# ARULMIGU PALANIANDAVAR ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, PALANI

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

## LEARNING RESOURCES

## THEATRE ARTS

# DRAMA AS A PERFORMING ART

**Dramatic arts** tell stories on stage through action. The dramatic arts are one type of performing art, which also includes acting, pantomime, and puppetry. Each performing art has distinct attributes that determine how it tells a story. Music is often included as a performing art. The audience is an important feature for the performing arts: all performances are presented in front of an audience. Another important feature is that, unlike film and television, dramatic arts are performed live. Typically, dramatic arts are performed in a building called a theatre that has a stage space for the performance and seats for the audience, called the **house** or **auditorium**. The word theatre derives from the ancient Greek name for this space, theatron, which means "seeing place." The most common dramatic art form is theatre or drama. In theatre, actors play characters and act out the story for an audience. This is a primary distinction between dramatic arts and performing arts. In dramatic arts, the story is represented on stage.

## History of Western Dramatic Arts

Ancient Greece is believed to be the origin of Western dramatic arts. Thespis is said to be the first actor. Before Thespis, narratives were chanted by a chorus. Thespis stepped out of the chorus and represented a character. Beginning in 534 BCE, the Ancient Greeks held annual drama competitions. Many well-known classical playwrights competed at these competitions, including Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. These playwrights are the authors of the only classical Greek plays that are still around. Beyond famous plays like Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (c. 430-425), each playwright made major contributions to the dramatic form. For instance, Aeschylus added a second actor, which turned drama from a monologue into a dialogue between two characters. The Ancient Greeks performed in masks made of linen or cork.

After the Ancient Greeks, theatre flourished in Rome. It was a popular form of entertainment, along with gladiator fights, chariot races, and animal fights. Two well-known playwrights from this period are Terence (195-159 BCE) and Plautus (c. 254-c. 184 BCE), who went on to directly inspire playwrights for over a thousand years. The Catholic church grew concerned about theatre, primarily because theatre was associated with paganism and often mocked Christianity in its comedies. By the time Rome was captured in the 5th century CE, theatre and the dramatic arts had fallen out of favor.

**Ancient Roman Theatre located in Pompeii.**

Though the Catholic Church was critical of theatre in Rome, the church can be credited with theatre's revival nearly 500 years later. In this form, drama became a tool for spreading Christian doctrine. The first recorded female playwright was a German nun named Hrotsvitha (935-973) who adapted the plays of Terence and Plautus to teach Christian values and Latin. Later in the Middle Ages, plays began to be performed outside of churches. **Mystery plays** told stories from the Bible, while **Miracle plays** told stories about saints. Some of these plays were performed as part of an annual feast on pageant wagons, which were carts that served as a stage, so the drama could be performed around town. As theatre became increasingly secular, a new form called **Morality plays** was introduced, which emphasized ethics rather than religion. The most famous morality play is Everyman (c. 1510) by Anonymous.

Toward the end of the 16th century and into the 17th, drama found favor as popular, secular entertainment once again. Playwrights like William Shakespeare (1564-1616) in England and Lope de Vega (1562-1635) in Spain were writing both comedies and tragedies for the general public. In Elizabethan England, theaters were multi-level structures in the shape of an "O." In the center stood a group of low-paying ticket holders known as the "groundlings" who were a rowdy bunch: they often talked, ate, and sang during the performance. Shakespeare and his contemporaries kept this in mind as they wrote their plays. As such, they strategically repeated plot points and kept the play's action lively to hold their attention.

**Types of Drama**

In The Poetics (c. 335-323 BCE), the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) identified six elements of drama that are still applicable today. The six elements are:

- Plot
- Character
- Theme
- Language
- Music
- Spectacle

**Plot** is the action of a narrative. The plot is a sequence of events that propel the story forward. In his book *Backward and Forward*, David Ball argues that plot is like a series of dominos, in which one domino falling over will trigger the next event, which will then trigger the subsequent event in a story. Plots begin with an inciting incident; an event that disrupts the status quo of the world of the play. Then the action rises toward a climax, the most heightened moment of the plot. The climax is typically the moment of change for the characters. This is followed by falling action, moving the plot to a new status quo.

**Character** is the person depicted in the drama and acted out by a performer. The main character is known as the protagonist. This role drives the action of the play. Though many might imagine the antagonist to be the villain, it's actually a character who competes with the protagonist. Often, the protagonist and antagonist share a common objective, which places them in conflict with one another.

**Theme** is the central thought of the play. Some plays may argue a principle, raise a question, or try to teach the audience a specific lesson. In the dramatic arts, there is often more than one theme in a play, but the main theme is the central message the playwright wants the audience to keep with them.

**Language** is often how the theme is conveyed. In studying language, one might consider the word usages, metaphors, and other stylistic choices in the dialogue. In theatre, language is also used to differentiate characters. In *A Street Car Named Desire* (1947) by Tennessee Williams, the characters of Stanley and Blanche come from different backgrounds. This is apparent in how each character speaks from their use of slang, dialects, and even their accents.

Aristotle viewed **music** and **spectacle** as the least important features of a drama. Music refers to the use of song in a performance and spectacle refers to the visual effects. Spectacle can also include the setting, which refers to where the place takes place and the visual elements that communicate it. While Aristotle believed these elements were superfluous to a good

drama, they have gained prominence as storytelling techniques in the 19th and 20th centuries in melodramas and musical theatre.

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## RELATION BETWEEN DRAMA AND THEATRE

Drama and theatre are two words that are associated with the performing arts. They have some differences and similarities, but communication plays a huge role in both drama and theatre as well.

In its simplest form, theatre is a collaborative art between a group of performers and a director who work together to create a live experience for an audience. Drama, on the other hand, is a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and action. It is one of the many forms that theatre can take, but it is not the only one.

The relationship between drama and theatre is a complex one. They are two different mediums that often intersect and overlap, but they also have their own unique purposes and functions. Drama is the written word that comes to life on the stage, while theatre is the live experience that happens between the performers and the audience.

Drama is the foundation of theatre. Without drama, there would be no theatre. It is the starting point from which all other elements of theatre are built. The dialogue, the action, the characters, and the story all come from the drama.

Theatre, on the other hand, is the live experience that brings the drama to life. It is the space in which the drama unfolds and the audience experiences it. Theatre is about the interactions between the performers and the audience. It is the place where the drama comes to life and where the audience can respond to it. Drama is the foundation of theatre, but theatre is more than just the sum of its parts. It is the live experience that brings the drama to life and allows the audience to respond to it.

Some of the differences between drama include the fact that drama can refer to the written text of a play, whereas theatre is the actual performance put on by characters on stage. Also, theatre can require more people, because to put on a show you may need people to make costumes, the director, backstage helpers, and of course, actors to put on the production. In theatre, there is normally no direct interaction between the written playwright and the audience, whereas drama can be very interactive. Another huge difference between drama and theatre is that in theatre the interpretation of the performance depends mostly on the actors who are performing, whereas the interpretation of the written work in drama depends on the reader or the audience. Theatre is more or less a branch of drama. Drama can refer to kinds of activities such as an episode of life, whereas theatre is only performance onstage. Also, an audience is an essential part of the theatre, whereas it is not for drama. Theatre is also a physical action, whereas drama can be very abstract.

Although there are differences between drama and theatre, one main similarity is that both use communication. In theatre, communication is essential to work with other actors, and exchange lives. When performing on stage in a theatre, you do not only need to communicate verbally, you must also communicate through body language and facial expressions. Listening is also an important method of communication, for you must listen to your peers or fellow actors to respond to lines and put on a performance. As I mentioned previously, the way you communicate also makes the audience in theatre interpret your

performance in a certain way, but in drama, the interpretation of performance can depend on the reader. The way that you communicate in drama can just be through a form of written work, such as a form of poetry or prose. In both drama and theatre, communication can help with problem-solving. When you are taking on the role of someone else, you are forced to understand their problems, so that you can become the person you are portraying, and when improvising in drama, you have to sometimes problem-solve to help certain scenes flow and carry on.

Overall, there are many difference between drama and theatre, such as the fact that theatre is only a branch of drama, but there are also many similarities because communication is essential to both forms of performing arts.

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## THE ROLE OF THEATRE

Theatre has been a part of human society for thousands of years. It is one of the oldest forms of art and entertainment. Theatre has the ability to entertain, educate, and inspire. It can bring people together and help them to understand each other. It can help us to see the world from a different perspective and to empathize with others.

Audiences are not only connected to the artists performing, but also to the community that supports them. Theatre can help people understand a social problem by allowing them to empathize with, heuristically, and visualize the issue. The act of playing a drama game, encouraging audience participation, rehearsing, and performing are all steps in learning to listen and observe. These performances, like self-knowledge, help us remember how we can work together to make the world a better place. A game is intended to be socially engaged and inclusive in order to engage and educate people about social change. Performing arts courses are designed to help students develop their self-esteem while exploring alternate paths and becoming their own boss. Performing arts students can be emotionally aware, understand emotions, and have the confidence to articulate their thoughts. Theatre brings a positive economic impact to a community by creating jobs and increasing employment opportunities.

We can benefit from the arts as individuals in order to express our feelings and process our thoughts about what is going on in our lives. Conversations between groups of people and the establishment of positive social change can lead to these outcomes.
It is up to playwrights to conceive and write in an environment that is fair and fair, as well as within their own socio-economic circumstances, their personal background, their religious or political beliefs, and their purpose in writing.

These theatres, as do these movements, are intended to bring about social change. Some may seek to change attitudes and attitudes among their constituents, while others may seek to accept the dominant culture in order to bring about social and economic equality. The performing arts not only teach self-expression, but they also assist society as a whole in gaining knowledge and understanding. Theatre and the performing arts are used to educate society about itself in order to inform society of its attitudes and mindsets. A website like this can help people become more aware of their current conditions.

### How Does Theatre Influence Culture?

Theatre has been around for centuries and has been used as a form of entertainment, education, and social commentary. Theatre can be used to influence culture in a number of

ways. It can be used to raise awareness about social issues, to challenge norms and stereotypes, and to promote diversity and inclusion. Theatre can also be used to celebrate and showcase the unique culture of a community.

With William Shakespeare's influence, theater has changed dramatically over the years. The playwright's complex characterizations have introduced a new type of narrative to the stage. During the Renaissance period, several inspiring art forms were rejuvenated. Kat Henry's film is a hybrid of heightened realism, absurdism, and post-modernism that combines many dramatic elements like time and space to create a rich and intriguing ending. In Henry's interpretation, the relationships between Juliet, the Friar, and Romeo are some of the most powerful and complex in Romeo and Juliet. In Arthur Miller's The Crucible, lies and deception are woven into the story of one man's quest for vengeance. Terry Martin brought to life the dramatic elements of this production in a truly spectacular way.

" Trifles" had a strong sense of suspense, a darker theme, and a darker setting. A new and intriguing interpretation of Homer's Odyssey is presented by Temple Theatre in a production directed by Brandon Mcshaffrey. Increased wages and leisure time were the driving forces behind the growth of popular recreation during the 1920s. During this time, magazines such as Reader's Digest and Time have had enormous success.

The theater provides us with a glimpse into some of the most difficult moments in our lives. When we look at our bodies, we discover our hearts' secrets as well as our souls' vulnerability. Theater takes on a whole new meaning as a teacher and a friend. The power of this method allows us to see the good and the bad in people, as well as understand our own and others' natural characteristics.

The act of performing in theater has a spiritual significance in reflecting our lives on stage. You learn about your ancestors' history, beliefs, and customs by doing so. Theater can also show us the most difficult moments in our lives, and it can help us understand our own nature and that of others. Learning about the people around you through the theater is not only a way to enjoy our lives, but it also serves as a way to learn about yourself.

**The Power of Theatre in Society**

We can express ourselves, tell stories about our lives and the lives of others, and build meaning from personal narratives by watching theater. In addition to affecting how we think and feel about our own lives, it can lead to important discussions about society. It is critical for community theatre to encourage people to advocate for change because it is one of the most effective ways to promote social awareness.

**Relationship Between Theatre And Society**

Theatre as an art form is both instrumental and aesthetic in nature. The act of depicting society's evolution and the changes that have occurred is an instrumental component of theatre. Theatre allows us to travel in time to a world of imitation on stage.

A story that is truly meaningful and resonate with its audience must be relatable to them. To be relevant, theatre must have an outsized social influence. As seen in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, the relationship between two lovers and the person who watches forms a bond. Classical Greek theater was a grand spectacle of elaborate sets and costumes, as well as the display of the actors' skills. In ancient Greece, the theatre served as a venue for social and political debate.

Despite the fact that ancient Rome's theatre was similar to those in ancient Greece, there

were some significant differences between them. A Roman theater, for example, was primarily used to display actors' skills and was not used as a place for social or political discussion.

A comparison of the theaters of ancient China and those of ancient Rome is also possible, but with some significant differences. The theater, for example, was primarily used for acting training and was not used as a social or political forum, as in ancient China.

Several factors distinguish the theater of medieval Europe from the theater of ancient Greece or Rome. A medieval Europe theatre, for example, served primarily as a showcase for the actors' skills, but it was not used to debate social or political issues.

There were a number of differences between the Renaissance and medieval European theaters. The theatre of the Renaissance, for example, was primarily used as a showcase for actors' skills, not for social or political debate.

There were a number of differences between the stage of the 18th and 19th centuries and the stage of the Renaissance. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the theater was primarily used as a forum for artistic expression, whereas social and political discourse were not.

The theater of the twentieth century was different from the theater of the nineteenth and twentieth century in a number of ways. The theatre, for example, was primarily used to demonstrate actors' abilities during the twentieth century, and it was not used as a place for social or political discussion.

The theater of the twenty-first century differs in a variety of ways from that of the twenty-first century. The theatre of the 21st century, for example, is primarily used to showcase actors' skills, and it is not frequently used for social or political discussions.

## THE NEED FOR PERMANENT THEATRES

Theatre is one of the oldest traditional activities in the world, and it is as old as human civilization. It is a form of expressing emotions on stage. Also, it is the best way to understand empathy better. It has been considered as the best way to teach themes like morality and religion. Over the centuries, it had spread to various different counties and cultures. Some of them brought their interpretation into it, and others embraced the ancient characteristics. Today, it became a wealthy marketplace despite cinema's popularity because it is an indispensable tradition for us. In this sense, cinema is a developed version of the theatre, and they both help us empathize with other people emotions and thoughts on common themes or problems which we have been facing for centuries. Therefore, modern societies are still showing so much attention to it. After all, this paper focuses on the significance of theatre and its evolution in different cultures over the centuries. Many cultures embraced and valued theatre in the past because it carried a critical role in society in terms of moral education, historical and religious narratives.

Ancient Greece was the first culture that showed so much value to the theatre. For example, they valued arts, architecture, literature, and philosophy along with theatre. They were one of the most developed cultures of their times. Originally, the theatre was a type of structure that was considered a place for religious rituals and social gatherings. One can highlight that ancient Greece played a critical role in the development of theatre. Thus, they invented tragedy when the poet and the first actor Thespis came to Athens in 534 BCE with his troupe on wagons, and performances were given in the Agora (Bay para. 4). Also, they

used chorus in the plays, and it became the most important characteristic of Hellenistic era tragedies. Tragedies were essential to them because they honoured their Gods, Goddesses and mortal heroes like kings and warriors. Tragedies included death, war, religion and moral lectures, and historical themes. Therefore, Ancient Greece was the first society which developed theatre and created a tradition in history.

In its later development, they built theatres in several cities, which were inspired by the Theatre of Dionysus. Also, in the beginning times, admission was free, then they have put an entrance price for theatre, and poor citizens were given entrance money. Thus, their community sought the poor citizens, and they provided the money because theatres were essential places to teach religious lectures and historical narratives to their citizens. In other words, they sought the development of poor citizens with it.

Ancient Greece was the heart of civilization and arts. Many cultures which came after them copied their arts and architecture. In this sense, the Roman empire followed Greek theatre, and they only changed few aspects of it. For instance, in their culture, theatre mostly was a center of entertainment, and it did not express any deep religious convictions. Also, they built much bigger theatres in every city.

The ancient Roman empire was not the only society that copied Greeks. In later centuries, theatres in Europe were influenced by Greeks in terms of tragedy plays and stage design. For instance, in Ancient Greece, the first theatre plays were performed in the streets of Agora, which were the marketplace, and in the middle ages, Pageant Plays were performed on special movable stages or carts in European countries ("History of Theatre" n.p). Until the 17th century, European theatres mostly was in control of the church, and they used theatre's influence to teach religious narratives and moral lessons and during the II. Charles reign, theatres became more independent so that they could focus on different topics. Also, in that era, Shakespeare was one of the most important play writers who led theatre to innovation. For example, he invented tragicomedy plays that combined tragedy, and comedy. His plays included various themes such as history, folklore, morality conflict, passion, love, and death.

## Conclusion

Consequently, theatre is the oldest entertainment tradition in the world, and it is old as civilization. Over the centuries, ruler classes used it for teaching religious and historical narratives and morality lessons while entertaining their society. In the modern world, theatre is still valued by the masses because there is a magical environment in live performances. The reason for theatre popularity is that many cultures embraced and valued theatre in the past because it carried a critical role in society in terms of moral education, historical and religious narratives. Eventually, it became a significant tradition for us.

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### GREEK THEATRE

Greek theatre began in the 6th century BCE in Athens with the performance of tragedy plays at religious festivals. These, in turn, inspired the genre of Greek comedy plays. The two types of Greek drama would be hugely popular and performances spread around the Mediterranean and influenced Hellenistic and Roman theatre.

As a consequence of their lasting popularity, the works of such great playwrights as Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes formed the foundation upon which all modern theatre is based. In a similar way, the architecture of the ancient Greek theatre has continued to inspire the design of theatres today.

**The Origins of Tragedy**

The exact origins of tragedy (*tragōida*) are debated amongst scholars. Some have linked the rise of the genre to an earlier art form, the lyrical performance of epic poetry. Others suggest a strong link with the rituals performed in the worship of Dionysos such as the sacrifice of goats - a song ritual called *trag-ōdia* - and the wearing of masks. Indeed, Dionysos became known as the god of theatre and perhaps there is another connection - the drinking rites which resulted in the worshippers losing full control of their emotions and in effect becoming another person, much as actors (*hupokritai*) hope to do when performing. The music and dance of Dionysiac ritual was most evident in the role of the chorus and the music provided by an aulos player, but rhythmic elements were also preserved in the use of first, trochaic tetrameter and then iambic trimeter in the delivery of the spoken words.

**A Greek Tragedy**

Plays were performed in an open-air theatre (*theatron*) with wonderful acoustics and seemingly open to all of the male populace (the presence of women is contested). From the mid-5th century BCE entrance was free. The plot of a tragedy was almost always inspired by episodes from Greek mythology, which we must remember were often a part of Greek religion. As a consequence of this serious subject matter, which often dealt with moral right and wrongs and tragic no-win dilemmas, violence was not permitted on the stage, and the death of a character had to be heard from offstage and not seen. Similarly, at least in the early stages of the genre, the poet could not make comments or political statements through his play.

Due to the restricted number of actors each performer had to take on multiple roles where the use of masks, costumes, voice & gesture became extremely important.

The early tragedies had only one actor who would perform in costume and wear a mask, allowing him to impersonate gods. Here we can see perhaps the link to earlier religious ritual where proceedings might have been carried out by a priest. Later, the actor would often speak to the leader of the chorus, a group of up to 15 actors (all male) who sang and danced but did not speak. This innovation is credited to Thespis c. 520 BCE (origin of the word thespian). The actor also changed costumes during the performance (using a small tent behind the stage, the *skēne*, which would later develop into a monumental façade) and so break the play into distinct episodes.

Playwrights who regularly wrote plays in competition became famous, and the three most successful were Aeschylus (c. 525 - c. 456 BCE), Sophocles (c. 496-406 BCE), and Euripides (c. 484-407 BCE). Aeschylus was known for his innovation, adding a second actor and more dialogue, and even creating sequels. He described his work as 'morsels from the feast of Homer' (Burn 206). Sophocles was extremely popular and added a third actor to the performance as wells as painted scenery. Euripides was celebrated for his clever dialogues, realism, and habit of posing awkward questions to the audience with his thought-provoking treatment of common themes.

**Greek Comedy - Origins**

The precise origins of Greek comedy plays are lost in the mists of prehistory, but the activity of men dressing as and mimicking others must surely go back a long way before written records. The first indications of such activity in the Greek world come from **pottery**, where decoration in the 6th century BCE frequently represented actors dressed as horses, satyrs, and dancers in exaggerated costumes. Another early source of comedy is the poems of Archilochus (7th century BCE) and Hipponax (6th century BCE) which contain crude and explicit sexual humour. A third origin, and cited as such by **Aristotle**, lies in the phallic songs which were sung during Dionysiac festivals.

**A Greek Comedy**

Although innovations occurred, a comedy play followed a conventional structure. The first part was the *parados* where the Chorus of as many as 24 performers entered and performed a number of song and dance routines. Dressed to impress, their outlandish costumes could represent anything from giant bees with huge stingers to knights riding another man in imitation of a horse or even a variety of kitchen utensils. In many cases the play was actually named after the Chorus, e.g., Aristophanes' *The Wasps*.

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## SHAKESPEAREAN THEATRE

There were no permanent playhouses in England until James Burbage built The Theatre in 1576. By the year 1592, two more playhouses came into existence namely, The Curtain and The Rose near Southwark Cathedral. G. B. Harrison says that the Elizabethan players had no permanent home. They were accustomed to act on a variety of stages. They gave private performances in the great halls of noblemen's houses or in one of the Queen's palaces, or the Inns of the Court and they acted in public Town Halls and inn yards or in any place where they could erect a stage and collect a crowd.

The external measurement of the Fortune Theatre where most Shakespeare's plays were composed to act was only eighty feet square and was erected in1600. This playhouse was built only to rival the new Globe. The most popular theatres of Shakespeare's time were The Globe and The Blackfriars The playhouses during the Elizabethan period were generally circular or octagonal. They had three tiers of galleries overlooking the yard or the pit, which was exposed to the sky. The stage was actually projected into the yard so that the actors practically intruded into the midst of the audience. There was roof over the stage and there were doors on the sides through which the players appeared or disappeared from view.

There was a gallery over the back of the stage, this was the upper stage with windows on both sides. This was used whenever an upper scene was shown to the audience, as it happens in Romeo and Juliet, Romeo climbing up to Juliet's room. The space beneath the upper stage is tiring house hidden from the view of audience. There was no curtain for the whole stage. The ending of each scene was indicated by withdrawal or disappearance of characters from the stage.

Shakespearean stage was bare. There was not much painted scenery. The absence of scenery became an advantage in the hands of Shakespeare. He could cast a spell on his audience with his poetry and shift the scene from one country to another country. There were no actresses on the Shakespearean stage. The role of Women characters were played by

young boys. The audience of Elizabethan time had varied tastes and expectation. Shakespeare, using his masterly skills, could successfully cater to the needs of all such audiences. There were the lords and courtly people, the upper class, the business men, the working lot, the groundlings.

These varied audiences had varied tastes. Some were nurturing crude tastes. They love scenes of violence and bloodshed. Shakespeare satisfies their expectations by presenting them plenty of such scenes in his tragedies. A sect of audience wanted to have an abundance of fun and frolic even in tragedies. The audience were lovers of music and so Shakespeare gave them ear-filling music in his comedies. The groundlings had a taste their own. Paying a penny, they took an entry and stood there at the pit, just in front of the main stage. They loved vulgar jokes, jests and pun. They would express their wild joy by whistling out aloud. Shakespeare never failed catering their needs though such stuff affected the artistry of the plays.

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## THE ABSURD THEATRE

The "Theatre of the Absurd" , a term coined by Hungarian-born critic Martin Esslin in his 1962 book *The Theatre of the Absurd*, refers to a particular type of play which first became popular during the 1950s and 1960s and which presented on stage the philosophy articulated by French philosopher Albert Camus in his 1942 essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in which he defines the human condition as basically meaningless. Camus argued that humanity had to resign itself to recognizing that a fully satisfying rational explanation of the universe was beyond its reach; in that sense, the world must ultimately be seen as absurd.

The absurdist dramatists believe that our existence is absurd because we are born without seeking to be born, we die without seeking death. We live between birth and death trapped within our body and our reason, unable to conceive of a time in which we were not or a time in which we will not be. Thrust into life , armed with our senses ,will and reason, we feel ourselves to be potent beings. Yet our senses give the lie to our thought and our thought defies our senses. We never perceive anything completely. The absurd theatre openly rebelled against conventional theatre. It was, as Ionesco called it "anti-theatre." It was surreal, illogical, conflictless and plotless. The dialogue often seemed to be complete gibberish. And, not surprisingly, the public's first reaction to this new theatre was incomprehension and rejection.

One of the most important aspects of absurd drama is its distrust of language as a means of communication. Language, it seems to say, has become nothing but a vehicle for conventionalized, stereotyped, meaningless exchanges. Words fail to express the essence of human experience, not being able to penetrate beyond its surface. The Theatre of the Absurd constituted first and foremost an onslaught on language, showing it as a very unreliable and insufficient tool of communication. Absurd drama uses conventionalised speech, clichés, slogans and technical jargon, which it distorts, parodies and breaks down. By ridiculing conventionalised and stereotyped speech patterns, the Theatre of the Absurd tries to make people aware of the possibility of going beyond everyday speech conventions and communicating more authentically. The absurd plays seek to explore the spiritual loneliness, complete isolation, and anxiety of the down-and-outs of society, of those who are social failures and social outcasts.

**Samuel Beckett:**

Samuel Beckett, the pioneer of the absurd theatre, also contributed to the other fields of literature- poetry,Fiction and criticism. He wrote his major works in French language. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is the most famous, and most controversial play in the absurd tradition. The characters of the play are strange caricatures who have difficulty communicating the simplest of concepts to one another as they bide their time awaiting the arrival of Godot. The language they use is often ludicrous, and following the cyclical patter, the play seems to end in precisely the same condition it began, with no real change having occurred. In fact, it is sometimes referred to as "the play where nothing happens."

**Eugene Ionesco**

In an essay about Kafka, Eugene Ionesco says: ≪Every-thing which does not have a purpose is absurd... Cut off from his religious or metaphysical roots, man is lost, all his approach becomes reckless, useless, suffocating. Alongside Beckett in the theatre genre of absurdity, is playwright Eugene Ionesco, the most introspective -and, at the same time, the most explicitplaywright of the absurd. Ionesco's main focus is on the futility of communication, so the language of his plays often reflects this by being almost completely nonsensical. He approaches the absurdity of life by making his characters comical and unable to control their own existence. His most brilliant absurd plays are The Chairs and The Lesson. In The Chairs, the inanimate chairs crowd out the imaginary world of the too old people. He uses empty chairs to show man's empty existence.

**Harold Pinter:**

Although Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco are two of the most famous absurdist playwrights, Harold Pinter is also the leading English language playwright in the genre. In his plays, Pinter never finds in necessary to explain why things occur or who anyone is, the existence within the play itself is justification enough. In general, lack of explanation is what characterizes Pinter's work, that and the interruption of outside forces upon a stable environment. What seems to set him apart though is that unlike Beckett and Ionesco, Pinter's world within the drama seems to be at least somewhat realistic.

**Jean Genet**

Jean Genet is, 'biogıraphically, the most spectacular author of the twentieth century'.10Be was bom İn Paris in 1910. His mother, Gabrielle Genet, was a prosı:itute;.and his father is not known. To Genet theater should present the vu1gar, the horrib1e and the obscene, through rich and rhythmic language and gestures within the framework of Black Mass., 'The greatest hero for him is the greatest crimina1, the greatest, rebel against society. He uses language as a means to communicate the spectator  the harsh facts of this cruel world and his own isolation. For Genet, theatre assumes a religious role, and turns out to be a Dionysian nightmare. He 1ived and died 1ike the hero of such a nightmaıe, a committed antagonist.

**Arthur Admov**

A Russian-born French playwright and translator, Adamov wrote absurdist, surrealistic dramas until 1957 and epic, realistic dramas from 1957 to 1970. He is best known for *Ping-pong*, the finest example of his earlier plays. He came to Paris at the age of fifteen and has lived there ever since. In Paris Adamov met surrealists and edited the surrealist journal *Discontinuité*. In Arthur Adamov's career, creative dramatic composition was to

begin just after the liberation of France when he was yet under forty. As a maker of plays he attacks with rigor the so-called absurdities of society. Vacillations of public authority are held up to ridicule as is also the alleged futility of the established order.

**Edward Albee:**

Albee is supposed to be one of the greatest absurdist playwrights after the Second World War in American literature. By the early 1960s, Albee was widely considered to the successor of Williams and Miller. Albee was the first and perhaps the only one of his theatrical generation to move from YAM (Young American Playwright) to FAM (Famous American Playwright). Albee came up with the series of successful works like *The Zoo Story*; a play written in Absurdist style; *The American Dream*; a play that attacks on the false values which have destroyed the real values in American society ; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, The most famous book having the theme of emptiness, and so on.

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### THE EPIC THEATRE

Epic theatre was a theatrical movement that began in the early twentieth century and last through the middle of the period. It consisted of new political dramas and was inspired by the social climate of the time. It was concerned with inspiring the audience to see the world the way it is. This was accomplished through various techniques. These are listed out below but include poor or ironic acting, captions, obvious set transitions, actors speaking with audience members, and the actors stepping out of their roles. Often, actors would also play multiple characters ensuring the audience could not, for a moment, consider what they're seeing on stage as real.

**Important Playwrights**

**Bertolt Brecht**

Brecht was born Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht in Februar 1898. He was a German playwright and poet who spent much of his life collaborating with composer Hanns Eisler. He is noted for his work on theories of epic theatre and what he called "the so-called V-effect. Bretcht is well regarded for his contributions to theatre as well as to political and social philosophy. He often used his work to criticize cultural happenings he disagreed with. When composing his plays, Brecht wanted to treat each element of the play separately. He often used comedy to separate his audiences from events.

**Erwin Piscator**

Anther well-known practitioner of epic theatre. He was born in December 1893 in Greifenstein-Ulm and is considered to be one of the most important writers of the movement. He sought to influence voters with his works and make left-wing policies clear. This was accomplished through the use of lectures, moving sets, and other mechanical devices. His contribution to the movement has been described by Günther Rühle as "the boldest advance made by the German stage" during the 20th century, according to *Erwin Piscator: Dream and Achievement.*

**Epic Theatre Characteristics**

Epic theatre is often defined in the terms of what Bertolt Brecht named the "alienation effect" or "Verfremdungseffekt." Sometimes also known as the estrangement effect, its characteristics are defined below:

- Captions explaining what's going on on stage/screen.
- Emphasizes the audience's perspective.
- Actors summarizing events that have just played out.
- Exposing set functions, like ropes, pulleys, and extras.
- Screen projections or placards.
- Actors interacting with the audience members.
- Bringing audience members on stage.
- Intentionally poor or ironic acting.
- The actor steps out of their role.
- The actor speaks the stage directions.

**Examples of Epic Theatre**

**"Mother Courage and Her Children" by Bertolt Brecht**

This is one of Brecht's most commonly performed plays. It is a great example of the alienation effect and is often cited as one of the most important anti-war plays ever written. It depicts a female main character, Anna Filing, and her children, and their struggle to survive. Over the course of the play, she loses all of her children. Through the play, Brecht wanted to convey the message that some people don't care who wins a war as long as there is a profit to be made.

Throughout this play, the actors might verbalize their actions and intentions, focus single-mindedly on one scene and ignoring the broader storyline, and more. "Mother Courage and Her Children" is considered to be one of the best plays of the 20th century and a great example of the characteristics of epic theatre.

**"The Good Soldier Shweik" by Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht**

This collaborative creation was produced in the 1920s. Throughout it, Piscator chose to use film sequences, cartoons, and more to draw the audience's attention to recent events in European history. On stage, viewers could see life-size puppets, and a conveyor-belt-like stage that moved set pieces and actors.

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## THE MULTIPURPOSE THEATRE

The multi-purpose theatre was designed to offer the community a space for hosting many different types of performances and events. Square in plan and with a compact prismatic exterior volume, the building is similar in typology to the city tower, a symbol of the community and a reference to the public life of its citizens.

Within, a cavernous full-height volume comprises the central space.

It is surrounded by galleries on three sides and on three levels, and by the stage on the fourth side. The building's functions are arranged on three floors. The main 300-seat auditorium has a level floor and is equipped with retractable riser to form the stalls for the performances which require this type of seating. With the risers stored away, the floor space of the auditorium space can also be used for various other types of events and exhibitions, with the seating stored away. There are also a small performances areas at the basement level and on the roof. The multi-purpose character of the building is based on the range of available performances spaces and on the flexibility of the main auditorium, easily adaptable and readily transformed by means of the retractable seating thus allowing a variety of

configurations. On the side towards the park, the wall behind the stage can be opened, transforming the auditorium into a stage for outdoor performances. The exterior materials are Botticino marble, wood and glass. Inside, concrete, brick-masonry and plastered surfaces are painted grey in correspondence to the circulation spaces. The main auditorium is finished entirely in wood. The strips and slats are arranged and carved in a vertical and horizontal design, resulting in an acoustic „configuration", while at the same time defining the appearance and the architectural character of the space.

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## THE EASTERN THEATRE

Before Eastern Theatre was established there was a beginning. The Origin of theatre, to our knowledge, began in Africa. To be specific, "The first known dramatic presentations occurred in northern Africa, alongside the Nile River in ancient Egypt, as much as five thousand years ago, possibly as early as 3300 B.C" (Cohen, 188). This is such an important calculation because it solidifies that our civilization has yearned for understanding even in Ancient times. That leads to the two main premises of known Theatre which are Ritual and Storytelling.

We as beings have always wanted to understand anything that we are observing. We also naturally want to share those personal understandings and that is the main key to the development of Storytelling. With the birth of storytelling came the development of speech, characters, and "elements of structured action in drama," known today as a plot (Cohen, 190). Ritual and Storytelling focus on two different aspects but when combined they created early forms of theatre known as dance-drama.

Dance-drama is a performance that involves dance and dialogue. Early forms include Shamanism rituals. In Shamanism, "the shaman (almost always male in the ancient world) can cure the sick, aid the hunter, conjure the rain, and help the crops grow" (Cohen, 190). The Shaman also can, "appear as mediums, taking the forms of unearthly spirits, often animal or demonic" similar to the characters in Eastern Theatre Noh performances. (Cohen, 190). Eastern theatre also includes those of India, China, and Japan but I was most interested in Asian Theatre of Japan. There is no single Asian country that solely defines Eastern theatre traditions. In the Asian theatre, they really focus on dialogue including imagery and sensual elements. This highly differentiates from the focus of the theatre in the west. The most important distinction is that the Eastern Asian theatre plots have, "… rarely escalating incidents, reversals, climaxes, or elaborate plot closures", while Western traditions premises are founded on a solid plot structure. (Cohen, 205)

In Japan, inspiration derives from their religion: Shintoism. This has contributed a dance-drama called, "Kagura or God music a dance performed by priestesses" (Mike, Crash Course). With the introduction of Buddhism, this sacred dance evolved even then there are additional forms of Asian sacred dance: Dengaku and Sarugaku.

Many sacred dances play a part in the forming of Noh proper theatre. "Nō is Japan's most revered and cerebral theatre. It is also the oldest continuously performed style of theatre in the world" . If you were to go and visit Japan next month you will receive a very similar experience. Traditional, "Noh plays are short only 10 or so pages long,…take anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours to perform,… include five types… consist of two scenes and most involve a ghost, a demon, or a tormented human that can't rest,". All the actors are males and

throughout history have held high ranks in the Military. All five types of Noh plays consist of a minimum of three characters which are, Shite, Tsure, Waki, or in other words the main character, companion and antagonist.

In between these plays, the tradition is to include a quick comedy skit or Kyogen. "There are two kinds of Kyogen: Parodies of Noh… and scenes of everyday life…". In each type, they are still very precisely executed and are far from crude.

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## THE CONVENTIONAL THEATRE

In conventional theater: "Anything absurd can only exist outside of the drama. What is included in it must be believable and what takes place should have nothing irrational about it." - Aristotle's Poetics. The conventional play is enacted as if it is in a room, three walls are physical - the stage's - and the fourth is between the actors and the audience. It is composed of stories and characters, forming an ending with a certain message to the audience.

Dramatic conventions are the specific actions and techniques the actor, writer or director has employed to create a desired dramatic effect/style. A *dramatic convention* is a set of rules which both the audience and actors are familiar with and which act as a useful way of quickly signifying the nature of the action or of a character.

All forms of theatre have dramatic conventions, some of which may be unique to that particular form, such as the poses used by actors in Japanese kabuki theatre to establish a character, or the stock character of the black-cloaked, moustache twirling villain in early cinema melodrama serials. It can also include an implausible facet of a performance required by the technical limitations or artistic nature of a production and which is accepted by the audience as part of suspension of disbelief. For example, a dramatic convention in Shakespeare is that a character can move downstage to deliver a soliloquy which cannot be heard by the other characters on stage nor are characters in a musical surprised by another character bursting into song. One more example would be how the audience accepts the passage of time during a play or how music will play during a romantic scene.

Dramatic conventions may be categorized into groups, such as rehearsal, technical or theatrical. Rehearsal conventions can include hot seating, role on the wall and still images. Technical conventions can include lighting, dialogue, monologue, set, costuming and entrances/exits. Theatrical conventions may include split focus, flashback/flashforward, narration, soliloquy and spoken thought.

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## FOLK THEATRE

Folk Theatre is a composite art form in India with a fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religion and festival peasantry. The Folk theatre having roots in native culture is embedded in local identity and social values. Besides providing mass entertainment, it helps Indian society as indigenous tools of interpersonal, inter-group and inter-village communication for ages. Folk theatre has been used extensively in India to propagate critical social, political and cultural issues in the form of theatrical messages to create awareness among the people. As an indigenous form it breaks all kinds of formal barriers of human communication and appeals directly to the people

**Emergence of folk theatre**

Historically speaking, it was during the 15th -16th century that the folk theatre emerged forcefully in different regions. It used different languages, the languages of the regions in which it emerged. Initially these were purely devotional in tenor and typically revolved around religion, local legends and mythology. Later, with changing times, it became more secular in content and began to focus on folk stories of romance and valor and biographical accounts of local heroes.

**Classification of folk theatres**

- Indian folk theatre can be broadly divided into two broad categories — religious and secular — giving rise to the Ritual Theatre and Theatre of Entertainment respectively
- The two forms thrived together, mutually influencing each other. Most often the folk and traditional forms are mainly narrative or vocal, i.e. singing and recitation-based like Ramlila, Rasleela, Nautanki and Swang, without any complicated gestures or movements and elements of dance.
- While most of these theatrical styles have their own unique form dependent on their local customs, they differ from one another in execution, staging, costume, make-up and acting style, although there are some broad similarities.
- The south Indian forms emphasize on dance forms like Kathakali and Krishnattam of Kerala and actually qualify as dance dramas, while the north Indian forms emphasize on songs, like the Khyal of Rajasthan, the Maach of Madhya Pradesh, the Nautanki of Uttar Pradesh and the Swang of Punjab. The Jaatra of Bengal, Tamasha of Maharashtra and the Bhavai of Gujarat stress on dialogues in their execution, the latter two emphasize on comedy and satire.
- Puppet theatre also flourished at many places in India-Shadow (Gombeyatta of Karnataka, Ravana Chhaya of Orissa), Glove (Gopalila of Orissa, Pavai Koothu of Tamil Nadu), Doll (Bommalattam of Tamil Nadu and the Mysore State and Putul Naach of Bengal) and String puppets (Kathputli of Rajasthan and Sakhi Kundhei of Orissa) are some of the popular forms in vogue.
- Dramatic art can also be found in some of the solo forms of Indian classical dance, like Bharat Natyam, Katthak, Odissi and Mohiniattam, and folk dances like the Gambhira and Purulia Chhau of Bengal, Seraikella Chhau of Bihar and Mayurbhanj Chhau of Orissa. Dramatic content is even woven into the ritual ceremonies in some areas, particularly those of Kerala, with its Mudiyettu and Teyyam.

**Some of the famous folk theatres in India are:**

**Bhand Pather**

- It is the traditional theatre form of Kashmir.
- Au nique combination of dance, music, and acting Music is provided with Surnai, Nagaara, and Dhol . It is usually held in open spaces.
- There are no predetermined scripts. Innovativeness is also a unique feature of this form of play
- These stories commemorate the lives of rishis (Sufi Sages, both Hindus and Muslims). This shows the secular character of this play

**Saang/Swang**
- It is a folk dance–theatre form in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is considered as the most ancient folk theatre form of India
- Two important styles of Swang are: Rohtak and Haathras
- Nautanki and Tamasha originated from this folk dance theatre

**Nautanki**
- It is associated with the state of Uttar Pradesh
- Famous centers of this theatre form are Kanpur, Lucknow, and Haathras.
- Only Men could play a part in this folk dance theatre initially. However, these days even woman are allowed
- Gulab Bai of Kanpur is a famous artist of this school

**Raasleela**
- It is based exclusively on Lord Krishna legends
- Some believe that it was Nand Das who wrote the initial plays based on the life of Krishna.
- This theatre is famous in the regions of Mathura, Vrindavana in Uttar Pradesh, especially during the festivals of Krishna Janmashtami and Holi

**Bhavai**
- It is a traditional theatre form of Gujarat
- The centers of this form are Kutch and Kathiawar.
- In this theatre form, both devotional and romantic sentiments are used.

**Jatra**
- This form was born and nurtured in Bengal
- It became popular due to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu influence
- The earlier form of Jatra was musical. Dialogues were added at a later stage.
- Fairs in honor of gods, or religious rituals and ceremonies are also conducted

**Maach**

- It is a traditional theatre form of Madhya Pradesh
- Songs are given more prominence than the dialogues
- The tunes of this theatre form are known as Rangat.

**Bhaona**
- This theatre form originated in Assam
- Practiced in Assam, Bengal, Odisha, Mathura, and Brindavan
- The story begins in Sanskrit and then either Brajboli or Assamese is used.

**Tamasha**
- Traditional folk theatre of Maharashtra
- The female actress is the chief exponent of dance movements in the play
- She is referred to as Murki

**Dashavatar**
- Theatre form of Goa and Konkan regions
- The performers personify the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu
- These performers wear masks of wood and papier-mache

**Krishnattam**

- It is a folk theatre of Kerala
- It came into prominence under the patronage of King Manavada of Calicut
- The episodes are based on the theme of Lord Krishna

**Mudiyettu**

- Traditional folk theatre of Kerala
- It is primarily performed in the Kali temples of Kerala
- It depicts the triumph of Goddess Bhadrakali over the Asura Darika.

**Koodiyaattam**

- Traditional theatre form of Kerala
- This theatre form is based on Sanskrit theatre traditions
- There is more emphasis on hand gestures and eye movements in this theatre form technique

**Yakshagana**

- Traditional theatre form of Karnataka
- Districts in which Yakshagana is famous in Karnataka: Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Shimoga and western parts of Chikmagalur districts
- It is also famous in Kasaragod district in Kerala
- In this theatre form- dance, music, dialogue, costume, make-up, and stage techniques are combined to form a unique style and form
- Yakshagana is also referred to as "Aata" or āṭa
- 'Badagu thittu' is a form of Yakshagana that is famous in Tulu Nadu region
- It is based on the mythological stories and Puranas
- The most popular episodes are from the Mahabharata
- Yakshagana shows are traditionally presented from dusk to dawn.

**Therukoothu**

- The most popular folk drama of Tamil Nadu
- It is also followed in Tamil speaking regions of Sri Lanka
- It is mostly performed at the time of the annual temple festivals of Mariamman (Rain goddess) to achieve rich harvest.
- The theme in this street play are usually from Hindu epic Mahabharata, focusing on the character Draupadi
- The core of this theatre form is based on eight plays based on the life of Draupadi

**Harikatha**

- It means 'Story of the Lord'
- It is also known as Harikatha Kaalakshepam in Telugu and Tamil
- It is a composite art form composed of storytelling, poetry, music, drama, dance, and philosophy most prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Karnataka
- Here, the storyteller, explores a traditional theme, usually the life of a saint or a story from an Indian epic

**Burra Katha**

- It is an oral storytelling technique performed in villages of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
- The troupe consists of one main performer and two co-performers.
- It is a narrative entertainment that consists of prayers, solo drama, dance, songs, poems and jokes
- The topic will be either a Hindu mythological story (Jangam Katha) or a contemporary social issue

Folk theatres grew out of the situations, experiences, and analysis of the actors who are themselves villagers. They created their own dramas out of their own collective analysis of their immediate situation and the deeper structures in which they are embedded. This art is a genuine expression of the people. Many national and international seminars held on the role of Folk Theatre and Development suggested the integration of folk Theatre forms with Mass Media for quicker transmission of information as it was motivating the rural audience.

## THIRD THEATRE

**Third Theatre** is a term coined by Eugenio Barba. The following extract is taken from Barba's book, Beyond the Floating Islands published in 1986 by PAJ (pp. 193-4) with commentary from the translators:

In the following text Eugenio Barba formulates the idea of a Third Theatre. Marginality, auto- didactism, the existential and ethical dimension of the craft and a new social vocation seem for him to be the fundamental characteristics of a reality composed of groups who associate themselves neither with traditional nor with avant-guard theatre.

A theatrical archipelago has been forming during the past few years in several countries. Almost unknown, it is rarely subject to reflection, it is not presented at festivals and critics do not write about it.

It seems to constitute the anonymous extreme of the theatres recognised by the world of culture: on the one hand, the institutionalised theatre, protected and subsidised because of the cultural values that it seems to transmit, appearing as a living image of a creative confrontation with the texts of the past and the present, or even as a "noble" version of the entertainment business; on the other hand, the avant-garde theatre, experimenting, researching, arduous or iconoclastic, a theatre of changes, in search of a new originality, defended in the name of the necessity to transcend tradition, and open to novelty in the artistic field and within society.

The Third Theatre lives on the fringe, often outside or on the outskirts of the centres and capitals of culture. It is a theatre created by people who define themselves as actors, directors, theatre workers, although they have seldom undergone a traditional theatrical education and therefore are not recognised as professionals.

But they are not amateurs. Their entire day is filled with theatrical experience, sometimes by what they call training, or by the preparation of performances for which they must fight to find spectators.

According to traditional theatre standards, the phenomenon might seem insignificant. But from a sociological point of view, the Third Theatre provides food for thought.

Like islands without contact between themselves, young people in Europe, North and South America, Australia and Asia gather to form theatre groups, determined to survive.

But these groups can only survive on one of two conditions: either by entering the circle of established theatre, accepting the laws of supply and demand, conforming to fashionable tastes, giving way to the preferences of political and cultural ideologists, and adapting themselves to the latest acclaimed results; or by succeeding through continuous work to find their own space, seeking what for them is essential and trying to oblige others to respect this diversity.

Perhaps it is here, in this Third Theatre, that, beyond the a posteriori motivations, one can see what constitutes the living matter of the theatre, a remote meaning which attracts new energies to it and which, in spite of everything, keeps it alive in our society.

Different people, in different parts of the world, experience theatre as a bridge, constantly threatened, between the affirmation of their personal needs, and the necessity of extending them into the surrounding reality.

Perhaps for them, theatre is a means to find their own way of being present – which the critics would call "new expressive forms" – and seeking more human relationships with the purpose of creating a social cell in which intentions, aspirations and personal needs begin to be transformed into actions.

The abstract divisions, made arbitrarily and instituted from on high – various schools, styles, tendencies and other labels which bring order to the recognised theatres – can be of no use here. It is not the styles or the expressive tendencies that count. What seems to characterise the Third Theatre, what appears as a common denominator among such different groups and experiences, is a tension that is difficult to define. It is as if the personal needs – ideals, fears, multiple impulses which would otherwise remain more or less obscure – wanted to be transformed into work, according to an attitude which from the outside is justified as an ethical imperative, not limited to the profession only, but extending through the whole of daily life. But, in the end, these groups are the first to pay the price for their choice.

## OTHER THEATRES IN VOGUE

### Modern Form Theatre

Modern form theatre is a type of theatre that uses modern forms of performance to tell a story. This can include things like using multimedia, using different types of performance styles, and using new technologies. This type of theatre is often used to create new and innovative ways to tell a story.

There were numerous world-changing forces that shaped the modern period and its dramatic development. As a result, a challenge and experimentation was created. Realism was conceived as a laboratory, with issues of society and familial relations presented objectively. A counterforce to realism, a method of symbolism, was introduced in the late nineteenth century. Anti-realistic approaches such as Expressionism, Theatricalism, and the French avant-garde extended the limits of theatrical art as part of an anti-realistic movement. These isms have shaped the way theater is performed today, creating a wide range of theatrical language. Intellectual Comedy is a type of theater that is emotional and irrational, as well as thought-provoking and rational.

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# FUNDAMENTALS OF PLAY DIRECTING
## CONCEPT

The directors are usually the main reason for the success or failure of a play. They work hard to make sure the acting, scenes, and script are the best they can be. They also have a main message they want to get across to the audience. The director of King Lear was Tim Crouch. He has the utmost respect for Shakespearean plays, and wanted to share his love for them by directing and editing King Lear. He wanted the audience to see the brilliance of Shakespeare and be able to relate to the craziness of the play by setting the time to Christmas, which is when families often deal with conflict, responsibility, and bad weather. Crouch also made the edit from the original script to have Kent actually become the Fool as his disguise. The Mystery of Edwin Drood was directed and conducted by A. Scott Parry. This musical was absolutely hilarious and actually included the audience in the outcome of the mystery. I think the main point was to make the audience laugh, which they did quite successfully. The fact that the cast went into the audience and actually counted everyone's vote for who was the murderer was important and I think made people feel more involved. This also showed everyone how well the cast was prepared, because they had to be ready to finish the production depending on a large number of different outcomes

## TECHNIQUES

**Dramatic devices** are techniques used in dramatic works by playwrights to make stories more interesting to audiences. They are a form of literary device. Dramatic devices are elements used by writers in plays or scripts to create drama, tension, and emotion. These can include the use of dialogue, stage directions, monologues, soliloquies, asides, flashbacks, foreshadowing, and more. They are crucial in conveying character emotions, advancing the plot, creating suspense, and enhancing the overall theatrical experience. We will explore the many different dramatic devices and we will look at some examples.

**Dramatic devices and techniques**

There is a multitude of devices and techniques used in dramatic writing. These terms can be used interchangeably, but for this article, we will call them **dramatic devices**. They are conventions that are used in drama to enhance the action on stage. This can be used for many effects, including realism, emphasis or contrast. They are essential tools in theatre. They serve as stand-ins for reality, enabling the audience to perceive the performance as authentic within its staged context.

**Dramatic techniques,** or dramatic methods, are specific strategies or methods used by playwrights and directors to tell stories on stage and create an emotional response. These techniques can involve elements of the script, like dialogue and characterisation, as well as theatrical components like lighting, sound, costuming, and set design. Effective use of these techniques can help to deepen audience engagement, create suspense, and bring a play's themes and characters to life. These techniques transmit information about characters or the plot that could not be conveyed by action alone.

**Dramatic methods** can also include how the themes and messages of a play are communicated through dialogue, action, symbolism, and metaphor.

**Types of dramatic device**
There is a multitude of conventions that can be used for different effects or purposes. Some types of dramatic devices include dramatic irony, soliloquy, aside, and paradox.

| Types of Dramatic Devices | |
|---|---|
| **Dramatic Device** | **Short Description** |
| Dialogue | The conversation between characters which can reveal their thoughts, feelings, motivations, and relationships. |
| Stage Directions | Instructions in the script that guide actors' movements and behavior, and inform set design, props, lighting, and sound. |
| Monologue | A long speech by a single character, often used to express their inner thoughts or feelings. |
| Soliloquy | Similar to a monologue, but it's a speech where a character talks to themselves or to the audience, revealing their innermost thoughts. |
| Aside | A remark by a character intended to be heard by the audience but not by other characters on stage. |
| Flashback | A scene that interrupts the present action to depict an event from the past. |
| Foreshadowing | The use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the plot. |
| Symbolism | The use of objects, actions, or characters to represent an idea or concept greater than themselves. |
| Irony | A situation where the outcome is the opposite of what was expected, often used to create dramatic tension. |

**Importance of dramatic devices**
Dramatic devices are of incredible importance: with the inclusion of these conventions and techniques, playwrights can incorporate additional complexities, depth and detail into their work, making it a more enjoyable experience for audiences. The major effect of all dramatic devices is to involve the audience, which makes the plot more immersive.

## PHYSICAL BALANCE

Theatrical performances use different processes, such as blocking and stage directions, as guidance for both actors and directors.

**Blocking**

The way actors' bodies help to tell the story is a direct result of a process called blocking. Used early in rehearsals, blocking is the planned physical motions of actors that aid the storyline, convey the subtext of the dialogue, and help to focus the audience's attention. It's a collaborative process between the director and the actors, that emphasizes what the characters might naturally do in any given situation. In major theatrical productions, every movement, or lack of movement, on stage originates with this planning process, including the proximity of the actors to other actors.

**Stage Directions**

The first step in blocking, which takes place long before the nuanced planning of expressions and positioning, is learning where to stand and where to move. This involves stage directions, or precise language about the parts of the stage and directional movements. Center stage is located in the middle of the stage, where the actors are centered in every direction and facing the audience. Actors are downstage when they're moving toward the audience and upstage when they're moving away from the audience. Stage left is when actors move left; this position is also know as house right because they're located to the audience's right. Conversely, stage right refers to moving toward the actor's right, or house left.

This approach helps to divide the stage into nine sections, like a tic-tac-toe board. Naturally, center stage is the middle section, and any movement toward the audience from center stage is down center, while movement away from the audience is up center. Stage left and stage right are horizontally level with center stage. Lastly, the corner sections are up right, down right, up left, and down left.

**Movement & Power**

Moving to and fro from different parts of a stage results in more powerful or less powerful movements. A movement that approaches the audience expresses power, while a movement away from the audience expresses weakness. Similarly, a horizontal motion towards the center of the stage expresses more power. Conversely, a horizontal motion away from the center expresses less power. Performers use their understanding of movements and power to add emphasis to strong statements or important plot actions. They can also express weakness or a low point in a character's experience. Given the strong or weak aspects of body language, it becomes clear how actors, even without dialogue, can tell an entire story through motion.

## THE DIRECTOR AND THE STAGE

The director has two basic responsibilities:

- o  to bring about a unified vision within the finished production, and
- o  to lead others toward its ultimate actualisation.

To meet these charges, the director must organize the realisation of his or her vision. The director must decide upon the interpretation to be given the play; work with the playwright (if possible), designers, and technicians in planning the production; cast and rehearse the actors; and coordinate all elements into the finished production.

To decide upon interpretation, the director must analyse the script to discover the play's structure and meanings. Without understanding, the director cannot make choices. He or she seeks to know what the play is about and to understand each character in terms of both the script and the demands that character places upon the actor. The director must be able to envision the play's atmosphere or mood and know how to actualise in terms of design and theatrical space. And, finally, the director must be able to see the play in terms of both physical and verbal action.

Before rehearsals begin, the director meets with the designers. At this time, the director not only gives his or her vision, but also listens to ideas. This highly creative intercourse results in a compromise which often is better than the original vision, for creative

ideas interact with other creative ideas. Ultimately however, the director decides upon the interpretation to be used. The director may have specific requirements that would need to be presented to the designers before their work begins. The director must be aware of actor movement when viewing a design. Also, the director must have an idea of what kind of lighting would help enhance the mood of the production.

When casting a play, the director is aware of the physical demands of a character. Physical appearance must fit the character and must also be seen in relation to other characters. The director also tries to discern acting potential.

Directors tend to follow an established process during rehearsals. Initially, the director usually has the actors read through the script. The read-through allows the director to discuss his or her vision, character motivation, and interpretation which will help the actors begin to see their characters in terms of a unified understanding. The director then blocks the actors. Blocking are an actor's basic broad movements which serve as the physical foundation of the actor's performance. The director indicates movement such as entrances and exits and positions actors onstage. Often, this step takes preplanning. During this stage, interpretation begins to be worked out, for blocking is linked to a character's motivation to move or position.

Also, eventually, the actors will need to be off script. Once off script and the lines are memorized well
enough that the actor is not thinking "What is my next line?" then the rehearsals enter into a very rewarding stage of development. For actors cease to read their part and truly make it living. They also discover new avenues of interpretation once off script. Late in the rehearsal process, the director often has the actors run through the production.
A run through gives the actors a sense of continuity from one scene to the next. At this stage, the director usually does not stop the actors but takes notes to give after the scene is finished.

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## COMPONENTS OF ACTING
## GESTURE

In the theatre performance, the theatricality of the gesture is amplified on stage as gestures segue into movements that both interrupt and propel the progression of dramatic actions. The actors produce a cacophony of gestural quotations from powerful characters on the international political stage.  Many *known* gestures are universally recognised as symbolising nervousness, frustration, excitement, etc. Others may simply be used by actors at different times in a performance that require a simple description when analysing them for drama/theatre studies.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A-okay (circle) | handshake | salute |
| arms folded | head down | Scout handsha |
| back of hand to forehead | head in hands | scratch |
| biting nails | head shake | sign |
| body shrug | head shrug | stiff |
| car horn sign | head tilt | stroking chin |
| chin in hands | high five | talk to the hand |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| clasping hands | hitchhiking thumb | tapping fingers |
| curtsy | legs crossed | thumbs down |
| finger clicking | loser (L) | thumbs up |
| finger gun | Nazi salute | touching nose |
| fist pump | nervous | two-finger salu |
| genuflect | nod | uncomfortable |
| gesticulate | one-finger salute | uneasy |
| glove handshake | patting hair | Vulcan salute |
| gripping hands | peace sign | wave |
| hand over mouth | pointing | wink |
| hands in pockets | raised fist | wooden |
| hands on hips | rubbing ear | |
| hands wide apart | rubbing hands | |

## VOICE

As one of the elements of drama, voice is critical to most performances. A drama without the use of voice is considered a movement piece or a mime. While some would place the voice in the category of a performer's expressive skills, it is nevertheless an element essential to nearly every drama. Vocal variety can be achieved via the use of projection, pitch, tone, rate (pace), emphasis, diction (articulation/enunciation), rhythm (beat), pause, intonation, tempo, subtext, and even silence.

While the dialog and music are the audible aspects of drama, the visual element deals with the scenes, costumes, and special effects used in it. The visual element of drama, also known as the spectacle, renders a visual appeal to the stage setup. The costumes and makeup must suit the characters. Besides, it is important for the scenes to be dramatic enough to hold the audiences to their seats. The special effects used in a play should accentuate the portion or character of the story that is being highlighted.

Apart from these elements, the structure of the story, a clever use of symbolism and contrast, and the overall stagecraft are some of the other important elements of drama.

## COSTUME

The costumes for a play are a very important part of the visual effect. In addition to the scenery, the costumes tell the audience a wealth of information about the characters who wear them. This stems from a particular social quality in Western civilization, and possibly the entire world. We often form opinions of others based on first impressions, and as a result, clothing is a significant part of that first impression – often even before seeing any facial details or hearing someone else speak. That's why we often hear the phrase, "The Clothes Make the Man."

**Costume Designer objectives**

As a designer, the Costumer is going to create a set of designs based on certain needs of the production. Under the guidance and consultation with the director, the costume designer will attempt to meet these basic objectives for the costumes in the show (these will each be discussed in more detail):

1. Help set tone & style

2. Indicate historical period & locale
3. Indicate nature of characters (status & personality)
4. Show relationships between characters
5. Create symbolic/nonhuman characters (when appropriate)
6. Meet the needs (movement) of the actors
7. Maintain consistency with the overall production

**Tone & Style**

The costumer will work to ensure that the costumes match the thematic elements of the play as determined by the director. For example, if the play is set in outer space, the costumes will reflect a futuristic style. In a tragedy, the costumer might help to set the tone of the play by using mostly serious and formal types of clothing with dark or neutral colors, but in a comedy, he or she might use humorous, mismatched, ill-fitting, brightly colored clothing.

**Time & Place**

The "when" and the "where" of the play, as determined by the director, is usually reflected in the costumer's designs as well. If the play has a historical setting, the costumes will be made to match the period elements of the play/production. This will be in terms of the location, since many locations have a particular style of clothing that fits that place. For example, a play set in the American Old West would likely have cowboy costumes.

It will also be in terms of the historical period that the play may represent, which helps the audience "place" the play in the appropriate time frame based on the kind of costumes being used. For example, a play set in ancient Rome might use togas, or a play set in the 1920s might have flapper dresses.

**Symbolic/Nonhuman characters**

Costume design can be very versatile. In fact, costumers can give an actor the ability to play almost anything, including non-human or symbolic characters. This usually refers to the idea of abstract characters. That is, characters who represent something or an idea that is not real, or not human. Some examples of these include the following:

1. Gods/Goddesses
2. Ghosts
3. Witches/wizards
4. Animals

**Elements of Costume Design**

Like the scenery designer, the costume designer is an artist, and several of the artist's elements come into play with the costume design. However, there are a couple of elements that are unique to the medium of costuming because the costumes are made of fabric instead of paint or other structural media. The costumer's artistic elements include the following:

- **Line, Shape, Silhouette** – similar to the scenic designer, the costume designer is concerned with the line of the garment, and the shape and silhouette of the garment closely parallel the ideas of Mass and Composition for the scenic designer.
- **Color** – color is also a consideration for the costume designer for many of the same reasons that it is important in scene design. Color, like music, can both influence and reflect our human feelings.
- **Fabric** – this is one of the unique considerations for the costumer. Since costume garments are usually made of fabric, the costume designer must be very familiar with

the qualities of the fabrics that may be appropriate to the time period of the style of the play and the characteristics that may reflect certain character traits or emphasize those traits in a character.

- **Accessories** – the costumer also takes charge of the accessories for a character's costume(s). This may include items such as handbags, jewelry, hats, gloves, belts, shoes, socks/stockings/tights. It can also mean character-related costume props – such as a cane, or badges, medals, or other sorts of character specific items that are worn on or with the costume to help denote the character for the audience.

## MAKE-UP

Theatrical makeup is the practice of painting, enhancing, or altering the face, hair, and body of the actor with cosmetics, plastic materials, and other substances; it is also the collective term for the materials used in making up. Actors have used makeup in the theatre for a long time, not only to look their best and to transform their appearance but also to ensure that they will be seen and recognized by the entire audience. How well an actor is seen depends upon the distance between the actor and the farthest spectator as well as the amount of available light. Distances blur the features and make recognition of the actors extremely difficult for the spectators.

It is impossible to say when the first actor daubed paint on his face in an attempt to make his performance more effective. Some maintain that Thespis, the first actor to step out of the chorus in Greek theatre in the 6th century BCE, smeared his face with white lead and red cinnabar. He may have done so, but the very large size of some of the Greek theatres (containing up to 15,000 spectators) made the use of the masks a more practical solution. Not only did masks enable the actor to play more than one role, but their larger-than-life size and exaggerated features also enabled the audience to identify the actor's role from a distance.

## MASK AND DIFFERENT STYLES IN ACTING AS AN ART FORM

Masks have been used almost universally to represent characters in theatrical performances. Theatrical performances are a visual literature of a transient, momentary kind. It is most impressive because it can be seen as a reality; it expends itself by its very revelation. The mask participates as a more enduring element, since its form is physical. The mask as a device for theatre first emerged in Western civilization from the religious practices of ancient Greece. In the worship of Dionysus, god of fecundity and the harvest, the communicants' attempt to impersonate the deity by donning goatskins and by imbibing wine eventually developed into the sophistication of masking. When a literature of worship appeared, a disguise, which consisted of a white linen mask hung over the face (a device supposedly initiated by Thespis, a 6th-century-BCE poet who is credited with originating tragedy), enabled the leaders of the ceremony to make the god manifest. Thus symbolically identified, the communicant was inspired to speak in the first person, thereby giving birth to the art of drama.

In Greece the progress from ritual to ritual-drama was continued in highly formalized theatrical representations. Masks used in these productions became elaborate headpieces made of leather or painted canvas and depicted an extensive variety of personalities, ages,

ranks, and occupations. Heavily coiffured and of a size to enlarge the actor's presence, the Greek mask seems to have been designed to throw the voice by means of a built-in megaphone device and, by exaggeration of the features, to make clear at a distance the precise nature of the character. Moreover, their use made it possible for the Greek actors—who were limited by convention to three speakers for each tragedy—to impersonate a number of different characters during the play simply by changing masks and costumes. Details from frescoes, mosaics, vase paintings, and fragments of stone sculpture that have survived to the present day provide most of what is known of the appearance of these ancient theatrical masks. The tendency of the early Greek and Roman artists to idealize their subjects throws doubt, however, upon the accuracy of these reproductions. In fact, some authorities maintain that the masks of the ancient theatre were crude affairs with little aesthetic appeal.

In the Middle Ages, masks were used in the mystery plays of the 12th to 16th century. In plays dramatizing portions of the Bible, grotesques of all sorts, such as devils, demons, dragons, and personifications of the seven deadly sins, were brought to stage life by the use of masks. Constructed of papier-mâché, the masks of the mystery plays were evidently marvels of ingenuity and craftsmanship, being made to articulate and to belch fire and smoke from hidden contrivances. But again, no reliable pictorial record has survived. Masks used in connection with present-day carnivals and Mardi Gras and those of folk demons and characters still used by central Europeans, such as the Perchten masks of Alpine Austria, are most likely the inheritors of the tradition of medieval masks.

The 15th-century Renaissance in Italy witnessed the rise of a theatrical phenomenon that spread rapidly to France, to Germany, and to England, where it maintained its popularity into the 18th century. Comedies improvised from scenarios based upon the domestic dramas of the ancient Roman comic playwrights Plautus (c. 254–184 BCE) and Terence (c. 195–c. 159 BCE) and upon situations drawn from anonymous ancient Roman mimes flourished under the title of commedia dell'arte. Adopting the Roman stock figures and situations to their own usages, the players of the commedia were usually masked. Sometimes the masking was grotesque and fanciful, but generally a heavy leather mask, full or half face, disguised the commedia player. Excellent pictorial records of both commedia costumes and masks exist; some sketches show the characters of Harlequin and Columbine wearing black masks covering merely the eyes, from which the later masquerade mask is certainly a development. Except for vestiges of the commedia in the form of puppet and marionette shows, the drama of masks all but disappeared in Western theatre during the 18th, 19th, and first half of the 20th centuries. In modern revivals of ancient Greek plays, masks have occasionally been employed

**Theatrical Conventions and Performance Styles**
**Performance Styles**
The way in which the plot is conveyed in a performance: sometimes to a particular philosophy of performance, sometimes to an historic period.
**Theatrical Conventions**
Things done on stage by the actors which contribute to an overall performance style

| Theatrical | Definition | Related Performance |
|---|---|---|

| Convention | | Style |
|---|---|---|
| Burle | Comic banter or verbal game playing; 'spin' to mock | Commedia dell'Arte, stand-up comedy, clowning |
| Burlesque | Any ludicrous take-off or debasing caricature, To burlesque …(a person) to create a mocking representation | Greek &, Roman Comedy, cabaret, farce, satire, Absurd theatre |
| Caricature | Exaggeration of character that is often ludicrous or grotesque, using voice, gesture and movement | Melodrama, Roman Comedy, Commedia dell'Arte, Story-telling, cartoons, Asian styles |
| Character transformation | The actor plays more than one role, shifting from one to another without going off stage. Transformation is made using expressive skills, characterization, use of props and costume. | Story-telling, Documentary Theatre, Realism. |
| Psycho/social characterization | Actor portrays an in-depth psychologically rounded character | Naturalism & Realism |
| Chorus | Use of a group in performance, to comment on the plot or action of a play, usually using heightened use of language, direct address, stylized and choreographed movement and tableau. | Greek Drama, Medieval Drama, Epic Theatre |
| Continuous time sequence | Dramatic structure follows a continuous time pattern, possibly using real time | Naturalism, Realism |
| Disjointed time sequence | Dramatic structure that does not unfold chronologically. Past, present and future events are performed in a non-sequential order. | Story-telling, Epic Theatre, Modern Realism |
| Direct address | The actor speaks directly to the audience, either as their character or as the actor stepping out of character. | Stand-up comedy, Epic Theatre (Brecht), circus, Realism, Greek Theatre |

| Dramatic metaphor | Heightened symbolic use of word, object or gesture beyond the literal meaning. | Greek theatre, physical theatre, Symbolist Theatre, Total Theatre, Epic theatre |
|---|---|---|
| Audience Endowment | The audience is constructed by the actor as a particular group of people, usually through direct address. E.g. audience as citizens of Vienna in *Measure for Measure* | Elizabethan Theatre, Greek Theatre, Epic Theatre, story- telling, Stand-up comedy, cabaret, clowning, realism |
| Documentary | Use of reported or researched fact to convey a particular set of views or ideas. | Cabaret, Epic Theatre, Realism. |
| Exaggerated Movement | Action that is deliberately overstated for a dramatic purpose, often for purposes of ridicule. | Clowning, Commedia Dell' Arte, Greek Theatre |
| Fourth Wall | Often called 'slice of life', a style dependent on the life-like representation of everyday life. No manipulation of time or space. Audience not recognized. | Naturalism and Realism |
| Heightened use of language | Poetic or exaggerated use of language. Includes choice of words whose syntax, alliteration and rhyming patterns lead to heightened delivery. | Greek theatre, Epic Theatre, various non- naturalistic |
| Heightened use of movement | Ritualized, dance-like movement sequences either individually or in a group, often using repetition, symbolic gesture | Physical Theatre, Greek Theatre, Medieval Theatre, Opera, Kabuki, Noh Drama, Asian performance styles, realism. |
| Implied character | Actor creates a sense of another person being present or addressed | Monologues, realism |
| Implied space | Actor creates a sense of a particular environment through voice and action | Monologues, Realism, Elizabethan Theatre, Story- telling, Epic theatre, Non- |

| Term | Description | Styles |
|---|---|---|
| | | Naturalistic styles |
| **Lazzo/ Lazzi (pl.)** | A short comic routine based in a single ludicrous idea, often using sight gags, or slapstick. | Commedia Dell' Arte, other comedy. |
| **Lyrical** | Use of verse, heightened song or movement, including the use of poetic imagery | Greek Drama, Musicals. Opera, Asian performance styles, Elizabethan Theatre |
| **Mask** | Use of false noses, half masks, or full masks, for purposes of caricature, stereo-type, abstraction, or ready identification with known characters. | Clowning, Greek drama, Commedia dell' Arte, Noh Drama, Kabuki, Other Asian performance styles |
| **Mime** | Unvoiced physical performance implying object and space | Realism and non-naturalistic |
| **Montage** | Juxtaposition of dramatic images or vignettes often presented in rapid succession uses: introduction of ideas summary of characters/events/actions. | Story-telling, visual theatre, epic theatre, other non- naturalistic styles. |
| **Narration** | Direct address where plot elements are conveyed | Story-telling, Epic Theatre, Stand-up, Realism |
| **Puppetry** | Use of objects or puppets as characters | Black Theatre, Visual Theatre, Shadow Puppetry, Bunraku (Japanese), Object Theatre, Asian styles |
| **Satire** | Use of sarcasm, irony and ridicule in denouncing, exposing or deriding vice, folly and abuse. | Cabaret, stand-up comedy, Farce, Clowning, Sitcoms |
| **Slapstick** | Comedy technique using physical humor, often stage violence | Clowning, Cabaret |
| **Stillness and Silence** | Absence of sound or movement to enhance dramatic effect | All styles |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Soliloquy** | Monologue addressed to self to argue an issue. Usually has a thesis/antithesis or argument structure | Elizabethan Theatre, especially Shakespeare |
| **Song** | Use of song to break up or comment upon a narrative or plot | Opera, Musicals, Epic Theatre, Music Hall, Cabaret |
| **Stereo-type** | Characterization that uses highly recognizable simplistic or clichéd character elements for dramatic purpose. | Melodrama, Commedia Dell' Arte, Agitprop, Sketch comedy. Cartoons, Cabaret |
| **Transformation of place** | The actor creates more than one place or setting without the use of scenery. This may be achieved using transformation of props or through use of expressive skills. | Story-telling |
| **Transformation of object** | A prop is used to represent more than one object | Story-telling and design styles which require minimal set. |
| **Use of symbol** | Minimalist focus on objects to represent ideas | Realism, & Non-naturalistic styles, Ritual Theatre |

## MANAGING TIME AND SPACE

**Time:**

Time in drama can be considered from a variety of angles. One can, for example, look at time as part of the play: How are references to time made in the characters' speech, the setting, stage directions, etc.? What is the overall time span of the story? On the other hand, time is also a crucial factor in the performance of a play: How long does the performance actually take? Needless to say that the audiences' perception of time can also vary. Another question one can ask in this context is: Which general concepts of time are expressed in and by a play?

**Succession and Simultaneity**

One of the first distinctions one can make is the one between **succession** and **simultaneity**. Events and actions can take place in one of two ways: either one after another (successively) or all at the same time (simultaneously). When these events are performed on stage, their presentation in scenes will inevitably be successive while they may well be simultaneous according to the internal time frame of the play.

Consider, for example, the plot of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Given the fact that the events happening in the play are supposed to take only three hours, one must presume that the various subplots presenting the different groups of people dispersed over the island must take place roughly at the same time: e.g., Caliban's encounter with Trinculo and Stephano in Act II, scene 1 and continued in III, 2 is likely to take place at the same time as Miranda's and Ferdinand's conversation in III, 1, etc. A sense of simultaneity is created here exactly because different plot-lines alternate without being presented separately in strings of immediately successive scenes. On the other hand, if no other indication of divergent time frames is given in the text, viewers normally automatically assume that the events and actions presented in subsequent scenes are also successive in their temporal order.

**Presentation of Temporal Frames**

There are a number of possibilities to create a **temporal frame** in drama. Allusions to time can be made in the characters' conversations; the exact time of a scene can be provided in the stage directions; or certain stage props like clocks and calendars or auditory devices such as church bells ringing in the background can give the audience a clue about what time it is. At the beginning of *Hamlet*, for example, when the guards see the ghost of Hamlet's father, the time is given in the guard's account of the same apparition during the previous night:

Last night of all,

When yond same star that's westward from the pole,

Had made his course t'illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one –

(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I, 1: 38-42)

While in this instance, the exact time is expressed verbally by one of the characters, the crowing of a cock offstage indicates the approaching daylight later in that scene and causes the apparition to disappear. In scene 4 of the same act, Hamlet himself is on guard in order to meet the ghost, and the scene begins with the following short exchange between Hamlet and Horatio:

HAM. The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold.

HOR. It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAM. What hour now?

HOR. I think it lacks of twelve.

(Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I, 4: 1-4)

This short dialogue not only conveys to the audience the time of night but it also uses **word painting t**o describe the weather conditions and the overall atmosphere ("air bites", "very cold", "nipping"). Word painting means that actors describe the scenery vividly and thus create or 'paint' a picture in the viewers' minds.

The third possibility of presenting time in the stage directions is used in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, for example. The introductory author commentary to each of the three acts in the secondary text gives very short instructions concerning the time of the subsequent scenes: "Early evening. April" (I, 1), "Two weeks later. Evening" (II,1), "The following evening" (II, 2), "Several months later. A Sunday evening" (III, 1), "It is a few minutes later" (III, 2). While a reading audience is thus fully informed about the timing of the scenes, theatre goers have to infer it from the context created through the characters' interactions. The temporal

gap between acts two and three, for example, has to be inferred from the fact that things have changed in Jimmy's and Alison's flat after Alison left, most noticeably that Helena has taken up Alison's place and is now the woman in the house.

**Space:**

Space is an important element in drama since the stage itself also represents a space where action is presented. One must of course not forget that types of stage have changed in the history of the theatre and that this has also influenced the way plays were performed. The analysis of places and settings in plays can help one get a better feel for characters and their behaviour but also for the overall atmosphere. Plays can differ significantly with regard to how space is presented and how much information about space is offered. While in George Bernard Shaw's plays the secondary text provides detailed spatio-temporal descriptions, one finds hardly anything in the way of secondary text in Shakespeare

The **stage set** quite literally 'sets the scene' for a play in that it already conveys a certain tone, e.g., one of desolation and poverty or mystery and secrecy. The fact that the description of the stage sets in the secondary text are sometimes very detailed and sometimes hardly worth mentioning is another crucial starting point for further analysis since that can tell us something about more general functions of settings.

Actual productions of a play frequently invent their own set, independent of the information provided in the text. Thus, a very detailed set with lots of stage props may simply be used to show off theatrical equipment. In **Victorian melodrama,** for example, even horses were brought on stage in order to make the 'show' more appealing but also to demonstrate a theatre's wealth and ability to provide expensive costumes, background paintings, etc.

A more detailed stage set also aims at creating an illusion of **realism,** i.e., the scene presented on stage is meant to be as true-to-life as possible and the audience is expected to succumb to that illusion. At the same time, a detailed set draws attention to problems of an individual's milieu, for example, or background in general. This was particularly important in **naturalist writing,** which was premised on the idea that a person's character and behaviour are largely determined by his or her social context.

By contrast, if detail is missing in the presentation of the setting, whether in the text or in production, that obviously also has a reason. Sometimes, plays do not employ detailed settings because they do not aim at presenting an individualised, personal background but a general scenario that could be placed anywhere and affect anyone. The stage set in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, for example, is really bare: "A country road. A tree." One can argue that this minimal set highlights the characters' uprootedness and underlines the play's focus on human existence in general.

# MODERN DRAMA

## CHARACTERISITIC FEATURES OF MODERN DRAMA

The drama written and performed in the 20th century is by any standards a major achievement. There has been much innovation and experiment and this has been related to the growth and crisis of civilization. The new movements in 20th century were influenced by liberty, equality and fraternity and the challenging attitude in Art and Life. There was an array of complex and confusing trends. This century witnessed the final culmination of the stage's commercialism and this was evident in the rise of the repertory playhouses and the associated movements (some of which we have already studied in Kinds of Drama). A new style of acting emerged: "less polished, less virtuoso, but stronger, more direct and individualistic, more related to behaviour outside the theatre" (Russell Brown: 1).

The characteristic features of drama in 20th century are:

1. New acting schools and theatres: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art; Abbey Theatre in Dublin (1903); Gaiety Theatre in Manchester (1907); People's Theatre at New Castle (1911); British Drama League founded by Geoffrey Whitworth (1919) and the establishment of Scottish Community Drama Association, to list a few.

2. Emergence of silent cinema which rapidly destroyed the tradition of theatre. In thirties came the sound films and then television.

3. Translations of foreign works proliferated and were at equal footing with English drama, in fact influenced it more.

4. The stage of this period was influenced and altered by historical, social, political, economic and scientific trends. The two wars, the economic depression, the technological advancements - from washing machines to nuclear bombs, from emergence of fractions of religious cults to man's conquest of space, all have led to diverse and manifold growth of human mind.

5. Emergence of new plays and new young dramatists with newer creative ideas and more imaginative presentations. Kitchen sink drama, neo-realist drama, drama of non-communication, absurd drama, comedy of menace, dark comedy, drama of cruelty, etc. evolved from the long tradition of stage and drama writing. To understand the new movement we must look beyond individual plays. The common ground was experimentation and innovation. The motives for writing plays and choice of subjects were different from the previous Elizabethan or Restoration drama. Conventional drama had accepted standards, formal rules and technical means in an acted performance. Development in conventions always exists as the audience is open-minded and therefore the dramatist may use any change in the performance of the play as there is a "latent willingness to accept them" (Williams. Raymond: 8).

The newer dramatist liked to be sensational, to surprise and shock; to be fantastic, and outrageous. Homosexuality, nymphomania, prostitution, abortion, violence, deaths, disfigurement and callow humour are all part of new drama. The writers choose popular, up-to-date, topical, obvious subjects. They use song, dance, soap-box oratory, pantomime and commercial techniques in their play adaptations.

A comparison with the Elizabethan theatre can help us understand the new drama better.

1. Marlowe, Jonson, Greene, Decker, Heywood, Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher all started writing for the theatre in their twenties. All of Jonson's best works were written by his mid thirties; Shakespeare started writing plays when he was twenty six and great tragedies like Hamlet were written by mid-thirties.

2. Elizabethans were sensational. Some of the title pages of printed editions proclaim " extreme cruelty", "lamentable tragedy", "odious death". "pitiful murder", "filthy best", etc. Plays dealt not only with violence, murder, grotesque deaths but also rape, sodomy, blasphemy, necrophilia sex.

3. The Elizabethans too were 'pop'.

4. The Elizabethans too worked in closest contact with theatre companies.

Modern theatre is a richly varied enterprise of realism on the one hand, and of numerous departures from it, on the other. Practical matters and commonplace interests stirred the creativity of the new dramatists. They not only accept their environment as a subject for study and improvement but derive from it a new, comparatively literal style and approach. Each dramatist brought a new and individual touch to the growth of theatre from the transitional age of twentieth century to the present times. There is a change in dramatic method. Each movement offered completion of the creative effort.

Drama in the world is no longer coexistent with theatre alone as the largest audience for drama is in cinema and on television. The liberating media and advanced technological inputs have released the drama from a closed form to a more open and wide frame work.

The twentieth century drama is "a record of difficulty and struggle … from Ibsen to Brecht, [it is] one of the great periods of dramatic history, a major creative achievement of our own civilization which gives us a continuing understanding, imagination and courage" (Williams Raymond: 401).

# EXPRESSIONISM AND DRAMATIC SYMBOLISM

Some major events that occurred from 1900 to 1950 that could affect Theatre are:- The Industrial Revolution, this caused urbanization and brought people to cities with a demand for entertainment. This caused theatre to become more popular. The technology needed for theatre was also more readily available now and would allow for more creativity with sets, lights, and sound.-World War I and World War II caused people to write more plays to cause a distraction from what was going on with the War. -During the Great depression, there was not a lot of funding for theatre however, movies became more popular and influenced fashion an da lot of other day to day activities.

## Symbolism:

Symbolism in theatre became popular from 1885 to 1910. Symbolism could be achieved by using lights, set, movement, costumes and colors. It could also be portrayed through the story as an allegory. Certain features could represent a specific idea. For example, a throne or the color purple would be a symbol for royalty and power.

## Important Playwrights and plays With symbolism

Maurice Maeterlinck ( )He was born in Ghent, Belgium in His most famous plays are Intruder and The Blind. The Blind is an allegory for life itself. It is about a group of blind people on an island who follow and trust a preist because they cannot see for themselves. This play seeks to show how people can blindly follow others in their lives.Vsevolod Emilievich Meyerhold ( )Was a member of the Moscow Arts Theatre. His plays included elements that would later be seen in Epic Theatre. Some of the elements his plays had were actors using biomechanics (physical theatre) and the house lights being left on.

## Writing Style and Dialogue

ExpressionismBasic Information-Started in Germany in 1912 and ended around 1921, expressionism was meant to focus on the development and human qualities of the protagonist. It started off as a response to realism and naturalism and would later influence Epic Theatre.- including juxtaposition of fantasy and reality, rapidly shifting scenes, and larger-than-life, dreamlike characters.Writing Style and Dialogue-The plays were divided into episodes based on the central idea. These scenes were short, static, and not casually linked like they were in realistic and naturalistic plays.- Speech would be disconnected from the movements and gestures of the actors and did not consist of many words or phrases (telegraphic speech)

## Expressionist Plays and playwrights

Georg KaiserErnst TollerWas born November 25, 1878 in Magdeburg Germany and was the leading playwright in the expressionist movement.Wrote From Morn to Midnight in 1912 and it was first performed in1917. From Morn to Midnight is often considered the best work of the German Expressionist movement. It is about a cashier who realizes the power of the money he handles and embezzles 60,000 marks to buy a painting for an Italian woman and leaves his family to go to the city, which ends up being a huge failure for him.From Morn To Midnight was turned into a movie in 1920, but it was not very popular because people could not widely relate to the story.Born on December 1st 1893 Samotschin, Germany and died on May 22nd New York City, New YorkWrote Man and the Masses in 1921, and The Machine Wreckers in Man and the Masses is aboutPlays w/ Expressionist Qualities Before

Expressionism- Spring Awakening by Frank Wedekind, written in 1891, first performed 1906A Dream Play by August Strindberg, written in 1901, first performed 1907

**Expressionist Structures**

- Lighting was often stark, illuminating key areas of the stage space and they would deliberately use shadows.- Stages were bare with few props( they were usually symbolic), and only settings essential to the play's theme were used. Sets were intentionally distorted and unusual shapes that were sharp and angular. it did not define a location (it was abstract)

**Futurism:**

Futurism originated in Italy at the beginning of the 20th century. This type of theatre has scenes that are only a few sentences long and are a big combination of nonsensical humor and different theatre techniques that we like to use so audiences can analyze them.Playwrights The first play that used futurism is Alfred Jerry's slapstick comedy (Ubu Roi). After he had done it, other playwrights like Marinetti jumped on the bandwagon to make it an artistic battle.

### STAGE DESIGN IN THE MODERN WORLD

Stage design in the present day provides the corporeal conceptual experience of an artist's ethos, and as modern touring advances, artists are able to incorporate highly technical and immersive stage designs which engross the audience in a multisensory artistic experience. Stufish Entertainment Architects, the leader in touring stage structures, is responsible for some of the most ambitious and groundbreaking stage designs in recent years incorporating architecture, sculpture, multi-media, and installation into their designs.

In addition to elaborate stage sets and subverting proscenium audience orientation, contemporary stage design aids in executing an artists conceptuality. Take, Beyonce's monumental Coachella performance. The concept: "Beyoncé's Homecoming" involved a bleacher style pyramid structure that filled the entire stage. A large cast of dancers on top of the structure created a kinetic backdrop of bodies throughout the spectacular show. A large inverted kinetic triangle of over 150 lights also hung above the stage. Before the show started, the triangle of light sat vertically in front of the stage, acting as a luminary curtain before rising and revealing the stage.

Inserting herself into a long grand tradition of paying homage to the culture of historically black colleges and universities, the set closely resembled the bleachers of a university stadium and the performance called to mind many of the traditions of HBCU "step" performances. An overtly African American centric performance, Beyonce in positioning a spectatorial setting as the stage design itself, succeeded in effectively mirroring both the audience and the abstract conception of contemporary American culture back to itself by mirroring the spectator back to themselves.

Contemporary stage design has pushed the limits of classical theatrical staging conventions. This effectively allows artists to manifest their artistic ethos' and political messages through various means. Multimedia, elaborate set design, and unconventional spectatorial relationships become an integral part of the world of the artist. Through the help

of architectural firms like Stufish, their concepts become immersive experiences which enrich their performances indelibly.

## LIGHTING IN THE MODERN WORLD

Before the invention of the electric light bulb in 1879, theatres used either gas or carbon arc lamps. Both gas and carbon arc lamps were prone to fires. Numerous theatres had switched to the carbon arc lamp during the 1840s, but since the concept of the arc lamp is to send voltage through the open air, there was still a high chance of fire. The Savoy in London was the first public building to operate completely on electricity. In 1882, a year after the Savoy opened, the Munich Exposition displayed an electrified theatre, marking the beginning of a general change-over to electricity-lit theatres. Existing theatres that already had gas lines repurposed them by threading wires through the old gas lines and inserting a row of light bulbs in front of the gas jets.

Unfortunately, electricity had quite a few drawbacks. The set designers or scenographers (combination set designer/costume designer) did not adapt to the new medium, creating sets that were unsuited to electric light placement. A second drawback was that electricity itself was very dangerous and electricians were hard to find. It might not be as dangerous as gas, but there was still the chance of fire. The front boards, also known as control panels (see above), were live, with handles that could be in an 'on' or 'off' position. The 'on' position did not have protection of any sort, and if the operator was not careful, he or she could die. In the photo to the left, technology had advanced enough for fuses. The third drawback to electricity was that it required a lot of power. Theatres often had to own the generators powering their theatres.

Gordon Craig, a British actor, director,producer, and scenic designer made invaluable contributions to lighting. Instead of putting most of his lights at the foot of the stage (known as footlights or floaters), he hung lighting instruments above the stage. He, along with Adolphe Appia of Switzerland, also realized the dramatic potential of lighting, playing with color and form. Appia also established the first goals of stage lighting in his books: *La Mise en scène du drame Wagnérien* or *The Staging of the Wagnerian Drama* and *L'Oeuvre d'art vivant* (1921) or *The Living Work of Art*. (Adolphe) (1895)

An American named Jean Rosenthal created the post of 'lighting designer' within the theatre world. Before her career in the 1950s, either the master electrician or the set designer would light the play. After her integral designs with the Martha Graham Dance Company and on Broadway, the position of Lighting Designer was added to the production staff. Many designers today credit her with specific lighting techniques and lovingly refer to her as the Mother of Stage Lighting.

## WORD VERSUS SPECTACLES

Spectacle: This refers to the visual elements of a play: sets, costumes, special effects, etc. Spectacle is everything that the audience sees as they watch the play. **Spectacle** is one of the six components of tragedy, occupying the category of the mode of imitation. Spectacle includes all aspects of the tragedy that contribute to its sensory effects: costumes, scenery, the gestures of the actors, the sound of the music and the resonance of the actors' voices.

Aristotle ranks spectacle last in importance among the other components of tragedy, remarking that a tragedy does not need to be performed to have its impact on the audience, as it can be read as a text.

Historically, the spectacle was one of the obligatory elements of drama outlined by the Greek philosopher Aristotle in *The Poetics*. Aristotle referred to spectacle elements as costumes, scenery, actor gestures, and the sensory effects of the resonance of the performer's voice (sound).

In a contemporary context, spectacle refers to all the visual elements of a play – those incorporating theatre stagecraft and production areas. These can include stage sets, lighting, costumes, props, make-up, special effects, and multimedia. Spectacle in contemporary theatre is probably more important today than it was centuries ago due to the advent of technology and its integration into all levels of the theatre.

**Language in Drama**

The word choices made by the playwright and the enunciation of the actors of the language. The dialogues are the lines that the characters speak and often represent their feelings and emotions.

Language and dialogues delivered by the characters move the plot and action along, provides exposition, and defines the distinct characters. Each playwright can create their own specific style in relationship to language choices they use in establishing character and dialogue.

Monologues and soliloquies help are speeches that incorporate information difficult to be extracted through dialogues. Example: "**To be, or not to be**", a soliloquy from Hamlet.

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