



Dramatic Technique



What is drama?

- **Origins of Drama**

- **The word drama comes from the Greek verb dran, which means “to do.”**
- **Drama is written to be performed by actors and watched by an audience.**



Cont...

- **Play/Drama is a form of literature written by a playwright, usually consisting of dialogue between characters, intended for theatrical performance or reading.**
- **Drama consists of characters in conflict and in action.**
- **In his poetics, Aristotle defined drama is “an imitation of an action.”**

Cont...

- **A drama is a story enacted onstage for a live audience.**
- **A form of literature commonly known as plays.**
- **Drama is a branch of literature, but is a special and distinctive branch.**
- **It is a conceptualization of the interactions of too numerous elements in the theatrical medium movement, speech, scenery, costume, staging, music, spectacle, and silence.**

Cont...

- **Its form is a prose or verse composition, especially one telling a serious story, that is intended for representation by actors impersonating the characters and performing the dialogue and action.**
- **Drama is the general term for performances in which actors impersonate the actions and speech of fictional or historical characters (or non human entities) for entertainment of an audience, either on stage or by means of a broadcast; or expected to present stories showing situations of conflict between characters.**

Cont...

- **Drama is an adaptation, recreation and reflection of reality on stage.**
- **In drama, the characters/actors talk to themselves and react to issues according to the impulse of the moment.**
- **Drama is therefore presented in dialogue.**

Cont..

- **Drama is an imitation of life. Drama is different from other forms of literature because of its unique characteristics.**
- **It is read, but basically, it is composed to be performed, so the ultimate aim of dramatic composition is for it to be presented on stage before an audience.**

Definition of Drama

- **There are many definitions of drama. Martin Esslin in Anatomy of Drama has the following definitions of drama:**
 - 1. Drama can be seen as a manifestation of the play instinct as in children who are playing mother and father.**
 - 2. Drama is something one goes to see, which is organized as something to be seen.**
 - 3. It is an enacted fiction an art form based on mimetic action.**
 - 4. In arts, drama is the most elegant expression of thought nearest to the truth (reality).**
 - 5. It is the most concrete form in which art can recreate human situation, human relationship.**

Cont...

- **Aristotle's definitions sum up these and other numerous definitions of drama by different scholars.**
- **He defines drama simply as an imitation of an action.**
- **He links it to the mimetic impulse in human beings like children playing father and mother in a childhood play.**
- **This means that imitation is part of life.**

Cont...

- **However, Bertolt Brecht insists that drama is not just an imitation of action, but a tool for the demonstration of social conditions.**
- **It is not just an entertainment but an instrument of political and social change.**
- **Generally,** drama is an imitation of an action.
- It is a branch of literature which is both literary art and representational art. As a literary art, it deals with fiction or an imaginary story that is presented through characters and dialogue.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. In your own words, define drama.
2. What is the basic difference between drama and other genres of literature?

Play

- **A play is a form of literature written by a playwright, usually consisting of dialogue between characters, intended for theatrical performance.**
- **Sometimes known as stage play, its a production which is meant to be performed on stage in front of live audience.**

Types of play

- 1. Stage Play**
- 2. Closet Drama**
- 3. TV Play etc**

Cont...

- **Drama and play are two words that are often confused when it comes to their usage and meanings.**
- **The word „drama “is used in the sense of „theater”.**
- **On the other hand, the word „play“ is used in the sense of„ a literary composition”.**
- **Play:** a dramatic composition or piece.
- **Drama:** a dramatic performance as on the stage.
- **This is the main difference between the two words, namely, drama and play.**

Playwrighting

- **The art or technique of writing, plays; the work or perform of a playwright.**
- **The activity or process of writing plays.**
- **Playwrighting focuses on the craft of preparing play script (a written version of a play; used in preparing for a performance.**

Creative Writing

- **The definition of creative writing is writing that expresses ideas and thoughts in an imaginative way.**
- **The writer gets to express feelings and emotions instead of just presenting the facts.**
- **Creative writing is any writing that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic, or technical forms of literature, typically identified by an emphasis on narrative craft, character development, and the use of literary tropes or with various traditions of poetry and poetics.**

Dramatic setting

1. **Novel:** has freedom to use natural setting all without specification for example, **place:**
 - ❑ If playwright propose to include whole Ethiopia he/she has freedom to include city, rivers, oceans, mountains etc...the time:
 - ❑ If when the story is happen also in difference of midday, night, sunrise: and far distance of between week, month & year, eras and up to changes of small detail scenes, is limitless.

Cont...

2. Film: also can use greater amount of various settings similar to novel.

- ❑ Screen playwright can create till using globe.

3. Drama: drama is limited to use of many and different setting in one specific story of play.

- ❑ The 1st reasons we restricted is because of to build on the theater stage there is no enough place or space.

- ❑ The 2nd reasons our skill of presenting natural setting as it is also limited.

- ❑ 3rd reasons in our country theater industry context there is no more than one to build scenery within one play.

Elements of Drama

- **The six elements of drama are parts of Greek tragedy of: plot, characters, language, thought/theme/Ideas, music & spectacle.**
- **According to Another dramatist/scholar, theorist GM Manli drama has three main elements: story, action, & Character.**
- **Modern drama, having base on the above theorist and model playwrights, improved their theory by classify drama element into five parts.**
 - **Setting, dialogue, characters, theme, plot**

1. Setting

- **Setting identifies the time & place in which the stories & events are occur shows social facts.**
- **The context of the play tells or gives us information about general location of the place performances events are occurred.**
- **In the explanation of setting a context has three main categories:**
 - 1. Historical moment/in time**
 - 2. Geographical location**
 - 3. Natural occurrence**

Cont...

- **Historical context:** includes culture, social, economical, and political occurrences rather explaining dramatic places and time it shows social issues.
- **Geographical Context:** Indicates the place where the drama's actions happened. The general and specific places are the part of geographical contexts.
- **Natural Context:** comprise nightfall, sunrise, seasons that indicates general & specific setting.

General and Specific Setting

- **General Setting:** Within a given the overall time of happening of story and the entire area story takes place is general setting.
- For example, era, years, seasons, month, week and etc can be general time and the location side planet, continent, country, cities and etc. are possible to be general place.

Cont...

- The problem & cause of Lack of enough description of setting.
- Plays that have not enough description of setting (place & time) actions take place makes readers of the play & director who transfer written book on the stage challenge & face as a problem.

Cont...

- **Dramatic setting is categorized in to four parts based on places.**

- 1.Box setting**
- 2.Outdoor setting**
- 3.Bare setting**
- 4.Special setting**

Cont...

- 1. Box set:** Interior or indoor setting refers to a given drama its action & story performed is the limited fourth wall.
 - When we watch from the side of audience on the stage built like living room, bedroom, courthouse, barroom, or any fourth wall.
- 2. Outdoor setting:** These kinds of setting employ like sky, mountain, ocean, lake, open land (field), forest etc.
 - Play that has designed outdoor setting is difficult to bring nature on the stage. Therefore it is possible by using scenery or painting copy of it.

Cont...

- 3. Bare setting:** During transferring a play script in to stage that never need scenery wall types of drama has no any setting or place the story & actions are take place.
- Playwright never explains the description of the setting. The location of the drama distinguished through characters action and dialogue.

Cont...

4. Special setting; this types of setting appears in a play that its story & action occur within locations can be moved from place to place like ship for passengers, flight and traveled plain, including foot travelers.

Exercise

- 1. Explain your birth place natural setting what mood it seems at night in the light of them moon & daylight differences.**
- 2. Explain the difference between Natural & dramatic setting by giving enough example.**
- 3. From play you have a read explain general & specific types of setting.**
- 4. Explain the following dramatic terminologies.**
 - Drama, playwrighting, action, elements of drama, setting, indoor sedramatic time, social, dramatic setting, outdoor setting, bare setting, special and box setting.**

2. Characters

- ❑ Character is an imaginary person of fictional works like drama (play, film, TV & radio play), novel and narrative verses these represents actual real world.
- ❑ Although they often seem like people, dramatic characters are actually created in the mind of the playwright and they are the people of creative works.
- ❑ Character can be defined as any person, animal, or figure represented in a literary work.
- ❑ The word character created in a certain drama commonly used human beings, animals, supper natural forces and ideas.

Cont...

- In other words animals, or objects, mystical, and ideas almost always would be seen personified. To describe in detail:
- **Human beings:** Kebede, Debela, Goytom ... etc.
- **Animals:** Donkey, hyena, cow, sheep, fox...etc.
- **Supernatural/mystical:** Angle (a super natural messenger), Satan, evil spirit, good spirit etc.
- **Ideas:** love, hate, evilness, goodness, malignant, lie, jealousy, envy etc.
- Good authors have the ability to create believable, memorable characters.

Types of character

- Round character and flat character
- Protagonist character and antagonist character
- Virtuous character and vicious character
- Main character and minor character
- Dynamic character and static character

Character crafting method

1. Physical
2. Social
3. Psychological
4. Moral

- ❑ **Physical character manifestation:** it emphasis on characters clothing, gender, sex, age, movement, healthy, sound, color, posture and ... etc.
- ❑ **Social Relationship:** Characters education and whole information related to education, marital status, the role characters have in the community, wealthy, economically, religion, political attitude, and professions.

Cont...

- **Psychological:** the method include characters internal feeling hope, wish, hate, love, cause of actions created in the mind of characters and reflected emotional sense toward outside world.
- **Moral character crafting method:** is depend on intangible ideas of conscience (moral conduct, sense of right and wrong) of characters.
- Moral personality includes humans" failure, discourage, and weaken demoralize ...because of wrong doing; when people broke what nature permit, too greedy, gluttonous; lacking any sense of moral or principles.

Cont...

- **Physical and social type of character crafting method are tangible capable of perceived; especially capable of handled, touched or felt and known as objective.**
- **Both psychological and moral character building method have the quality of immaterialness, incapable of perceived by the senses especially the sense of touch therefore is intangible and subjective.**

Cont...

- Six mechanisms are known that playwright often used to present character:
1. Introduction of play script: The script part that is not used as characters speech or dialogue.
 2. Stage direction: is part of the script of the play that tells the actors how they are to move or speak their lines.
 3. Reserved page for character: Since plays have format that playwright should governed by. Next to the title page the second page is serving as characters name list is demonstrated.

Cont...

- 4. Characters speech:** Characters are living the actual people life.
- ❑ So the language they use is what we use in our day to day life.
 - ❑ The character dialogues he or she uses reflect life style, status, and personality.
 - ❑ Therefore characters speech identifies who they are.

Cont...

5. **Characters explanation about each other.** Similar to our real life characters explain about one another.

□ Through dialogue, they introduce each other relating to social, life style, marriage, birth, work, cultured behavior, gentility, generosity, and mannerly way.

□ The best method that characters explain each other through greeting between them can be described by three ways.

1. Characters introduce themselves

2. Two characters introduce each other

3. One or more than one characters introducing the third person.

3. Plot

- **The plot is refers to the sequence of events inside a story which affect other events through the principle of cause and effects.**
- **Plot is the organization of an action, the arrangement of the sequential material into a whole.**
- **It is all about establishing connections, suggesting cause, and a showing relationship.**
- **Plot is in general consists of story, conflict and cause and effects.**

Story:

- **Story:** a sequential list of the incidents or a detailed outline of the entire story; also notes about how the play begins and ends.
- Story not narrates actions and events based on cause and effect. Rather story narrates an arrangement of a course of events in time.
- **Scenario** is an outline of a play or arrangements of a drama that finally presented on the stage or published in the form of book.
- In other words plot or story is first transformed into scenario and then brought into performance on stage.

4. Conflict

- **Conflict is a situation in which groups and peoples of dramatic work involved in a serious disagreement.**
- **It is the occurrence of unbalance clash between ideas or need have opposite peoples.**
- **In story of drama dispute can be happened between people and people, individual with individual, individual with group, person with him/herself, human with nature. The interaction between conflict and story is plot.**

Cont...

□ Drama is divided in five parts based on plot types.

1. Weak plot drama
2. Strong plot drama
3. Single plot
4. Plot less drama

Weak/loose Plot

- **The relation between sub-stories, scenes, and acts lacking tightened are weak plot drama type.**
- **Actions, events, and stories of loose plot drama should not necessarily base on cause and effect.**
- **Characters without any reason come into sight and they exist with no giving information where they go.**
- **In addition characters movement, actions and dialogue are not this much express reality.**
- **The power of the drama to catch attention of an audience is too weak, because time and location of story takes place rapidly changing.**

Cont...

- **Rather the story concern on the main character it emphasis on other ordinary characters.**
- **Most of the time drama and films known by loose plot is farce.**

Strong Plot

- **Characters of strong plot drama type is carefully designed; and so characters movements, actions, and dialogues are depend on cause and effects.**
- **The structure of time and place is organized well because during time and space of the story happened change is expected as real world.**
- **It does not create question in the mind of reader and spectators.**
- **Most of the time audiences get satisfaction from strong plot type drama.**

Double Plot

- **Double plot drama type also can be existing in the form of strong or weak plot.**
- **These types of plot contain two different aims in the story but, interconnected as one.**
- **One of the two is main plot and the other is subplot. Both main plot & sub plot have small pieces of stories.**
- **Pieces of plots are a body of the main one and get solution together with the main plot.**

Plot less Drama

- **Plot less drama has no a single or specific story reader or spectator mention after reading or watching.**
- **A character that is protagonist, antagonist and etc are difficult to identify.**
- **Character once appeared in a given scene not continuously seen in the next. In addition, a theme of the play also impossible to discovered.**

Exercise

1. Choose one play script and describe its (5-10) pages
 - Story
 - Conflict
 - plot
2. Explain below dramatic terms in the class. First discuss with your friends out of the class room
Scenario, plot, story, conflict.

Dramatic structure

- Dramatic structure notifies Plotline of drama. Plot structure is also called dramatic structure.
- It refers to the combination of dramatic elements such as setting, characters, plot, theme and dialogue with selective and acceptable ways that follow the line of conflict.
- The Drama's line of conflict fills up socially acceptable story that has beginning, middle, and ending parts. Story designed based on conventional dramatic structure, the main character at the minimum obstructed by one among five types of conflicts.
- 1) Individual 2) himself 3) society 4) nature 5) luck /chance

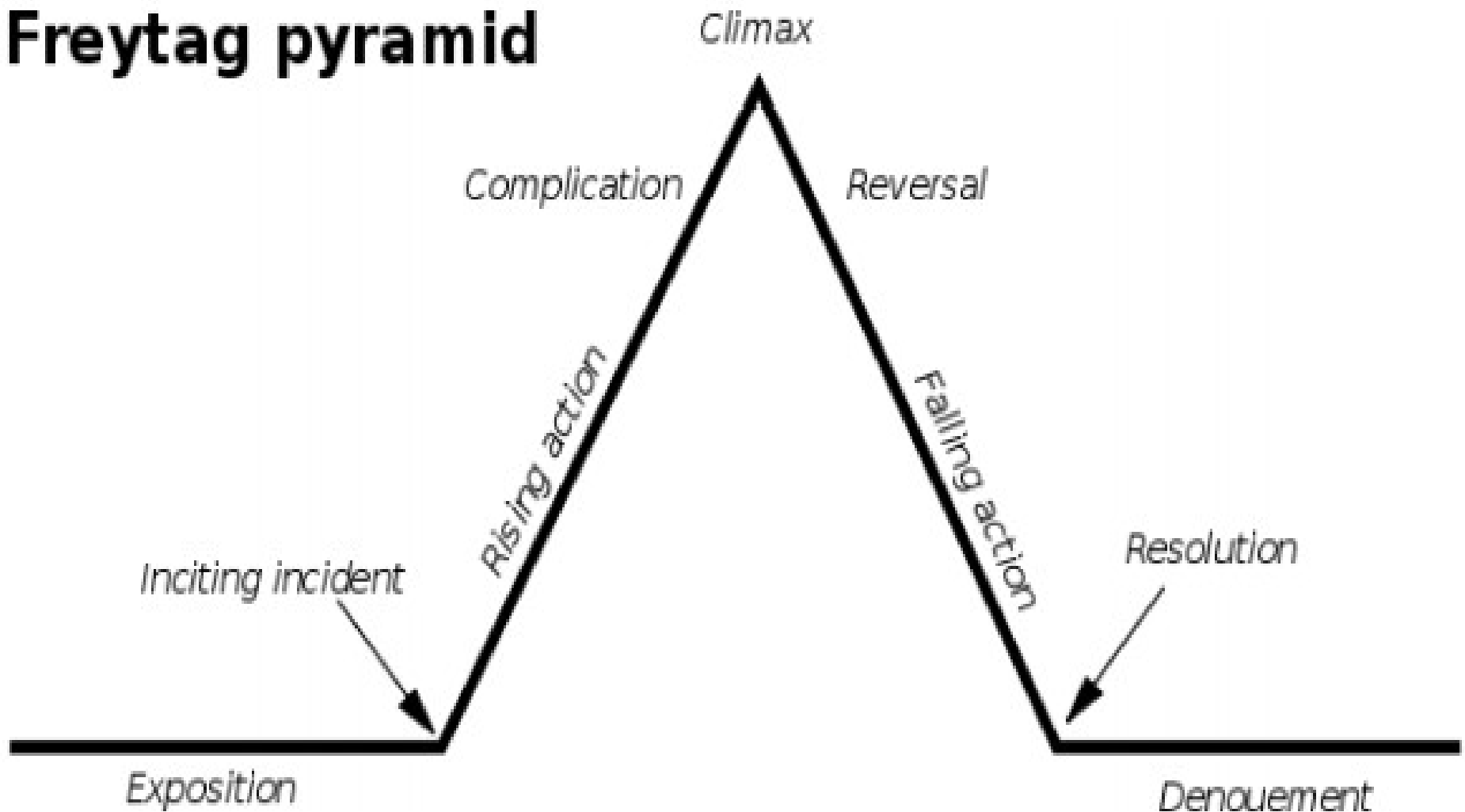
Cont...

- The main characters involved with confront until a started conflicts or story should get solution.
- The first dramatic structure model was designed by Gustav Freytag.

Cont...

"Freytag's pyramid", symbolizing his theory of dramatic structure

Freytag pyramid



Cont...

- According to Freytag, a drama is divided into five parts, or acts, which some refer to as a dramatic arc: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement.
- 1. **Exposition:** This is the introduction of story - background information that is needed to properly understand it.
- This information can include the protagonist, antagonist, the setting and so forth.
- Elements of drama especially characters, general and specific settings, conflict, mood and the main objective of the drama described through direct and indirect ways of explanations.

Rising Action and Complication

- **At this middle part there are no introducing dramatic elements; since necessary prerequisite information is described in the first exposition section.**
- **In the rising action, a series of events build toward the point of greatest interest.**
- **The rising action of a story is the series of events that begin immediately after the exposition (introduction) of the story and builds up to the climax.**
- **These events are generally the most important parts of the story since the entire plot depends on them to set up the climax and ultimately the satisfactory resolution of the story itself.**

Climax

- This section is in a dramatic or literary work a decisive moment that is of maximum intensity or is a major turning point in a plot.
- The climax is considered the high point - the most exciting part - of the story.
- Turning point of a narrative work is its point of highest extreme tension and drama, or it is the time when the action starts during which the solution is given.

Falling Action

- **The falling action deals with events which occur right after the climax.**
- **These events are usually the after-effects of the climax.**
- **During the falling action, the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist loosens, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist.**
- **The falling action may contain a moment of final suspense, in which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.**

Resolution/Denouement

- Here is the end of the falling action and the conclusion to the story. There is usually a release of dramatic tension and anxiety (also known as catharsis).
- It can also be the portion at the end of the plot that reveals the final outcome of its conflicts or the solution of its mysteries.

Act (drama)

- **An act is a part of a play defined by elements such as rising action, climax and resolution.**
- **A large division of a full-length play, separated from the other act or acts by an intermission.**
- **Act is the main section of drama.**
- **An act is a division or unit of a theatre work, including a play, film, opera, and musical theatre.**
- **The duration of an act usually ranges from 30 to 90 minutes, but may be as short as 10 minutes.**
- **Dividing drama into five sections was originally used in Roman time"s latter used in Elizabethan era.**

Cont...

- **19th century reduced to four acts. Gradually become changed into to three acts.**
- **To clarify, full length plays are usually between 2 to 5 acts in length. The number of acts used depends on how the writer has structured his or her play.**
- The process of transition from one act to other acts in the full-length play is known by “curtain fall” or “off light”.
- During performance of dramatic action the indication of ending act curtain fall and off light shows that occurrence of a change in time, a change in location or both place and time at once.

One-act play

- Is a short drama that consists of only one act.
- It does not permit time and place changes.
- One-act play is a play that has only one act, as distinct from plays that occur over several acts.
- One-act plays may consist of one or more scenes.
- The length of time for an act ranges from 30 to 60 minutes - although they can be shorter or longer.

Scenes

- **A scene is a division of an act in a play during which the action takes place in a single place without a break in time.**
- **As France's drama theory a scene is a part of an act defined with the changing of characters, entrance and exit of characters into actions.**
- **Another English drama theory notifies that the scene is once started action is finished and the stage gets clear, no characters are seen on stage.**

Questions

- Describe the following dramatic terminologies.
- □ Dramatic structure
- □ Exposition
- □ Rising action
- □ Climax
- □ Falling action
- □ Resolution/denouement
- □ Act
- □ Scene
- □ Full-length play
- □ One act play