



How to Read a Play: Script Analysis for Directors

Damon Kiely

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The work done on a play before the first rehearsal, the first group reading or even before the cast have met, can be crucial to the success of a production. Directors and dramaturgs must know how to analyze, understand and interpret a play or performance text if they hope to bring it to life on the stage.

This book provides a broad range of tools and methods that can be used when reading a text, including:

1. Lessons from the past. What can we learn from Aristotle, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Vakhtangov, Brecht and Harold Clurman? This section establishes the models and methods that underpin much of a director's work today.
2. A survey of current practices in Western theatre. A combination of research, interviews and observation of practical work addresses the main stages in understanding a play, such as getting to know characters, sharing ideas, mapping the action and grappling with language.
3. A workbook, setting out twenty one ways of breaking down a play, from the general to the particular.

Contributions, reflections and interjections from a host of successful directors make this the ideal starting point for anyone who wants to direct a play, or even devise one of their own. This wide range of different approaches, options and techniques allows each reader to create their own brand of play analysis.

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