

The best long plays.

PREFACE

The interest of Chinese students in drama is noteworthy. They like to see and hear plays, but they like better to act on the stage themselves. Reading and studying plays in the classroom may seem a more prosaic business to some of them, but it is nevertheless a most valued exercise. Plays such as these give examples of correct spoken English; they give information about Western manners and customs; they raise questions about social and economic problems which are not confined to the West but have to be faced in modern China as well.

The plays in this volume represent a wide field of Western dramatic literature of modern times, being taken from American, English, Irish, Scotch, French, Norwegian, and Russian authors. They have been chosen with a view to their suitability as texts for classroom work. The introductory notes and the questions are designed for mature students, and will be found useful for class discussion as well as for reviews and tests. They will be suggestive to both teachers and students, but the wise teacher will not be a slave to them and will have a great deal to add that can never be attained by printed notes.

To my "heroine," my wife, Susan, on this our thirty-fifth wedding anniversary, I dedicate this volume of plays, with hearty appreciation for her constant help and inspiration in all my efforts. Since, according to the world's greatest authority on drama, "All the world's a stage," our life together has been a most interesting "high comedy," in which she has played well her part opposite to mine; perhaps it might be called "melodrama," with its ups and downs and many exciting "climaxes." Our "play" with its "settings" in Michigan, India, and China, may seem to have lacked "unity," but perhaps later we may be better able to see life whole. The "rising action," with its numerous "complications," and all the various elements of "contrast," "struggle," and "conflict" have not been wanting; times of "suspense" have been frequent; the intense "problems," vital, spiritual, economic, which on this stage of life we have faced and discussed, have thus far been successfully met.

Since our performance is still on the stage it may be hard to perfectly forecast the end, but judged by the length of time we have been "playing," we may reckon that we have passed the "turning point," and being now on the "falling action," are soon to see the happy "denouement," that is at present known only to God.

HENRY HUIZINGA.

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THE BEST LONG PLAYS

INTRODUCTION

This introduction is intended to help teachers and students to read the plays in this book with appreciation. It is not primarily intended for advanced students who have already read widely in the field of dramatic literature, but rather for beginners who are here making their first acquaintance with plays. The author's *Best One-Act Plays*, with its introductory study, will serve as a useful antecedent to this text, though it is not a necessary prerequisite.

References to illustrate the principles of drama discussed in this chapter are for the most part to plays from this volume rather than to a wider range with which the student may not be familiar or to which he may not have access. A detailed discussion of the principles exhibited in the plays will be reserved for the notes after each play.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FICTION AND DRAMA

The first important thing for the student of drama to observe is the difference between the play and the novel. The two have much in common. By means of story, setting, dialogue, characterization, both seek to give an interpretation of life which will serve as entertainment and instruction. Plays when merely read in the study or in the classroom are very much like the dialogue portions of novels with the descriptive parts and all reflections of the author concerning the motivations of the characters more or less strictly ruled out. We have to say "more or less," for the tendency of authors in modern plays, following the brilliant lead of Shaw and Barrie, is to intrude quite a bit with descriptions, observations, argumentations, moralizings, and what not.

The novel may be long or short; a play must be compact and in that respect may be compared to a long short story. The brevity of a play imposes severe restrictions upon its contents and method.

But the essential difference between a novel and a play is in the conditions under which they are generally intended to be received and enjoyed. The novel is intended to be read; the play is constructed to be acted before an audience. This gives rise to a vast difference in the technique of construction of these two forms of literature.

The play is a story lived or acted out by the characters of the story before an audience. Thus the actors in a play seek to give life to the characters created by the author. Think how different the impression is if one should say to you that so and so killed a man some time ago, or if you actually saw the murder committed. Contrast the difference between reading a description of a drunken man,

a crazy man, a grief-stricken woman, and actually seeing such characters in their intensified horror of emotion. Some scenes may, in fact, be too gruesome or otherwise unsuitable for presentation on the stage. Action, gesture, eye, and voice contribute to the greater effectiveness of drama as compared with the novel.

It is this imitation of the action and speech of real life that is the fundamental characteristic of drama. In our study of plays we must continually emphasize this feature. The obvious difficulty under which the writer of plays labors consists in the fact that in his exposition of character the dramatist has to manage affairs far different from the novelist. The latter can talk about his characters to us; he expounds their motives; he tells us their feelings; he shows us their relations to each other. But the dramatist has to exhibit all these on the stage, and is limited in that he cannot intervene between his characters and ourselves to tell us about them. He has to reveal his characters wholly through the medium of their own utterances and actions.

Authors of plays not only write their plays suitable to be acted before the public, but they often construct them to fit certain special actors or actresses for at least the leading part. And even after a play is written, a skillful actor can give special tone and shape to the character conceived by the author. Thus every reader of a play is bound to confess, after seeing a character on the stage, that he had never realized all that the character meant.

Since the enjoyment of a play is intended to be by a group of people rather than by an individual reader, not only must the psychology of the group be considered by the author, but the type of entertainment is generally of somewhat restricted form. At any rate it would seem that the author must keep in mind the average person, the man in the street, rather than a highly specialized type of intelligent person. Also, since a play must be gone through with on the stage and there can be no pausing or turning back, as a reader of a book can do when he does not understand, therefore plays must be constructed in rather simpler and plainer fashion than books that are meant to be read. Often to convey a certain idea and to make a suitable impression of it on the audience, the dramatist makes use of the device of repetition with only slight variations, causing a character or different characters to repeat certain scenes and actions and even emphatic words and phrases. Notice the repetition of the expression "dare not" in the fifth act of *An Enemy of the People*.

In respect to some of the qualities mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, and in many other respects as well, drama is much like oratory. Both demand a clearness of utterance and enunciation, suitable action and gesture, etc., on the part of the speaker or per-

former. There are, however, vast differences between drama and oratory, which need not be enlarged on here.

The subject matter of plays also is influenced to a large extent by the foregoing considerations. Audiences want emotion and action more than characterization. The fundamental interests of mankind, such as love, hate, ambition, sorrow, fear, are stressed by the dramatist rather than some subtler passions. A good story for a dramatist's purpose is one that contains much action, high emotional tension, and a conflict of wills.

Audiences vary considerably in different countries and cities and in different times. Europe, America, China, India, Japan, Boston, California, Shakespeare's day, the nineteenth century, the present; all these present various tastes in audiences that call for different sorts of dramatic performances. A play is written specially for an audience even more than a novel is written for its readers. A play, therefore, reflects the current thought and atmosphere of the time and of the country in which it is produced. The dramatist is alive to public opinion and strives to foster the taste of that part of the public which enjoys all that is best in the theater.

HOW TO READ PLAYS

From all that has been said, we should not come to the conclusion that reading plays is of no value at all. We are glad to be able to quote so eminent an authority as Barrett H. Clark, who says in his *Study of the Modern Drama*: "Most plays—many critics to the contrary notwithstanding—lose little or nothing in the reading, and some are more effective between the covers of a book than they are behind the footlights." But it is necessary in reading plays always to keep in mind the actor's point of view. Try to see the character acting and speaking before you, or rather, be yourself the character and act and speak the part. Use the gestures, the facial expression, the tone of voice, that you would use if you were in the position of the character, and feel as deeply as it is possible to feel the emotions which you imagine would be felt by the character. A play is written to be acted; the reader who does not (as he reads) make himself a potential actor misses the greater part of the pleasure of reading.

We should therefore not read a play merely for the sake of the story, but should always make an active attempt to visualize the characters as they appear and move about and speak on the stage. For this reason the reading of drama is more difficult and demands a maturity of experience, both of life in general and of witnessing plays in particular, that is too often lacking. I mention experience in witnessing plays on the stage as essential to the complete understanding and enjoyment of the reading of a play. Seeing moving

pictures, especially talkies, may be a fair substitute, provided we pay considerable attention to the technique of stage acting. But the very limitless possibilities of moving pictures in the way of stage scenery and the performances of characters makes them not so good for the study of actual dramatic technique. A movie which should merely show an actual stage performance by an ordinary professional group of one of Barrie's or Shaw's plays would be a rather tame affair.

Our aim, then, in reading plays should always be to visualize the acting, and to realize fully how much every play gains by good action. Even the plays of Shakespeare, after we have studied them for weeks in the classroom, always reveal unsuspected effects when put upon the stage. Says a distinguished dramatic author, Henry Arthur Jones: "Actors are on the stage to fill in a hundred supplementary touches to the author's ten." To the printed dialogue the actor must add action, gesture, pauses, and the right tone of voice. "In *Lady Windermere's Fan* Lady Agatha in all her thirteen speeches says nothing whatsoever except 'Yes, mamma,' yet every one of these speeches must be spoken differently."

"To portray the character of Hamlet is many an actor's highest ambition. There is hardly a line in all that long part which is not known to players and audiences before the performance begins; yet each actor hopes to give a fresh interpretation, to pluck out anew the heart of Hamlet's mystery. And every reader should seek this too, for the true reader of plays is at heart an actor, and the actor as well as the author is a creator of the part."—*Boas and Smith*.

In reading plays we should not forget that the setting forth of ideas is usually entirely objective. The words spoken and the actions performed by the characters are to be laid completely upon their own heads and dissociated from the author's intentions. Whatever the author's motives may have been in writing the play, and whether his method be characterized as realistic, naturalistic, or romantic, we must take it simply as a bit of real life placed before us for observation; and we laugh at or with the characters for their folly, sympathize with them in their sorrows, are stirred up with joy over their successes and happiness, and are depressed or utterly dismayed over their defeat and ruin.

A play is written to be acted not before a single person but before a group, usually a large audience in a theater. The author has this group in mind when he writes the play, and generally the performance will be better appreciated thus than by a single individual. A person can sometimes feel very much alone in a crowd, and therefore a single individual going even to a moving-picture show does not enjoy himself as much as when he goes in company with congenial friends.

Jokes are funnier, laughter more easily aroused, and excitement more thrilling and unrestrained when we are in a crowd. For this reason, we can also enjoy the reading of a play better together in a classroom than at our own desks. Fortunate for the students to have a teacher who, both by reading to them and by teaching them how to read the several parts, can inspire them with at least a partial realization of what a play would look like if acted before them.

✓ In order to visualize a play and to see it in imagination as if actually going on before us, students should be required to draw on the blackboard on a fairly large scale a rough representation of the stage with the various pieces of furniture in place and the characters indicated by letters each in his proper place. In arranging the stage according to the stage directions, the letters R and L may be assumed to mean right and left as seen by the spectator. In actual stage arrangement, something will depend upon your particular hall and its exits as to which side shall correspond to right and which to left. C. stands for center; U., for upstage, away from the audience; D., for downstage, toward the audience. The characters should be shifted on the blackboard when necessary during the progress of the play.

When students read the parts in class they should be taught not only to give the correct emphasis and tone of voice, but also to perform the proper actions with face, hands, feet, and body, that are needed to express the action of the play. For action and emotion are held by competent judges of drama to be the chief things of interest in plays. Awkward action, exaggerated action, is much better than no action at all. At first students will suffer a great deal from shyness and embarrassment, but in spite of this the attempt must be made and persevered in.

✓ In order that a person may be able to read well any part of a play he must get inside of the character whose part he reads, think as he thinks, feel as he feels, look as he looks, and act as he acts. He must have the same fundamental attitudes towards life. To get a proper conception of a character he must determine just what sort of man his speech and action show him to be, and then must seek to identify himself with him; that is, to make himself look at matters as he does, to feel about them the way the character in the play does. Thus the reader will really be the character.

Perhaps the students will say that this is impossible. One cannot be as noble as the true hero of the play; one does not want to be as foolish, as sentimental, as the maiden, nor as hateful as the wicked villain. Yet this is exactly what we must for the time being become. Remember, it is a game of pretense. Look up the derivation of "hypocrite" in the dictionary. It comes from a Greek word mean

ing, "one who plays a part on a stage." Now a hypocrite in present-day language is one who pretends to be something he is not. So that is exactly what you must do. The character in the drama is a cruel tyrant; you must enter into his feelings and be that also. He is a noble philanthropist; you must then be that. He is a crook, mean, selfish, and cowardly; he cannot keep his word; he breaks faith with his companions; he plays false with those with whom he has sworn fidelity; he is a bully with women and young children: you must be all that, and you must feel it all just the way he feels it. You must get inside your part.

As a matter of important though small detail, students should be taught to give proper intonation to questions and interjections. A question, especially when the form is that of a declarative sentence, must have the rising inflection at the end. Thus: "You call me a fool?" Also such interjections as "ahem," "um," "hm," must not always be pronounced with full vocalization as they look. "Ahem" stands for a slight cough; "um" and "hm" may be made through the nose with the mouth shut; "sh" or "shh," meaning, "keep quiet!" should only be breathed with a slight opening of the lips; while "tchk" is an imitation of a clicking sound made with the tongue either against the lips or against the cheek. Some other examples may need careful attention of students and teachers with the above suggestions in mind.

KINDS OF PLAYS

The two most fundamental divisions of the drama are tragedy and comedy. If the leading character is overcome in his struggle, if he loses his fight, the play is a tragedy. A tragedy need not necessarily end in the death of the hero or any other character. Generally speaking, tragedy is that type of play in which the prevailing mood is serious, in which characterization is most important, and where the leading character loses the struggle. In comedy the prevailing mood is cheerful, the hero overcomes the obstacles with which he is striving and wins the fight. In modern plays the two are often blended. The loser gains something; the winner also loses. Just as in real life, neither side in the conflict can be said to be wholly winner or wholly loser. Such a play is sometimes called a tragi-comedy.

A comedy of manners is a play in which the author satirizes contemporary society so as to make us see its faults and weaknesses. *Candida* and *The Cherry Orchard* may be cited as examples. A farce is a comedy in which the conditions are improbable, artificial, and exaggerated. There are farcical elements in many modern comedies. Melodrama is a play characterized by exciting scenes, hairbreadth escapes, villainous plots against overgood characters, who always

manage to disentangle themselves or are somehow rescued. Some otherwise good plays may contain melodramatic parts. Many moving pictures are melodramatic or contain highly melodramatic parts. Melodrama is not true to life but presents life exaggerated.

Realism and romanticism are terms that are used in connection with drama as with other literature. // By realism we mean that style of writing in which facts and events are made to appear as they occur in real life. The author makes such selection of materials that nothing improbable happens, and that nothing even seems to be omitted that would be called for in ordinary life. *An Enemy of the People* is good example of realism: so is *The Cherry Orchard*, but of a different sort.

Romanticism is somewhat the opposite of realism. It presents unusual happenings, individually and in groups, such as life may be imagined to be but seldom is. It comprises wonder, adventure, extraordinary passion, and subtle charm of feeling. Naturalism is bald realism, apparently unselected and unadorned. The author tries to convey the impression that he represents life in all its sordid aspects as it really is, without any attempt to organize its materials towards an artistic end. *Beyond the Horizon* may be cited as an example of romanticism.

A fantastic comedy is unreal and fairylike, and is an exaggeration of romanticism. The excitement is less than in melodrama, though the facts are more unreal and untrue to life. The story is often based upon some legend or fairy tale, but there is often an underlying truth or some pointed moral. Sir James M. Barrie has created many successful fantastic comedies, of which *Peter Pan* and *Mary Rose* are excellent examples. *The Admirable Crichton* is partly fantastic comedy.

A problem play is a play with a serious and absorbing problem. It is usually of contemporary interest. *Strife*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Red Robe*, are excellent examples of problem plays. "It often happens that the attention of the author is distracted by the problem from his plot and characters. Thus in Galsworthy's *Strife* the problem of capital and labor overshadows the development of characters and plot."—*Boas and Smith*. Is this criticism justified? Does it apply to the other two plays also? *He and She* is also primarily a problem play.

In Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* we have an example of a chronicle play. "The author cannot expect to show all of Lincoln's life in one evening's performance. He must select only those incidents which he thinks will most dramatically emphasize what manner of man his hero was; and he must make his selection with severe economy, no matter how attractive the unessential material may be." "A chronicle play deals directly with historical episodes and characters. Its

leading figures go through scenes much like those of real life. Such a play, however, often has a subplot dealing with imaginary characters, thereby adding dramatic interest to the historical narrative." The student must not think that the above terms are mutually exclusive. Many plays have features of more than one sort and may be classified under different heads.

ANALYSIS OF A PLAY

The first thing we notice is that a long play is usually divided into acts — three, four, or five. In Shakespeare's plays and old French plays each act was divided into scenes. The latter division is generally given up in modern plays for, with present-day elaborate stage settings, it would be impossible to shift the scenes so often. But the division into acts serves a useful purpose aside from emphasizing the natural division of the story into several parts, whereby the segments of the truth or action are emphasized. In presenting a play before an audience it gives the hearers a chance to rest and to take refreshments, and even to discuss the play and to reflect upon what they have seen and to compare the play with real life.

But in all plays there is another less obvious division, which corresponds only partially with the division into acts, but which is very much more important. Every play consists of the following parts.

1. Introduction or exposition.
2. Initial incident, also called exciting force.
3. Rising action, also called complication.
4. Climax, crisis, or turning point.
5. Falling action, resolution, unfolding, unraveling, or denouement.
6. Conclusion, or catastrophe.

Some of the above terms are somewhat technical, but for the most part they are self-explanatory. A play must have an *introduction* which generally consists of an exposition of the situation in which the characters find themselves at the beginning. It was customary in old times to have a prologue spoken by a special announcer, who related to the audience the initial position of the play. Drinkwater has revived this form in the play given in this volume. Another form of exposition is given by a talkative servant coming on the stage to sweep or dust the room, who talks to herself and for the audience to hear about the persons in the house. A little more clever design is to let two servants talk to each other. Sometimes a stranger, or one of the family who has been long absent, comes in near the beginning of the play whom the other characters inform about the state of affairs. A *confidant* is a character who listens to the rehearsal of previous

events or to the plans and purposes of the leading character or other persons in the play, and is thus used by the author to inform the audience of initial or antecedent conditions of the characters in the play.

Such devices or a combination or variation of them are still used to supply the essential information that the audience must have concerning the beginning situation of the play. It is quite necessary that the dialogue of this part should be and seem natural, not dragged in; and at the same time the audience must be given the necessary information so as to follow the play intelligently. However, it is not necessary for the audience or the reader to know everything at the beginning that might be known about the characters. Something may well be left for further elucidation during the progress of the play. It is sometimes thought that the exposition must inform the reader of all the antecedent events of the story. This is not at all necessary. Often these can be revealed later on and then may come as genuine surprises. It is usually quite customary that the leading character of the play, the hero so-called, shall not appear in the introduction but is often referred to by the other characters, sometimes in a very significant way.

// The *initial incident* or exciting force marks the beginning of the action of the play. • It may be in the form of a resolve or purpose, which, when revealed, indicates the first dramatic element in the story. It is equivalent to the first complicating incident, and as there may be several such in the play, we see that with the initial incident the *rising action* of the play begins. With each succeeding complication the action becomes more tense and interesting. These incidents may all be compared to rungs in a ladder or steps in a stair. They may be few or many, natural or artificial, trite or novel. Each new complicating incident brings in a minor crisis, and contributes something to the interest of the performance.

// We should remember, however, that in a play, as in real life, all the steps may continue to be obstructions or impediments to successful action, and they require the continued skill and endurance of the character to overcome them. All these steps lead to a chief step, called the *crisis*, or *climax*. This is the turning point of the story, where fortune turns definitely for or against the hero. // This in Shakespeare was near the middle of the play, but in modern plays it is nearer the end. We should not forget that in a play there are many climaxes leading up to a great climax, or turning point. The climax should always be strong in its emotional appeal. "The great law of the crisis is that it shall be the natural and logical outcome of all that has gone before; which means that we shall be able to explain it completely by reference to the characters and to the conditions of things existing at the time."—Hudson. This part of the play always

presents an intense dramatic situation, which may be very short, a few minutes only, or may last for half an hour, during which the chief character undergoes a high emotional strain. This is often called the "big" scene of the play, and is the scene of "great acting." It is the most important part of the play and should be carefully studied, both for its dramatic and its literary qualities.

After the climax comes the *falling action*, or the resolution of the difficulties. This in modern drama is short, for after the audience has definitely learned the tendency of the play, it is impatient and wants to see the end. The falling action is hard to write, for the interest of the audience is likely to flag. It is well to study falling actions of plays, both ancient and modern. What new ideas do the authors introduce in this part of their plays? What are the reactions of the characters and how are these revealed? Is there still any element of suspense in this part of the play?

The *conclusion* may be a little hard to distinguish from the falling action. It is the end of the falling action and the end of the play. Many critical writers persist in calling this the *catastrophe*, even where the play ends happily. It is doubtful if such a perversion of popular usage of words can help us any. The conclusion of a play is implicit in the beginning and should follow necessarily the course of action of the story, which is another way of saying that it must be satisfying. The ancients spoke much of *poetic justice* regarding this part of the play. The skillful dramatist prepares carefully for his conclusion, foreshadows it, and leads up to it, so that it will seem the inevitable result of the situation. Hubbell and Beaty say that "the last act of Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton* seems hardly the logical outcome of the years on the desert island."

During the course of the falling action, and at the end, the audience is interested in witnessing the effect of the final outcome upon the leading character. How does he take the blow, if it is a tragedy? the happiness, the victory, the success, if it is a comedy?

SOME SPECIAL CHARACTERS IN PLAYS

A few technical terms may be referred to here. The leading or chief character is also called the "protagonist," the "hero," or the "heroine." The two latter terms are going somewhat out of use. The one who is opposed to the leading character is called the "antagonist," popularly the "villain;" though the leading character may himself be a villain, or bad man, as in the case of *Macbeth*. The out and out villain has gone somewhat out of fashion in modern plays. In this volume the only example that occurs is that of Mouzon, and even then he does not act the part of the pure stage villain. What part does Hook play in *Abraham Lincoln*?

One special character in plays remains to be noticed. In some problem plays the author introduces a character, or uses one of his characters, as a *spokesman* of his own ideas. This may sometimes mar the artistic form of the play if it is too evident, but in other ways it may be very effective. As an example of the spokesman, we may cite La Bouzule in *The Red Robe*, who says very pertinently some of the things which the author wishes to teach in this play. Is Dr. Stockman the spokesman of Ibsen in *An Enemy of the People*? See the introduction to that play.

In discussing plays, it is best to confine ourselves to plain and self-evident terms and expressions, and to avoid technical terms as far as possible.

READING PLAYS AS LITERATURE

In our study of the analysis of a play, we must not be carried away as though that is the only thing in it. Especially in reading a play we must not forget that the dialogue and the language are the main thing. Nor should we be satisfied merely with selecting a beautiful passage here and there, an example of brilliant repartee, a striking epigram, a *bon mot* as it is called.

"If your drama is truly alive, it will necessarily be literature. If you have faithfully and searchingly studied your fellow citizens; if you have selected from amongst them those characters that are interesting in themselves, and that also possess an enduring human interest; if in studying these interesting personalities, you have severely selected from the mass of their sayings and doings and impulses, those words and deeds and tendencies which mark them at once as individuals and types: if you have then recast and reimagined all the materials; if you have cunningly shaped them into a story of progressive and cumulative action; if you have done all this, though you have not used a single word but what is spoken in ordinary American intercourse today, I will venture to say that you have written a piece of live American literature — that is, you have written something that will not only be interesting on the boards of the theater, but can be read with pleasure in your library, can be discussed, argued about, tasted, and digested as literature." — *Henry Arthur Jones, quoted by Barrett H. Clark.*

The permanent value of plays as literature depends upon the following considerations;

1. The story, including the setting, the plot, and the characters.
2. The literary expression in the dialogue.
3. Discussion of a problem, an idea, or a theme of permanent interest.

The mere story of the play is not the most important part, yet students must become familiar with it as the A B C of their study of

drama. The questions given with each play at the end of this volume are intended to bring out the essential features of the story, and students should in all cases be able to give satisfactory and complete answers, oral or written, to all the questions. Some of the questions deal with minute points in the story which might otherwise escape notice. //The dramatic significance of even obscure speeches should not be lost sight of. These questions have been carefully tried out and frequently revised in practical experience with many classes of students. They help both the teacher and the students to check up on the facts of the story and plot, and to a lesser extent on the dramatic technique of the play. //The editor believes that a faithful use of the questions will result in a good understanding of the plays. Copious notes have been avoided on the principle that both teachers and students who take up this study will be able to do their own thinking along these lines.

Setting from a literary standpoint is not so important in drama as in fiction. In Shakespeare's plays, much of the setting or reference to the scenery is conveyed in the lines of the dialogue and is often dramatically effective. Modern plays depend more on scenic effects of stage properties. Even clothes and costumes are important. The *stage directions*, which are printed in italic at the opening of each act or scene, convey the setting to the reader and should be carefully studied. The remarks of the author scattered throughout the play and printed in italic and usually inclosed in parentheses are also called stage directions.

The essence of a dramatic plot is *conflict* or struggle. In tennis, football, baseball, boxing, as well as in cards or chess, we are interested to see who is going to win. In a play there is a strong conflict between two forces. It may be a simple struggle between two persons or two groups of people; it may be a struggle between a person and circumstances or environment or fate; it may be an inner struggle of will within one nature.

//One other principle that often needs to be specially observed in reading plays is that of *suspense*. This is one of the most important technical requirements that an author of any story or drama must meet. Somehow, from the opening "Once upon a time" to the final catastrophe, an audience will not listen either to a play or a story unless it is kept in suspense. Suspense is one of the surest ways of maintaining interest. //Suspense means uncertainty, when the audience or reader is not sure just what is going to happen to a character, particularly the leading character. And at the same time it must seem important that we should know what is going to happen. Every new complication, every incident that leads up to a fresh minor climax, is a means of creating suspense.

After the main climax is reached, when we are quite sure what is going to happen to the character, the technique of suspense becomes hardest for the author to keep up. When we realize, or think we know, at the end of the third act, that Dr. Stockmann is going to fail in his heroic enterprise of being the savior of his town, Ibsen creates an entirely new scene for us in the fourth act, in which the suspense is well maintained. The end of the fourth act again reads and sounds almost like a catastrophe, when the mob shouts: "An enemy of the people! An enemy of the people!" Yet with the fifth act there is a new suspense awaiting us with the very opening scene, as we see the doctor amid the litter of fallen glass and stones in his study. As we said above, we are deeply interested how this beaten man can still hold up his head. And as one after another of the former characters file in, Peter Stockmann and all the lesser fry, there is renewed suspense in each case as to how they will meet their enemy and how the doctor will react towards them all, and how he will maintain to the end his position of superiority among them.

The really fundamental and lasting element in the greatness of any dramatic work is *character* drawing. In his greatest plays Shakespeare has so wonderfully adapted character to plot that the whole story seems to proceed from the inner lives of the characters. Frequently the whole action of a play revolves about one central figure. Great plays, like great novels, are great more by virtue of fine characterization than any other one thing. It is characterization that makes the chief difference between farce and high comedy, between melodrama and tragedy.

The author's methods of portraying character are precisely those methods which we use in real life in forming an estimate of a new acquaintance: we judge him by what he does, by what he says, and by what others say about him. In the exposition, before the leading character appears on the stage, we listen to the other characters concerning him. We need not take at face value all that any person in the play says about another character; and it is seldom that an author would thus use the speeches in his play, just as in real life we need not believe all we hear about a person. Yet we do learn a great deal about the hero from the general attitude of the other characters. Very impressive, for example, is the expression of the old farmer, in the beginning of the play of *Abraham Lincoln*: "Abraham Lincoln. I have known him forty years. Never crooked once. Well." What a character says himself will also furnish a continual running comment upon his conduct and character.

In drama characters are more likely to be *types*, sometimes referred to as *stock characters*, than in the novel. This is because within the limits of a three-hour play it is not always easy to draw a full,

well-rounded portrait of a complex character. Yet how clearly defined are the characters in some really great plays! The rarest type of great character in drama, as in fiction, is the developing character, a character which grows in goodness or else deteriorates during the course of the play.

The principle of *contrast* is largely used in drama in the portrayal of character. Thus the strong and the weak, the true and the false, the charming and the ugly, the dissolute and the virtuous, the romantic and the realistic, the generous and the crafty; all these pairs and hundreds of others are brought together, each to offset the other. Another form of contrast is frequently employed with telling effect. It is a contrast between a character's present happiness, sometimes seemingly exaggerated, and his subsequent down-fall, which may or may not be foreseen by the audience. Examples of this are seen in *An Enemy of the People*. At the end of the first act Dr. Stockmann is happy to the point of frenzy. Again in the third act, just before the climax, Dr. Stockmann is very much elated and very sure of himself, which contrasts sharply with the change of attitude towards him that has already been produced in his friends.

Passages of permanent *literary value* are not so common in modern plays as in Shakespeare, nor would they be expected or even tolerated by modern audiences. Examples of so-called fine writing are not indulged in nowadays in plays. Speeches are not so long; descriptions of scenes are not needed in the dialogue. Since the characters have dropped poetry, they must be made to talk naturally like ordinary human beings. Most of all, the speeches should be realistic, true to life and true to the character that utters them, true also to the special circumstances in which the character finds himself at the moment of utterance.

And yet the language must not lack imaginative expression. It is the language of the creative imagination of the author, rather than the ordinary speech of real life, that we want to hear on the stage or read in a play. The language must convey ideas and paint character in many subtle variations. Slapstick comedy and melodrama are less dependent on dialogue, but the higher type of play is more dependent on the literary quality of the speeches.

"It must not be imagined that dramatic dialogue is exactly like the conversation we daily hear and hold among ourselves. Congreve was of the opinion that if a playwright were to put on the stage without change the extempore conversation of the two wittiest men on earth, he would find it but coldly received. Dramatic dialogue must have a directness, a charm, a conciseness that ordinary conversation conspicuously lacks. Our everyday talk is too diffuse, too rambling, too full of repetitions and irrelevancies to be effective in a