From non-dramatic literature to live theatre

IB DP Literature and Performance SL: the transformative performance and oral

From non-dramatic literature to live theatre

- explain the format and marks of the **transformative performance** and the oral;
- transform a narrator, a place, thoughts, a crowd and time into stage choices;
- follow a worked transformation of Lu Xun's "Kong Yiji";
- keep a rehearsal log and plan the four parts of the oral.

What changes from page to stage

- A story or poem has features that the stage cannot copy directly.
- Each one needs a **transformation** 转换:

Worked transformation: "Kong Yiji"

- **Space**: a real counter across the stage. The audience sits on the customers' side, so they watch Kong Yiji as the laughing customers do, and become part of the crowd.
- **Voice**: the narrator is played twice: the grown man speaks to the audience from the edge of the stage; the boy of twelve stays behind the counter. The gap between them shows the story's double view: the boy laughed, the man remembers.

Worked transformation: "Kong Yiji" (2)

- **Chorus**: three actors play the customers, laughing on cue. As Kong Yiji's story gets worse, the laughter stays the same, which makes it more and more painful to hear.
- **Object**: the shop's board with "Kong Yiji: 19 coins" written on it stays visible; at the end, it is the only thing left of him.
- **Movement**: he enters standing in his long gown; he exits crawling on his hands. The difference in height says what the narrator does not say.

Rehearsal and the oral

- Keep a **rehearsal log** 排练日志: what you tried, what failed, what you changed and why.
- The oral (15 minutes) explains your process:
- 1.
- The extract and why you chose it. 2.

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Literature and Performance guide* (first assessment 2024), internal assessment criteria.
- Lu Xun, "Kong Yiji" (1919), translated by J. Lovell in *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China* (2009).
- P. Brook, *The Empty Space* (1968).

Common errors

- Retelling the plot on stage instead of transforming it.
- Reading the narration aloud in full; the stage must show what the page tells.
- Making choices only because they look good, with no link to the text.

Common errors (2)

- Forgetting the audience: say where they sit and what they are meant to feel, and why.
- Keeping the rehearsal log only at the end; record what failed as well as what worked, while you work.

Key terms

- **Transformative performance**: a 10-minute piece of live theatre made from an extract of a non-dramatic work.
- **Non-dramatic**: written to be read, not performed: a novel, short story or poem.
- **Transformation**: turning a feature of the page, such as a narrator, into a choice on stage.

Key terms (2)

- **Chorus**: a group of actors who move and speak together, often standing for a crowd or a society.
- **Rehearsal log**: a record of what you tried, what failed, what you changed and why.

Check yourself

- 1.
- How long are the performance and the oral, how many marks are there, and what are they worth? 2.
- Give two ways to transform a narrator for the stage. 3.
- In the worked transformation, why does the audience sit on the customers' side of the counter? 4.