



新维度外语系列教程



英语戏剧选读

Selected Readings of English Drama

丛书主编 谢群 陈立华

主编 梁绯



北京理工大学出版社

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前 言

在英语教材越来越多元化的今天，将英语戏剧的剧本作为学习的媒介无疑具有独特的优越性，是训练听、说、读、写等技能的最佳语言来源之一。阅读剧本也是培养人文素养的很好途径。剧本的易于表演性更是为英语学习添加了乐趣，适用于各个英语水平层次的学习者。《英语戏剧选读》教材的对象为英语专业高年级学生，或同等水平、对戏剧感兴趣的学习者。由于他们已经具有相当的英语基础，本教材并不着重语言的培训，而着重于对戏剧作品的理解和欣赏。

鉴于戏剧是一门综合了语言、动作、舞蹈、音乐等的特殊艺术形式，对它的文本形式即剧本的阅读也有别于其他文学作品的阅读。了解一些戏剧的相关知识成为更好地阅读剧本和欣赏戏剧作品的必要前提，因此本教材不仅仅将剧本作为文学作品阅读，而且将剧本的阅读与了解一些入门的戏剧知识结合起来，让学生欣赏戏剧语言，领略、思考人生的同时，也让他们学会欣赏戏剧这门艺术形式，同时鼓励学生在课堂上自导自演所读剧本的片段，更大程度地发挥戏剧直观性和过程性的独特魅力。

本教材所选剧本不局限于英美国家的作品，还包括英语版的其他世界著名戏剧作品。每一单元的剧本选自不同时期、不同国家、不同特点的剧作家。针对每个单元教师可以提供相应的背景知识，以便学习者大致了解西方戏剧史上某个时代的戏剧艺术、剧作家的戏剧观及他们的舞台实践。所涉及的剧作家及对应的背景知识如下：

- 索福克勒斯→古希腊悲剧
- 莎士比亚→伊丽莎白时期的英国戏剧
- 易卜生→十九世纪后期现实主义戏剧
- 契科夫→象征主义
- 布莱希特→叙述体戏剧（亦称史诗剧场）
- 田纳西→二十世纪美国戏剧
- 贝克特→荒诞派戏剧
- 怀尔德→打破现实主义“第四堵墙”的尝试

本教材的主体为剧本节选，共8个单元，之前有6页的戏剧常识简介。前面的7个单元分别从一个剧本中选择五个比较有代表性的片段，篇幅适中，涉及不同幕次，使学生仍然可以对剧本的整体有较好的了解。最后的第8单元选择的是美国剧作家桑顿·怀尔德完整的一部独幕剧《漫长的圣诞晚餐》，仍然分成五个部分阅读，方便学习讨论。每个单元包括三大板块：

(1) 剧作家及其主要作品简介，以条目形式出现，简明扼要、篇幅短小、重点突出。

(2) 剧本。剧本阅读之前有人物关系图和剧情简介，以便学生更好地理解要阅读的剧本选段。每个单元选择了同一剧本的五个选段，同步注释（包括单词、难句和相关背景知识）出现在右边，方便阅读理解。每个选段后配有五道讨论题，涉及对所读选段语言、内容的理解，也涉及对主题和剧作家戏剧手法的讨论。五个选段之后有5道附加讨论题，可以在读完所有选段后对剧本进一步讨论。选段阅读也方便教师根据课时等的需要自行调整阅读的篇幅和讨论问题的多少。

(3) 学生台词朗读，即最后一个部分——朗读者剧场（Readers' Theatre）。朗读者剧场是一种团体朗读文学作品的形式，在课堂上运用更是促进学习的有效活动，让学生通过朗读来诠释他们对台词的理解，因此要求有一定的声音表情和面部表情甚至肢体动作。这个部分的内容可由教师挑选，或侧重不同的理解对台词做不同的处理，或只是进一步欣赏剧中人精彩的台词，以加强学生的实际参与，加深他们对语言和思想的认识，同时也使戏剧文本的阅读成为更直接、更有趣的学习体验。台词也可由学生挑选他们自己喜欢的部分朗读。

《英语戏剧选读》教材希望通过对这些不同时代、不同文化、不同艺术实践的剧本精华的阅读，学习者可以进一步提高英语技能，拓宽知识领域，提高人文素养。

最后，感谢美籍人士 Paul Gregor 先生担任本教材所有英文文字的校对，感谢中南财经政法大学原外语学院严丽娜老师参加本教材一个单元的编写，也感谢武汉理工大学何梦颖同学担任部分剧本文字的打字工作。同时，本教材通过网络参考了大量百科全书、文学经典学习指导、国外大学戏剧课程教案等资料，由于作者等信息不全，无法将参考资料一一列出，在此也一并表示感谢。

梁 绯
2013年9月



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Drama and Theatre: A Brief Introduction



Drama and Theatre

“Drama” and “theatre” are the words often used interchangeably, but do not necessarily mean the same thing. “Drama” is derived from a Greek word “dran” meaning “to do” or “to take action.” The term can now be used to mean a play of a playwright, or a body of plays in a particular period or place, or the art or practice of producing dramatic works. “Theatre” also comes from an ancient Greek word “theasthai” which means “to see” or “to view.” It is now a building where plays are performed. It can also refer to an art form, the professional practice of making dramas.

Drama is a unique art form which is different from other forms of literature in a number of ways:

- A play mainly consists of dialogues and actions about life and human activities.
- Plays are written to be performed. A play is not completed until it is performed by actors before an audience.
- Drama is a collaborative form of arts, requiring more than one type of arts and artists to produce.
- Drama is always live and immediate. It cannot be replayed.



The Origin of Theatre

The earliest known performances were in ancient Greece, going back to at least the 5th century BC. It is generally believed that the origin of theatre is closely related to ancient religious rituals where people sang and danced in honor of a certain god. Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher and drama theoretician, suggests in his *Poetics* that imitation is human nature; the dramatic art form probably came from people’s imitation of reli-



gious rituals, where the leader of the ritual gave the improvisation.

Theatre and rituals are similar in a couple of ways:

- Theatre and rituals both employ similar means: music, dance, spectacle, masks, costumes, speech, performers, audience, stage, makeup, etc.
- They are both intended to influence, to glorify or to entertain.

As Man's confidence of his own powers increased, the theatrical elements of religious rituals increased. Eventually, the theatre emerged on its own.



Dramatic Genre

Many types of drama have developed over time. Traditionally, the plays in Western culture (as far back as the Greeks) can be roughly classified into three types: **tragedy**, **comedy** and **tragicomedy**, which relate to the kind of emotional responses a play creates in the audience.

Tragedy is one of the oldest forms of drama. The Greeks believed that tragedy was the highest form of dramatic art. Aristotle defines tragedy as the imitation of a serious action of great importance, dramatically showing the downfall of a great man (usually of noble birth) and leading the audience to pity for the tragic hero and fear for the destructive end. In modern theatres, the definition of tragedy is less strict. Tragedy can be about the common people who struggle for their lives. Tragedy usually involves serious subject matters and rarely has a happy ending.

Comedy is often considered inferior to tragedy in insight and power, but it concentrates on the commonplace of everyday living and helps us deepen our understanding and experience of life. Comic heroes are usually the common people struggling against unpredictable coincidences in life, demonstrating human vices and follies. If tragedy affects audience emotionally and laments Man's fate, comedy affects audience intellectually and celebrates life. Comedies typically end with conflicts happily resolved.

Tragicomedy is a form combining the elements of the tragedy and the comedy. From Shakespeare's time to the nineteenth century, tragicomedy referred to a serious play with either a happy ending or enough jokes throughout the play to lighten the mood. Today's notion of the tragicomedy is more closely connected to the statement of Gotthold Lessing, the 18th century German writer and critic, that the tragicomedy presents situations in which "seriousness stimulates laughter, and pain pleasure." Many modern tragicomedies present humor and despair at the same time.



The Elements of Drama

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle listed six main elements of drama: **PLOT, CHARACTER, THOUGHT, LANGUAGE, MELODY** and **SPECTACLE**.

PLOT or structure, of all the six elements, was put by Aristotle at the top of the list. Plot is the way the events in a play are connected, or the organization of the actions in a play. A plot usually consists of four parts: **exposition, complication, climax** and **denouement**. **Exposition** introduces the background information the audience needs to understand what is going to happen. **Complication** is the development of the story. It is also called the rising action. In this part, the conflict, which is essential to a plot, develops and accumulates to build in emotional intensity until the story reaches the moment of the greatest tension-climax. **Climax** is the turning point which marks a change for the hero, for the better or the worse. Following the climax the story is heading to the conclusion or **denouement** where the conflict is resolved. Some would add a fifth part, falling action, between the climax and denouement. The falling action unwinds the conflict and prepares for the denouement.

Many plays follow the classical exposition-to-denouement routine scene by scene, act by act, so that the plays can be “well-made.” A well-made play, in a traditional sense, is also supposed to follow the three unities: the unity of plots/actions, the unity of places and the unity of time. The rules require that a play should have only one main plot, and the action should take place in no more than 24 hours in one single place. Of course, many “well-made” plays do not follow these rules strictly.

The most commonly used types of plots are **the linear plot, the episodic plot** and **the cyclic plot**. **The linear plot** is the most traditional form of plotting where the events progress forward sequentially in time, where there is a causal link among the events occurring one after another. In **the episodic plot**, the events are thematically related rather than causally related. In other words, the events in a play relate to each other because they share the same theme even though there is little or no causal relationship between them. **The cyclic plot** offers no resolution. The events end much the way they began. This form of plotting is especially popular in modern theatres and is employed to suggest the futility of life and show human predicament in which there are no resolutions to life's problems.

CHARACTER is the second most important element on the list. Characters are the agents of the plot. Characters provide the motivations for the actions and the vehicle



for the conflict. Speeches and actions are fundamental for depicting a character in a play. Many terms are used to talk about characters. The following terms may help us know more about the dramatic characters.

“**Protagonist**” and “**antagonist**” are two terms most frequently used when we refer to characters in a play. A **protagonist** is the central character around whom the entire plot of the story revolves. The protagonist in most plays is a good person, but he can be a bad person (or anti-hero) as well. An **antagonist**, on the other hand, is a character who opposes the protagonist. He is the person who introduces the problem and triggers the conflict. While the protagonist has to be a person (or a group of people), an antagonist can be whatever opposing force the protagonist struggles with, such as another character, environment, or something within the protagonist.

A **stock character** appears repeatedly in the plays of a particular time. It is one that has certain conventional attributes or attitudes, like the buffoon in the ancient Greek comedy, the heroine disguised as a handsome young man in Elizabethan dramas, etc. A stock character is stereotyped and is usually instantly recognizable in a play because the figure reoccurs in many other plays, such as a mad scientist, the cruel step mother.

An **archetypal character** is an original model from which other later copies are made, a character that has a common meaning in an entire culture, or even the entire human race and takes on a symbolic value with universal appeal. For example, Prometheus is the archetype of the human who takes on suffering for the greater good.

In terms of characterization, a character can be flat or round. A **flat character**, also called a **static character**, is a simplified character who does not change throughout the play. The character can be either good or bad. By contrast, a **round character** is usually **dynamic** and has the capacity for development over the course of a play. Round characters are three dimensional, neither wholly good nor wholly evil, but wholly human. They are complex with extensive personality, depicted with psychological depth and detail.

THOUGHT is what the play means as opposed to what happens (the plot). It is the theme, the central idea or insight of a play. It can either be clearly stated or inferred through the dialogue or action. A play may convey more than one interpretation to the audience. Many modern playwrights do not give solutions to the problems raised in their plays, provoking thought rather than persuading the audience.

While thought deals with what is said, **LANGUAGE** deals with how it is said. The language of drama is a form of action, using words in either verse (as in poetry) or prose (similar to the everyday speech as in novels). The language in a drama is



generally presented as **dialogue**, along with **monologue**, **soliloquy** and **aside** in some plays. **Dialogue** is a means by which the dramatic story is taken forward. It must fit in with the story and suit a character's personality. The success of a drama depends hugely on the contents and the quality of the dialogue. The long speech delivered by a single character when he or she is speaking his or her thoughts aloud, directly addressing another character or group of characters, is called a **monologue**. A special form of the monologue, where no other person is present on stage beside the speaker, is a **soliloquy**. The character is able to "speak his/her mind" in soliloquies, relating his or her thoughts and feelings to him/herself and to the audience without addressing any of the other characters. A character is giving an **aside** when he or she speaks to the audience rather than to the other characters on stage. An aside is usually a brief comment, rather than a speech.

MELODY does not mean music only. It includes all sounds in a production—music, songs, the actor's voices, the rhythm of dialogues and speeches. Melody is employed to enhance the mood and to strengthen the theme and ideas of a play. In some plays, music can even assume the role of an invisible character or force.

All plays have **SPECTACLE**, some emphasizing spectacle more than others. Spectacle involves everything that is seen or heard on stage—actors, sets, costumes, make-up, props, lights, sound, actors' physicality and movement. All the visual elements of the play are created for theatrical events. Each play will have its own unique and distinctive behaviors, dress and language of the characters, which provide the psychological and physical environment and create atmosphere for the play.

In any given play the six elements work together to create a special world on the stage. The relative significance of the different elements may vary considerably from play to play.



Reading a play

Ideally, a play should be seen in performance where directors, actors, set designers and other artists bring additional richness and depth to its stage production. That is the best experience of a drama which is meant to be seen and heard. However, we can also enjoy reading a play, without the subjective filters of actors and directors. Consider the following few points when reading a play:

- Visualizing the action. What would the lines of a character sound like? What would an actor look like speaking the lines? Be aware of the actions (gestures,



costumes, etc.) suggested in the dialogue. Actions may also be implied in stage directions. When there are many characters in a play, making a diagram of character relationships will help.

- Understanding cultural and historical background. How were plays produced in their times? In what way was a play written differently from another one you have read? What famous works of literature or theatrical practice influenced the play you are reading? How did this play inspire or influence later works?
- Reading critic comments on the play. This can help you go beyond your own responses and inform yourself of other people's interpretations of the play. It will also enrich your understanding and appreciation of the play.

Reading and thinking about plays can be fun and enlightening. When you read actively and imaginatively, a play jumps to life. And if at all possible, watch a stage or a film version of the play you are reading to enhance your experience of the play.



Unit 1

Antigone by Sophocles



Sophocles (496 BC – 406 BC)

I. Life experiences

- 496 BC: Born into a wealthy family near Athens; got a very good education when growing up.
- 480 BC: Chosen to lead the chorus celebrating the country's victory over the Persians.
- 468 BC: Took first prize in the Dionysian festival (a festival for Dionysus, God of wine) theatre competition over the great master of Athenian drama, Aeschylus; at least 18 first prizes to follow in the rest of his life.
- 441 BC: Served as a general in the Athenian campaign against Samos (a Greek island).
- 425 BC: Published his masterpiece *Oedipus the King*.
- 425 BC – 406 BC: Wrote more than 120 plays, only 7 complete tragedies have survived.
- 406 BC: Died in Athens at the age of 90 after he finished *Oedipus at Colonus*.

II. Major plays

- *Antigone* (441 BC)
- *Oedipus the King* or *Oedipus Rex* (425 BC)
- *Oedipus at Colonus* (406 BC)

III. Brief comments on Sophocles and his plays

1. Sophocles is considered one of the world's greatest dramatists for initiating the stage conventions that have become central to western dramatic art. His masterpiece *Oedipus the King* was cited by Aristotle as a perfect example of tragedy.

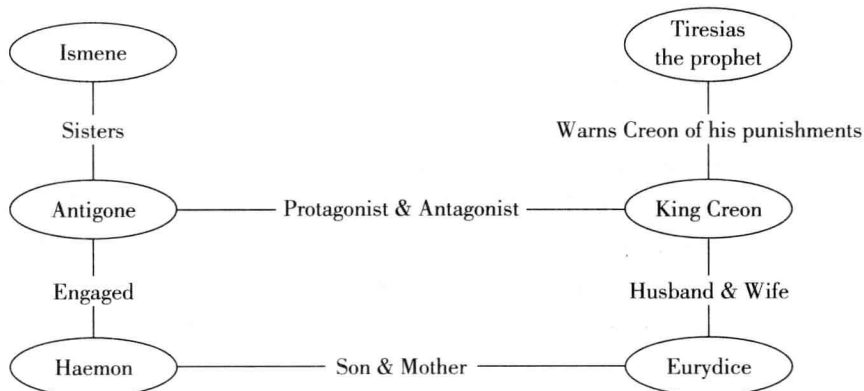


2. Subject matter: Stories originated from Greek myth and epic poems with noble characters and humanized gods (gods with human feelings and needs).
3. Themes: The struggle of a strong-willed individual against fate; the strengths and nobility of humans; justice; moral conflicts; pride as a character flaw and so on.
4. Style: Three unities (unities of the time, the place and the action); more expressive characters; more complex dramatic situations by increasing the number of the actors on stage from two to three; poetic, clear and simplistic language with hidden depths.



Antigone^①

I. Character relationship map^②



II. The plot

The twin sons of the late King of Thebes (Oedipus), Eteocles and Polyneices died in their battle for the throne^③. The new King, Creon, decrees that Eteocles will have a proper burial while Polyneices, the attacker of Thebes, will be left unburied as a punishment. Antigone, the sister of Eteocles and Polyneices, defies the order even though her sister Ismene refuses to help. Antigone is caught when she pours dirt and

① The play consists of a prologue (序幕), five episodes (节; 片段) and an exodus (结局; 退场) — Each ends with choral songs to serve as an actor in the play, provide background information, foreshadow the future or give comments on the actions. Sophocles increased the number of chorus members from 12 to 15.

② Character relationship map of each play selected may only include main characters.

③ Twin brothers Eteocles and Polyneices co-ruled Thebes. At the end of his first year of rule, Eteocles refused to give up the throne and forces Polyneices into exile. Later Polyneices came back with an army to take what was his by right. Both brothers died in the battle.



sand over her brother's guarded body, and is sentenced by Creon to be buried alive—even though his son, Haemon, pleads with his father to release Antigone, his bride-to-be. The blind prophet Tiresias warns Creon that the gods are on Antigone's side and that his son's death will be the punishment, but Creon will not listen. When he is finally convinced that he gave wrong orders to punish Polyneices and Antigone, it is too late. Antigone is dead, and Haemon has killed himself for her. A broken man, Creon returns to the kingdom only to learn that his wife, Eurydice, has killed herself after learning about her son's death.

III. Excerpts with questions for discussion

Excerpt 1

ANTIGONE. Will you share in the labor and the deed?

ISMENE. What is the venture? Where have your thoughts gone?

ANTIGONE. Will you lift the corpse with this very hand?

ISMENE. You want to bury him, although it's forbidden in the city!

ANTIGONE. I'll bury my brother—your brother, too, though you refuse! I'll not be found a traitor.

ISMENE. Madwoman, even when Creon forbids it?

ANTIGONE. He has no right to keep me from my own.

ISMENE. No, no! Think, my sister, how our father

died hated and infamous from offenses,

self-detected, smiting both his eyes

with his very own hands. His wife and mother—

both words at once! —took her life with twisted noose;

then, third, our two brothers in just one day

slew each other, poor wretches, achieving

a common doom at one another's hands.

And now the two of us, left all alone—

think how very horribly we will die

if we go against the king's decree and strength

outside the law. Rather, consider that we

were born women, proving we should not fight with men,

and that we are ruled by more powerful people

and must obey them, even in more painful things.

Therefore, I ask forgiveness from those below,

注释:

corpse: 尸体

offenses, 指俄狄浦斯在不知情的情况下杀父娶母。

smite: 重击; 惩罚

noose: 绳索

slew: 杀害 (slay 的过去式)

wretch: 不幸的人

doom: 厄运; 死亡

decree: 法令; 命令

“we should not fight with men” 的背景是: 古希腊妇女没有选举权, 法庭上也无权发言。哀吊死者是少数她们可以做的事之一。



as I am forced to in these matters, and yield
to those who walk with authority.

For to do excessive things is nonsense.

ANTIGONE. I would not order you; and if you change your mind
now, I would not have you do it with me.

Be whatever you want, and I will bury him.

It seems fair to me to die doing it.

I will lie dear to him, with one dear to me,
a holy outlaw, since I must please those
below a longer time than people here,
for I shall lie there forever. You, though,
dishonor the gods' commands, if you wish.

ISMENE. I do not dishonor them, but to do this
against the state—I have no strength for it.

ANTIGONE. Use that excuse, if you like, but I indeed
will go and heap a tomb for my dearest brother.

ISMENE. Alas, how I fear for you, daring girl!

ANTIGONE. Don't worry for me; straighten out your own life.

ISMENE. Then, at least, proclaim this deed to no one;

But keep it secret, and I shall do the same.

ANTIGONE. Oh, denounce it! I will hate you the more
if you don't tell these things to everyone.

ISMENE. You have a hot heart for chilling matters.

ANTIGONE. But I know I'll please those I should please most.

ISMENE. If you can—you want the impossible.

ANTIGONE. Well, then, I shall stop whenever my strength fails.

ISMENE. You should not start an impossible quest.

ANTIGONE. If you say this, you will be hateful to me,
and the dead will hate you always—justly.

But let me and my foolish plans suffer
this terrible thing, for I shall succumb
to nothing so awful as a shameful death.

ISMENE. Then go, if this seems best to you, but know that
your friends truly love you, however foolish.

outlaw: 罪犯

“dishonor the gods' commands” 的背景是：古希腊文化视弃尸不葬违反了天条，妇女尤其有责任埋葬家人，使其灵魂得以安息。
proclaim: 公布；声明

succumb to: 屈服于

Questions:

1. What are Ismene's reasons for not joining Antigone to bury their brother?
2. Why does Antigone insist on burying her brother even though she could be punished by the state law?
3. What does Ismene mean by "You have a hot heart for chilling matters"?
4. What does Ismene's refusal reveal of her? What type of person is Antigone? If you were in their situation, whose side would you take, Antigone's or Ismene's? Why?
5. What is the dramatic role of Ismene in this scene? Why is she necessary even though she does not join Antigone?

Excerpt 2

CREON. Gentlemen, the gods have set right again our city's affairs, after shaking them in a storm, and I have summoned you here out of all the citizens, knowing well how you always revered the power of Laius' throne; then, both when Oedipus saved the city and when he fell, you stood in consistent support of their children. And so, since in the same day they both fell by twofold fate, each striking and spreading fratricidal pollution, now I hold sole power and the throne, because I am the closest relative of the fallen. It is impossible to know the soul, the mind, and character of any man, until he has proven himself in the law. For if someone rules an entire city and does not take hold of the best counsels, but holds his tongue out of fear, I think him to be the worst of men, now and always; and the man who considers more important than his fatherland his friend, I think him

注释:

summon: 召集; 召唤

revere: 敬畏; 尊敬
Laius, 是底比斯的国王 (俄狄浦斯之父)。

throne: 王位; 王权

fratricidal: 杀兄的

"the closest relative of the fallen" 的背景是: Creon 是俄狄浦斯母亲及妻子 Jocasta 的兄弟, 俄狄浦斯孩子的舅舅。