

Important questions and answers on the course « Théâtre Anglophone »

What is Drama ?

Drama refers to a form of literature that is intended to be performed on stage by actors in front of an audience. It can also refer to the genre of plays and the study of the dramatic arts.

Drama often involves a **story or plot**, with characters who have conflicting goals or interests. Through **dialogue and action**, these characters face challenges and obstacles that drive the plot forward and create tension and conflict. **Drama** can be serious or comedic, and may explore a range of themes and subjects, from love and betrayal to social issues and political commentary.

In addition to live theater performances, drama can also be expressed through other mediums such as television, film, and radio. It is **a powerful form of artistic expression that has the ability to evoke strong emotions and spark important conversations about the human experience.**

Why Drama is said to be an active and an immediate art ?

Drama is often described as an **active and immediate art form** because it involves **live performance and immediate feedback from the audience.** Unlike other forms of art, such as literature or painting, drama **is not static and unchanging.** It is a dynamic art form that is constantly evolving and adapting to the moment.

In live theater, the actors perform in front of a live audience, and the audience is an integral part of the performance. **The audience's reactions, whether it be laughter, tears, applause, or gasps, can influence the actors' performances and the overall energy of the production.** This creates an immediate connection between the performers and the audience, making it an **active and dynamic art form.**

Drama is also **immediate** in the sense that it takes place in real time. **The actors** are performing in the present moment, and the audience is experiencing the story unfolding in front of them in real time. This **immediacy** can make drama a **powerful and engaging art form** that can capture the attention and emotions of the audience in a way that other art forms cannot.

Overall, drama is an **active and immediate** art form that relies on **the live performance and interaction between performers and audience to create a powerful and engaging experience.**

The Origin of Drama in African Context ?

Drama has a **long history in African cultures and traditions**, with roots that can be traced back to **ancient times.** In many African societies, drama was an important part of religious ceremonies, festivals, and social gatherings.

One of **the earliest forms of African drama** was **ritual drama, which was performed in the context of religious ceremonies and initiations.** These performances often involved **masks, dance, music, and storytelling, and were intended to honor the spirits and ancestors, as well as to impart important cultural and moral values to the community.**

In addition to ritual drama, there were also many other forms of drama in African cultures, including epic poetry, praise singing, and oral storytelling. These forms of drama were used to celebrate

heroes, warriors, and important figures in the community, and often involved music, dance, and elaborate costumes and props.

With the arrival of European colonizers in Africa, traditional forms of African drama were often suppressed or marginalized, and many African playwrights and performers began to adopt Western theatrical forms and styles. However, in recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in traditional African drama, and many contemporary African playwrights and performers are exploring new ways to incorporate traditional forms and themes into modern theater.

What is Modern Drama or Art Drama ?

Modern drama, also known as art drama, refers to a **genre of theater that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, marked by a departure from traditional forms and subject matter.**

Modern drama is **characterized** by a **focus on psychological realism, the exploration of complex social issues, and experimentation with form and style.**

One of the defining features of modern drama is its **emphasis on the inner lives of characters and the exploration of their psychological and emotional states.** Modern playwrights often **portrayed characters in a realistic and nuanced way, exposing their flaws, doubts, and contradictions, and reflecting the complex social and psychological realities of the modern world.**

In addition to its psychological realism, modern drama was also marked by its **willingness to explore controversial and taboo subjects, such as sexuality, mental illness, and social inequality.** **Modern playwrights** often used their work to critique **social norms and institutions, and to challenge audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about themselves and their society.**

Another important aspect of modern drama was its experimentation with form and style. **Playwrights** such as **Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and Eugene O'Neill** were known for **pushing the boundaries of traditional theatrical conventions, using techniques such as non-linear narrative, minimalism, and absurdist humor to challenge and subvert audience expectations.**

Overall, modern drama is characterized by **its commitment to psychological realism, social critique, and formal experimentation, and has had a profound influence on the development of theater and performance art in the 20th and 21st centuries.**

How to read and analyse a play in Drama ?

Reading and analyzing a play in drama can be an **exciting** and **rewarding experience.** Here are **some steps** to help you **read and analyze** a play effectively :

Read the play multiple times : Start by reading the **play from beginning to end to get a general sense of the plot and characters.** Then, read it again, **this time paying closer attention to the dialogue, stage directions, and character motivations.**

Identify the characters : Take note of **the characters and their relationships with each other.** Pay attention to how they **interact and how their actions and words shape the plot.**

Analyze the plot : Identify the **exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of the play.** Look for **plot twists, conflicts, and character arcs.**

Identify the themes : Look for the **underlying themes of the play**, such as **love, revenge, power, or justice.** Think about **what the author is trying to say about these themes.**

Analyze the language : Pay close attention to the *language used in the play*. Look for *literary devices* such as *metaphor, simile, and symbolism*. Consider the *tone* and *mood* of the play and *how* they are created through language.

Consider the historical context : Think about the *time period* in which the play was written and *how* it may *have influenced* the *author's writing*. Look for *historical events or social issues* that may be *referenced* in the *play*.

Analyze the performance : Consider how the play would be performed on stage. Think about *the staging, lighting, costumes, and music* that would be used to bring the play to life.

Interpret the play : Finally, draw conclusions about the play based on your analysis. *What is the author trying to say ? What message is being conveyed ? What impact does the play have on the audience ?*

By following these steps, you can develop a deeper understanding of a play and appreciate the nuances of the writing, characters, and themes

Types of Drama ?

Drama is a *diverse art form* that *encompasses* many different *types of plays*, each with its own *unique characteristics and style*. Here are some of the main types of drama :

Tragedy : Tragedy is a type of drama that explores serious and often somber themes, such as death, loss, and the struggle to overcome adversity. It typically features a hero who faces a tragic flaw or a disastrous event that leads to their downfall.

Comedy : Comedy is a type of drama that is intended to be funny and entertaining. It often features exaggerated characters and situations, and may include witty dialogue, puns, and slapstick humor.

Farce : Farce is a type of comedy that emphasizes physical humor, mistaken identities, and absurd situations. It often involves exaggerated characters and may be quite silly and nonsensical.

Melodrama : Melodrama is a type of drama that emphasizes strong emotions and sensationalism. It often features exaggerated characters and situations, and may include music, elaborate sets, and dramatic lighting.

Musical : A musical is a type of drama that incorporates songs and dance numbers into the story. It can be comedic or serious, and may feature original or adapted music.

Absurdist : Absurdist drama is a type of drama that emphasizes the meaningless and chaotic nature of life. It often features bizarre and surreal situations, and may use nonsense dialogue and non-linear storytelling.

Historical drama : Historical drama is a type of drama that is set in a specific historical period. It may incorporate real events and figures, and often explores themes of power, politics, and social change.

By understanding these different types of drama, you can better appreciate the diversity and richness of the theatrical form.

Elements of Drama ?

Drama is a *form of literature that is meant to be performed*. It *involves a collaboration* between *the playwright, actors, and audience to create a compelling story*. Here are some of the *key elements of drama* :

Plot : This refers to the sequence of events that make up the story. It includes *the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.*

Characters : Characters are the people who inhabit the world of the play. They may have different personalities, motivations, and relationships with each other.

Theme : This refers to the underlying message or idea that the playwright is trying to convey through the play.

Dialogue : Dialogue is the spoken words of the characters. It is used to reveal their *thoughts, feelings, and motivations.*

Setting : The setting is the time and place where the play takes place. It can be *realistic or abstract, and it can include multiple locations or be confined to a single space.*

Stage directions : These are instructions provided by the playwright to guide the performance of the play. They may include information about the *characters' movements, the use of props, and the lighting and sound effects.*

Conflict : Conflict is a key element of drama. It can be internal or external and may involve the *characters' struggles against each other, society, or themselves.*

Spectacle : This refers to the visual and auditory elements of the play, such as *costumes, lighting, sound effects, and stage design.*

By understanding these elements of drama, you can better appreciate and analyze the ways in which they are used to create a powerful theatrical experience.

Dramatic Devices ?

Dramatic devices are techniques that playwrights and directors use to create a more engaging and impactful theatrical experience for the audience. Here are some of the most common **dramatic devices** :

Soliloquy : A soliloquy is a monologue in which a character speaks their thoughts aloud, usually when they are alone on stage. This can provide insight into the character's motivations and inner conflicts.

Aside : An aside is a brief comment made by a character to the audience, which is not heard by the other characters on stage. It can provide humor or provide insight into the character's thoughts or feelings.

Dramatic irony : Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something that the characters do not. This can create tension and suspense, as the audience waits for the characters to discover the truth.

Foreshadowing : Foreshadowing is a technique in which the playwright hints at future events in the play. This can create suspense and anticipation in the audience.

Symbolism : Symbolism is the use of objects or images to represent abstract ideas or themes. This can add depth and meaning to the play.

Motif : A motif is a recurring element in a play, such as an image, word, or phrase. This can create a sense of unity and coherence in the play.

Stage directions : Stage directions are instructions provided by the playwright that guide the performance of the play. They may include information about the characters' movements, the use of props, and the lighting and sound effects.

Flashback : A flashback is a scene that interrupts the present action of the play and takes the audience back in time. It can provide important background information or reveal key events that have occurred offstage.

Monologue : A monologue is a long speech delivered by a character to other characters on stage. It can be used to reveal the character's thoughts and emotions, or to advance the plot.

Repetition : Repetition is the repeating of a word, phrase, or action for emphasis. It can create a sense of urgency or importance in the audience.

Contrast : Contrast is the use of opposing elements, such as light and dark, good and evil, or comedy and tragedy, to create tension and interest in the play.

Irony : Irony is the use of language that means something different or opposite to its literal meaning. It can create humor or add depth and complexity to the play.

Juxtaposition : Juxtaposition is the placement of two contrasting elements side by side to create a contrast or comparison. It can create a sense of tension or highlight a particular theme or idea.

Prologue/Epilogue : A prologue is an introduction to the play, usually spoken by a character who is not part of the main action. An epilogue is a concluding section, often spoken by a character after the main action has ended. Both can provide context or commentary on the play.

By using these dramatic devices, playwrights and directors can create a more engaging and impactful theatrical experience for the audience.

Difference that lies between Mime and pantomime ?

Mime and pantomime are two forms of *physical theatre* in which performers use *gestures, facial expressions, and body language* to tell a story or convey an emotion, without the use of words or props.

Mime is a performance art in which performers use exaggerated gestures and facial expressions to tell a story or convey an emotion. Mime often involves the use of imaginary props and the creation of invisible objects or scenery. Mime artists may also incorporate dance or acrobatics into their performances.

Pantomime, on the other hand, is a type of theatrical performance that originated in England in the 18th century. It is a form of comedy that uses exaggerated physical gestures and facial expressions to tell a story or convey an emotion. Pantomime often involves the use of music and dance, and may also feature audience participation.

Both **mime and pantomime** rely heavily on physical expression and gesture to communicate their messages. They are often used in theatre, dance, and other performance arts to convey complex emotions or ideas without the use of words.

Comment on the significance of the madman scene in the play « harvest of corruption » by Frank Ogunode Ogbeche.

The madman scene in Frank Ogodo Ogbeche's play « Harvest of Corruption » is a *significant moment* in the play as *it serves to expose the corrupt and decadent state of the society depicted in the play*. In the scene, *the character of the madman confronts the corrupt characters in the play*, including *Chief Ade Haladu-Amaka*, and reveals their *immoral and unethical actions*.

The madman's rantings and ravings are symbolic of the madness and chaos that pervades the society in the play. He speaks the truth that others are afraid to speak, and his words act as a catalyst for change in the play. He exposes the hypocrisy of the corrupt officials and their disregard for the suffering of the common people.

The scene is also significant in that it *highlights* the *role of the individual in fighting against corruption and social injustice*. The madman is a lone voice in the wilderness, but his words inspire others to take action against corruption and fight for a better society. The scene also serves to underscore the importance of speaking out against wrongdoing and the power of collective action in effecting change.

Overall, the madman scene in « *Harvest of Corruption* » is a powerful moment in the play that serves to expose the corruption and decay of society, and to inspire hope for a better future.

By E-learning.

Contact : +228 79-83-62-19