

THTR 2340

Introduction to Design

Fall 2021

A,B,C's of Internal Research (thanks to Darwin Reid Payne, from Design for the Stage)

When we speak of Internal Research, it means the information that can be gleaned from the text. It is the first research step, and continues throughout the process. Good designers return to the script again and again to connect to the script and for further insight. Let's look at these in more of a checklist which can be useful in reading a play:

- 1) Explicit Directions Written by the Author. These come under a couple of categories. Some directors and designers disregard all stage directions, others find valuable information in them.
 - A) Factual descriptions. Simply, a description of the environment of the play. Prior to the last 150 years, these descriptions were very scanty - look at Shakespeare for example. But more recently, playwrights have included sometimes very detailed descriptions. George Bernard Shaw is a great example.
 - B) Poetic Descriptions. This is a way for the the author to not only give information about the environment and circumstances, but to also convey a mood to the piece and a sense of style. Tennessee Williams is an excellent example of this.
 - C). Stage directions in acting editions of the play. These are often not the author's writing, but come from the Stage Manager's book from the first major production of the play. It can be, and should be completely disregarded - or at least carefully scrutinized.
- 2) Deductive evidence gained by direct or indirect references within the play.
 - A). Genre
 - B). Mood
 - C). Plot
 - D). Style
- 3). Production Demands
 - A). Actor movement, number of actors in a scene
 - B). Furniture
 - C). Properties
 - D). Set Props, Dressing
 - E) Set and Costume changes
 - F) Entrances
- 4) Date - of composition, of action, of first production.