

Essence of drama essay sample



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Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance.[1] The term comes from a Greek word “ dran” meaning “ action” (Classical Greek: δράμα, drama), which is derived from “ to do” or “ to act” (Classical Greek: δράω, draō). The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception.[2] The early modern tragedy *Hamlet* (1601) by Shakespeare and the classical Athenian tragedy *Oedipus the King* (c. 429 BCE) by Sophocles are among the masterpieces of the art of drama. [3] A modern example is *Long Day’s Journey into Night* by Eugene O’Neill (1956).[4] The two masks associated with drama represent the traditional generic division between comedy and tragedy. They are symbols of the ancient Greek Muses, *Thalia* and *Melpomene*. *Thalia* was the Muse of comedy (the laughing face), while *Melpomene* was the Muse of tragedy (the weeping face).

Considered as a genre of poetry in general, the dramatic mode has been contrasted with the epic and the lyrical modes ever since Aristotle’s *Poetics* (c. 335 BCE)—the earliest work of dramatic theory.[5] The use of “ drama” in the narrow sense to designate a specific type of play dates from the 19th century. Drama in this sense refers to a play that is neither a comedy nor a tragedy—for example, Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin* (1873) or Chekhov’s *Ivanov* (1887). It is this narrow sense that the film and television industry and film studies adopted to describe “ drama” as a genre within their respective media.[6] “ Radio drama” has been used in both senses—originally

transmitted in a live performance, it has also been used to describe the more high-brow and serious end of the dramatic output of radio.[7]

Drama is often combined with music and dance: the drama in opera is generally sung throughout; musicals generally include both spoken dialogue and songs; and some forms of drama have incidental music or musical accompaniment underscoring the dialogue (melodrama and Japanese Nō, for example).[8] In certain periods of history (the ancient Roman and modern Romantic) some dramas have been written to be read rather than performed.[9] In improvisation, the drama does not pre-exist the moment of performance; performers devise a dramatic script spontaneously before an audience.[10]