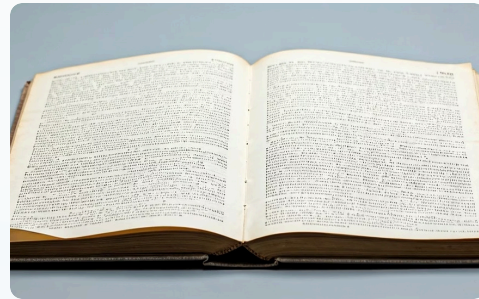


What is Drama?



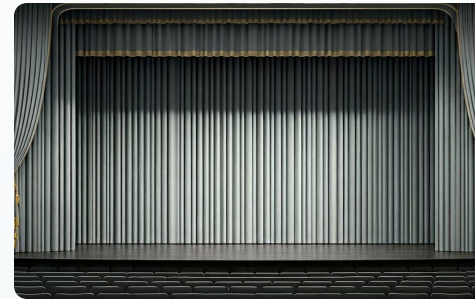
Theatrical Performance

Drama as a live performance art form dates back to ancient Greek traditions, where actors would don masks to portray different characters.



Dramatic Literature

As a literary form, drama consists of dialogue and stage directions intended for performance rather than private reading.



The Stage

The physical space of performance shapes dramatic works, with various stage designs influencing how stories are told and received.



Dramatic Elements

Drama relies on conflict, character development, and dialogue to create compelling narratives that engage audiences.

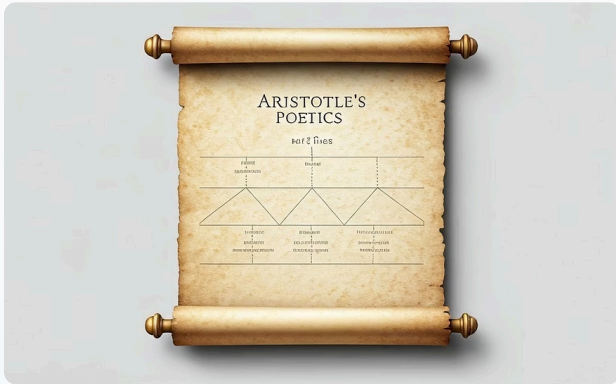
Character

- Definition: a person represented in an imagined plot, whether narrated or acted out, but also to the unique qualities that make up a personality.
- Stage Direction: the appearance, manners, and movement of someone speaking the lines assigned to any one character.
- Protagonist vs Antagonist
- Hero or Heroine vs Villain
- Minor characters or supporting roles
- Foil: a character designed to bring out qualities in another character by contrast.



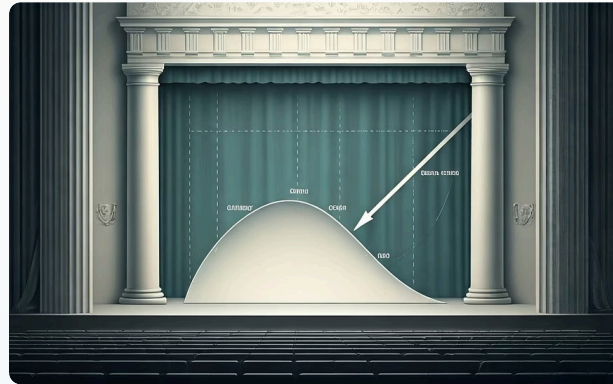
Plot and Structure

Aristotle defines plot as the soul of tragedy and emphasizes its importance in dramatic works.



Aristotle's Unified Plot

The plot must have "unity of action" (be an artistic whole). Being an imitation of action, plot should imitate one action which forms an artistic whole directed toward achieving catharsis of pity and fear.



Continuous Sequence

The order of unified plot follows a continuous sequence of beginning, middle, and end. The beginning sets an action in motion, in the middle it gets complicated, and at the end all complications related to the action are resolved.

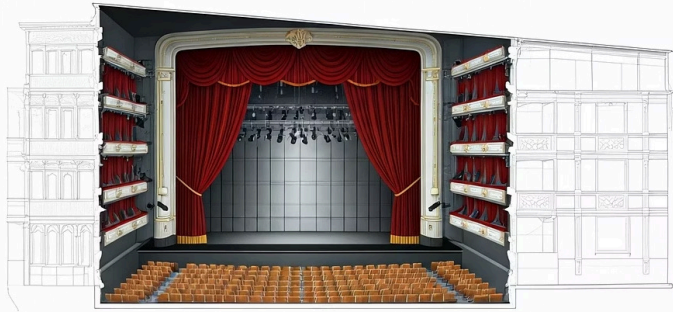


Interconnected Elements

All parts of the plot are so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole, destroying the unity of action.

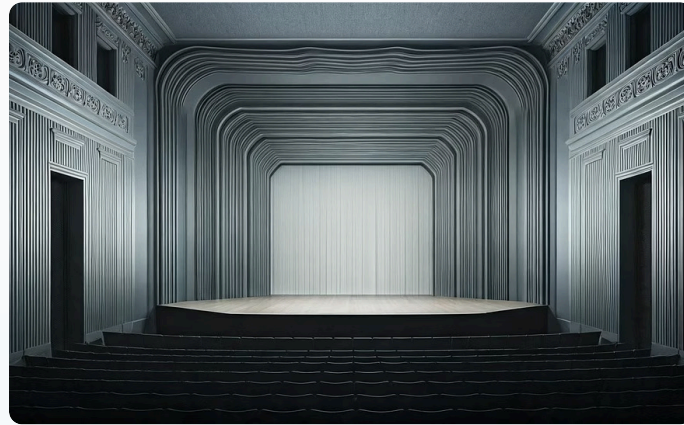
Modern Stages

Different stage configurations create unique relationships between performers and audience:



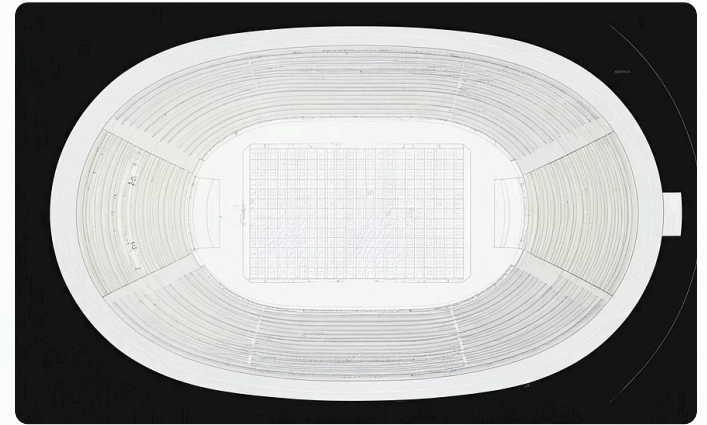
Proscenium Stage

The traditional "picture frame" stage where the audience views the performance from one direction through an arch or frame.



Thrust Stage

A platform extended into the audience area with viewers on three sides, creating a more intimate theatrical experience.

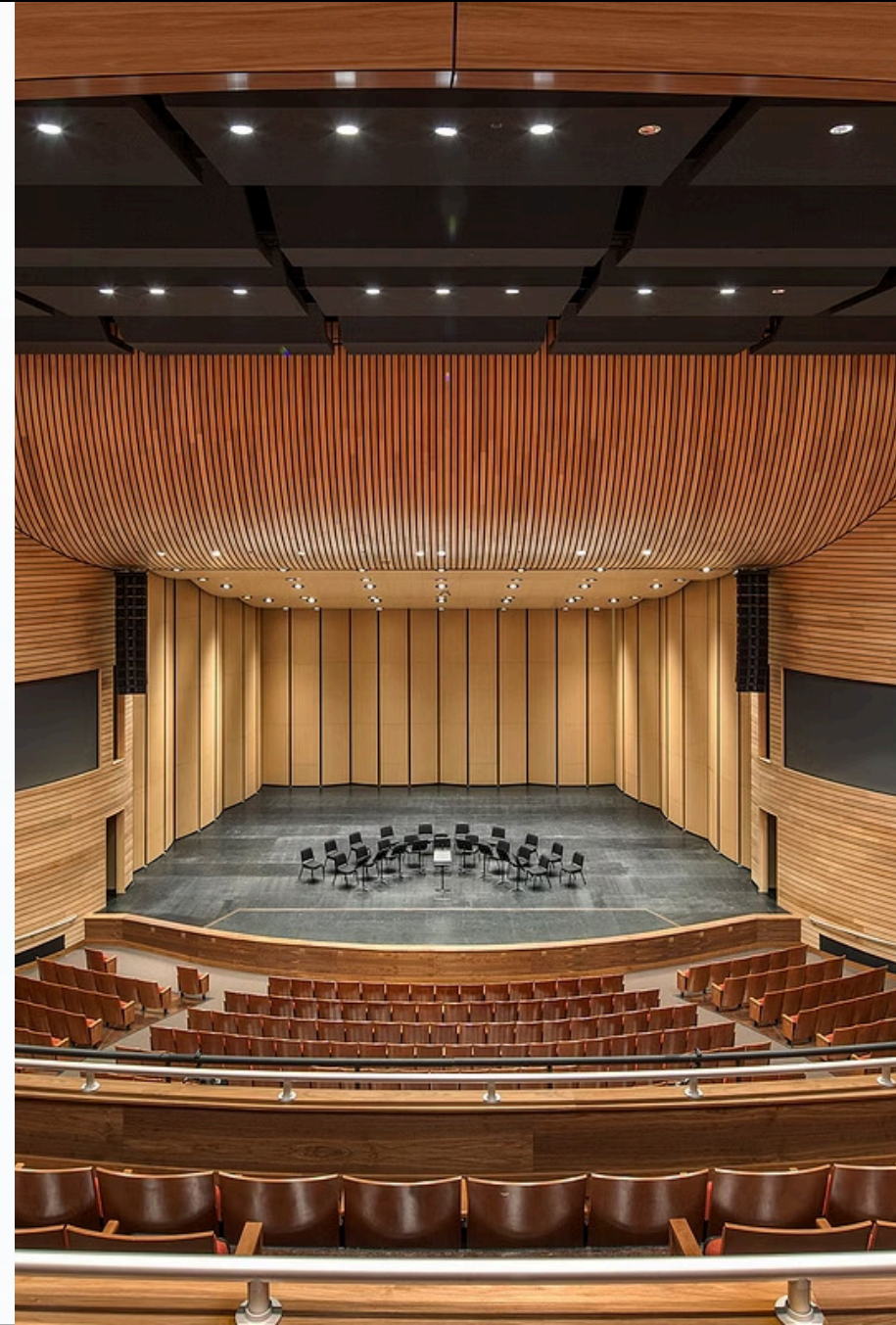


Arena Stage

Also known as theater-in-the-round, this configuration places the performance area in the center with audience members surrounding it on all sides.

Proscenium Stage

A room with the wall missing between us and it.



Thrust Stage



The audience sits around three sides of the major acting area.



Arena Stage

The audience sits all the way around the acting area and players make their entrances and their exits through the auditorium.



Greek Theater

Amphitheater: the audience sat on a raised semicircle of seats.

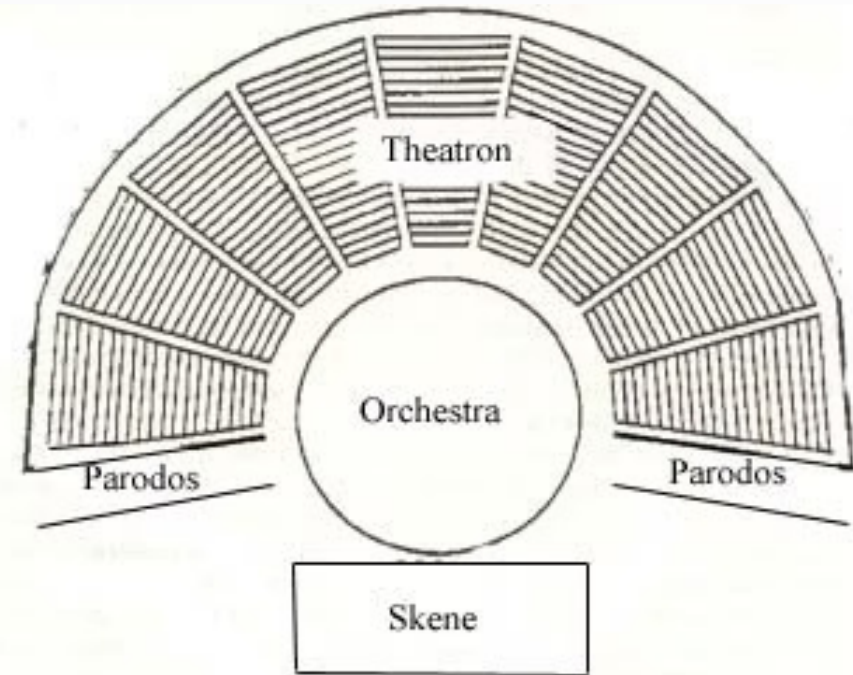


Amphitheater discovered in Pompei



Diagram of Greek Amphitheater

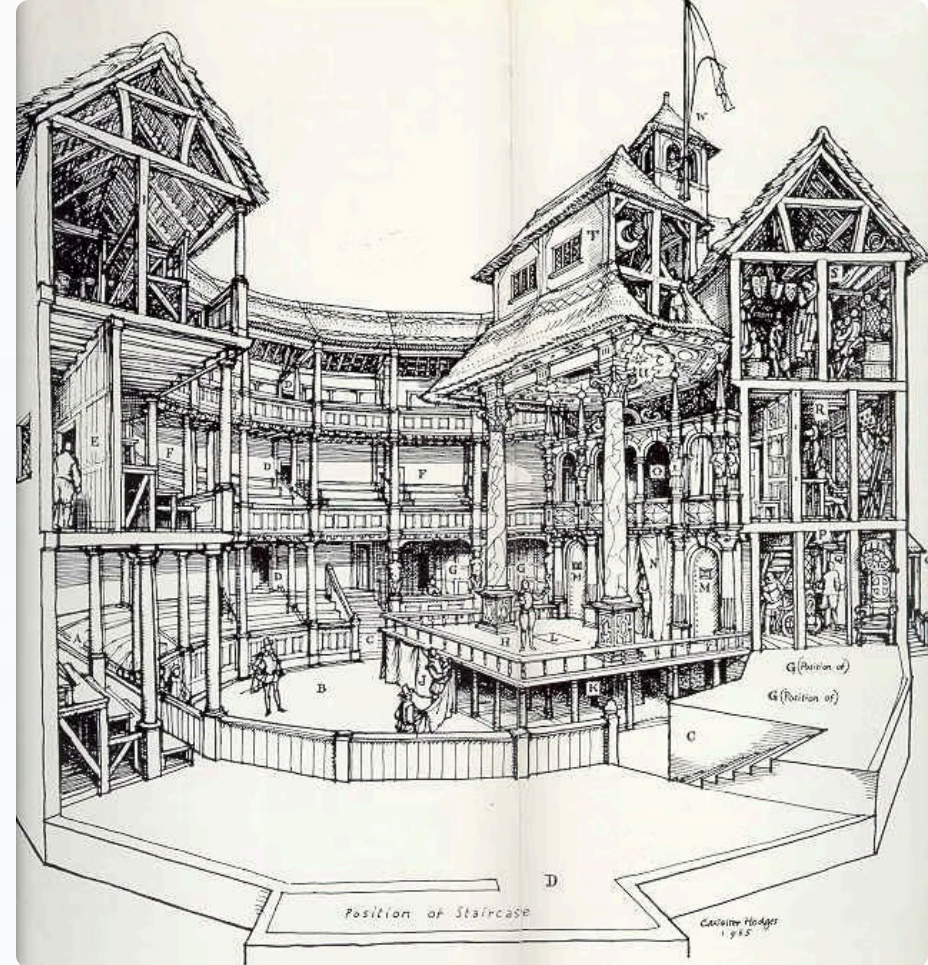
- Orchestra: halfway around a circular area used primarily for dancing by the chorus.
- Skene: stage house representing the palace or temple before which the action took place.
- Parodos: side-entrance.
- Theatron: theater



Parts of a Greek Theater

Shakespeare's Stage

- A rectangular area built inside one end of a large enclosure like a circular walled-in yard; the audience stood on the ground or sat in stacked balconies around three sides of the principal acting area.
- There were additional acting areas on either side of this stage, as well as a recessed area at its back and an upper acting area. A trap door in the stage floor was used for occasional effects.



Globe Theatre in London



Exterior view of the Globe Theatre



Interior view showing the stage and audience area

Setting

Usually the audience is asked to imagine that the featured section of the auditorium is actually a particular place somewhere else. Theater settings have evolved throughout history:



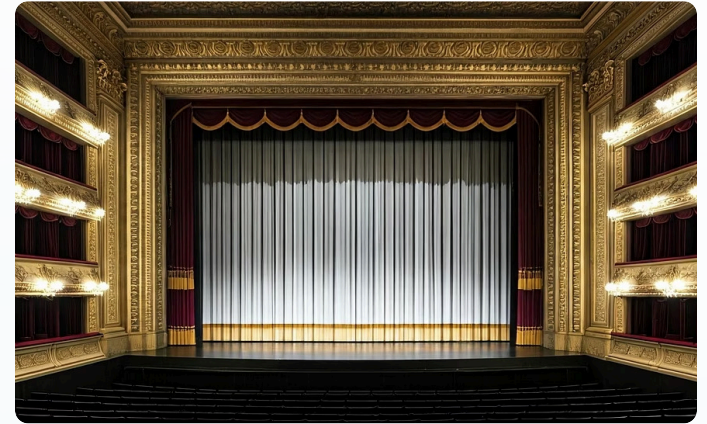
Ancient Greek Theater

In ancient Greek drama, the play's setting never changes throughout the performance.



Shakespearean Theater

The acting arena assumes temporary identities based on characters, costumes, and speeches rather than representing specific places.



Modern Theater

Several changes of scene occur, marked by lowering curtains or darkening the stage while different sets and props are arranged.

Aristotle on Unities

Aristotle's prescriptive theory of dramatic tragedy emphasizes three essential unities:



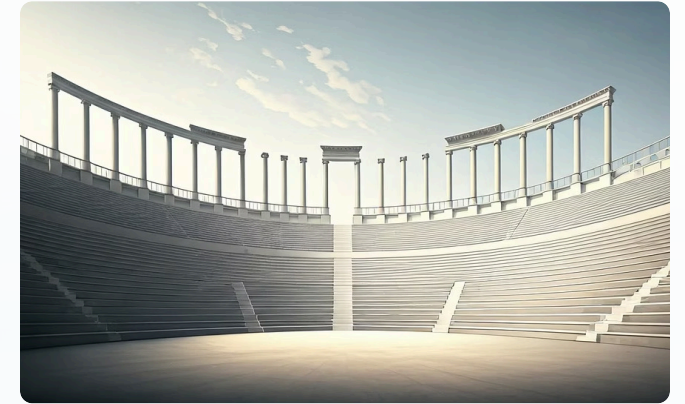
Unity of Action

Tragedy imitates a complete action with significant implications. The plot must be unified with events so interconnected that moving or removing any one would disrupt the whole.



Unity of Time

A poetic imitation should be unified with a single object. The dramatic action should occur within a single day (24 hours), creating temporal cohesion.



Unity of Place

An element that makes no difference when added or removed is not truly part of the whole. The drama should unfold in a single physical location throughout.

Tone in Drama

The actor must infer from the written language just how to read a line, what tone of voice to use. The choice of tone must be a negotiation between the words of the playwright and the interpretation and skill of the actor or reader.



Ironies in Drama



Dramatic Irony

A character's perception is contradicted by what the audience knows.



Situational Irony

A character's (and the audience's) expectations about what will happen are contradicted by what actually does happen.



Verbal Irony

A statement implies a meaning quite different from its obvious, literal meaning.