragos*, "the song of the goat," which celebrated the rebirth of Dionysus, god of wine and ecstatic festivities. The whole concept of tragedy, as Jordan Miller points out in *The Heath Introduction to Drama*, was based on a special view which the ancient Greeks held concerning mankind and its relationship to the gods.

Tragedy is an assertion of the greatness of humanity. It shows our ability to rise to heights of human dignity in the face of opposing forces which we ourselves know will finally destroy us. Tragedy does not deal with the incidental which can be avoided; it tackles the inevitable. There is no escape for the tragic protagonists. They are doomed, and we watch in awe as they move toward that doom. Thereafter comes a balance of forces, a tranquility; nothing comes afterwards. The ending is final. Yet the tragic protagonists are also winners in the battle they are doomed to lose. What really counts is what they have done in process of the struggle and how they have faced the actual or symbolic death. Tragedy is therefore positive in its view of the heights human beings can reach.

The tears that an audience of tragedy may shed upon the final catastrophe are not tears of sadness, but of compassion. Aristotle speaks of the ***catharsis***, or **purgation** of **pity** and **fear**, that tragedy effects on the audience. When viewing a tragedy, one is moved by a compassionate, rather than sentimental, pity toward the protagonist, as well as fear for the cause of his or her sufferings. Tragedy should help the audience to rid themselves of such emotions as pity and fear, showing them the utmost pains that life may bring to a human being and the way to cope with these pains with dignity. By the end of a tragedy, when the hero or heroine has died and tranquility has been restored, the audience should have also gone through a spiritual purgation to realize the greatness of human beings.

For this purpose, the tragic protagonists should not be gods or goddesses; they must be human. Aristotle further stipulates that this human being should be of a certain noble stature. Originally this meant royalty or nobility; today we understand it as an element of human greatness beyond the ordinary. In a modern tragedy, such as Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, the protagonist may be a common man of lower social status and yet have something noble in his character, in this case an indomitable will to pursue his dream. Noble as he may be, the tragic protagonist, as Aristotle specified, should also have an intrinsic **tragic flaw** (error or frailty) that brings about his or her own destruction. The tragic hero is by no means perfect. Be it pride, arrogance, ambition, or vanity, it is within the human psyche that the seed of doom rests. The tragic characters are nonetheless courageous enough to act and take the consequences of their action. For the audience, tragedy is an experience both terrifying and uplifting. If one merely moralizes upon the fate of the protagonist and speaks of "justice," one is not holding the **tragic view**.

A device constantly used in tragedy is dramatic **irony**. The term can refer to a dramatic situation in which the audience knows what is going on, or what is going to happen, while the character concerned remains in ignorance. It also refers to the twists and turns of fate: the harder a tragic protagonist tries to avoid the catastrophe, the faster it arrives. In the end, however, the protagonist of a tragedy should achieve both **self-recognition** and recognition of his or her own fate.

2. COMEDY

Comedy as a form is very old, but not as old as tragedy. It is often considered inferior to tragedy in insight and power, but in some cases — the **romantic comedies** of Shakespeare, for example, or Oscar Wilde's **comedy of manners** *The Importance of Being Earnest* — the **comic vision** comes very close to that of tragedy. The ultimate significance of great comedies is that they, too, provide an insight into the nature of human condition and deepen our understanding of human life.

The word "comedy" has a Greek origin as well. The primitive festival from which comedy grew was a joyous and happy one, marked by jokes and laughter. Today, "comedy" is a term broadly applied to a light, humorous play that ends happily.

In tragedy, we are seldom aware of the commonplace of everyday living. Comedy lives in the very world that tragedy transcends. Clothing, manners, physical appearance, money, possessions — these are the very stuff of comedy. It is the genre of those plays that make us laugh at humanity's vices and follies. While tragedy tends to deal with our philosophical being, comedy is most concerned with our social being. Comedy concentrates not on people's destiny, but on their follies, foibles, and vices. Frequently, comedy will exaggerate or distort these deviations for greater effect. For all its caricature of human failings, however, it is usually affirmative and leaves the audience pleased and gratified.

In playwriting, some elements have been constant from the earliest comedies to those of the present day. The first constant is heavy reliance on **stock characters**, that is, stereotype characters with little individuality. Such characters provide the playwright with opportunities to poke fun at various human traits. The audience, in turn, can immediately recognize these characters' essential quality, without the need to painstakingly analyze their individual personality or motivation.

Comedy also features a variety of **stock situations**. For instance, the plot device of "mistaken identity," either intended or accidental, has been frequently employed to create a comic situation. The "screen scene," in which some character eavesdrops behind a screen, is another popular situation for comedy. The complication of a comic plot usually involves characters in quite unusual or ludicrous situations. No matter how innovative a comic play is in other respects, its plot usually includes situations that have done service for generations, even centuries.

3. TRAGICOMEDY

For a long time in the history of western drama, critics scorned the genre of tragicomedy as something additive: bits of comedy added onto a tragedy. Such plays used to have serious themes and