

Freytag's Technique of the drama - an exposition of dramatic composition and art

Blomington - Gustav Freytag (1816)



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Technique Of The Drama: An Exposition Of Dramatic Composition And Art by Freytag, Gustav by Freytag, Gustav

The capability of producing dramatic effects is not accorded to the human race in every period of its existence. To the historian, the event itself, with its significance for the human mind, seems of most importance.

Gustav Freytag

In Love and Intrigue, therefore, Ferdinand and Louise are pushed forward by the intriguers; and only from the scene between Ferdinand and the president, after the tragic force enters, Ferdinand assumes the direction till the end. The climax follows this: Chief scene, the composition of the letter.

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It has the highest significance only in those pieces in which the hero, through his own mental processes, impels the ascending action; in those dramas which rise by means of the counter-play, it does not indicate an important place, where this play has attained the mastery of the chief hero, and misleads him in the direction of the fall. Now these occurrences which the historian reports, are very numerous. During the first acts, in general, a light and brief treatment may be made possible; and here sometimes the heavy exaction is laid on the poet, perhaps even to moderate a great effect; but the last acts from the climax on, require the summoning of all his resources.

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The hearer keenly feels the speech of Antony to be a result of the wrong which the conspirators have done Caesar; through the relation of Antony to Caesar, and his behavior in the previous dialogue scene with the conspirators, the speech is conceived as the necessary consequence of the sparing of Antony, and the senseless and over-hasty confidence which the murderers place in him. For the gradual increase of these effects, it will be useful to insert, just before the catastrophe, a finished scene which either. Therefore, in answer to the question, how the poet must compose his action so that it may be tragic in this sense, the advice, meant in all seriousness, is given that he need trouble himself very little about it.

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