

**University of Anbar / College of Arts / Department of English**

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**Subject: Introduction to Literature / First class**

## **Drama**

In the everyday use of the word drama, the element of conflict is often given prominence. This particularly emerges from the way it is seen in the mass media. The dramatic is any situation which creates a sense of the unexpected or the abnormal. At other times, the dramatic is limited to that which involves action in the sense of demonstration. For instance, a teacher may be said to be dramatic if he injects life into his teaching by acting out situations and experiences that he is describing.

For our purpose, a broader and more universal understanding of the dramatic is needed. For a start, you should recognize the fact that drama involves some components which no informed examination can overlook. These components are ACTION, DIALOGUE and CONFLICT.

Drama brings all these together to make a meaningful whole. We shall take a closer look at these aspects of drama in a moment. However, we must immediately admit that the ultimate experience of drama is the presentation on stage before an audience. This implies that it has a message to communicate and has some relevance to human experience. This is probably why the concept of MIMESIS or imitation is often emphasized in relation to drama. To say that drama is MIMETIC implies that it is imitative of reality. The mimetic impulse of drama is one feature that makes it appeal to people. In other words, it is the quality that makes it relevant. Let us for a moment consider the components of drama that we earlier identified.

## **Action**

This is what keeps the plot of a play moving. The play emerges from the enactment of actions before an audience. Acting generally generates other actions. Conflict evolves in the process until there is a climax under which the plot is finally terminated through the resolution or denouncement.

**Character**

Drama is impossible without people. People who are allotted roles in a play are called characters. Character is an important component of drama as is Dialogue.

**DIALOGUE.**

The verbal exchanges among characters in a play help to realize the intention of a playwright. Just as a novelist narrates his story, the playwright depends on the interaction of characters to expand his ideas.

Characters are made to speak in such a way that the situations desired by the writer will be created. Even though the writer often supplies relevant background information, the characters always play out the writer's intentions in their action and verbal exchanges - with the exception of MIME that does not use dialogue, most forms of drama depend largely on dialogue. At times, some characters also embark on an extensive revelation of their minds to the audience; such bursts are called soliloquies. It is normal that characters be assigned the language that is appropriate to their social status in the drama.

**Conflict**

Conflict is another aspect of drama you will need to recognize. It naturally grows out of interaction of the characters. It is a product of the contending forces in a drama. The conflicting actions and tendencies manifest when the play reaches the climax. The conflict is eventually resolved at the end and is known as DENOUEMENT.

**A- Elements of Drama**

Dramatic literature, you will soon discover, is very rich. Your enjoyment of it will be determined by your ability to recognize some of its components. In this section of the unit, we shall endeavor to take a look at some of them. If a few of the concepts examined in the previous chapter are discussed once again, it is because they are so important that we must keep on referring to them.

**Plot**

The plot refers to the story that a play tells. Normally, the events are arranged sequentially. This does not happen all the time. Some of the plays distort the sequence of events. What you do is to reconstruct the play. The fact that the plot of a play is not sequential or chronological does not necessarily suggest that you will have any difficulty understanding it.

**Setting**

Setting generally refers to the location of a literary work. The setting is a reference to the placement of a work in both time and place. The locale or environment in which a play is set will determine a lot about it. The setting is often related to the focus or concern of the play.

**Theme**

Each play makes a statement about the social world. This may emerge from an exploration of the entire play. The theme is the central message of a play. It is however possible to have sub-themes along with major dramatists who seek to make statements that have universal validity in their works. Generally, plays that treat common human problems make statements that have timeless relevance and consequently have more appeal as they speak to people of all ages and at all places.

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