



'Two' Knowledge Organiser

CAPA212 – Modern Text

Understand how to interpret and analyse text in modern and classic dramatic writing.

Perform dialogue from modern and classic texts

Jim Cartwright

Background

Jim Cartwright is an English dramatist, born in Farnworth, Lancashire in 1958. Cartwright's first play, *Road*, won a number of awards before being adapted for TV and broadcast by the BBC. His work has been translated into more than 40 languages.

Cartwright moved to London to live a 'bohemian lifestyle' and began to write. His first script 'Road' was produced in 1986 at the Royal Court, London. It won various awards and was then produced in New York and is now considered a modern classic. Since then, Cartwright has produced several plays nearer his hometown. 'Two' and 'Eight Miles High' were produced at Octagon Theatre here in Bolton in 1991. Cartwright's plays have now been performed worldwide and he has directed many plays within the Northwest and around London.

Influences

A number of Cartwright's plays engage with the poverty within the Northern working class. Although, the language of the characters does not follow a conventional realistic approach. It links to a more avant-garde, experimental theatre, that began in the late 19th century.

Cartwright is not limited to a particular style but interweaves many inspirations into his writing. He uses monologues and dialogues in many of his works.

Humour is hugely important in Cartwright's plays, he pushes the boundaries by injecting humour into the most tragic of situations -starvation, domestic violence, inoperable cancer.

He uses techniques that lend themselves to **Brecht**, as characters seamlessly move from talking to one another to the audience, breaking the forth wall. Especially seen in 'Two'.

Bertolt Brecht

Bertolt Brecht was a German playwright and influential theatre practitioner. Many of his ideas were so revolutionary that they changed the theatrical landscape forever. Modern theatre owes a lot to his methods.

He wanted to make the audience think, and used a range of devices to remind them that they were watching theatre and not real life.

Brecht was against **cathartic theatre**. He believed that while the audience believed in the action onstage and became emotionally involved they lost the ability to think and to judge. He wanted his audiences to remain objective and distant from emotional involvement so that they could make considered and rational judgements about any social comment or issues in his work.

When writing 'Two' Cartwright stated that he lived a double life — one glamorous in London and another working class and difficult.

'Two' gives the audience an insight into the working class, factory life Cartwright witnessed. The play is centred around a community whose lives have been stripped away.

The community spirit is key shown in the local pub a place where you recognise everyone and know what they're going through.

'Art is not a mirror with which to reflect reality but a hammer with which to shape it.' Bertolt Brecht

Epic Theatre

To do this he used a range of theatrical devices or techniques so that the audience were reminded throughout that they were watching theatre; a presentation of life, **not** real life itself.

He called this style **Epic theatre**.

[Epic Theatre](#)

'Two' Education Pack



Most famous plays

Road 1986
Two 1989
Bed 1989

Screenplays / Films

Little Voice
Strumpet

He often works with award winning British director, Danny Boyle.

Voice

Pitch	Speaking in a high, low or natural voice.
Pace	The speed at which someone speaks.
Pause	Where sound stops, how often and for long.
Projection	Enables audience to hear actor's voice.
Volume	How loudly or softly the words are spoken.
Articulation	Clarity of your diction and voice.
Tone	Suggests your mood and your intention.
Inflection	The rise and fall of your voice.
Accent	Particular to a country, region, local dialect.
Repetition	Repeating a sound or words for emphasis.
Emphasis	Choosing to stress particular words to convey meaning.

Physical

Facial Expression	Using your face to show mood, emotion, feeling and responses.
Posture	Stance, way of standing and sitting.
Gesture	Movement or action of nay part of the body to express idea, feeling or mood.
Mime	Demonstrating an action with an object that doesn't exist.
Proxemics	Use of space, how the characters are placed on stage. The distance or level between character shows their relationships, feelings and give clues of the situation or the people within the situation at that moment.
Gait	The way you walk.
Eye Contact	Establishing eye contact with another actor or the audience.

Context – 1980s Lancashire

Growing up in Lancashire, Cartwright's community was centred around labouring: his father was a factory worker and he attended an unfussy secondary school, not much more than a "direct conveyor belt" to manual labour. He followed this conveyor belt and got his first job stacking crates in a warehouse.

There was not a custom of going to university, so his writing began out of his surroundings rather than book learning. He's said the writing style from his early work — the style academics and critics applauded — came out of not knowing where to put a full-stop. But this style found an audience with the Royal Exchange in Manchester, and *Road* was staged in 1986.

For the remainder of the 80's and into the early 90's he would continue to write character-driven plays based on his personal experiences of growing up working class in Thatcherite Lancashire.

To dramatically understate and simplify, the 1980's was a difficult time for working class northerners. Between the closure of industries like mines and steelworks and an economic recession countless jobs were cut and unemployment skyrocketed.

Victorian concepts of the "undeserving poor" returned in the form of benefit "scrounging" and political and economic division drove a hard line between people in the north and south of the country.

Glossary – Acting Skills