

**Elements of Literature and Creative Communication**  
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**Lecture - 47**  
**Introduction to Drama (Contd.)**

Hi there, welcome to our ongoing discussion on drama, play, theatre, and all that. In fact, ideally, I should have asked you this question in the last class itself: Have you watched any play being performed on stage? Have you done that, you will know this is a different experience than of course, watching a movie.

So, there are very many well-known theatres for instance you have Prithvi theatre, National performing Arts theatre in Bombay, you have Minerva theatre or Star theatre in Kolkata, you have wonderful stages in Delhi itself. In fact, if acting is what you want to learn, or if you want to learn something related to stagecraft and all this you have National School of Drama in Delhi. And when it comes to Mysore you have Rangayana and it has different stages there. Kala Mandir. So, these are the places right. So, in the last class, we were discussing drama and how it offers a radically different sensibility to the audience, the sensibility that is quite distinct from the sensibility we get when we read fiction, or when we read a poem and all that. And we also learned that drama is basically a composite genre of literature.

And you make use of very many other elements in order for a dramatic production to happen. We realize how drama as a distinct genre has to depend upon directors, actors, stage, theatre, various stage props, and all of it that is why we said it is a composite art. And when we say composite art it offers a collective writing experience because behind the making of a drama you need many people and when it comes to reading too.

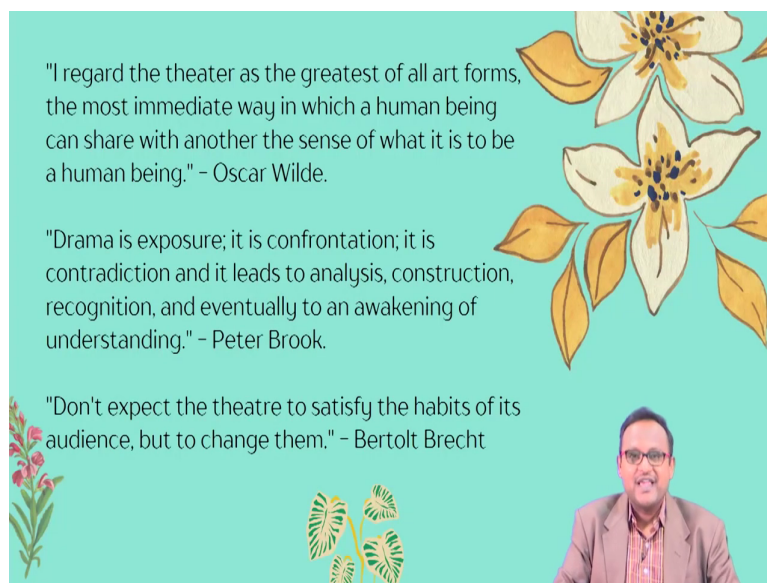
Because when you decipher a drama it is generally in a collectivistic mode because you do not generally read a play. Because a play is meant to be enacted, therefore, as an audience imagine 10000 of you or a couple of thousands of you sitting together and decoding. What this theatrical performance is trying to convey powerful experience. In fact, in the best sense of the term drama is it is a communal experience.

In fact, generally, it is acquired a very pejorative meaning these days right especially in the political context. But communal means anything that involves a shared experience. In fact,

communication itself has this root meaning. In fact, if you can recall communication comes from the root word communis, which means to share. And all the words related to that. So, communal means to share, communication to share whatever you feel, and communion when you say communion with God or something like that it has a shared experience.

Therefore in the best sense of the term drama is communal, it is communal well not in the negative sense please recall that. So, in this class let us explore some more components of drama, let us dig a little deeper.

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Now, here is some interesting I have compiled some brilliant quotes by well-known playwrights and dramatists, and theatre directors. And let us see what they have got to say about play or drama or theatre. The first one is by Oscar Wilde, a very well-known. He is the playwright of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, you must have heard of it.

I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms. The most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it means to be a human being. Just now I said drama is a communal experience probably this is what Oscar Wilde means.

When he says it that you share you and you just do not merely share it and you construct the meaning of what it means to be human. You share the meaning of what it means to be human and you also construct and redefine and re-craft what it means to be human. Because the

stage provides you that opportunity, the spectacle provides you that opportunity, your fellow audience provides you that kind of an opportunity a remarkable experience, a delight.

And Peter Brook, of course, is a renowned director, of course, he is a very remarkable director who has even directed the Mahabharata and all that. Drama is exposure, it is confrontation, it is a contradiction and it leads to analysis, construction, and recognition which later eventually leads to an awakening of an understanding. Now, look at this because understanding is not an ordinary thing.

You and I may keep using it in a very quotidian way, but understanding is a blooming of a new sensibility in us. It is an awakening of a new cognitive potential, understanding is an extraordinary thing and understanding is at the core of human evolution right it is at the core of evolution therefore, please do not underestimate the quality of understanding.

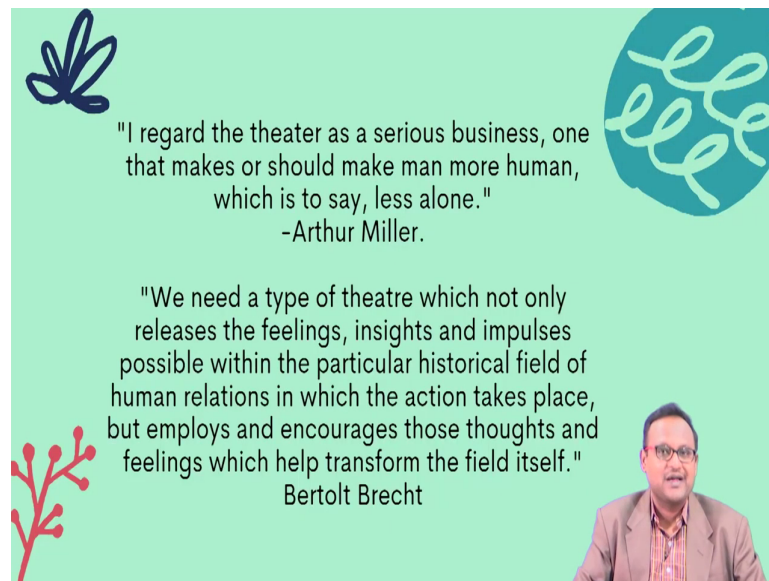
And then you have Bertolt Brecht again a thespian in many respects and a remarkable playwright Bertolt Brecht and who redefined the very concept of theatre who redefined the concept of drama in very many ways. Of course, we are going to devote some more time to discussing Bertolt Brecht's contribution to theatre. His dramas do not expect the theatre to satisfy the habits of its audience, but to change them of course.

Brecht believed in the transformative abilities of the stage for him the stage or theatre was not a place where people come and have fun, of course, that is there. But it does not end there. In fact, from there, in fact, he always used his place to bring in radical social transformations even in his play Galileo he ridicules the monopolies of religion. And in fact, he lampoons the administration and he makes you realize the plight of one true scientist who is in search of some truth.

So, whether it is in the field of science, whether it is in the field of arts, or whatever it is the plight of an individual when pitted against society and especially when that individual is right and the society is wrong, but the society thinks it the other way around now what happens it.

So, he believed that theatre can bring this kind of radical transformation in the consciousness in layers of consciousness that we have. So, that is why he says basically it is meant to change when we say change, of course, to change for the better.

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I have another very interesting quote by Bertolt Brecht; he says it is when somebody asks him, “What is his dream theatre? What is this concept of dream theatre?” He says we need a type of theatre that not only releases the feelings, insights, and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which of course, the action takes all of them there.

Because when you watch a play what happens? It releases feelings insights impulses you get to meet all of them. So, that is a given in any play that happens, but along with that it also employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself. Here is the field what is this field is he talking of stage? Is he talking of theatre? He is talking of the field of human relationships, he is talking of a field called society.

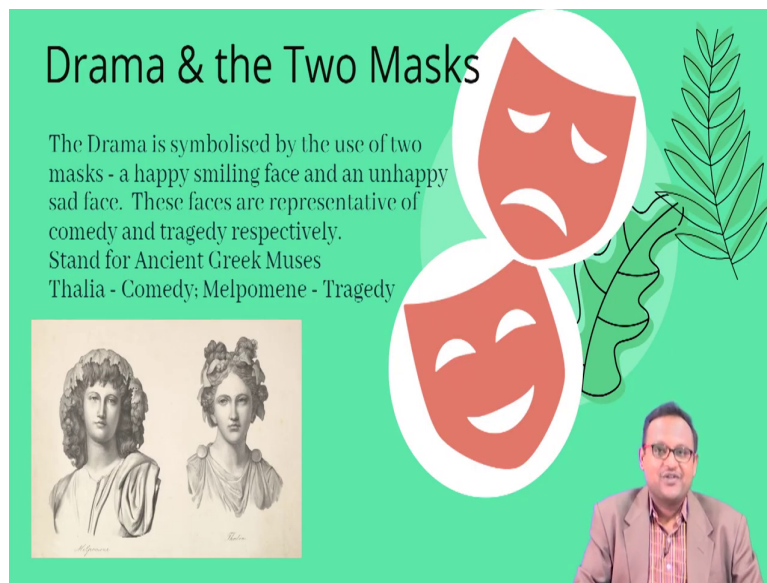
So, it not only helps us see these feelings insights, and impulses, but should help us transform the way we equate with society in positive ways. You have, Arthur Miller a well-known American playwright. *Death of a Salesman* is one of his very well-read plays and was also performed several times on several stages.

In fact, if you have time please read it; talks of the perils of modern society using a salesman as a protagonist Arthur Miller. I regard the theatre as a serious business one that makes or if it does not make, it should make a man. When he says by man is a human being more human which is to say less. Because of course, he explores in his place the modern predicament of loneliness.



And how society in it is greed to maximize it is profits is pushing human beings, especially human beings to the brink of despair and all that. So, therefore, he says that the theatre should make us a little more human more I mean it should make human beings more humane something like this. These are some extraordinary insights that delineate the nature. And scope possibilities and the vision in which the theatre, should move forward, something like this.

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Yeah, this is very important ideally we should have discussed it a bit earlier. But nevertheless of course, we get to see this. Now when we say drama; if there is one picture that comes to our mind probably these are the two masks.

Of course, there are a lot of variations in these masks, but essentially the two masks that you get to see here; one obviously, you can make out it is slightly sad face; it is a sad mask. And the other one is a happy mask. Why mask? Why not face? Face: see the moment you give it a face, it becomes fixed whereas, a mask is fluid.

Because anybody who wears the masks acquire the shape and characteristic trait of the mask, therefore, masks are more fluid and more dynamic than faces. So, these masks stand for or represent the very concept of drama itself and they have their origins in the ancient Greek Drama. In fact, ancient Greece excelled in the production of dramatic arts. You have the first play being performed, I mean the official records show that may be as back as 5th century BC the first play was performed on stage, especially in a very grand way. So, imagine before that

it must have many things more like that; it must have or its origins much earlier than that. So, these faces stand for comedy and tragedy respectively and you have two Greek Goddesses Muses that stand for it, one is Thalia she is the Greek Muse of comedy. You have Melpomene the other is Melpomene, she is the Greek Muse for tragedy.

So, these two goddesses are symbolized through these two masks which is why the moment you say drama these two masks come to our mind, these are common things. They symbolize the two essential facets of drama: comedy and tragedy.

Everything that happens is an in-between. One it is like two ends of the spectrum, the rest of the types come somewhere in between. So, these two masks represent the two ends of the spectrum.

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Now, having discussed various stage conventions, various types of stages, and of course, different types of drama and all of them. Now let us see what are the various elements of drama and theatre by extension various elements of drama and theatre. Please remember the elements of literature that we have already studied hold good here as well.

Because drama at the end of the day is a form of literature, therefore, the various elements remember we discussed, especially during our discussion of fiction we said characters, plot, story, theme, all of them. So, all of them come here to maybe with some variations, just some minor variations and especially our discussion of plot. You remember the Freytag's Pyramid

structure, well that is there in the play as well the plot essentially deals with that, but there are some minor variations.

Because as I said drama is a composite art we have to realize those additions as well. Generally speaking when we say elements, of course, now depending on which book you read, there are elements ranging from 4 to 5 elements to 10 to 12 different elements. But these are some common dramatic elements or theatrical elements that you can see. Setting and staging, characters and actors of course, you can see in fiction or in literature in general what we call setting in theatre ,it becomes staging.

Because the stage provides a setting whatever may be the setting whether it is a rainy season, whether it is summer, whether it is the 1980's or whether it is the 14th century everything has to be enacted on the stage right. The state has to I mean this state has to represent all the varieties of settings that are there in fiction or short fiction.

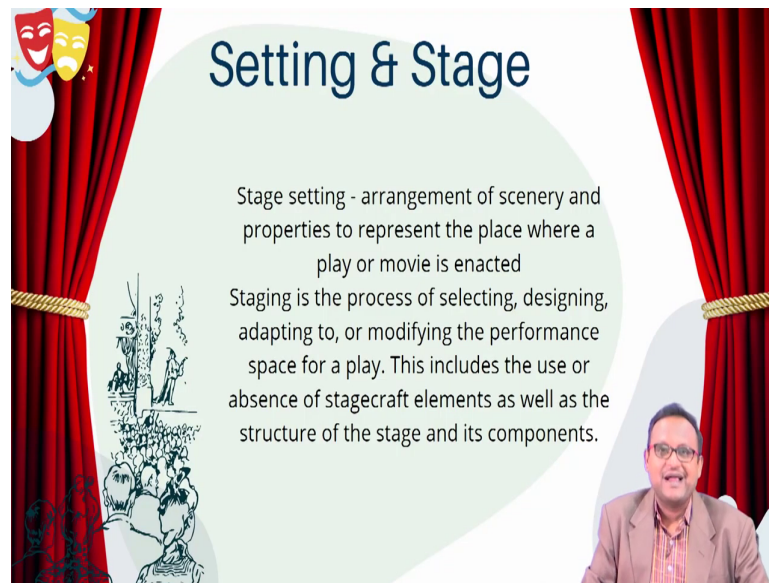
So, therefore, in theatre, we call it staging and what we call characters in fiction or in literature we call also actors perform them. Therefore, you can call it characters, actors, and roles right and then you have plot, the element of plot remains common and you have dialogue. In fact, how is a story furthered in fiction usually you have a character speaking, something between inverted commas.

I mean when you read a novel you see when a character has got to say something it is put between the inverted commas. So, here it is through dialogues, Soliloquys, Asides, and Monologues that you mention the talking of the characters, the speech element, the speech is represented using these different techniques. Then you have various tools and props that are essential.

Then you have dramatic action you have audience; the audience plays a very very important role in drama remember that and you have a playwright and a dramatist. So, a person who writes a play is a playwright, a person who engages in producing it is a dramatist, and generally directors can be dramatists sometimes. So, you can also add director if you wish if you want to give a special status why not dramatist playwright-director and all that.

Then you have a theme which is common when we say theme it is a vision we have already discussed it. Let us take a quick look at all of them in a little more detailed manner.

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First is setting and stage I have already said this stage plays a very important role therefore when a play is being designed when a play is being crafted. You must have an idea if you are a playwright you must have an idea what kind of stage, it is going to be produced on, is it going to be on a proscenium.

Or is it going to be on thrust which kind of stage are you talking of that becomes very very important. Because when I say props it requires arranging various sceneries properties where where the action is taking place. Therefore, whether you want a small stage or a big stage; if big how big? If small how small? Why should it be small? There must be a reason behind all these things it is not a random choice.

So, staging and setting stand for this kind of things, generally speaking, staging involves a process of selecting, designing, adapting and we say adapting modifying the performance. Thus I mean the space that is available for the plate to be enacted these are the various things that are involved in setting and staging ok.

So, it also has scope for including various stagecraft elements and various structural modifications that you need to make. Say for instance if you need an elevation then you need to create it if you need a rainy season you have to use certain elements. So, all these things happen on stage; and setting that is the first important, element of drama that has to be kept in mind.

Both a director and a playwright must have an acute sense of the stage and an active sense of the theatre. Otherwise, they may fail to a certain extent if the choice is not adequate.

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## Characters & Actors

- Characterization is the really
- fundamental and lasting element in the greatness of any dramatic work
- Before the dialogue in a script, the playwright will often include a cast of characters
- Typically, each character, both major and minor, is listed alongside a brief description of the character's role in the story

The slide features three circular illustrations of characters: a woman with a flower in her hair, a man in a red jacket, and a man with a mustache. A small inset photo of a man with glasses is also visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

From stage and setting let us go-to characters and actors we have already learned this characters are in literature. And these the roles of these characters are being performed by actors on stage in a drama.

So, when we say characters and actors as I said actors also play a very important role because through their acting, they direct the shade of the meaning ,the text may acquire that is why I said their collaborators. like directors, actors collaborate with the playwright in order to produce the meaning that is why I said writing a play is a collectivistic venture, producing a drama is a collectivistic venture.

Because here more than one shapes the text. So, actors play an important role because the entire meaning rests on the capacity of the actor to bring out through, their facial expressions the range of meanings that a playwright has envisioned in creating that particular character right. So, therefore, how sensible an actor are you? It depends I mean the meaning depends on how sensible an actor you are.

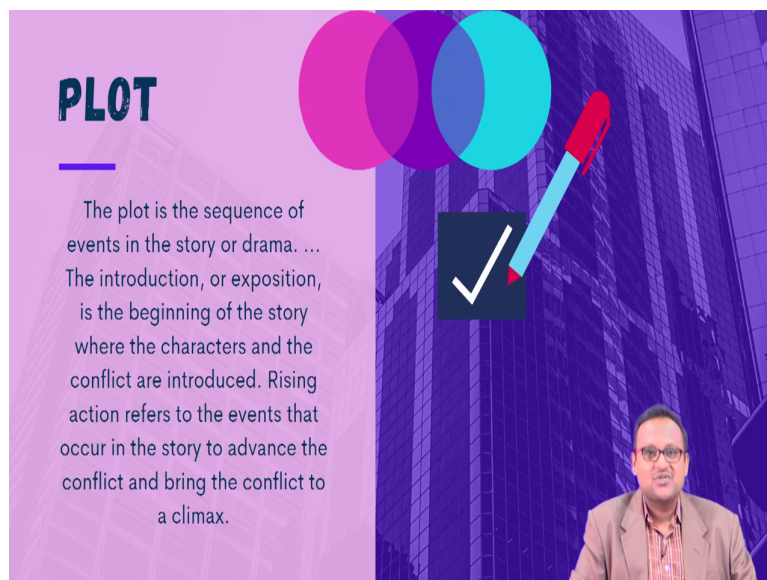
And in order to for you to develop a sensible good sensibility, you need to have a wide exposure to reading different stage crafts and all that. Therefore, a character played by an actor plays a very very important role here. Now, in fact, it is the actor who provides who

brings the text alive. I said while reading a poem if it is the voice that I mean that brings alive, the frozen text on the pages.

Here it is the character who through their acting brings out the hidden meanings of the text. Therefore, they play a very very important role. So, when we say characters and actors well protagonists, antagonists all the different types of characters.

We read in fiction, flat character, dynamic character, dull character, and bright characters. I mean you think of any number of characters you have equivalent actors here ok. That is why characters and actors become a very important and influential component or element of drama.

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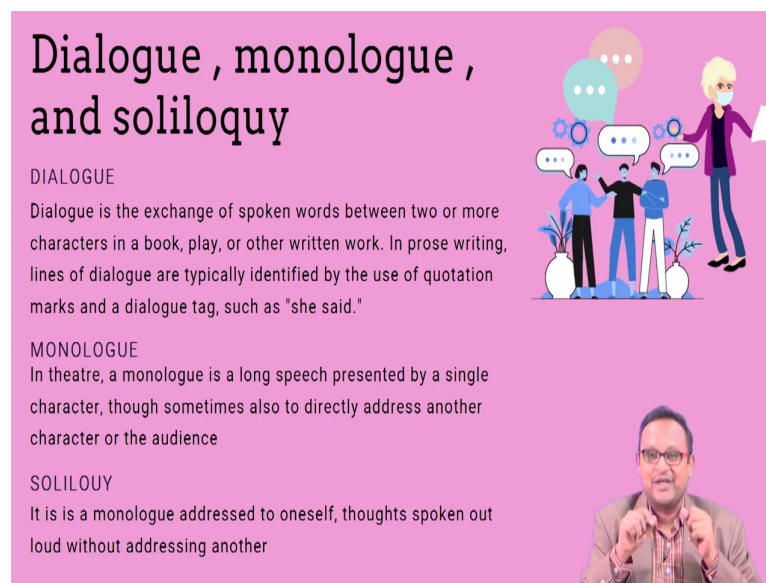
From here let us go to discuss the plot, of course, we have already identified the plot as a sequence of events in the story or in drama not just a chronological event including the causal factor. Why does something happen? Or if you do this will happen: the cause and the result factor.

So, here in the plot as we have already discussed in detail you have. In fact, Aristotle said that Aristotle is one of the biggest names when it comes to understanding drama and theatre again we are going to discuss Aristotle in detail. He says a good piece of drama should have a wonderful beginning, a beautiful middle, and a convincing ending right. Beginning middle

and the end and within these three things, you should embed the 5 different components of the plot.

What is it you have an exposition, you have the rising action, you have a climax, you have the falling action you have denouement you have resolution. So, all of them must wonderfully fit into this plot and it should be able to convince the audience. Because here there is a live reader audience, it is a live reader, a reader in flesh and blood and you can see what they are doing actually.

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**Dialogue, monologue, and soliloquy**

**DIALOGUE**  
Dialogue is the exchange of spoken words between two or more characters in a book, play, or other written work. In prose writing, lines of dialogue are typically identified by the use of quotation marks and a dialogue tag, such as "she said."

**MONOLOGUE**  
In theatre, a monologue is a long speech presented by a single character, though sometimes also to directly address another character or the audience

**SOLILOQUY**  
It is a monologue addressed to oneself, thoughts spoken out loud without addressing another

The slide features an illustration of three stylized figures in a conversation, with speech bubbles and gears. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset of a man with glasses speaking.

So, therefore, it should be convincing. The next is speech ;in the novel is represented on the stage using dialogues, monologues, soliloquies, and asides. Of course, through the characters, through the actors. Now, what is a dialogue? Dialogue is basically when two or more than two individuals interact like our guys here in the animation are interacting. Do you think it is a heated debate by the way or is it one of them showing their fingers at each other?

So, when you are showing fingers to a teacher and speaking it is generally not a good sign may be a heated debate. So, dialogue stands for all these things. So, where there is a verbal exchange, an exchange of spoken words between two or more than two characters in a play it is called dialogue and that is very very important. In fact, it is through dialogue that the story sails across this ocean of the text.

So, dialogue becomes important and then you have a monologue. If dialogue is speaking between two or more than two, monologue is generally speaking with oneself or speaking just one person speaking. So, generally what happens if a character has got to say a lot to the audience or to another character, it is a one-sided conversation.

Dialogue is a two-way conversation, monologue is a one-side conversation. So, it is a long speech given by the actor either to the audience or to another character it is called a monologue. There is no scope for the other person to respond here even if they have to respond it is only through the facial expressions or some minimal verbal fillers like oh ho, oh my God, oh you should not have oh glad something like that except that nothing else. The other person is doing a serious marathon talking it is a verbal marathon monologue.

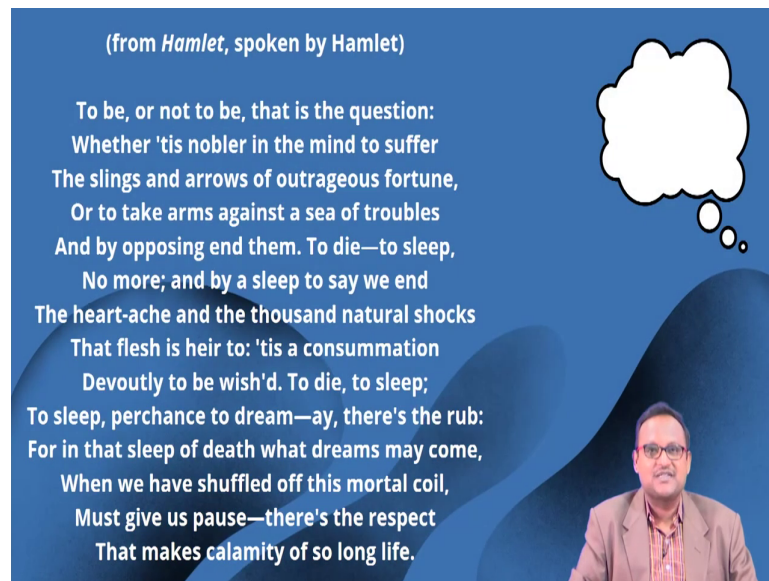
Then you have soliloquy; that is again it is related to a technique in a play, technique in the drama. Here is what happens in the novel when you are reading fiction whatever the character thinks you get to know because the character says the character was thinking like this. The writer can write that the character was thinking maybe it is better to go and explore that particular city he have not been to something like this.

Whereas in a play or in drama what does the character say? Of course, the character says his or her thoughts aloud. A character speaks their thought aloud this is what is called soliloquy, it is generally a monologue see every soliloquy is a monologue, but not every monologue is a soliloquy. So, soliloquy involves one person speaking.

But just oneself, not even to the other character here what the actor is thinking or what the character is thinking they speak it out loud so that the audience can know it. So, that the audience can know it better, this is what is called soliloquy. Well, you have some extraordinary soliloquies immortalized in the plays of Shakespeare.



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(from *Hamlet*, spoken by Hamlet)

To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause—there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life.

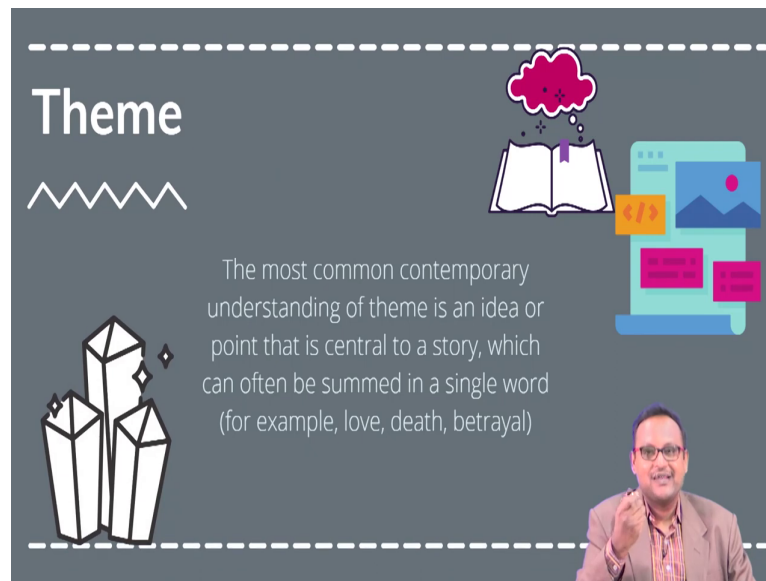
Well if drama is a universe well, Shakespeare is the crowning prince of this universe. if drama is a kingdom, well he is the crowning King something like that.

So, it is from his remarkable play Hamlet. The play it is about 120 or 150 pages, a very small book. But it said that the critical material available on hamlet is more than 150000 pages. In a play that has about 150 pages you have the critical material generated more than 150000 pages, such a small play.

And see do you think it can embody all that of course, a great work of art. It still has a scope I do not think anybody even after all these pages are written anybody have exhausted the meaning of Hamlet you still can explore fresh meaning. So, this is our prince hamlet soliloquizing in the plane to be or not to be that is the question.

Now, it is these are these have become immortal lines in order for you to project your dilemma, your inner dilemma you do not know you are unable to decide. What to do what not to do and all that. So, that is when you say to be or not to be immortal lines that stand for dilemma; for want of time I will not read it, but in extraordinary soliloquy by Hamlet.

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So, from there let us go on to discuss another important theme another important element which is called theme. Well, theme is something that runs through all the pages not in a very visible way, but in an invisible way. In other words, theme can be considered as an invisible thread that connects the characters, the story, the plotline, the setting, and everything.

The theme is the invisible thread that connects all the components of that work of art. If it is fiction it connects all elements of fiction, if it is drama it connects all the elements of drama.

So, it is a vision that runs across that runs beneath the layers in order to understand the theme you need to read in between the lines. So, in a play or in a drama you need to listen to in between the lines, in between the dialogues that the characters say.

So, generally, the theme would be something like love, separation, death, betrayal, or hope positivity all of them something like that. It runs across the pages it is the moral vision or the total vision that you get, the precept of life that you get when you have completed reading it or watching the play.

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## TOOLS

- props and sets: proper setting and props are used in plays to make the play look like an imitation of life
- Body: Facial expressions, body movements, etc...
- Sound or Voice: Conscious use of music, voice, and tone is essential for a drama



From theme let us go to various tools and props that are used in a play. For instance, in order for it to further the story actors make use of various tools. Say for instance the basket that they are holding, the lights are important tools and props or for instance there is a staircase.

There maybe it is essential for them or a broomstick or a mop or anything like that all of them can be important props and sets including a table that you put or a computer. If you are making use of it supposing you want to give how stressful the life of a computer programmer is.

So, the table that you make use of and the dark lights and the blue glaring screen and huge glasses. Well as they are the various props the character needs in order to emit the range of meanings, the character embodies in the original play. So, these are various tools and they are also called tools and props in general.

So, one is, of course, the physical tools and props. The other thing is even the sound, the voice tone, and music that you make use of they are also considered various props in order to bring out the pathos. If the playwright or if the director makes use of soft music. So, that is also a prop, a tool.

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Then you have dramatic action the driving force or forward motion of drama to create dramatic meaning. what does the character do? What does a character do? What does an actor do in order to further the plot.

The stage movements that that are involved here, their expressions all of them come under dramatic action. The act that they do in order to present the drama that is given to them is called dramatic action, it is very very important. Because if you miss a movement you may miss a meaning, or if you miss a facial expression you may miss a meaning so all that is very important dramatic action.

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From dramatic action let us go to see another one. In fact, we have already said this to the playwright or the dramatist, or the director. Usually, when you say director either of a movie or of a theatre, it is symbolized by either a hat or a chair, it somehow comes to stand for the director— a hat or a chair.

So, a playwright or the director play a very important role and they are the collaborators we said this. It is a joint venture between the director the playwright and the dramatist or the dramatist right.

If they are different, then it is a joint venture, it is a collective venture between these two things to produce the play that is why they are generally called a *sutradhar* director is called *sutradhar*. The *sutra* is the thread, the one who is holding the thread. So, who is controlling the show— directors. So, these are the various elements that can be kept in mind while discussing play and drama.

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## Audience

- Individuals or groups of people who experience the arts in a range of settings and contexts (formal, informal, virtual or interactive) through intellectual, emotional and social engagement
- Audience are the life of dramatic performance
- Theatres such as the third theater emphasise more on audience and attempts to reduce the gap between the audience and actors

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And of course, the audience as I said audience is it is a collective reader, the audience is the readers in flesh and blood and collective readers and basically, this drama is meant to be performed before an audience. Otherwise, see though audience does not have any direct role to play in many theatres.

Of course, there are some theatres that actively make use of the audience. They are the lifeblood of any drama, because if there is no audience for whom do you perform. So, therefore, the audience is the lifeblood of any theatrical performance, any dramatic production.

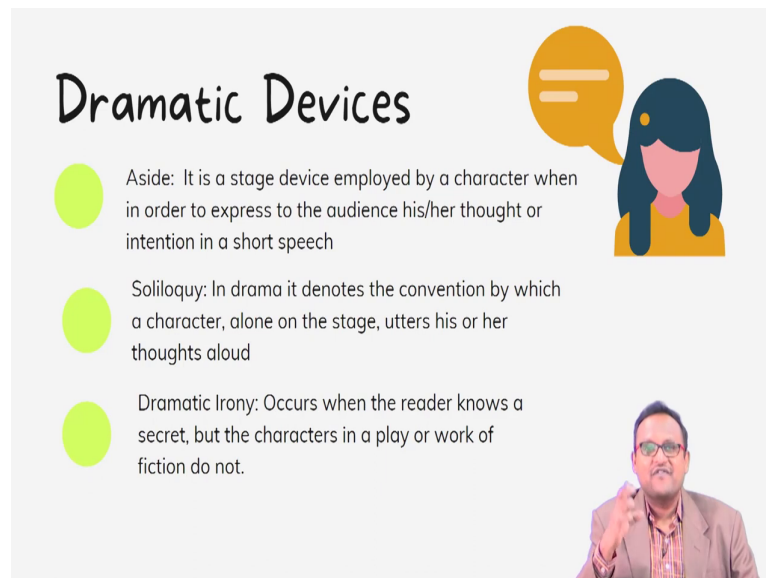
So, when we say audience it can be individuals or groups of people who experience the range of emotions collectively. they experience it collectively that is why we say that they are very important.

Now, imagine I said that there are certain types of theatres, especially the third theatre which is called the third theatre. They emphasize, that they attribute more role to the audience generally that is the reason why in such kind of theatres there is no formal gap between the audience and the actors. They make use of such kind of stagecraft where that gap between the audience and the actors is erased or it is minimum ok.


So, they involve the audience, they ask a question, they ask ,they even prepare directly while being within a play they prepare the audience to act it in a particular way. So, they give more


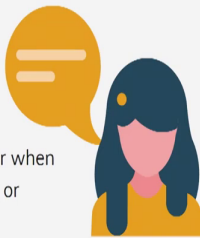
roles to the actors. So, these are various ways through which the audience plays an important role in dramatic production.

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## Dramatic Devices

-  **Aside:** It is a stage device employed by a character when in order to express to the audience his/her thought or intention in a short speech
-  **Soliloquy:** In drama it denotes the convention by which a character, alone on the stage, utters his or her thoughts aloud
-  **Dramatic Irony:** Occurs when the reader knows a secret, but the characters in a play or work of fiction do not.



Now, these are the various dramatic devices that we have, but probably we can take them in subsequent classes. I said yeah very quickly what we can do aside is something that we have we need to know. Because soliloquy we have realized. What soliloquy is monologue and dialogue aside, is what happens when the character is a stage device.

Basically, it is a stage device where the character or the actor reveals what they are thinking to what they are thinking to the audience. Whereas, the fellow character who is acting along with them are not supposed to know that this is called an interesting aside.

Therefore, the actor speaks it aloud, but by stage convention, though there is another actor who is standing next to him or her they cannot hear it. Or there I mean they do not suppose I mean they are not supposed to hear that this conversation is only between the audience and the actor. Though there is another actor who is there they do not hear it they are absolutely muted something like that, that is called an interesting aside. Fine, I guess you enjoyed this introduction to drama and we discussed very many important things.

Now, that we know various components, elements, and different varieties of stages and theatres. Let us go ahead and probably in the next class discuss the origin of drama, and

various theories of drama. Maybe if time permits certain dramatic techniques used there until then take care, we will see you in the next class.