

Intro to Theatre Day 2 Notes 8/28/13

Defining Theatre

- the act of seeing, and being seen
- theatre = theatron
- requires actor/ audience/ space for theatre
- Aristotle, concept mimesis: imitation of human action
- Theatre spaces:
 - Proscenium arch- 'in front of the stage', straight rows front to back
 - sense of stage as two dimensional
 - front row/ back row seat is significantly different
 - Proscenium thrust- stage thrusts out into audience
 - radically different angles depending on seating
 - actors enjoy this stage, more engaged with audience
 - Black box theatre- small cube painted all black
 - neutral position, very intimate setting between actor/ audience
 - completely flexible spaces
 - Arena stage- theatre in the round
 - Can also create intimacy, audience circles the stage
- What is being seen?
 - props, background, story, relations
- "Willing suspension of disbelief"- participation in the illusion that what is happening is real and is happening for the first time.
- Motivation and inspiration, emotion, entertainment = all things we get out of going to the theatre

Day 4 Notes 9/2/13

- Catharsis
- theatre as a collaborative art form
- Dramatic Form-the way in which the playwright wants his audience to experience his story
 - tragedy, comedy, etc.

Othello (1603-04)

- Shakespeare as playwright (1564-1616)
- Othello, who, what, why, when, where
 - every scene flows from one place to another
 - drops audience into middle of the action
- exposition- background information, just enough for audience to understand the setting
- fuel of Iago's anger is that Cassio received a promotion that Iago was passed off for
- Roderigo & Iago go to Brabantio in the dead of night to wake him
 - Iago disappears after initiating a scene
 - crude language used, very strong imagery
 - Roderigo tells Brabantio that his daughter has run away to be with the moor, Othello
- Othello is very level headed and calm
 - even when Iago is attempting to rile him, he remains calm
 - also adds how much he loves Desdemona
 - when Brabantio is yelling at Othello, he still doesn't lose his cool

Day 5 Notes 9/4/13

Othello (1603-04)

- Othello defends himself when Brabantio accuses him of taking away Desdemona
 - Desdemona is summoned, highly unusual situation
 - As Othello tells story, they fall in love with his situation
- Focus goes back to the war, Othello and Desdemona want to be together
 - Ask if she can come along, and Duke says it is up to them
- Othello asks Iago to take Desdemona
 - Iago constantly referred to as Honest Iago
- Roderigo is so in love with Desdemona that he is blinded
- Iago's first soliloquy
 - A speech that is more than a paragraph long with no one else on stage
- Iago chooses Cassio as a perfect mark
 - states he is the ideal man for Othello to believe Desdemona would be into
- Scene moves from Venice to Cyprus
- pg. 37 Othello comes in and declares war over
 - Othello and Desdemona publicly shows their affection for each other, atypical in these times
- Iago's second soliloquy
 - acknowledges that Cassio, Othello, and Desdemona are all good people that have done nothing wrong
 - wants to destroy that happiness, feeds himself reasons for revenge
- Asides- character speaks but other characters can't hear
- pg. 42- "locker room talk"- Iago talking up Desdemona to Cassio
 - tries to get Cassio thinking of Desdemona in a romantic way
 - even when they are alone, Cassio speaks respectfully of Desdemona
- finds Cassio's weakness and keeps tempting Cassio to drink
 - gets Cassio in deep trouble; after initiating fight, Iago is the first person Cassio turns to for help
 - again the role of honest Iago

Day 6 Notes 9/6/13

- going into Act 3, pg. 58
- Iago pretends to have something in his mind and makes Othello question him
- Acts 4 and 5, action really picks up, when Iago really lays the poison
 - Iago is really making it up as he goes along, recognizing opportunities

Day 7 Notes 9/9/13

- End of act 4, moment where Othello really turns against Desdemona
- Iago has obsession with Othello
- Calls Desdemona a whore
- Desdemona and Emilia turn to Iago for help, still see him as honest
- Scene 3, Othello tells Desdemona to prepare for bed, dismiss Desdemona
 - Desdemona and Emilia discuss women's fidelity
- Act 5 Scene 1, things really take off
 - Roderigo attacks Cassio under Iago's orders
 - Roderigo finally realizes what he has done as Iago is wounding him
- Emilia enters to give news that Roderigo is dead, and finds Desdemona dying
- Othello compares Iago to the devil, and Iago is like yeah, I am the devil
- now all Othello wants is to know why Iago has ruined his life

Day 8 Notes 9/11/13

-Shakespeare plays have reoccurring themes

- the most honest person can be so deceived
- always has a form of miscommunication
- structural, political and social structures impact the plays
- trust, mistrust, betrayal

-Shakespeare, neoclassicism, romanticism, realism

-Neoclassicism- 17th century France, major inventions, scientific process leads to rise of this

- Pure forms- plays should be written as pure tragedy, or pure comedy
 - fairs of state, said tragedy must have unhappy ending
- Verisimilitude- to have the audience believe the play is believable
- The three Unities- time, place, action
 - said plays required these unities in order to be believable
- Decorum- behavior appropriate to a given situation, characters must be written to appropriate decorum
- Confidante- replaces need for the soliloquy and Greek chorus

-Romanticism- 1800 humans are led by emotions, feeling, and intuition

- Higher truth- there exists a higher truth than we are able to perceive every day
- Duality of nature- body/soul, physical/spiritual, temporal/eternal
- The role of artists and philosophers- they bring us a vision of their higher truth through their work/art
- Rejection of Neoclassicism, embracing of Shakespeare
- Subject matter= innocence vs. tyranny

-“If I am no poet, I shall try my luck as a photographer” –Henrik Ibsen; transition away from romanticism

-Elements of Realism (mid-19th century)

- Direct observation of the contemporary world
- Truthful presentation
- “Slice of life”- looking in on lives of the characters
- Heredity and environment- idea that each of us is the product of these
- 4th wall removed, breaking away from Shakespeare
 - in Ghosts, there is a whole paragraph describing the set
 - no more soliloquys, never acknowledge that the audience is watching
- Visual exposition
- Individual vs. rigid moral society (societal reform= betterment of human kind)