An Introduction to

English Drama-II

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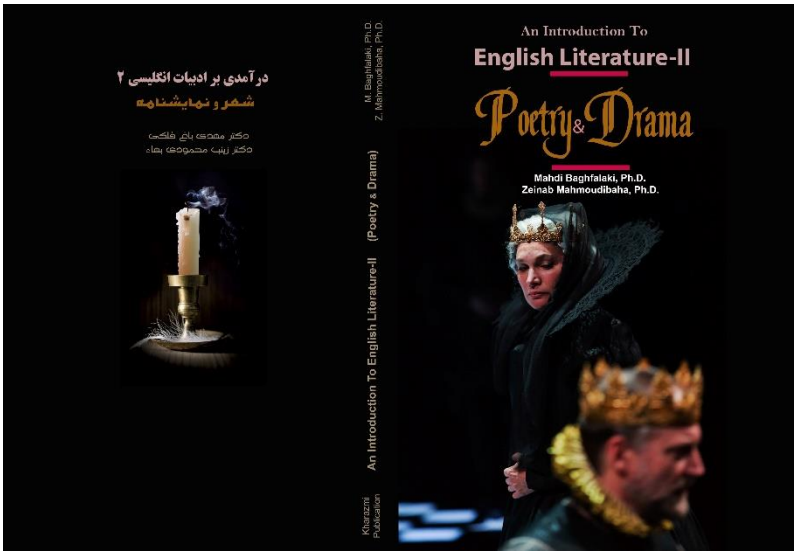

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INTRODUCTION

What is Drama?

The form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated actions, and speak the written dialogue. The common alternative name for a dramatic composition is a *play*.

Drama may be defined as “a form of literature intended to be interpreted to an audience by actors who impersonated the characters, recite the speeches and dialogues and perform the action of the story.”

Martin Esslin in his *Anatomy of Drama* has defined drama as follows:

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.

Origin of Drama

It is commonly believed that the art of drama is western form of literature and it has been originated from the Greeks. Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "action" (drama), which is derived from the verb meaning "to do" or "to act”. The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception. The early modern tragedy *Hamlet* (1601) by Shakespeare and the classical Athenian tragedy *Oedipus the King* (c. 429 BC) by Sophocles are among the masterpieces of the art of drama. A modern example is *Long Day's Journey into Night* by Eugene O’Neill (1956).

The two masks associated with drama represent the traditional generic division between comedy and tragedy. They are symbols of the ancient Greek Muses, Thalia and Melpomene. Thalia was the Muse of comedy (the laughing face), while Melpomene was the Muse of tragedy (the weeping face).

A cursory glance at its history clearly shows the development and changes during centuries up to the present time.

A Brief History of Drama in West

- **Classical Greek drama**

Greek drama is acclaimed to be the earliest recorded form of drama (5th century B.C). Western drama originates in classical Greece. The dramatists of this age gave insight into the philosophy and religious beliefs of the ancient Greece.
The theatrical culture of the city-state of Athens produced three genres of drama:

1. **Tragedy**
2. **Comedy**
3. **Satyr (Tragicomedy)**

Their origins remain obscure, though by the 5th century BC they were institutionalized in competitions held as part of festivities celebrating the god Dionysus. Historians know the names of many ancient Greek dramatists, not least Thespis, who is credited with the innovation of an actor (hypokrites) who speaks (rather than sings) and impersonates a character (rather than speaking in his own person), while interacting with the chorus and its leader (coryphaeus), who were a traditional part of the performance of non-dramatic poetry (dithyrambic, lyric and epic).

Only a small fraction of the work of five great dramatists, however, has survived to this day: we have a small number of complete texts by the tragedians **Aeschylus**, **Sophocles** and **Euripides**, and the comic writers **Aristophanes** and, from the late 4th century, **Menander**.

Aeschylus' historical tragedy *The Persians* is the oldest surviving drama, although when it won first prize at the City Dionysia competition in 472 BC, he had been writing plays for more than 25 years. The competition for tragedies may have begun as early as 534 BC; official records begin from 501 BC, when the satyr play was introduced. Tragic dramatists were required to present a tetralogy of plays (though the individual works were not necessarily connected by

story or theme), which usually consisted of three tragedies and one satyr play (though exceptions were made, as with Euripides' *Alcestis* in 438 BC). Comedy was officially recognised with a prize in the competition from 487 to 486 BC.

Ancient Greek comedy is traditionally divided between *old comedy* (5th century BC), *middle comedy* (4th century BC) and *new comedy* (late 4th century to 2nd BC).

- **Classical Roman Drama**

Following the expansion of the Roman Republic (509–27 BC) into several Greek territories between 270–240 BC, Rome encountered Greek drama. From the later years of the republic and by means of the Roman Empire (27 BC-476 AD), theatre spread west across Europe, around the Mediterranean and reached England; Roman theatre was more varied, extensive and sophisticated than that of any culture before it.

Two famous Roman comedy writers are Titus Maccius Plautus (**Plautus**) and Publius Terentius Afer (**Terence**). Plautus wrote between 205 and 184 BC and twenty of his comedies survive, of which his farces are best known; he was admired for the wit of his dialogue and his use of a variety of poetic meters. All of the six comedies that Terence wrote between 166 and 160 BC have survived; the complexity of his plots, in which he often combined several Greek originals, was sometimes denounced, but his double-plots enabled a sophisticated presentation of contrasting human behavior.

The well-known Roman tragedian is **Seneca**. Nine of Seneca's tragedies survive, all of which are **fabula crepidata** (tragedies adapted from Greek originals); his *Phaedra*, was based on Euripides' Hippolytus for instance.

- **Medieval**

In the Middle Ages, drama in the vernacular languages of Europe may have emerged from religious enactments of the liturgy. Mystery plays were presented on the porch of the cathedrals or by strolling players on feast days. Miracle and mystery plays, along with moralities and interludes, later evolved into more elaborate forms of drama. In short, **Miracle** plays, **Morality** plays, and **Interludes** are three types of medieval drama.

- **Elizabethan and Jacobean**

One of the great flowerings of drama in England occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries. Many of these plays were written in verse, particularly iambic pentameter. In addition to **Shakespeare**, such authors as **Christopher Marlowe**, **Thomas Middleton**, and **Ben Jonson** were prominent playwrights during this period. As in the medieval period, historical plays celebrated the lives of past kings, enhancing the image of the Tudor monarchy. Authors of this period drew some of their storylines from Greek mythology and Roman mythology or from the plays of eminent Roman playwrights such as Plautus and Terence.

- **Modern and Postmodern**

The pivotal and innovative contributions of the 19th-century Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen and the 20th-century German theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht dominate modern drama; each inspired a tradition of imitators, which include many of the greatest playwrights of the modern era. The works of both playwrights are, in their different ways, both modernist and realist, incorporating formal experimentation, meta-theatricality, and social critique. In terms of the traditional theoretical discourse of genre, Ibsen's work has been described as the culmination of "liberal tragedy", while Brecht's has been aligned with an historicized comedy.

Other important playwrights of the modern era include Antonin Artaud, August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, Frank Wedekind, Maurice Maeterlinck, Federico García Lorca, Eugene O'Neill, Luigi Pirandello, George Bernard Shaw, Ernst Toller, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Jean Genet, Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Dario Fo, Heiner Müller, and Caryl Churchill.

- **Pantomime and Melodrama**

Pantomime:

> These stories follow in the tradition of fables and folk tales. Usually there is a lesson learned, and with some help from the audience, the hero/heroine saves the day. This kind of play uses stock characters seen in masque and again commedia dell'arte, these characters include the villain, the clown, the lovers etc. These plays usually have an emphasis on moral dilemmas, and good always triumphs over evil, this kind of play is also very entertaining making it a very effective way of reaching many people.

Melodrama:

> The term melodrama refers to a dramatic work that puts characters in a lot of danger in order to appeal to the emotions. It may also refer to the genre which includes such works, or to language, behavior, or events which resemble them. It is based around having the same character in every scene, often a hero, damsel in distress, a villain. It is also used in scholarly and historical musical contexts to refer to dramas of the 18th and 19th centuries in which orchestral music or song was used to accompany the action. The term originated from the early 19th-century French word mélodrame, which is derived from Greek *melos*, music, and French *drame*, drama.

The Elements of Drama

According to Aristotle, there are Six Elements of Theatre namely 1) **Plot**, 2) **Character**, 3) **Thought**, 4) **Diction**, 5) **Music**, & 6) **Spectacle** which are briefly explained below.

1. **Plot:** chain of events and incidents with cause and effect relationships in the course of a story. Plot in simple terms is the arrangement of a story in such a way that there will be a sequential, logical and chronological order.
2. **Character:** The persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities. The people in the play.
   There are different types of characters in drama. They include the **Dynamic** character, the **Static** character, the **Flat** and **Round** characters, and **Stereotypes**, **Protagonist, Antagonist, Villain, Hero/Heroin** and **Foil** characters that will be explained through dramatic terminology.
3. **Thought:** (Theme)The message the author is trying to convey to the audience. Main or controlling idea.
4. **Diction:** (Language or Dialogue); Diction refers to the arrangement of words, phrases, and sentence structures, and sometimes also of figurative language, that constitute any work of literature.
5. **Music:** Instruments, Singing, Use of language e. g. Iambic Pentameter
6. **Spectacle:** lighting, costume, special effects or more.

It is noteworthy that **point of view** in drama is only objective and dramatic. **Setting** is the location of a play. It is the **time** and **place** when and where the action of the play takes place. Setting is very important in a play because it helps us to appreciate the background of the play. Also, in productions it helps the designers to design appropriate locale, atmosphere, and costume for the play. We can identify the setting through the names of characters.

Types of Setting:

(a) **Geographical Setting:** (actual geographical location like Denmark in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*).
(b) **Temporal / Historical Setting:** This is the period in which a story takes place. This includes the date, the season, and the general atmosphere in the local like war, fuel scarcity, democratic or military rule. This, like the physical setting, could be reduced from the dialogue or from the stage direction. It could be stated in some commentaries, especially the ones on the background of the play.
(c) **General Environmental Setting:** The social, moral, emotional, mental and religious backgrounds of the story. This is highlighted through dialogue, stage direction and the characters interpersonal relationships.

Dramatic Structure

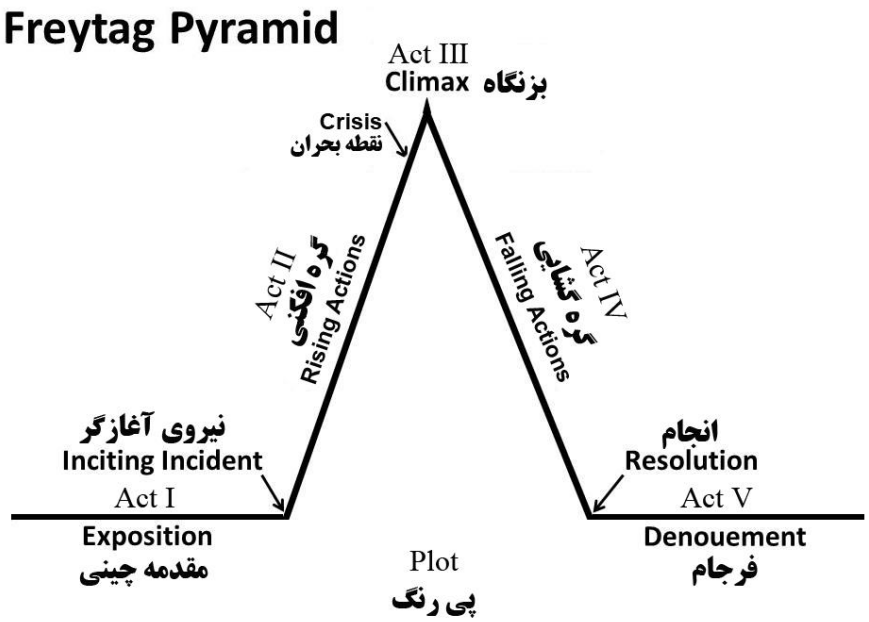
Dramatic structure is the structure of a dramatic work such as a play or film. Many scholars have analyzed dramatic structure, beginning with Aristotle in his Poetics (c. 335 BC). However, the most reliable and useful one propounded by **Gustav Freytag** which enable us to easily analyze all types of drama preferably ancient Greek and Shakespearean plays.

In his Poetics the Greek philosopher **Aristotle** put forth the idea that "A whole is what has a beginning and middle and end". This three-part view of a plot structure (with a beginning, middle, and end – technically, the protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe) prevailed until

The Roman drama critic **Horace** advocated a 5-act structure in his Ars Poetica: "A play should not be shorter or longer than five acts".

Renaissance dramatists revived the use of the 5-act structure. In 1863, around the time that playwrights like Henrik Ibsen were abandoning the 5-act structure and experimenting with 3 and 4-act plays.

The German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag proposed a diagram what has come to be known as **Freytag's Pyramid**. According to Freytag, a drama is divided into five parts, or acts, which some refer to as a dramatic arc: 1. exposition, 2. rising action, 3. climax, 4. falling action, and 5. Dénouement (Resolution). It should be noted that the pyramid is not always easy to use for analyzing a plot, especially in modern plays since the number of acts has been reduced variably from five to one-act plays. However, it is quite fruitful to comprehend movies, plays, short stories and novels in a better way.



- **Exposition:**

It refers to introducing and providing background information of the plot including Characters and Setting (Time & Place)

- **Inciting Incident (Force):**

The first incident or force that starts the complications by pushing the plot like pushing the first standee piece in a typical domino game.

- **Rising Actions**

Major events that add tension or complication that lead to climax. In other words, the rising actions of a story is the series of events that begin immediately after the exposition of the story and builds up to the climax.

- **Climax**

It is the turning point or the highest point of crisis which changes the protagonist's fate. The most suspenseful part of the plot.

- **Falling action**

Major events that unravels the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist that begin immediately after the climax with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist.

- **Resolution**

The tying up of the loose ends. The dénouement comprises events from the end of the falling action to the actual ending scene of the drama or narrative. Conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters and a sense of catharsis, or release of tension and anxiety, for the reader. Etymologically, the French word dénouement is derived from the Old French word *desnouer*, "to untie", from *nodus*, Latin for "knot." It is the unraveling or untying of the complexities of a plot.

The comedy ends with conclusion in which the protagonist is better off than at the story's outset. The tragedy ends with a catastrophe, in which the protagonist is worse off than at the beginning of the narrative.

It must be noted in here that typically there are three types of "**Dramatic Action**" in theatre namely: (a) **Physical Action**; (b) **Reported Action**; and (c) **Mental Action**.

Tragedy

Tragedy is taken from the word "tragoedia" in Greek meant 'goat song'. Goat was the sacred animal of the gods to be sacrificed. Tragedy is the **most esteemed** of all the dramatic genres. The protagonist in a classical tragedy must be from **noble or royal family**.

According to **Aristotle's *The Poetics***, "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic

ornaments, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting a proper purgation of these emotions.

Aristotle used the term **Catharsis** to refer to a characteristic of typical tragedy and discussed as: "the sense pity and fear aroused from the catastrophic fate of the hero effects a purgation of such emotions on the powerful feelings in the spectator."

Tragedy presents a character (**tragic hero**) who is not too virtuous or too vicious but one who aspires for higher ideals. He tries to improve himself and the world around him.

In the course of this, the hero makes a mistake, or commits an **Error of Judgment** which technically called **Tragic Flaw**; the fall from happiness to misery and catastrophe. Aristotle called the protagonist's error of judgement **Hamartia**. It is often the result of a condition called **Hubris**, the excessive pride which brings down divine punishment upon the head of the protagonist.

Tragedy presents injustice, evil, pain, misfortunes, paradoxes and mysterious aspects of human existence. Oedipus Rex is a true example of classical tragedy.

Types of Tragedy

The major kinds of tragedy ranging from classical to the present time can be introduced distinctly as follow:

1. **Greek Tragedy**
2. **Senecan Tragedy**
3. **The Renaissance Tragedy**
4. **Revenge Tragedy**
5. **Domestic Tragedy**
6. **Tragedy of Circumstance**
7. **Heroic Tragedy**
8. **Tragicomedy**

1. Greek Tragedy:

Ancient Greek tragedies typically consisted of a protagonist of high rank who makes an error of judgement (flawed) and accepts his fall from grace. Other important elements include Gods, mythology, conflict, suffering and catharsis. The great Greek tragedians were Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus. Sophocles' play Oedipus Rex is often considered the perfect tragedy.

2. Senecan Tragedy:

The closet dramas of the Roman Seneca (4Bc-AD 6y). While many Greek tragedies were still being performed during Roman times, few genuine Roman tragedies survive. Those that have survived are mostly adaptations of Greek tragedies. The plays had a five-act structure with a Chorus marking the end of each act and the theme of revenge, usually introduced by the ghost of a wronged person like Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*.

3. The Renaissance Tragedy:

Elizabethan tragedies (not all written by William Shakespeare) often include protagonists of high status (nobility, military rank, etc.) who are flawed, encounter a reversal of fortune and (usually) die at play's end. Jacobean tragedies are mostly characterized as being revenge tragedies (see below).

4. Revenge Tragedy (Tragedy of Blood):

Revenge tragedies are dramatic works in which one character seeks revenge upon another character for an evil doing. A form of tragic drama in which someone (usually a hero or a villain) rights a wrong. Excellent examples of revenge tragedies include William Shakespeare's Hamlet and John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi.

5. Tragicomedy:

A mixture of tragic and comic elements existing in a single dramatic work. Samuel Beckett's absurdist play Waiting for Godot is a fine example of the form, where the comic elements are not necessarily noticeable at first glance.

6. Domestic Tragedy:

A tragedy about middle or lower middle-class life which concentrates on the more personal and domestic element of tragedy, as opposed to tragedy in the grand manner which involves kings, princes and enterprises 'of great pitch and moment. These dramas originated in the Elizabethan period. An excellent example is Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House.

7. Tragedy of Circumstance:

A tragedy in which some kind of external force like fate or the gods brings about the doom of the hero or heroine (and other characters).

8. Heroic Tragedy:

A name given to a form of tragedy which had some vogue at the beginning of the Restoration period. It was drama in the epic mode-grand, rhetorical and declamatory; at its worst, bombastic. Its themes were love and honour and it was considerably influenced by French classical drama, especially by the work of Corneille. Dryden's *The Indian Emperor* is a good example of this type of tragedy.

Comedy

Comedy is a word that Greeks and Romans confined to descriptions of stage-plays with happy endings. In the Middle Ages, the term expanded to include narrative poems with happy endings and a lighter tone. Black comedy is defined by dark humor that makes light of so-called dark or evil elements in human nature. A comedy of manners typically takes as its subject a particular part of society and uses humor to parody or satirize the behavior and mannerisms of its members. Romantic comedy is a popular genre that depicts burgeoning romance in humorous terms, and focuses on the foibles of those who are falling in love. Comedy begins with misfortune and ends with joy. Tragedy is the opposite. Conventionally, characters of a comedy are from low classes of society or ordinary people with ordinary language unlike decorum or elevated language in tragedy.

In his **Apologie for Poetrie**, S. P. Sidney says that "Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of life, which he represented in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be; so that is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one."

Types of Comic Drama

1. **Ancient Greek Comedy** (Aristophanes & Menander)
2. **Ancient Roman Comedy** (Plautus & Terence)
3. **Burlesque**
4. **Citizen Comedy** (Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton & Ben Jonson)
5. **Comedy of Humors**
   A form of drama which became fashionable at the very end of the r5th c. and early in the 17th So called because it presented 'humorous' characters whose actions were ruled by a particular passion, trait, disposition or humor. (Ben Jonson & George Chapman)
6. **Comedy of Ideas**
   A term loosely applied to plays which tend to debate, in a witty and humorous fashion, ideas and theories. Shaw is an outstanding exponent in *Man and Superman* (1905), The Doctor's Dilemma (1906).

7. **Comedy of Intrigue**
   A form of comedy which depends on an intricate plot full of surprises and tends to subordinate character to plot. This distinguishes it from comedy of manners. (Niccolò Machiavelli & Lope de Vega).
8. **Comedy of Manners**
   This genre has for its main subjects and themes the behaviour and deportment of men and women living under specific social codes. It tends to be preoccupied with the codes of the middle and upper classes and is often marked by elegance, wit and sophistication like Sheridan's The School for Scandal (1777).
9. **Comedy of Menace**
   It denotes a kind of play in which one or more characters feel that they are (or actually are) threatened by some obscure and frightening force, power, personality etc. The fear and the menace become a source of comedy, albeit laconic, grim or black. Harold Pinter, among others, exploited the possibilities of such a situation in such plays as The Birthday Party (1958) and The Dumb Waiter (1960).
10. **Comédie Larmoyante**; tearful comedy (Pierre-Claude Nivelle de La Chaussée)
11. **Commedia dell'arte** (Dario Fo, Vsevolod Meyerhold & Jacques Copeau)
12. **Farce** (Georges Feydeau, Joe Orton & Alan Ayckbourn)
13. **Restoration comedy** (George Etherege, Aphra Behn & John Vanbrugh)
14. **Sentimental comedy** (Colley Cibber & Richard Steele
15. **Shakespearean comedy** (William Shakespeare)
16. **Theatre of the Absurd** (Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Jean Genet & Eugène Ionesco)

Dramatic Conventions

In drama, the playwright tries to present life as it is lived in the real world. However, it is not possible to present real life on stage so he presents an illusion of reality. He needs certain devices to make this illusion as realistic as possible and the audience accepts the devices. In Shakespearean plays, sometimes a character talks to himself and this is called soliloquy.

M. H. Abrams, the famous literary critic argues that “conventions are necessary or convenient devices, widely accepted by the public, for solving problems imposed by a particular artistic medium in representing reality.” There are also conventions in terms of style. Abrams explains further: “conventions are identifiable elements of subject matter, form, or technique which recur repeatedly in works of literature. Conventions in this sense may be recurrent types of character, turns of plot, forms of versification, kinds of diction and style.” It is not compulsory for every work to conform to preexisting conventions but what matters is how effectively an individual writer makes use of them.

To provide you with an example, the **Classical** Age the convention was that the dialogue is presented in **verse** but in the **modem** convention in most plays the dialogue is presented in **prose**.

- ✓ **Prologue**

This is the introductory part of the play usually including a foreshadowing. It could be an opening scene, a speech or an address. In most cases, it introduces the action and makes a statement on what the audience should expect in the play. Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus is a good example.

- ✓ **Epilogue**

This is the direct opposite of the prologue. It is presented at the end of the play. It sums up the action of the play and in some cases, makes a statement (an advice or a lesson) on the action or events presented in the play.

- ✓ **Interlude**

An interlude in a play is a short piece of entertainment that is presented between the acts or major scenes in a play.

- ✓ **Soliloquy**

Soliloquy is a speech made by a character when he is alone. The audience hears it but the other characters are not expected to hear it. It is very common in Renaissance plays. Shakespeare in particular made use of soliloquies in his play a lot. Playwrights use this device to reveal the thoughts or the feelings of specific characters in reaction to certain events or situations like **Iago**'s frequent soliloquies in *Othello*.

- ✓ **Aside**

Aside is a dramatic convention in which a character speaks to himself or makes a comment in the presence of another character. However, that other character is not expected to hear the comment but the audience hears it. An aside is a very brief remark and in most cases, it is indicated in the stage direction. For example, when Hamlet feigns madness and is discussing with Polonius, he actually uses an aside.

- ✓ **Chorus**

The use of chorus is a dramatic convention that was adopted by playwrights, especially in the Classical Age, to comment on the events of the play. In Oedipus Rex, the chorus is made up of the elders of Thebes.

- ✓ **The Three Unities**

Recommended by **Aristotle**, the unities (Time, Place, Action) became a dramatic convention. The "**unity of action**" means a play should "approximate" the actual conditions of life in only one plot being represented in the play and should not leave rooms for sub-plots. The "**unity of place**" means the action be limited to a single location. and the "**unity of time**" means that the time represented should be limited to the two or three hours it takes to act the play, or at most to a single day of either twelve or twenty-four hours.

- ✓ **Comic Relief**

Comic episodes or interludes aimed to relieve the tension and heighten the tragic element by contrast in Shakespearian tragedy.

Realistic and Nonrealistic Drama

Literary truth in drama (as in fiction and in poetry) is not the same as fidelity to fact. Fantasy is as much the property of the theater as of poetry or the prose tale. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, Shakespeare has fairies and spirits and monsters as characters, and in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* he introduces ghosts and witches. These supernatural characters, nevertheless, serve as a vehicle for truth. When Bottom, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is given an ass's head, the enchantment is a visual metaphor. The witches in *Macbeth* truthfully prefigure a tragic destiny.

Because it is written to be performed, however, drama adds still another dimension of possible unreality. It may be **realistic** or **nonrealistic** in mode of production as well as in content. Staging, makeup, costuming, and acting may all be handled in such a way as to emphasize the realistic or the fanciful.

It must be recognized, however, that all stage production, no matter how realistic, involves a certain necessary artificiality. If an indoor scene is presented on a picture-frame proscenium stage, the spectator is asked to imagine that a room with only three walls is actually a room with four walls. In a [thrust stage or arena theater, in which audiences are in a semicircle around the playing area, the spectator must imagine three of the four walls, while theater-in-the-round has the audience seated on all sides of the action and spectators have to imagine all four walls while imaginatively shutting their minds to the presence of spectators facing 'them from the other side of the action. All of these types of stage presentation, moreover, require adjustments in the acting. In a proscenium theater the actors must be facing the missing fourth wall most of the time. In arena or round stagings, they must not turn their backs too long on any "wall." Both types of staging, in the interests of effective presentation, require the actors to depart from an absolute realism.

Beyond these basic requirements of artificiality in stagecraft, the departure from the appearance of reality may be slight or considerable. In many late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century productions, an effort was made to make stage sets as realistic as possible. If the play called for a setting in a study, there had to be real bookshelves on the wall and real books on the shelves. If the room contained a sink, real water had to flow from the faucets. On the other hand, plays have been performed on bare stages with little more than platforms and a few props.

In between these two extremes, all degrees of realism are possible. The scenery may consist of punted flats, with painted bookshelves and painted books and painted pictures on the wall, and

these paintings may strive for photographic faithfulness or for an impressionistic effect. Or, instead of scenery, a play may use only a few movable properties to suggest the required setting. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* (1938) utilized a bare stage, without curtain, with exposed ropes and backstage equipment, and with a few chairs, two ladders, and a couple of trellises as the only properties. For a scene at a soda fountain counter, a plank was laid across the backs of two chairs. In fact, provision of elaborately realistic stage sets has been the exception rather than the rule in the long history of the theater. Neither in Greek nor in Shakespearean theater was setting much more than suggested.

The choice of realistic or nonrealistic stage sets, costuming, and makeup may, in fact, lie with the producer rather than the playwright, and a producer may choose to disregard a playwright's directions for the sake of novelty or emphasis. When we move to the realm of language and the management of dialogue, the choice is entirely the playwright's. Here again all degrees of realism and nonrealism are possible. In the realistic theater of the last hundred years, some playwrights have made an elaborate effort to reproduce the flat quality of ordinary speech, with all its stumblings and inarticulateness, its slang and its mispronunciations. Others go even further in imitating reality, even at the risk of offending some members of the audience, and reproduce the vulgarities of the language of the streets and the contemporary habit of using obscene terms simply to add force to a statement. In real life, of course, few lovers speak with the eloquence of Romeo and Juliet, and many people, in daily conversation, have difficulty getting through a grammatically correct sentence of any length or complexity. They break off, they begin again, they repeat themselves, and sometimes, like the Young Man in "The Sandbox," they are barely articulate ("I am ... uh ... I am the Angel of Death. I am ... uh ... I am come for you." [page 1069]). Such unimaginative and inadequate speech, skillfully used by the playwright, may faithfully render the quality of human life at some levels, yet its limitations for expressing the heights and depths of human experience are obvious. Most dramatic dialogue, even at its most realistic, is more coherent and expressive than speech in actual life. Art is always a heightening or an intensification of reality; else it would have little value. The heightening may be little or great. It is greatest in poetic drama. The love exchanges of Romeo and Juliet, spoken in rhymed iambic pentameter and at one point taking the form of a perfect sonnet are absurdly nonrealistic if judged as an imitation of actual speech, but they vividly express the emotional truth of passionate, idealistic young love. It is no criticism of Shakespearean tragedy, therefore, to say that in real life people do not speak in blank verse. The deepest purpose of the playwright is not to imitate actual human speech but do give accurate and powerful expression to human thought and emotion.

The term **nonrealistic** used in the previous paragraph to describe the dialogue of Romeo and Juliet should not be confused with the term "unrealistic." Nonrealistic and **realistic** describe qualities of dramatic presentation; "unrealistic" is a term that judges people's actions on a scale of good sense, practicality, and insight. It is useful in discussing drama only when you are considering a character's grasp on reality for example, a drama (whether realistic or nonrealistic) might portray a character who is unrealistic in outlook, such as a hopeless optimist or an incorrigible sentimentalist. In drama, realism is the attempt to reproduce or imitate the

sights and sounds of real life, insofar as these can be represented on a stage. In life, realism is looking at the world with good judgment and clear vision.

All drama asks us to accept certain departures from reality-certain **dramatic conventions**. That a room with three walls or fewer may represent one with four walls, that the actors speak in the language of the audience whatever the nationality of the persons they play, that the actors stand or sit so as to face the audience most of the time-these are all necessary conventions. Other conventions are optional-for example, that the characters may reveal their inner thoughts through soliloquies and asides or may speak in the heightened language of poetry. Playwrights working in a strictly realistic mode will avoid the optional conventions, for these conflict with the realistic method that they have chosen to achieve their purposes. Playwrights working in a freer mode may choose to use any or all of them, for they make possible the revelation of dimensions of reality unreachable by a strictly realistic method. The famous speech of Hamlet that begins "To be, or not to be," in which he debates the merits of onerous life and untimely death, is nonrealistic on two counts: (1) it is spoken as a soliloquy, and (2) it is in blank verse. But despite the nonrealistic conventions, it presents Hamlet's introspective mind, his clear rationality, and his profound emotions in a powerful way. The characteristic device of Greek drama, a chorus-a group of actors speaking in unison, often in a chant, while going through the steps of an elaborate formalized dance-is another nonrealistic device but a useful one for conveying communal or group emotion. It has been revived, in different forms, in many modern plays. The use of a narrator, as in The Glass Menagerie (page 1156), is a related nonrealistic device that has served playwrights as a vehicle for dramatic truth.

The history of drama might be told in a history of conventions that have arisen, flourished, and been replaced; and those readers and audiences who experience plays most fully are those who have learned to understand the main conventions of its various periods and major dramatists. The less experienced reader or spectator may judge a play defective because it makes use of conventions other than those in common current acceptance (whether or not consciously recognized as such). Most contemporary audiences, for example, have been trained by their experience with movies and television, two media based on the realistic conventions of photography. Few people pause to consider that looking at a photograph, whether filmed by! a still camera or a movie camera, requires the acceptance of the simple convention that three-dimensional reality is being represented two-dimensionally, or that the full spectrum of color may be represented by shades of white, gray, or black. We accept these conventions without question, as we also accept in cinema and television the emotional reinforcement that comes with a musical background even though there is no justification for the presence of an orchestra in a living room or on a beach. The study of drama requires the purposeful learning of its conventions, both realistic and nonrealistic.

In most plays, the world into which we are taken-however unreal it may be-is treated as self-contained, and we are asked to regard it temporarily as a real world. Thus, David Ives's puddle of mayflies in "Time Flies" is real to us while we watch the play. We quite willingly make that "temporary suspension of disbelief" that, according to Coleridge, "constitutes poetic faith." And the step from accepting May and Horace as real insects, though we know in fact that they are only costumed actors, is an easy one because they think and talk like human beings in a

fleeting romance as they erotically rub antennae and enjoy gnat snacks. But some playwrights abandon even this much attempt to give their work an illusion of reality. They deliberately violate the self-containment of the fictional world and keep reminding us that we are only seeing a play. Thus Edward Albee, in "The Sandbox," not only presents as his main character a Grandma who buries herself alive and speaks after she is presumably dead, but he also systematically breaks down the barriers between his fictional world and the real one. The Musician, instead of being concealed in an orchestra pit, is summoned onstage and told by Mommy and Grandma when to play and when not to play. Grandma addresses herself much of the time directly to the audience and at one time shouts to the electricians offstage, instructing them to dim the lights. The Young Man reminds us that he is an actor by telling Grandma that he has "a line here" and by delivering the line "like a real amateur." When Mommy and Daddy hear a noise offstage, Daddy thinks it may be thunder or a breaking wave, but Mommy says, with literal accuracy, "It was an off-stage rumble." In short, Albee keeps reminding us that this is a play-not reality-and not even an imitation of reality, but a symbolic representation of it. The effects he gains thereby are various: partly comic, partly antisentimental, partly intellectual; and the play that results is both theatrically effective and dramatically significant.

The adjective *realistic*, then, as applied to literature, must be regarded as a descriptive, not an evaluative, term. When we call a play realistic, we are saying something about its mode of presentation, not praising nor dispraising it. Realism indicates fidelity to the outer appearances of life. Serious dramatists are interested in life's inner meanings, which they may approach through either realistic or nonrealistic presentation. Great plays have been written in both the realistic and nonrealistic modes. It is not without significance, however, that the greatest plays in this book are probably *Oedipus Rex* and *Othello*-originally written in quantitative Greek verse and English blank verse respectively. Human truth, rather than fidelity to superficial fact, is the highest achievement of literary art.

Modern Drama

Classical plays follow their own dramatic conventions and focus on the Three Unities (action, time and place) of Greek theatre where fate plays a pivotal role in the action of the drama. The classical genres and features were; morality plays, masque-like drama with restoration in the Romances, tragic flaws by protagonists in the Tragedies, and the Comedies with happy endings in the Renaissance Age.

However, modern and postmodern contradicts by breaking the Three Unities where fate is replaced by human-choice (free will), ridiculing the melodrama or well-made-plays, prioritizing the form rather action, portraying life and world as chaotic and futile .

Socio-political history had a bombastic impact on the formations of literary genres. World War I unraveled a new path to new literary experiments like — expressionism, surrealism, Dadaism, Freud's psycho-analytical theories, avant-garde movement and existentialism.

Expressionism arose as a reaction against materialism and rapid mechanization aiming at subjective emotions rather objective reality through distortion, exaggeration or jarring

application of formal elements. Its famous practitioners are Eugene O'Neill, August Strindberg, and Frank Wedekind. **Surrealism** is the artistic bridge between reality and imagination overcoming the contradictions of conscious and subconscious by creating unreal and bizarre stories full of juxtaposition. Freudian ideas of 'free association' steer readers away from societal influence and open up the individual mind. It compels readers to reveal the subconscious meaning. **Dadaism** is a form of artistic anarchy that challenged the social, political and cultural values of that time. The great paradox of Dada is that it is anti-art, anti-establishment — "art is alive to the moment, not paralyzed by the traditions or restrictions of established value ."**Avant-garde** began with Alfred Jarry and Ubu plays opposing bourgeois theatre introducing a different use of language. It encourages playwrights to make society or viewers change their attitudes, values and beliefs on an issue through representing real life by merging strange and disturbing forms — for instance, Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty — eventually leading to the *Theater of Absurd* .

Modernism ended with World War II and the era of post-modernism began as a reaction against the modernism termed as the Theatre of The Absurd. Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), Jean Genet (1910-1983), Eugène Ionesco (1909-1994) are the lamp-bearers of absurd drama.

Modern plays thrived as a self-conscious break from conventional artistic forms stepping on naturalistic and realistic principles in the late 19th-early 20th century in Europe. Modern dramatic themes derived from soaring technological progress, escalating urban life, changes among social classes, and the leap from agrarian to an industrial economy. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) — the father of modern realism, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) — a brilliant satirist of social problems, and of course, Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) are pillars of modern drama.

Unlike the earlier drama of Shakespeare and Sophocles, modern drama tended to focus not on kings and heroes, but instead on ordinary people dealing with everyday problems. And like much of the literature of this period, which expressed reactions to rapid social change and cataclysmic events like World War I, it often dealt with the sense of alienation and disconnectedness that average people felt in this period. Three of the most emblematic plays of modern drama are Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Shaw's *Major Barbara*, and O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Henrik Ibsen (1906-1828) is the father of modern realism. This Norwegian playwright adapted themes concentrating more on Man versus Society, leaving Romanticism aside, focusing on political and social problems. His prominent Plays are ***Peer Gynt*** (1876), ***A Doll's House*** (1879), ***Hedda Gabler***(1891)

George Bernard Shaw (1950-1856), as a modern satirist of social problems, focuses on ideas and issues, for instance: *Widower's Houses* (1892) on slum landlordism; ***The Philanderer and Mrs. Warren's Profession*** (1893) — a jibe at the Victorian attitude toward prostitution; ***Arms and The Man*** (1894) - satirizing romantic attitude towards love and war .

Postmodern Drama

postmodern plays flourished in the mid-20th century in Europe focusing the failure of absolute truth, raising questions rather attempting solutions, standing for the Theatre of The Absurd - a dismissal of realism as well as the concept of well-made play .Postmodern theatre emerged as a reaction against modernist theatre. Essentially, postmodern theatre raises questions rather than attempting to supply answers.

Samuel Beckett (1989-1906) is the 1969 Literature Nobel Laureate. He is the ground-breaking playwright, one of the key writers of the Theatre of Absurd. Special features in his plays — polarities of characters (foil characters): Didi-Gogo, Hamm-Clov, Pozzo-Lucky, Nag-Nell, Krapp's present and past voice. Bizarre location and repetitive multi-layer meanings of language are also striking weapons of Beckett. His plays focus the absurd position of human in the universe leading to no resolution in the end .His well-known plays are ***Waiting for Godot*** (1952), ***Endgame*** (1957)

Harold Pinter (2008-1930) is the master of pregnant pause. Silence is communication, an integral element of linguistic function, says Pinter. Sequences of ridiculous series, verbal barrages, chaos, but also rhythmic silences are his idiosyncratic style . Most common sight in his plays is the visit of outsiders as intruders and protagonists often as extra-terrestrial beings . His well-known plays are ***The Birthday Party*** (1959), ***The Room*** (1957), ***The Caretaker*** (1960), ***The Dumb Waiter*** (1960), ***The Homecoming*** (1965)

Modern versus Postmodern Plays

Modernism emerged around the time of the second industrial revolution (1870-1920), which was marked by the decline of stable social classes, the beginning of professionalism, and a sense of urban alienation. Modern writers give primacy to form. This results in experimentalism, which breaks with 19th century realist conventions. The modern narrator tends to be the main protagonist of the story. Modern fiction often explores the theme of identity, which is more fluid and unstable than in pre-modern literature. Modern fiction privileges interiority over exteriority, a good example of which is the hallmark of modern literature – the stream of consciousness.

Postmodernism generally refers to cultural phenomena with certain characteristics that emerged after the Second World War. When exactly postmodernism starts vary according to national contexts and individual critics. It was marked by an array of social and historical phenomena, which shaped our contemporary world, such us advanced capitalism, globalization, and rapid technological progress.

Postmodern texts tend not to engage in innocent, linear story-telling. Similarly, to modern works, they draw attention to their status as fiction and the act of writing or reading. Unlike modernism though, postmodern texts refer both to themselves and the external world. Protagonists are often aware that they are in fiction. Postmodern texts are also frequently intertextual. Postmodern writers tend to challenge hegemonic values, such as heteronormativity, imperialism, and traditional conceptions of femininity and masculinity.

Sr	Modern Plays	Postmodern Plays
1	Dialogue has a motive and understanding	Dialogue is made redundant and meaningless or no communication is prioritized
2	Specific and setting and comprehensive passage of time	Unclear setting and passage of time
3	Rejection of literary conventions	Parody of literary conventions
4	Pathos for pessimism	Rejoice of pessimism
5	Characters represent a particular class or background	Characters are universal and serve no specific background
6	Criticism of the chaotic life or society	Celebration of the chaotic and fragmented life or society
7	Welcome senses of unification, centered self, unified identity	Reject unification but welcome senses of fragmentation, decentered self, multiple or conflicting identity
8	Truth is objective	Truth is subjective, rhetorical, and relative
9	Reject the romantic visions of harmony and mirror realism	Reject all forms and even self-contradictory
10	Adheres to Western hegemonic values	Contests Western hegemonic values
11	Faith in totalizing theory	Rejection of totalizing theories
12	Observe hierarchy, order, centralized control	Subverted order, loss of centralized control
13	Faith in meaning, value-the signified	Attention to play of surfaces-the signifiers
14	Faith in real, authenticity of origins	Faith in hyper-reality or simulacra and illusion

Functions of Drama

Drama is said to have originated from rituals. It is an important branch of literature and is devoid of the closeness with the novel, the abstract message of fine arts, the incomplete message of music or toe cryptic and abstruse language of poetry. It presents a story realistically through the actors to the audience. Drama is therefore used to entertain, inform and educate people.

Of all the creative artiste, the dramatist is in the best position-to reflect his society and to cause social reforms. This is because his work has a unique characteristic of presenting events in a vivid, picturesque and realistic manner. This helps to stamp social conditions, realistically in the minds of the audience. Its message is therefore immediate. The rich and the poor, the young and the old, the literate and the illiterate enjoy and take in the message of drama once it is presented in the appropriate language as the actors perform the story (message) on stage.

Part II

ANALYSIS

Oedipus Rex

A Poetic Drama

Sophocles

Overview:

Sophocles' Major Plays:

1) Antigone
2) Oedipus Rex
3) Oedipus at Colonus
4) Electra
5) Ajax
6) The Women of Trachis
7) Philoctetes

The Theban plays: consist of three plays:

1. **Oedipus Rex**
2. **Oedipus at Colonus**
3. **Antigone**.

Oedipus Rex

Author: Sophocles
First Performed: c. 430–426 BCE
Type: Play
Genre: Tragedy
Perspective and Narrator: In this typical Greek tragedy, a chorus introduces and comments on the story in *Oedipus Rex* and converses with the characters.
About the Title: *Oedipus Rex* is Latin and means "Oedipus the King," which is the title of later translations of the play.

Characters:

Major:

1. **Oedipus**: The protagonist of Oedipus the King and Oedipus at Colonus.
2. **Tiresias**: The prophet or blind soothsayer, tells Oedipus that the truth.
3. **Creon**: Oedipus's brother-in-law.
4. **Jocasta**: Oedipus's wife and mother & Creon's sister.

Minor:

5. **Messenger**
6. **Shepherd**
7. **Second Messenger**
8. **Chorus**: Theban Elders
9. **Mute:** Daughters of Oedipus (**Antigone** & **Ismene**)

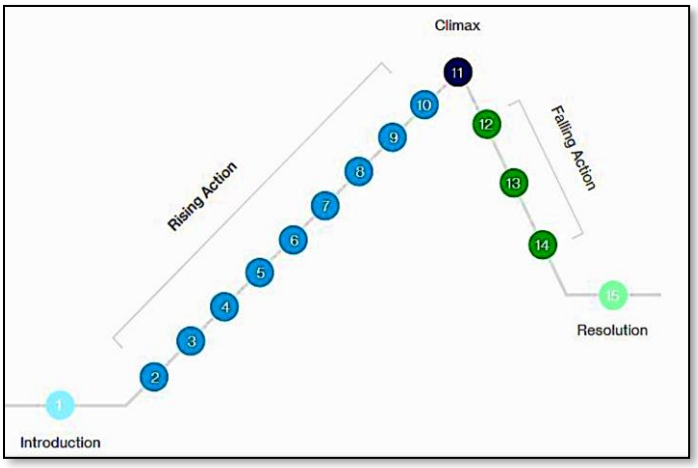
Setting:

Place: Ancient city in east-central Greece, northwest of Athens.
Time: 430 b.c. Ancient Greek

Themes:

- ✓ **The Power of Unwritten Law** (Fate and Fatalism): Oedipus is a mere puppet controlled & crushed by the fate for no good reason.
- ✓ **Tragic Flaw** (Ignorance): Oedipus is ignorant to the fact (his mother & father)
- ✓ **Sight and Blindness**: Clear vision serves as a metaphor for insight and knowledge, but the clear-eyed Oedipus is blind to the truth about his origins and inadvertent crimes.

Plot Diagram



Exposition:

1) Oedipus saves Thebes from the Sphinx.

Rising Actions:

2) Oedipus becomes king, marries Jocasta, has children.
3) Years later a plague infects the city of Thebes.
4) Oedipus sends Creon to Apollo's shrine for help.

5) Apollo wants Oedipus to find Laius's killer.
6) Oedipus consults the old prophet, Teiresias, for help.
7) Teiresias says Oedipus killed Laius; Jocasta is his mother.
8) Jocasta and Oedipus swap stories about similar prophecies.
9) A messenger reveals who Oedipus's true parents are.
10) Laius's former servant confirms the story.

Climax

11) Oedipus realizes Teiresias was right about him. (Epiphany)

Falling Actions

12) Jocasta realizes Oedipus is her son and kills herself.
13) Oedipus blinds himself.
14) Oedipus decides to exile himself from Thebes.

Resolution

15) Oedipus makes Creon king and asks him to guard his children & he leaves the city.

Othello

William Shakespeare

Overview:

Genre: Classical English Drama, Tragedy (a prime example of Aristotelian drama)

Setting:

Time: Late 16th century, during the wars between Venice and Turkey
Place: Venice in Act I; the island of Cyprus thereafter

Characters:

Minor:

Brabantio: Desdemona's father, a somewhat blustering and self-important Venetian senator. As a friend of Othello, Brabantio feels betrayed when the general marries his daughter in secret.

Duke of Venice: The official authority in Venice, the duke has great respect for Othello as a public and military servant.

Montano: The governor of Cyprus before Othello.

Lodovico: One of Brabantio's kinsmen, a messenger from Venice to Cyprus.

Graziano: Brabantio's kinsman who accompanies Lodovico to Cyprus.

Clown: Othello's servant.

Bianca: A courtesan, or prostitute, in Cyprus. Bianca's favorite customer is Cassio, who teases her with promises of marriage.

Major:

Othello:

Protagonist, round, dynamic and hero, a Christian Moor and general of the armies of Venice, Othello is an eloquent and physically powerful figure, respected by all those around him. He possesses a "free and open nature". His weaknesses are jealousy and pride.

Desdemona:

Round, static, and virtuous heroin. The daughter of the Venetian senator Brabantio. Desdemona and Othello are secretly married before the play begins. Faithful to Othello. Sacrificed for Iago's conspiracy.

Iago:

Iago is young and treacherous, the villain of the play. He is responsible for all manipulation and destruction. He manages the conspiracy. He is immoral, but very perceptive, keen, and able to manipulate people into falling for his deceptions.

Emilia:

Iago's wife and Desdemona's attendant or handmaiden. Emilia is not aware of her husband's machinations, nor his darker qualities at the beginning. She remains loyal to Desdemona above all others, although she unwittingly plays a key part in Iago's treachery.

Michael Cassio:

Othello's lieutenant. Cassio is a young and inexperienced soldier, whose high position is much resented by Iago. Truly devoted to Othello

Roderigo:

A jealous suitor of Desdemona. Young, rich, and foolish, Roderigo is convinced that if he gives Iago all of his money, Iago will help him win Desdemona's hand. Repeatedly frustrated as Othello marries Desdemona and then takes her to Cyprus

Theme:

1. **Conspiracy**
2. **Gullibility:** Othello's simple-heartedness and credulity
3. **Betrayal & Fidelity**
4. **Love versus Hatred**
5. **Jealousy has the power to destroy**
6. **Revenge**

7. **Seduction & Obsession**
8. **Appearance vs. reality**
9. **Good vs. Evil**
10. **Chastity versus Adultery**
11. **Racial prejudice:** Despite his standing and military prowess, Othello never feels comfortable in Venice because of his otherness. As a Moor, he is constantly stereotyped as "savage" or "animal".
12. **Patriarchy**
13. **Bad things happen to good people.**

Plot Analysis:

(Classical Five-Act Play)

Exposition: Roderigo learns that Desdemona, the woman he wishes to marry, is married to a black man, Othello and other characters introduced in the setting (late 16th century Cyprus & Venice)
Rising actions: EVERYTHING that transpires up until the plan starts to unfold and the Moor strangles Desdemona.
Climax: Othello kneels and vows to avenge and kill Desdemona and Cassio.
Falling actions: everything that happens after Desdemona finally dies.
Resolution: (Misery) Othello kills himself with a hidden dagger as realizes that he has been deceived by Iago and her wife was quite faithful.

Major Conflicts:

External:

Man Vs. Fate: Othello & Desdemona Vs. Fate
Man Vs. Man
Othello Vs. Casio, Iago Vs. Othello, Rodrigo Vs. Othello, Othello Vs. Desdemona

Techniques:

Catharsis: The ending of the play evokes the emotions that Aristotle said tragedy should evoke: pity and fear which lead to catharsis in Aristotle's terminology.

Hamartia: (or internal tragic flaw as the main reason to fall from happiness to misery). His extreme jealousy that enables him to be tricked and allows him to create his own destruction.

Symbolism: 1) The Handkerchief: Othello's love & Desdemona's chastity and faith**.**
2) Candle: The candle Othello blows out just before he murders Desdemona symbolizes him extinguishing her life.

Soliloquy: (one character remains alone on the stage and thinking out loud to him/herself to share the inner thoughts of his characters and to reveal crucial information with his audience.)

In Othello the soliloquy serves many functions like revelation of secrets, development of character and plot, foreshadowing and dramatization, and the addition of the poetic element at climactic points in the play. soliloquy is used mainly for the revelation of secret plans and conspiracies of Iago. Iago is involved in soliloquy for ten times in the play. Each time he plans how to destroy the life and happiness of others by thinking out loud to himself.

A Doll's House

(A Play in 3 Acts)

Henrik Ibsen

Overview:

- ✓ Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906) is the **Father of Modern Drama**
- ✓ Ibsen was a Norwegian playwright. As one of the founders of Modernism in theatre, Ibsen is often referred to as "**the father of realism**" and one of the most influential playwrights of his time.
- ✓ Famous & major works include:

1. **An Enemy of the People**
2. **A Doll's House**
3. **Ghosts**
4. **The Wild Duck**
5. **When We Dead Awaken**
6. **Pillars of Society**
7. **The Lady from the Sea**

- ✓ He is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare.
- ✓ ***A Doll's House*** became **the world's most performed play** by the early 20th century.
- ✓ Key Facts:
  - Full Title: **A Doll's House (Norwegian: Ett dukkehjem)**
  - Original Language: **Norwegian**
  - When Published: Published and first performed in **1879**
  - Literary Period: **Realism; modernism**
  - Genre: **Realist Modern Drama**
  - Tone: **Serious, intense, somber**

- ✓ **Historical Context of A Doll's House:**
  The 1870s were dominated by **strict Victorian social codes and laws** that severely restricted **the rights of all women**, and married women in particular. Governments throughout Europe used the Napoleonic Code, which prevented women from engaging in financial transactions. Many women who conducted their own business or earned their own wages chose not to marry because the laws regarding what married women could do when it came to finances were so limiting. By the beginning of the 20th century, things were beginning to change as the female suffrage movement swept over Europe and the world and women were awarded rights such as the right to own property and the right to vote. However, for most people in the late 1870s, such eventualities were not yet even a distant dream.

Setting:

Time: **1879**
Place: **Circa, a Norwegian town**

Plot Analysis:

- Climax: **When Torvald discovers the letter from Krogstad revealing Nora's secret.**
- Resolution: **Nora slamming the door as leaves the house.**

Characters:

Major:

Nora: <u>Protagonist</u> and the wife of Torvald Helmer.
Torvald Helmer: Nora's husband of 8 years, promoted to manager of the bank.
Dr. Rank: Friend of the family and Torvald's physician, a corrupting force, both physically and morally, confesses his desire for Nora in the second act and goes off to die in the third act.
Mrs. Linde: An old schoolmate of Nora's, Mrs. Christine Linde comes back into Nora's life after losing her husband and mother. She worked hard to support her helpless mother and two younger brothers since the death of her husband. Mrs. Linde decides that she will only be happy if she goes off with Krogstad. Symbolizes a hollowness in the matriarchal role.
Nils Krogstad: <u>Villain</u> (antagonist) a man from whom Nora borrows money to pay for trip to Italy, his job at the bank is jeopardized by Torvald's refusal, Krogstad blackmails Nora to ensure that he does not lose his job.

Minor:

Ivar, Bob, and Emmy
Nora's young children. Raised primarily by Anne, Nora's old nurse.
Anne: The family nurse. Anne raised Nora, who had lost her mother, and stayed on to raise Nora's children.
Helen: A housemaid employed by the Helmers.
Porter: A porter who brings in the Christmas Tree at the very beginning.

Themes:

Major:

1. **Patriarchal Hegemony** (Male Governed Society)
2. **Marginalized Position of Women**
3. **Objectification woman's body (Doll)**
4. **Angel in the House (Gilbert and Gubar)**
5. **Imprisonment & Liberation**
6. **Rebellious and courageous woman**

Minor:

- **Marriage**
- **Deception & Forgery**
- **Reality vs Appearance**
- **Materialism**

❖ Torvald defines the simple duty of a woman is to be a good **wife** by decorating the house and a **mother** should raise her children. He thinks a wife should **be "taken care of"** and be "**subservient"**.

❖ **Angel in the House**: Victorian woman an ideal model to emulate expected to be submissive, meek, powerless, pious, pure, confined to the four walls of a house.

❖ Torvald's **nicknames** for Nora suggest that he thinks of her almost as **a child or a pet**. These include "**little songbird**," "**squirrel**," "**lark**," "**little featherhead**," "**little skylark**," "**little person**," and "**little woman**."

Techniques:

- **Symbols**

1.The Christmas Tree: Nora's role in her house; adding visual appeal and charm to the home. It symbolizes family happiness and unity as well. This represents the end of Nora's innocence and foreshadows the Helmer family's eventual disintegration.

2. Macaroons: Torvald has banned Nora from eating macaroons. Although Nora claims that she never disobeys Torvald, this is proved false in the very opening of the play when Nora eats macaroons while she was alone in the living room. The macaroons foreshadow Nora's disobedience.

3. Dress Change at the End of the Play: Nora's embarkation on a new life.

- **Foreshadowing:** a clue that shows what may happen later on in the course of story most probably.

Waiting for Godot

(A Play in 2 Acts)

Samuel Beckett

Overview:

- Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) is an **Irish playwright**, theatre director, poet, and literary translator who lived in Paris for most of his adult life. He wrote in both **English and French**.
- Beckett was awarded the **1969 Nobel Prize in Literature**
- One of the key figures in the "**Theatre of the Absurd**".
- The last modernist writer
- Beckett's work offers a **bleak, tragicomic outlook on human existence**, often coupled with black comedy and gallows humor, and became increasingly minimalist in his later career.
- *Waiting for Godot* is the "**most significant English language play of the 20th century**". It is a **landmark in modern drama**.
- Well-known dramas: ***Waiting for Godot*** and ***Endgame***

Key Facts

- ✓ Full Title: En attendant Godot (Waiting for Godot)
- ✓ Original Language: French/English
- ✓ Literary Period: Absurd Theatre
- ✓ Genre: Tragicomedy
- ✓ Tone: bitter and humorous or bleak & comic

Absurd Theatre:

Theater of the Absurd (also called Anti-Theater and New Theater): The term was coined by the critic Martin Esslin in1962. It refers to a literary movement in drama popular throughout European countries from the 1940s to approximately 1989. It conveys that life is meaningless and ridiculous. The hallmark of the genre is neither comedy nor nonsense, but rather, the study of human behavior under circumstances that appear to be purposeless and philosophically absurd. The movement flourished in France, Germany, and England, as well as in Scandinavian countries.

Several of the founding works of the movement include Jean Genet's *The Maids* (1947), Eugene Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* (1950), Arthur Adamov's *Ping-Pong* (1955), Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*.

Characteristics of an Absurd Play:

1. No regular plot
2. Inadequacy of communication
3. No clear time & place (setting)
4. Instability of characters
5. Repetition
6. Irrationality
7. Silence
8. Absurdity & Futility

Setting:

Unknown Time and Place
Time: before evening
Place: a country road

Plot Analysis:

A play about nothing. It is about two men who hang out waiting for someone who never shows up.
No real Climax and Resolution.

Characters:

Major:

Vladimir (Didi) (Mr. Albert): more responsible and mature like Hardy
Estragon (Gogo): weak & helpless, always needs Didi's protection like Laurel
Pozzo: He is boss to Lucky, passes by the spot where V & E are waiting & provides a diversion. In act II, he is blind, does not remember meeting V & E the night before.
Lucky: Pozzo's slave, who carries Pozzo's bags and stool. In Act I, he entertains by dancing and thinking. However, in Act II, he is dumb.

Minor:

Boy(s): He appears at the end of each act to inform V & E.
Godot: Mute: The man for whom Vladimir and Estragon wait unendingly. Godot never appears in the play.

Theme:

Major:

1. **Absurdity**
2. **Tragic-Comic essence of life**
3. **Meaninglessness**
4. **Purposeless living**

Minor:

- Waiting
- Suffering
- Duality
- Boredom

Techniques

- ✓ **Symbols**

1. Godot stands for God
2. Hat stands for identity (all wear hat).
3. Deserted setting: Empty life & world
4. Tree: Cross, Tree of Life
5. Duality: homosexuality

Six Characters in Search of an Author

(A Play in 3 Acts)

Luigi Pirandello

Overview :

- **Luigi Pirandello (1867- 1936)** poet, novelist, and short story writer & above all **Dramatist**
- One of the **most influential dramatists** of the twentieth century .
- Pirandello by 1891 had earned a **Ph.D. in linguistics**
- **Professor of Italian literature and language**
- A Prolific writer: By the end of 1936, Pirandello had written 8 volumes of poems, 7 novels, 250 short stories, and **44 plays** .
- Pirandello was awarded the **Nobel Prize for literature in 1934**
- Pirandello has had a profound effect on twentieth-century drama and especially on what would be called the **Theatre of the Absurd**. Having given eloquent testimony to the issues of the relativity of truth, the instability of personal identity, and the nature of stage illusion, Pirandello remains
- **Well-known plays :**

1. ***Six Characters in Search of an Author*** (1921)
2. ***Henry IV*** (1922)

- **Key facts:**

Full Title: Six Characters in Search of an Author

Original Language: Italian
Literary Period: Absurd Theatre
Genre: Stage Comedy
Tone: Tragic-comic and playful

Six Characters in Search of an Author created Luigi Pirandello's international reputation in the 1920s and is still the play by which he is most widely identified .

Setting :

Time: Daytime (1920)
Place: The stage of a theater (Rome)

Plot Analysis :

The play does not adhere to the conventional model of rising action, climax, and falling action as an Absurdist Play. However, one can say that

Climax: The climax occurs when the Boy shoots himself and the actors cannot determine whether he really committed suicide or is just pretending .

Characters:

The Characters from an Unfinished Play

The Father
The Mother
The Stepdaughter
The Boy
The Child
The Son
Madame Pace

The Theater Company

The Director (also the manager or the producer)
The Leading Man
The Leading Lady
The Second Lady
L'Ingénue (actress playing innocent young girls)
Juvenile Lead
The Prompter
The Property Man
The Machinist
The Director's Secretary
The Doorkeeper
The Scene-Shifters

Themes:

1. **Reality & Illusion**
2. **Permanence and the Concept of Self**
3. Who Am I? (**Quest for Identity**)
4. **Relativism:** the way one person evaluates or judges another person or a place, a thing, or an idea varies from individual to individual .
5. **Reality**: Character vs Actor: an actor is less real than a character. Consider that in novels and short stories, characters speak directly to their readers in dialogue, they do not need actors to play them. In a play, an actor playing a character is simply pretending to be the character .

Techniques:

The Play Within the Play

The most obvious device that Pirandello uses to convey his themes is to portray the action as a play within a play .

Comedy

A less obvious device in the play is Pirandello's use of laughter to lighten the audience's confrontation with this frustrating collision of reality and illusion. The play is not easily seen as humorous on the page, but in production the humor can be rich and is certainly essential in order to reassure the audience that their inability to easily distinguish between reality and illusion is an inevitable but ultimately comic part of human existence .

Meta-theatre

the play has metafictional features in that the dramatist himself comes in the play and he is criticized by his own characters. The drama is a comment upon drama. It has a Chinese box structure of play- within–a-play and two stories within a story. The characters criticize themselves .

Part III

TERMINOLOGY

Aside: A dramatic convention by which an actor directly addresses the audience but it is not supposed to
be heard by the other actors on the stage.

Catharsis: The process by which an unhealthy emotional state produced by an imbalance of feelings is
corrected and emotional health is restored.

Comic relief: Humorous speeches and incidents in the course of the serious action of a tragedy; frequently
comic relief widens and enriches the tragic significance of the work.

Epiphany: A major character's moment of realization or awareness.

Farce: A type of comedy in which one-dimensional characters are put into ludicrous situations; ordinary
standards of probability and motivation are freely violated in order to evoke laughter.

Hubris: Overwhelming pride or insolence that results in the misfortune of the protagonist of a tragedy. It is the particular form of tragic flaw that results from excessive pride, ambition, or overconfidence. The excessive pride of Macbeth is a standard example of hubris in English drama.

Mood: An atmosphere created by a writer's word choice (diction) and the details selected. Syntax is also a determiner of mood because sentence strength, length, and complexity affect pacing.

Motif: A frequently recurrent character, incident, or concept in literature.

Pathos: Qualities of a fictional or nonfictional work that evoke sorrow or pity. Over-emotionalism can be the result of an excess of pathos.

Persona: A writer often adopts a fictional voice to tell a story. Persona or voice is usually determined by a combination of subject matter and audience.

Plot: System of actions represented in a dramatic or narrative work.

Satire: A work that reveals a critical attitude toward some element of human behavior by portraying it in
an extreme way. Satire doesn't simply abuse (as with invective) or get personal (as with sarcasm). Satire usually targets groups or large concepts rather than individuals; its purpose is customarily to inspire change.

Soliloquy: When a character in a play speaks his thoughts aloud —usually by him or herself.

Theme: A central idea of a work of fiction or nonfiction, revealed and developed in the course of a story or explored through argument.

Tone: A writer's attitude toward his or her subject matter revealed through diction, figurative language, and organization of the sentence and global levels.

Tragedy: Representations of serious actions which turn out disastrously.

Tragic Flaw (Hamartia): Tragic error in judgment; a mistaken act which changes the fortune of the tragic hero from happiness to misery; also known as hamartia.

Character:

Hero/Heroin: A *hero* (masculine) or *heroine* (feminine) is a person or main character of a literary work who, in the face of danger, combats adversity through feats of ingenuity, bravery or strength, often sacrificing their own personal concerns for a greater good.

Antihero: a prominent character in a play having characteristics opposite to that of a conventional
hero.

Protagonist: Chief character in a dramatic or narrative work, usually trying to accomplish some objective or working toward some goal. Opposite to **Antagonist**.

Flat Character: A character constructed around a single idea or quality; a flat character is immediately recognizable.

Round Character: A character drawn with sufficient complexity to be able to surprise the reader without losing credibility.

Foil: A character whose traits are the opposite of another and who thus points up the strengths and weaknesses of the other character.

Cliché (Stock Character): Conventional character types that recur repeatedly in various literary
genres. E.g. the wicked stepmother or Prince Charming or the rascal.

Recommended plays for further studies:

The Oresteia by Aeschylus
Electra / ***Oedipus Rex*** / ***Antigone*** by Sophocles
Bacchae by Euripides
The Birds by Aristophanes
Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe
Romeo and Juliet / ***Hamlet*** / ***Othello*** / ***Macbeth*** / ***King Lear*** by William Shakespeare
Volpone by Ben Jonson
The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster
Don Juan/ Le Misanthrope by Molière
The Beggar's Opera by John Gay
Brand / ***Hedda Gabler*** by Henrik Ibsen
The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde
Man and Superman / ***Major Barbara*** / ***Pygmalion*** / ***Saint Joan*** by George Bernard Shaw
The Seagull / ***Uncle Vanya*** / ***Three Sisters*** by Anton Chekhov
Six Characters in Search of an Author by Luigi Pirandello
The Playboy of the Western World by John Millington Synge
Juno and the Paycock / ***The Plough and the Stars*** by Sean O'Casey
Long Day's Journey into Night / ***The Iceman Cometh*** by Eugene O'Neill
Murder in the Cathedral by T.S. Eliot
The Skin of Our Teeth by Thornton Wilder
The Threepenny Opera / ***Life of Galileo*** by Bertolt Brecht
Waiting for Godot / ***Endgame*** by Samuel Beckett
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof / ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** by Tennessee Williams
The Lesson / ***Rhinoceros*** by Eugène Ionesco
The Crucible / ***Death of a Salesman*** / ***All My Sons*** by Arthur Miller
The Sunshine Boys by Neil Simon
The Zoo Story / ***Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*** by Edward Albee
The Caretaker by Harold Pinter
The Invention of Love by Tom Stoppard
Fool for Love by Sam Shepard
The Piano Lesson / ***Fences*** / ***Joe Turner's Come and Gone*** by August Wilson
Sexual Perversity in Chicago by David Mamet
Angels in America by Tony Kushner

THE END