

Mapping Out The Storyline

An accurate interpretation of any piece of literary work requires that the reader or audience enters the creative world of the playwright. It forces the reader or audience to create mental images or symbols of what he or she perceives the playwright's ideas to be. This process engages the reader's sensory experiences and allows him or her to map out the interconnectivity of a **plot**. General observations include:

Thematic Development: themes are the central or main ideas/situations that are usually discussed and result in conflict within and between characters. Conflict generally takes place internally (a character against himself) or externally (a character against another character or a character against the environment or a character against the society). When a character highlights the characteristics of the main character, this actor is known as a **foil**.

Conflict: it is interesting to note that conflict can arise from minute or simply/insignificant issues and how they can affect the characters. Conflict is the basic or integral element of a plot that helps the audience to understand the 'substance that a character is made of'. It normally evokes a reaction from the characters.

Characters: a keen observation of character(s) would require the onlooker to observe the following-

1. What is the situation that he or she finds himself/herself in?
2. What do they want? What do they do to accomplish this?
3. Is the character hiding something?
4. What is the characters' attitude towards the situation that they find themselves in?
5. What drives/motivates them? Is it power? Or greed? Or wealth? Or struggle?
6. Are there noted changes in the behaviour of the characters during the course of the drama?
7. Is the character's language lofty or simple?

Atmosphere: may be considered as the subliminal message that undergirds the play. It captures how the playwright combines several dramatic elements to complement the overall dramatic experience for the audience. It starts with the the

tone used by the character to express their thoughts. The character's tone informs their mood (which is long-lasting, or the lasting effect resulting from the tone). This helps the audience to learn about the character's attitude towards given subject matters. The elements of sound effects, lighting and costuming (all consumed under stage directions) complement the voice of the characters to create the overall feeling or atmosphere of the production.

It is created through the playwright's pepperpot of language, imagery, sound, costume and symbolism - a creative journey from the pen to the stage.