

1. Some assumptions of imagistic analysis:

Dramas are expressions of reality, agencies through which the playwright's vision becomes an object an audience can appreciate intellectually and emotionally. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is thus not merely about Brick Pollitt's drinking problem, nor is it about Maggie Pollitt's sexual frustrations. What is it? What is this particular world like?

2. CONCEPT: A play is a vision of human life created in the mind of an auditor by the presentation of patterns of images.

CONCEPT: The experience of a playwright's vision is a creative act of integration of hundreds of discrete images suffusing the production.

CONCEPT: The imagery of a production of a play derives from the imagery contained in the playscript. The interpreter's task is to discover the images in the playscript and to integrate them into a commanding image (or sensory metaphor).

CONCEPT: A commanding image is a likeness of the playwright's vision. The aim of imagistic analysis is to sense the world as the playwright might have felt it.

CONCEPT: A good production of any play expresses the playwright's vision in terms comprehensible to a particular audience.

3. DEFINITION: An image in a playscript is any descriptive term, adjective or adverb, word or phrase, or the sensual connotation of nominative and predicative words or phrases. Example: "Sensual connotation of nominative and predicative words or phrases." A part of the playwright's setting of *Oh Dad Poor Dad...* indicates that "a large balcony juts out over the audience." The structure named (nominative word) is "balcony." The sensual connotation is slight, but the sense of elevation is clear. The predicative term, "juts out over" has powerful sensual connotations of abruptness and violence. The connotation is clearer if one considers that the balcony could also "bulge," or thrust," or simply "project." It "juts." The image helps grasp the threatening, violent quality of Arthur Kopit's vision as concretized in this play.

4. TECHNIQUE: Images fundamentally appeal to our senses. The analyst can categorize images according to each image's dominant sensual appeal:

- a. visual: colors, shapes, masses, lines
- b. auditory: tonality of speech as well as sound effects
- c. tactile: textures of scenic surfaces, of costumes and properties
- d. olfactory: odors characteristic of the play's environment
- e. image of taste: sour sweet, bitter, bland
- f. kinesthetic imagery: movement, gesture, facial expression

The interpreter's grasp of the playwright's vision is enhanced by answers to three questions:

1. What is the play about? First consider the story of the play, then what happens in the play. Finally, consider briefly the structure or shape of the play.
2. What is the play's theatrical context? Evidence about the physical form and the equipment of the theatre for which the play was written, as well as evidence about the institution of theatre in the playwright's time provide keys to the playwright's vision.

3. What is the play like?

Imagistic Analysis:

1. Prepare an analysis of the images of the study play as a list (see #4). Act III is all I need to see. Though you will want to look at more than just Act III to get an accurate assessment.
2. (1 and 2 above) integrate these details with information about the play's theatrical context and a description of what the play is about (theoretical metaphor) to
3. (3 above) create a commanding image that tells me what the playwright's vision is like. Start the paragraph with Cat is like_____.

As always, tell me what you think, why you think so, and prove that it is viable.