Theatre Brief 11th edition Cohen Solutions Manual

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The Renaissance

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
This chapter discusses the plays, staging practices, and cultural contexts of Renaissance theatre in England, Italy, and Spain.

I. You should know the general qualities of the era known as "the Renaissance."

II. You need to be familiar with the origins, varieties, and qualities of theatres in the Shakespearean era.

III. You should know the configurations and qualities of theatre troupes in England, with particular emphasis on the Lord Admiral's Men and the Chamberlain's Men.

IV. You should understand the origins and characteristics of Shakespearean era theatre.

V. You should have a clear sense of the dramaturgy and staging practices of Shakespeare's plays specifically, and Renaissance theatre generally, using the example of *Romeo and Juliet*.

VI. You need to be familiar with major playwrights, dramatic forms, and presentational contexts of Renaissance theatre in Italy and Spain.

OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE
In one sense, the Renaissance in Europe was an era of renewed interest in classical (Greek and Roman) civilizations, but more importantly it marked a period of revolution in thinking that explored the potentials of the individual and the mind. Shakespeare, perhaps more than any other figure, exemplified this sense of freedom to explore man's place in the universe, as an individual. . Although his achievements in playwriting represent his greatest contribution, he was also an actor, producer, and director; and his accomplishments were set in an age already rich with numerous other great theatre artists, such as Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and John Webster.

There were two types of London's playhouses: public and private. The large public theatres featured an area open to the sky; a large, roofed, thrust stage; and a sizable audience on three tiers virtually surrounding the playing area. Although the exact dimensions and configuration are still in dispute, excavations of The Rose and The Globe theatres suggest some likely structural possibilities. Furthermore, three preexisting architectural and staging elements that recall the medieval stage—the innyard, trestle stage, and pageant wagon—seem to have been adapted in the construction of public theatres. In addition, the Roman amphitheatre apparently provided some influence. However, Shakespeare's company also performed plays at smaller, indoor,

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"private" theatres attended by a more elite audience: at the court, for royalty, and on tour to college halls, castles, and manor houses.
Players in Shakespeare's time were organized into all-male troupes, under the patronage of nobles. These multi-talented performers began primarily as touring groups early in the sixteenth century. In Shakespeare's lifetime, however, they took up residence in theatres built specifically for them. The Lord Admiral's Men and Shakespeare's own Chamberlain's Men were the most celebrated troupes of the time; they owned their theatres, refined the art of acting, and commissioned numerous plays. A famous manager/producer was Philip Henslowe.

Since Queen Elizabeth I banned plays with religious themes in 1559, playwrights turned to history and distant locales for their first Elizabethan-era plays. Nationalism, global expansionism, and a spirit of adventurous discovery informed the dramas that followed. Playwrights were prolific, commonly working in collaboration to create enough plays to fulfill the audience's appetite and supply themselves with income. Many such plays survive as masterpieces, even though their means of publication were relatively shabby at the time. The numerous genres in which they can be categorized, including tragedies, comedies, tragicomedies, history plays, and others, featured swordplay, wordplay, and an energetic use of language unequaled by any other period of English writing. Such plays were staged with a similar energy and imagination that capitalized on the vigor and imagery of the writing. An in-depth look at the language and implied staging of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* provides insight into the complexity of Renaissance dramaturgy, and helps us imagine what an audience would have experienced at a Shakespearean era production.

The Renaissance also witnessed theatrical blossoming in Italy. Machiavelli helped create a style based on the models of ancient authors, such as Plautus and Terence. This form, *commedia erudita,* preceded a form that would influence nearly all comic playwrights since: *commedia dell'arte*. Since its performances were built around a scenario and largely improvised, we have no scripts. However, scenarios, stock bits of comic business called *lazzi*, set speeches, and a vivid array of stock characters provide a clear idea of the form. Today the spirit and structure of *commedia* lives on in street-theatre performers, productions of the *commedia*-influenced plays by Moliere, and actor training exercises. Spain's Golden Age was inaugurated with the plays of the prolific Lope de Vega, who also helped establish Spanish drama's central theme: personal honor. Concerned with honor as well as philosophy, Pedro Calderón de la Barca wrote, like Lope, for the public theatres called *corrales* (which shared many features with Elizabethan public playhouses) and for the royal courts. Spanish Golden Age theatre not only influenced individual plays of the world repertoire but also, in its concern for honor and chivalry, infused later European drama with a sense of romanticism that would last for centuries.

THE RENAISSANCE

I. THE SHAKESPEAREAN ERA
   A. The Theatres
   B. The Players
   C. The Plays
II. THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE
   A. *Romeo and Juliet*
III. RENAISSANCE THEATRE IN ITALY AND SPAIN

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A. Italy: Machiavelli and the Commedia dell'Arte
B. Spain's Golden Age

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TERMS

Anti-Stratfordian
Blank verse
Boy companies
Cambises
Cellarage
Chamberlain's Men
Christopher Marlowe
Chronicle plays
Commedia dell'arte
Commedia erudita
Corrales de comedia
Doggerel
Elizabethan Age
Folio
Fuenteovejuna
Groundlings
Heavens
Iambic pentameter
Innyard
Jacobean Era
Lazzi
Life is a Dream
Lope de Vega
Lord Admiral's Men
Niccolò Machiavelli
Pasos
Pavilion
Pedro Calderón de la Barca
Philip Henslowe
Private theatres
Public theatres
Quarto
Renaissance
Scenario
Slapstick
Soliloquy
The Globe Theatre
The Rose Theatre
Tiring house
Touring
Trestle stage
Troupe
William Shakespeare

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SUGGESTED PLAYS AND FILMS

These plays and films offer examples of Renaissance drama and theatrical performance.

Plays

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Othello by William Shakespeare

Henry V by William Shakespeare

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

Dr. Faustus by Christopher Marlowe

The Servant of Two Masters by Carlo Goldoni

Fuenteovejuna by Lope de Vega

Life is a Dream by Pedro Calderón de la Barca

Films/Videos

Romeo and Juliet. Dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 1968.

Romeo and Juliet. Dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1996, (modern adaptation).

Hamlet. Dir. Laurence Olivier, 1948.

Hamlet. Dir. Kenneth Branagh, 1997.

Hamlet. Dir. Michael Almereyda, Miramax, 2000.

Henry V. Dir. Laurence Olivier, 1944.

Henry V. Dir. Kenneth Branagh, 1989.

Henry V. Dir. Michael Bogdanov, English Theatre Company, 1994.

Shakespeare in Love. Dir. John Madden, Miramax, 1998.

Shakespeare's Globe Restored. Learning by Performance, TMW Media Group,1997.

Shakespeare and His Theatre: The Globe. Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 1993.

Shakespeare and the Globe. Films for the Humanities, 1986.

The Green Bird. Dir. Giovanni Poli, from the series "Theatre: The Search for Style," IASTA (Institute for Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts), 1982.

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CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS A PLAY?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This chapter discusses the play as the basic unit of theatre. Plays can be understood through the ways in which they are classified and structured.

I. You should be familiar with the variety of durations of plays in performance, along with which durations are more typical.

II. You should be acquainted with the different genres in which plays are written; primarily tragedy and comedy, but also subgenres, in addition to debates about genre classification itself

III. You should know Aristotle's components of a play and the significance of conventions.

IV. You should be familiar with the order in which a theatrical event develops.

OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

As the basic unit of theatre, a play is not a thing so much as an event, an action surrounding a particular conflict. A major contribution to understanding what a play is was penned by Aristotle, in his famous, *Poetics*. It can also be seen as a piece of literature, and its 2500 years of written practice has given rise to two primary taxonomies for understanding the nature and potential of dramatic form

One method of understanding plays is to classify them. Duration is one method of classification, but the more useful—though more subjective—approach is through genre. Strictly speaking, the genre of a play is its type. The two most frequently employed genres are tragedy and comedy, although there are many more—the practice of classifying itself is highly flexible and a subject of critical debate. Tragedies, as defined by Aristotle, tell the story, centered on a great person whose flaw leads to a reversal of situation and newfound self-recognition, that ends in death or demise. Comedy humorously deals with topical situations; while it typically does not carry the historical reputation of tragedy, masterpieces of comedy have proven their timelessness through their acuity of human observation. Other genres include histories, musicals, melodramas, and documentary dramas and seemingly infinite other varieties.

Historically, scholars and theatre practitioners have relied upon two primary ways of analyzing the structure of particular plays. The patterned actions that comprise this structure comprise the play's dramaturgy. A play can be analyzed utilizing two intersecting axes: the "vertical" and the "horizontal," or temporal, order. Aristotle initiated analysis of a play according to its components 2500 years ago, and yet his list of a drama's six parts—along with the modern addition of a seventh, convention—is still useful to understanding how a play functions. Another way to evaluate a play's structure is to break down its temporal order. With an appreciation that plays exist in time and therefore within a shared theatrical experience, Aristotle's observation that

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drama has a beginning, middle, and end can be expanded to include the groupings of the preplay, the play proper, and the postplay.

Throughout the history of theatre, its practitioners have rebelled against the classical dramatic structure (from Euripides' *Electra*, to much of Pirandello's entire oeuvre, to postmodern "anti-theatre" presentations). However, the Aristotelian-defined theatrical elements remain the core building blocks that most playwrights use to create their work.

WHAT IS A PLAY?

I. CLASSIFYING PLAYS
   A. Duration
   B. Genre
II. DRAMATURGY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF DRAMA AND DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE
   A. Drama's Components: The Vertical Axis
      1. Plot
      2. Characters
      3. Theme
      4. Diction
      5. Music
      6. Spectacle
      7. Conventions
   B. Drama's Timeline: The Horizontal Axis
      1. Preplay
      2. Play
      3. Postplay

TERMS

Action
Antagonist
Catharsis
Characters
Climax
Comedy
Conflict
Convention
Criticism
Curtain call
Dark comedy
Denouement
Diction
Documentary
Drama
Dran
Exposition
Farce
Genre

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Hamartia
History play
Inciting Incident
Melodrama
Music
Plot
Poetics
Preplay
Postplay
Proagon
Procession
Protagonist
Self-recognition
Spectacle
Theme
Tragedy
Tragicomedy
Well-Made Play

SUGGESTED PLAYS AND FILMS

These plays and films exemplify a variety of dramatic genres.

Plays

Agamemnon by Aeschylus

Oedipus Rex by Sophocles

Medea by Euripides

Macbeth by Shakespeare

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

Stuff Happens by David Hare

Tartuffe by Moliere

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead by Tom Stoppard

Noises Off by Michael Frayn

Execution of Justice by Emily Mann

Films

Oedipus Rex. 1. Dir. Don Taylor, BBC/Bioscope production, 1986, Part 1 of "The Theban Plays" series.
2. Dir. Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Stratford Shakespeare Festival, 1957.

Agamemnon. Dir. Peter Hall, National Theatre of Great Britain, 1983, Part 1 of "Oresteia: The Trilogy" series.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. Dir. Tom Stoppard, 1990.

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Henry V. 1. Dir. Michael Bogdanov, English Shakespeare Company, 1994.
2. Dir. Kenneth Branagh, 1989.
3. Dir. Laurence Olivier, 1944.

Death of a Salesman. Dir. Volker Schlondorff, 1986, with Dustin Hoffman.

Tartuffe. Dir. Bill Alexander, Royal Shakespeare Company, 1984, with Anthony Sher.

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CHAPTER TWO

What Is a Play?

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A Play: *Defined*

- A play is the basic unit of theatre
  - It is not a *thing*
  - It is an *event*
    - The word *drama* derives from the Greek *dran*: "something done"
    - Is *pure action*, framed and focused around a particular conflict to become art; not just words
  - It can also refer to literature: *Artistotle's Poetics*
    - Ancient Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C.)
    - Most influential work of theatre criticism in Western history
    - Poetics (335 B.C.) divided plays into comedies and tragedies

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Classifying Plays

Genres/Duration

- ***Why classify?***
  - Do we want to go and see the play or not?
- A play's genre is its *type*
  - Discerning a play's genre is subjective
    - Scholars and critics can still disagree!
- Two major genres of plays
  - Comedies
  - Tragedies
- Other genres
  - Melodramas, histories, musicals, tragicomedies, documentary dramas, etc.
- ***Duration:***
  - 10 minute, one act, full –length (2-3 hours)

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Dramaturgy

The Construction of Drama and Dramatic Performance

- How the action of a play is structured is known as its dramaturgy
- Drama's Components:
  - The "vertical" axis
    - The components of the play:
      - plot, characters, theme, diction, music, spectacle, convention
  - The "horizontal" axis
    - The temporal experience of the play:
      - pre-play, play and postplay

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Tragedy

- According to Aristotle, tragedy tells a story that:
  - centers on a great person, or protagonist
  - who possesses a tragic flaw
  - that leads to reversal and self-recognition
  - who undergoes a change in fortune
  - ends in death or demise
  - creates catharsis:
    - The audience purges emotions of pity and terror
- Examples of Tragic Heroes/Characters:
  - Oedipus, Willy Loman

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Comedy

- Hilarity created through:
  - Full-stage chases, mistaken identities, sexual puns, clever disguises
- Humor found in ordinary people, ordinary circumstances
- Comedy does not have the same historical reputation as tragedy
  - Lose their popularity sooner than tragedies
  - But some masterpieces, such as those by Molière, survive through the ages

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The Seven Components

- Plot
  - The structure of actions
- Character
  - The depth and quality of people
- Theme
  - Abstract intellectual content
- Diction
  - The character of the text
- Music
  - Orchestration of sonic palette (noise and music)
- Spectacle
  - The visual aspects of the stage
- Convention
  - The agreement of "rules" between audience and performers

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The Preplay

- The preplay transitions into the world of the play.
  - It attracts the audience to the theatre.
    - Historically: processions, flags, speeches
    - Today: posters, billboards, advertisements
  - It shifts focus to the play
    - Audience members are seated
    - The audience becomes a community and aware of its self
    - The preshow draws them in

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The Play

- The event of the play is sequenced into four features:
  - Exposition
    - Gives audience information and structure
  - Conflict
    - Establishes character decisions and personality
  - Climax
    - The extreme point of conflict
  - Denouement
    - End of conflicts and possible resolution

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The Postplay

- The ending of the agreement between audience and performers
- A traditional element is the expected curtain call
  - The actors bow to applause
  - A recognition of shared experience
- The audience continues the postplay outside the theatre
  - They engage in discussions, debates
  - Published reviews, scholarly aricles
  - Actor interviews
  - This practice is known as dramatic criticism.

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