Comparative Dramatic Models & Screenplay Structure: A Practical Compendium from Aristotle to Modern Screenwriting

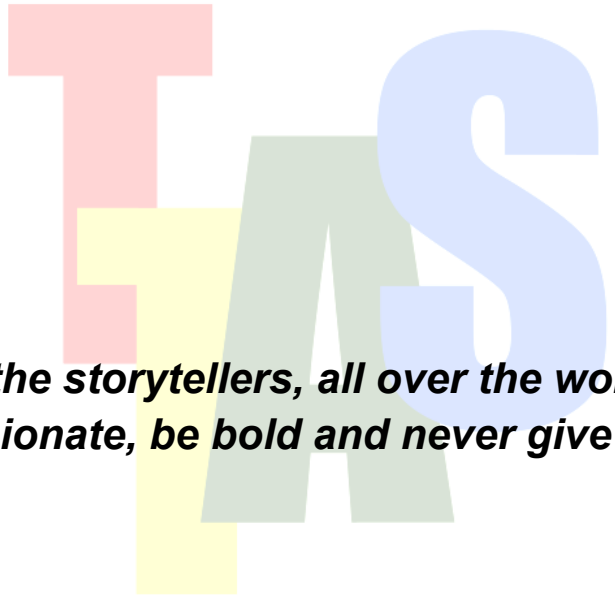
The Complete Toolbox

by
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For all the storytellers, all over the world.
Be passionate, be bold and never give up!

The Toolbox

The greatest story minds of all times, all in one place

For my doctoral thesis at the Berlin Technical Institute (Technische Universität Berlin) I set up an experiment. The idea was to find out which of the most cited screenwriting how-to books (according to Google Scholar) had the best and most efficient advice.

I put each of the following books to a tough test. What actionable advice did it contain?

Aristotle – The Poetics

Gottfried E. Lessing – The Hamburg Dramaturgy

Gustav Freytag – Technique of the Drama

Gottfried Mueller – Dramaturgy of the Theater and the Film

Semjon Frejlich – The Dramaturgy of the Film

Lajos Egri – The Art of Dramatic Writing

Syd Field – Screenplay. The Foundations of Screenwriting

Christopher Vogler – The Writer's Journey

Robert McKee – Story

Linda Seger – Making a good Script Great

The result was an ordered list of work instructions on the topics of brainstorming, plot construction, scene construction, dialogue and script revision.

I have called it THE TOOLBOX.

Students were given a writing task (a draft for a television movie, an episode of a crime TV show, an episode for a family drama TV show). Students were divided into groups of 4-6 people.

I exposed each group to one set of rules. I invited the executives of the TV series and series of T movies to evaluate the outcome.

500 students went through the process, 120 outlines were evaluated. The evaluation results were merged with data derived from student's feedback about the writing process. From this a ranking of rules emerged according to their contribution and usability.

The result is now available to you. The free e-book gives you a concise, comprehensive overview, my take on 2000 years of theory about writing.

The idea is of course not to replace the books. The TOOLBOX gives you fast and easy access to some of the best advice on screenwriting ever given. You will find that you relate more to one or two of these amazing teachers, to how they talk about screenplays and writing. In this case you have found your master. You should go and buy the book and start your journey into writing.

If you want instead to go the fast route, check out our Services. We will give you the right advice, taken from those books, at the right time and in the right shape and form so that you understand what needs to be done to make your screenplay ready to be sent out into the world.

But for now, enjoy, take a deep dive into the thinking of some of the greatest story minds of all times, and, most importantly, keep on writing!

Comments, also about errors, typos, omissions, are always very welcome. This is a work in progress and I will add more tools over time. If you want to leave me a message, please do so on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or Twitter.

Thank you!

Who is in The Toolbox?

ARISTOTLE AND CHINATOWN

400 A.D. – publisher unknown

"..The noble ones imitate good deeds and those of good ones, but the ordinary ones imitate those of the bad ones."

What are Aristotle's rules for writing?

Do these 2400 year old rules still apply?

How to translate Aristotle's terminology in today's language?

Who are these rules for?

What kind (genre) of story to expect if you follow his rules?

G.E. LESSING AND CHINATOWN

The Hamburg Dramaturgy – 1767 – Reclam jun. GmbH & Co., Stuttgart

"Because nothing is great that is not true."

Why is a great critic also a great teacher?

Why did Lessing have it in for French theater writers?

What did he have to say about the nexus of society and drama?

Why is it worth taking a look at contemporary movies through Lessing's eyes?

Why would Lessing have loved Chinatown?

GUTAV FREYTAG AND CHINATOWN

Die Technik des Dramas von Gustav Freytag – 1886 – Verlag S.Hirzel, Leipzig

"He [the poet] thinks he is driving his figures, but he is secretly driven by them."

How one writer single handedly revitalized the landscape of German drama.

How "character-driven" became the battle cry of an entire generation of writers.

Meet the man who invented the visuals of play structure that we still use today.

Why has nobody ever described a plot point better than Gustav Freytag?

Why did Freytag introduce the dreaded “m-word” (morale) into the catechism of writers?

Why would Freytag have hated Chinatown?

GOTTFRIED MUELLER AND CHINATOWN

Dramaturgie – 1942 – Konrad Riltsch Verlag, Würzburg

“The beginning has to burst into the exposition like a bomb, the middle has to be the climax and the end a release.”

What warfare and scriptwriting have to do with each other.

How this man discovered the secret sauce of Hollywood and involuntarily helped the Nazis to almost create their own.

The birth of the action movie through Aristotle reimagined.

Why the right ratio of fate to doom is a life saver for writers.

How the plot became just another character of the story.

SEMJON FREILICH AND CHINATOWN

Die Dramaturgie des Films – 1964 – Henschelverlag Berlin (DDR)

“The drama must represent the conflicts of life, otherwise it is not drama.”

The birth of Neorealism and the social drama.

Why communism was bad for storytelling.

How your plot can reveal your political affiliation.

Why Soviet writers dreamt of writing a never ending drama.

Why society can never be the hero and revolution can never be a plotpoint.

LAJOS EGRI AND CHINATOWN

The Art of Dramatic Writing – 1946 – Verlag Simon & Schuster, New York

“The premise is the seed that grows into a plant that was contained in it, no more and no less.”

Why you will never ask again ‘why do I need to write that darn backstory?’ after reading Egri’s rules.

How every story is part of another story that started long ago.

Why did it take 2364 years to effectively contradict Aristotle?

Why does it need an equation with three known unknowns to write a good story?

SYD FIELD AND CHINATOWN

Screenplay. The foundations of Screenwriting – 1979 – Dell Publishing, New York

“Writing is the ability to ask yourself questions and get the answers.”

Why did it take Syd Field 2000 scripts to understand what was missing in all but 40?

Why is the “want” vs “need” dichotomy still one of the most powerful tools?

Why it took the Paradigm of three acts to discover that there were really four of them.

Why Syd Field was puzzled by Chinatown and went to investigate.

CHRISTOPHER VOGLER AND CHINATOWN

The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers – 1992 – Michael Wiese Productions

“The generic term for a handful of recurring components that we come across again and again in myths, fairy tales, dreams and films is: the hero’s journey.”

Why Christopher Vogler was at one time suspected to be a Soviet secret agent.

Why psychology had to be invented before this book could be written.

How Vogler can help you through the “40-mile-desert” of the second act and what you will find on the other side.

Why only this book can explain what the difference between film and real life is.

ROBERT MCKEE AND CHINATOWN

Story von Robert McKee – 1997 – Harper Collins Publishers, New York

“Story is a metaphor for life.”

What a performing artist knows about storytelling.

Why 95% of our movies today owe big time to a small actors studio in NYC.

What is the smallest element of storytelling ever discovered?

How the entire world fits into a triangle.

Why you should always toss all your dialogue ideas before you start writing.

LINDA SEGER AND CHINATOWN

Making a good Script Great – 1987 – Samuel French Trade

“As is the case with every other art form, the same holds true for scriptwriting: In the beginning, there is chaos.”

How could you possibly add more character types to Chris Vogler’s many archetypes?

Why did it take a woman to discover one of the most overlooked elements of good writing?

Why does the midpoint so often become the first plotpoint after a thorough revision?

Why should the myth stay out of the game before a writer has written their first draft?

How Chinatown teaches us that no story is instantly great.

Comparative Architecture Matrix: Foundational Structural Paradigms

Across two and a half millennia of dramatic theory, theorists from Aristotle to modern Hollywood screenwriting analysts have examined the identical human storytelling instinct. While terminology, act counts, and emphasis fluctuate between external plot mechanics and internal character transformation, the structural milestones align across four universal dramatic pivot points:

1. **The Disturbance (Inciting Incident / Catalyst / Point of Attack):** The event that shatters equilibrium and forces active engagement.
2. **The Point of No Return (Act I Break / Plot Point 1 / Crossing the Threshold):** The definitive commitment where the protagonist leaves their known world and locks onto a premise goal.
3. **The Crucible / Reversal (Midpoint / Peripeteia / Central Value Shift):** The central confrontation where the true stakes are revealed, shifting the protagonist from reactive pursuit to proactive stakes.
4. **The Resolution / Purge (Climax / Crisis / Catastrophe / Anagnorisis):** The ultimate obligatory confrontation resolving the premise, delivering emotional and intellectual catharsis.

The Master Comparison Table

Theorist & Foundational Work	The Disturbance (Inciting Incident / Catalyst)	The Point of No Return (Act I Break / Plot Point 1)	The Crucible & Reversal (Midpoint / Peripeteia)	The Resolution & Purge (Climax / Catharsis)	Primary Analytical Lens
Aristotle *The Poetics* (4th c. BC)	**Beginning (*Arche*)** Originating cause; the disturbance setting action in motion.	**Desis (*Complication*)** The binding of the dramatic knot; conflicts begin tangling irreversibly.	**Peripeteia & Anagnorisis** Reversal of fortune coupled with discovery/recognition of truth.	**Lysis & Catharsis** The unknotting (*dénouement*) producing emotional purgation of pity and fear.	**Action-Centric / Mimesis:** Plot (*mythos*) is the primary soul of drama; character serves action.
G. E. Lessing *Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1767–69)	**Der Keim (*The Seed*)** Inner motivational impulse driving natural moral conflict.	**Verwicklung (*Entanglement*)** Character convictions clash irreconcilably with outer reality.	**Sittlicher Umschlag (*Moral Shift*)** Reversal driven strictly by internal psychological necessity.	**Schrecken und Mitleid** Resolution of ethical conflict through profound moral empathy.	**Psychological / Moral Realism:** Internal emotional consistency over rigid external geometric unities.
Gustav Freytag *Technique of the Drama* (1863)	**Erregendes Moment (*Inciting Incident*)** Catalytic spark initiating rising movement.	**Steigende Handlung (*Rising Action*)** Definitive launch up the pyramid slope toward confrontation.	**Höhepunkt (*Climax / Peak*)** The apex of the pyramid; the tragic/dramatic force reaches peak intensity.	**Katastrophe (*Catastrophe*)** Downward falling action culminating in total systemic resolution or ruin.	**Architectural / Five-Act Pyramid:** Symmetrical ascent and descent pivoting on a central dominant height.

Theorist & Foundational Work	The Disturbance (Inciting Incident / Catalyst)	The Point of No Return (Act I Break / Plot Point 1)	The Crucible & Reversal (Midpoint / Peripeteia)	The Resolution & Purge (Climax / Catharsis)	Primary Analytical Lens
Dr. Gottfried Müller *Dramaturgy of Theater & Film* (1944)	**Konfliktanstoß (*Conflict Impulsion*)** The spark introducing kinetic tension into the arena.	**Fesselung (*Binding*)** Irreversible capture of the dramatic will into systemic struggle.	**Achsenwende (*Axis Pivot*)** The central axis where mechanical forces invert polarities.	**Endentscheidung (*Final Decision*)** Total mechanical and philosophical settlement of opposing energies.	**Structural-Mechanical:** Dramatic forces analyzed as opposing kinetic vectors and axis shifts.
Semjon Freijlich *The Dramaturgy of Film* (1972)	**Visual Disruption** Cinematic rupture fracturing spatial/temporal equilibrium.	**Thematic Engagement** Protagonist becomes the bearer of cinematic and historical tension.	**Dialectical Collision** Montage-driven collision of thesis and antithesis across cinematic space.	**Synthesized Resolution** Thematic synthesis uniting subjective inner reality with objective truth.	**Dialectical / Cinematic Montage:** Visual dramaturgy where meaning arises through collision of shots and ideas.
Lajos Egri *The Art of Dramatic Writing* (1942)	**Point of Attack** The precise crisis moment where relentless character drive detonates.	**Growth & Irrevocable Decision** The militant character pursues their goal beyond any possibility of compromise.	**Crisis / Polar Shift** Contradictory inner traits collide under mounting conflict pressure.	**Climax & Premise Proof** The inevitable explosion proving the singular philosophical premise (*"X leads to Y"*).	**Dialectical Character Premise:** Plot cannot exist without dynamic three-dimensional character conviction.
Syd Field *Screenplay* (1979)	**Inciting Incident** Sets the story in motion (approx. Page 10–12).	**Plot Point 1** Pivotal event hooking into action and turning it into Act II (approx. Page 25–30).	**Midpoint** Central anchor in the middle of Act II dividing context into halves (approx. Page 60).	**Plot Point 2 & Climax** PP2 turns story into Act III (Page 85–90); Climax resolves dramatic premise.	**Three-Act Paradigm:** Precision page-count architecture, linear causation, and defined act breaks.

Theorist & Foundational Work	The Disturbance (Inciting Incident / Catalyst)	The Point of No Return (Act I Break / Plot Point 1)	The Crucible & Reversal (Midpoint / Peripeteia)	The Resolution & Purge (Climax / Catharsis)	Primary Analytical Lens
Christopher Vogler *The Writer's Journey* (1992)	**Call to Adventure** Disrupts the Ordinary World with a challenge or quest.	**Crossing the First Threshold** The Hero commits fully to journeying into the Special World.	**The Inmost Cave & Ordeal** Confrontation with core fear; symbolic death and rebirth at the center.	**The Resurrection & Return** The ultimate exam applying lessons learned; return with the Elixir.	**Mythic Archetypal / Hero's Journey:** Universal psychological transformation through mythological stages.
Robert McKee *Story* (1997)	**Inciting Incident** Radically upsets balance of forces in protagonist's life.	**Progression to Action** Protagonist crosses line of no return; forces of antagonism deepen.	**Mid-Act Climax / Value Reversal** Major shift in primary value charge (e.g., Hope to Despair, Life to Death).	Crisis & Climax The Obligatory Scene: protagonist faces supreme choice under final gap.	**Substance & Value Mechanics:** Deep character revealed through choices under pressure across emotional gaps.
Linda Seger *Making a Good Script Great* (1987)	**Set-Up & Catalyst** Establishes baseline status quo before the catalyst disrupts life.	**Turning Point 1** Turns the action around in a new direction, raises the Central Story Question, and commits the protagonist to solving the problem.	**Midpoint Reversal** A major turning point in the middle of Act II that spins the action around, raises the stakes, and narrows the character's options.	**Turning Point 2 & Climax** TP2 propels the story toward the finish; Climax resolves the central question, releases the main tension, and tests the protagonist's growth.	**Practical Script Doctoring & Rhythms:** Action-beat turning points, scene beats, thematic development, and subtext integration.

The Poetics by Aristotle

Pages: ca 178

written in the 4th century BC

"*...the nobler ones imitate good actions and those of the good, but the ordinary ones those of the bad.“*

Background information:

At the age of 20 Aristotle came to Athens to become Plato's greatest pupil and later opponent. The difference between the sober, empirical and evidence-oriented scientist and his poetically inspired teacher, who was guided by beauty and ideals, could hardly be deeper. It may seem all the more astonishing that Aristotle, the founder of the "logos", wrote a treatise on poetics.

The roots of this project can be traced back to Plato's contempt for the reproductive arts, to which he counted painting and poetry. According to his theory of ideas, everything that exists is the image of an existing idea. To reproduce this image again, as is done in reproductive art, he saw as a disparagement of the original idea, because it was a copy of a copy. He also despised the fact that poetry addresses the inner driving forces and thereby arouses the passions of the spectator and consequently, in his view, destroys reason.

Although there are critical remarks by Plato that say something about the essence of poetics, it was Aristotle who, in his comprehensive study of poetics, established rules that are still important today. There is no known work of earlier date on the structure of a drama, and even this one was not actually intended for publication. It is an achromatic writing, which was intended for internal school use only.

"The thorny read", as some say, seems sketchy, the second part of the book, the treatise on comedy, is missing. But due to some references one can assume that the author was convinced that the basic dramatic principles about the tragedy summarized under the headings "Dramatic Basic Principles" and "Creating a Drama" in the following part, apply to both drama forms. The train of thought shows "a strange

mixture of discipline and arbitrariness," which is probably due to the fact that it is a copy of an oral lecture made by a student. But after getting used to it, the content is relatively easy to understand, since Aristotle explains each of his introduced terms clearly and in detail.

A summary of these extensive explanations has been omitted in order to maintain a comparable thematic structure with the other works on dramaturgy. For the same reason, the inclusion of the Chorus and Melody in the antique production is only mentioned in a footnote.

The significance of the work for the history of dramaturgy is beyond question. Here we can see which basic principles have survived the millennia. However, reading it is only recommended to those who wish to get the most authentic impression possible. In many of the works that followed Aristotle's poetics, the Aristotelian rules are formulated much more stringently and also more reader-friendly.

Definition of a drama:

Dramas imitate those who are active, whereby “all characters are defined as acting and being active”. This is true of both comedy and tragedy. Tragedy and comedy, viewed as a whole, are imitations of reality composed of rhythm, melody and verse.

Structure of a drama:

"A whole is what has a beginning, middle and end. Furthermore, tragedy rests not only on the arrangement of these constituent parts, but also on the fact that it is of a certain size.“ Beauty is based on size and arrangement. This means that a certain size of the events is required, but it must always remain clearly structured, and, derived from this, a certain extension of the action is necessary so that what is shown is easily impressed in the memory.

The required limitation of the size results from the successive events according to probability or necessity, which bring about a transition from happiness to misfortune or from misfortune to happiness. The play's fable does not form a unity simply because it revolves around a single hero. Because an almost infinite number of events can happen to the hero, which in itself cannot result in any unity. “As an imitation of a unified act, the fable is based on a single, and indeed a complete act.”

Furthermore, the parts of the events must be put together in such a way that if any part is rearranged or removed, the whole thing changes and is mixed up. Because what without visible consequences can either be present or missing, is not even a part of the Whole."

Every tragedy consists of connection and resolution. The connection usually includes the necessary preceding events up to the part of the action which immediately precedes the turning point into happiness or misfortune. The solution encompasses the portion of the plot from the beginning of this turning point to the end. Imitation not only has a self-contained act as its object, but it must also contain something terrifying and deplorable. These effects mainly come about when events occur contrary to expectations but nevertheless consistently emerging from each other. It makes a certain big difference whether one event occurs logically as a result of another or just follows another event. The turning points and transition points are summarized under the term “Peripeteia and Recognition”. “Peripeteia is the reversal of what is to be achieved into the opposite, according to probability or necessity. Recognition is a turn from ignorance to knowledge, with the result that friendship or enmity occurs, depending on whether those involved are determined to be good or bad. "

Peripeteia and recognition must result from the composition of the fable itself, i.e. they must emerge with necessity or probability from earlier events.

Best is the Recognition, if it occurs at the same time as Peripeteia, as is the case with Oedipus. Besides Peripeteia and Recognition "heavy suffering" is an essential part of the tragedy. "Serious suffering results from painful events, such as death on open stage, severe pain, wounds and the like."

The ancient tragedy is divided into six sections: prologue, episode, exodus and choral part, which in turn can be a parodos or a stasimon.

Basic dramatic principles:

“Comedy tries to imitate people who are worse than they appear in reality. Tragedy seeks to imitate better people than they appear in reality.”

“Comedy is the imitation of bad people, yet not with regard to every kind of badness, but only insofar as the ridiculous partakes in the ugly. The ridiculous is a mistake associated with ugliness, which, however, does not cause pain or destruction, just as the ridiculous mask is ugly and distorted, but without the expression of pain.

“Tragedy is the imitation of a good and self-contained action of a certain size, in attractively formed language, which, through the imitation of actors and not through report, evokes wailing and shuddering and thereby causes a purification of such states of excitement.” It takes place within the course of the sun or goes only a little further.

“The imitation of action is what I call the myth. What I mean by myth here is the composition of the events. I understand by characters what allows us to attribute a certain quality to the actors. By cognitive ability I mean that with which they present something in their speeches or give a judgment. The most important part is the assembly of the events. Because tragedy is not an imitation of people, but of action and reality." Hence, the actors do not act to mimic characters, but only for the act's sake.

Therefore the events--today one would say the “subject”--are the fundamental theme of the story and myth is the real goal of tragedy. The goal is most important of all. “Without a plot, no tragedy can come about, but it can without characters”, because the tragedy affects the audience most of all with the components of myth, precisely those peripeteias and recognitions mentioned earlier. The foundation and, so to speak, the soul of tragedy lies in myth.

In second place are the characters who are characterized by the degree of wickedness and goodness. “So actors imitate those who are either better or worse than us, or who are just like us. Tragedy is an imitation of action, and therefore also an imitation of characters. The character is what he shows to be his inclinations and their quality, and expresses himself through his capacity for knowledge, with the ability to express what is appropriate. Those speeches show no character in which it is not at all clear what the speaker tends to do or what he rejects. The capacity for knowledge is shown in the speeches of the characters about whether something is or is not, or when they make general judgments. The staging can be impressive, but it is artless and has hardly anything to do with poetry, because the effect of the tragedy comes about without a performance and actors.”

So tragedy is the imitation of actions and their effects. Recognition results in misfortune or luck. Recognition can occur in inanimate objects or in response to something that someone did or did not do. The best way to recognize people is in action or fable, because such recognition causes the intentional “wailing and shuddering”.

Creation of a drama:

It is not the task of the poet to tell what has really happened, but rather what could happen, i.e. what is possible according to the rules of probability or necessity. In comedy, the poets put the fable together according to the rules of probability and only then give the characters any names. In tragedy, the poets stick to the names of people who have really lived. One need not, however, strive to adhere strictly to the traditional facts on which the tragedies are based. “Such an endeavor would also be ridiculous, since what is known is known only to a few and the action should nevertheless bring pleasure to everyone.

"It follows from this that the activity of the poet extends more to the fables, than to the verses: he is, after all, a poet with regard to imitation, and that which he imitates, are actions." While structuring the actions and during the linguistic elaboration, the poet is requested to imagine the action vividly. "For if one sees the action with the greatest clarity, just as if one were present at the events as they take place, one easily detects the right thing and overlooks which is least appropriate or which contradicts."

Necessity or probability should always be taken into consideration when it comes to the characters - as in the combination of events - i.e. that it is necessary or probable that such a person says or does such a thing, and that one action follows the other with necessity or probability. Here, too, it helps to imagine the gestures of the people as vividly as possible. “The most convincing, with the same talent, are those who put themselves in the shoes of the passionate. The excited best represents excitement, the angry best represents anger.”

Since tragedy is the imitation of people who are better than us, individual traits must be reproduced, but at the same time they should be portrayed more ideally than the average person. A hero can be irascible and reckless, but righteous nonetheless.

The linguistic form of a tragedy should be clear and at the same time not banal. The linguistic form is clearest when it consists of nothing but common words; but then it is banal. The linguistic form is sublime when it uses a lot of foreign words. But using just such words, the result is either a mystery or barbarism. Extensions, shortenings and modifications of words contribute to the clarity as well as the unusualness of the linguistic form. If expressions are different from the usual expression and deviate from the usual, they bring about the unusual, if they are close to the usual, they bring about clarity.

A poet should speak as little as possible as a person himself, but should speak through his characters. The fables should not be composed of inconsistent parts, but rather contain nothing inconsistent. If you do it anyway, then the action should appear believable; weird or strange actions are also permissible under this condition: “The impossible, which is probable, deserves preference over the possible, which is implausible.” Since the poet is an imitator, he must always choose one of three modes of imitation: either he presents things as they are or as they were , or he puts them as they say they are and as they seem to be, or he puts them as they should be.

Since the composition of a good tragedy is supposed to imitate what is terrifying and pitiful, flawless men must not experience a transition from happiness to misery; for this is neither terrifying nor pathetic, but rather abhorrent.

Likewise, villains are not allowed to experience a transition from misfortune or misery to happiness; it is the most un-tragic of all possibilities: it is neither philanthropic, nor pitiful, nor terrifying. On the other hand, even the very bad may not experience a transition from happiness to misery. Such a combination would contain philanthropy, but neither wailing nor shuddering but only boredom. This leaves us with a hero standing between the possibilities mentioned. This is someone who, not in spite of his moral greatness and his outstanding sense of justice, but also not because of his wickedness and meanness, experiences a turn into bad luck, but because of a mistake he makes. The good fable must not turn from bad luck to good luck, but rather it must change from good luck to bad luck, not because of the meanness but because of a great mistake on the part of the hero. The dreadful and pitiful can be caused by the staging, but it can also be determined by the combination of the events themselves, which is better and shows the better poet.

Events that are terrible or lamentable, and the severe suffering almost always occur in close quarters, because the closeness is often what causes the lament. The effect of an action results from the tension between the plan and the execution, which offers the following possibilities: Someone knowingly performs a bad action. One acts without realizing the horror of the act. A person intends to do something incurable out of ignorance, but gains knowledge before doing the deed.

Recognition through signs such as scars or jewelry has least to do with poetry, but is often used out of embarrassment. It is better to create a recognition based on memory or by inference that the characters draw from the events.

The composition of the events must not resemble a history book, because then the plot will be too extensive, confusing and complicated. Although the war of Troy had a

beginning and an end, Homer has only focused only on a detail while he covered the other events in numerous episodes.

It is evident that the solution of the action must result from the action itself and not through the intervention of a god. The intervention of a god may only be used in what is outside the stage action, or what has happened before it and what a person cannot know, or what will happen after it and what needs prediction or announcement.

Chinatown according to the rules of Aristotle

Aristotle's definition of a drama as an imitation of reality by people in action is fulfilled in Chinatown. All characters involved are defined by their activities. The resulting actions are part of a whole and each action unit is essential for the whole: The actions of all secondary characters such as the gardener or the servant Kahn also contribute significantly to the course of the action: the gardener gives Gittes the decisive indication that the pond contains salt water, the residence of the servant Kahn provides the decisive reason why the final part of the plot moves to Chinatown.

The plot is told from Gittes' perspective, the composition of the events is logical and straightforward, from Gittes' acceptance of the job to the dissolution.

The division of the story into the essential two parts, linkage/connection and solution, can also be clearly outlined. Gittes accepts a job of discovery, overcomes obstacles to solve it, until a turnaround is announced, when Gittes recognizes the connection Cross / Mulwray and establishes an emotional connection with Evelyn Mulwray himself, which is a typical heroic mistake. The solution is closely linked to recognition, especially the recognition of Noah Cross' brutal claim of limitless power and Evelyn Mulwray's confession of incest. The end, the resolution of the events, makes the viewer shudder, as it leaves the hero mentally wounded in Chinatown. The audience comes to know that Gittes, in the past, has already made the same mistake. Every event is here the logical consequence of another event, the inner logic is preserved.

Aristotle demands that the frame of the story should be temporally probable and comprehensible, and finds the duration of a day to be appropriate. The backstory , the elements of which are combined in the first part of the tragedy to prepare for the peripeteia, began years ago. The chain of events in told Chinatown (on the stage) is probable and comprehensible.

Gitte’s previous experiences in Chinatown and Evelyn Mulwray’s incestuous relationship are essential elements, but performing them would be beyond the scope. The tragedy begins when both strands join together (Mulwray hires Gittes) and thus a few days before the solution. This also fulfills the requirement that the fable is the imitation of a single complete plot: the plot portrayed depicts Gittes’ ’uncovering of Noah Cross’ crimes and his simultaneous fatal involvement in the events.

Aristotle demands that action is being given a prevalence before character. This is in part fulfilled, in another part it is not. One part of the backstory serves to lay the foundation for Gittes' fatal ambition to this time go to the bottom of things. It is thus dedicated to character description much more than to depict a character's actions. All the rest of the events that lead up to and are being told in Chinatown, including Evelyn Mulwray’s fatal relation to her father and the resulting birth of her sister/daughter are action or plot in the purest sense of the word.

Aristotle's higher estimation of the course of the plot is probably based on the fact that the antique tragedies had a limited set of "fixed" characters with fixed characteristics. Aristotle emphasized furthermore that a tragedy was the depiction of "better" people than in reality. This demand is also met in Chinatown. The hero, Gittes, and Evelyn Mulwray are ‘larger than life’ characters. Gittes is obsessed with loyalty and truth finding , ever since he failed a client and caused their death, to an extent that makes him a “better” person than the average sleuth. Evelyn Mulwray is also obsessed with loyalty (to her family) and with keeping a secret, even if it risks destroying her very life. Again, we are confronted with a level of commitment that makes her a “better” or larger than life character.

Aristotle also stated that the hero should combine both good and bad character traits to make it easier for the spectator to relate. Both Gittes and Evelyn Mulwray, fulfil this demand. Also Aristotle's demand to balance the language between the banal and the sophisticated is fulfilled. The different linguistic styles, the distinguished Evelyn Mulwray, Gittes’ often raw and obscene tone, down to the gardener's broken English, are neither too lofty nor too banal.

The decisive recognition turns the course of history considerably and, as Aristoteles demanded, contains something terrifying and deplorable.

Gittes recognizes from photos that Mulwray and Cross had a very tense relationship. The water scandal is established as a decisive motive for murder for Cross. This recognition provides a crucial clue, but not yet the climax. Only Evelyn's confession, which Gittes knocks out of her because he thinks she is guilty when he discovers her

with the supposed lover of Hollis Mulwray, brings the truth and the whole horror to light: here suffering, shudder and a decisive insight come together through the confession of incest, which also confirms Aristotle's rule that the terrible always takes place in close relationships.

Here is the decisive turning point of the course of action into disaster. Behind the truth that Gittes was looking for, there is another, more terrible truth. Gittes' tragic mistake as a hero lies in overconfidence, or more classically, in pride. He believes he is able to deal with Cross alone and frame him of murder, but Cross overpowers him. This seals the fate, the final change from happiness to misfortune has taken place: Evelyn Mulwray finds death, her daughter / sister is in the hands of her perverted father / grandfather, Gittes, as in the past, guilty of pride, has destroyed his own and other people's lives. He is an utterly failed man.

The Hamburg Dramaturgy by G. E. Lessing

Pages: 696

“Because nothing is great that is not true.”

Background information:

The Hamburg Dramaturgy is not a systematic textbook on drama, like the Poetics of Aristotle, which he abstracted from the plays of his time, but a series of theater reviews that Lessing wrote as the dramaturg of the first German national theater in Hamburg. Lessing’s individual theater reviews sometimes seem out of date from today's perspective, they lack the current reference, but the fundamental considerations on dramaturgy that Lessing derives from his reviews have created a new understanding of drama and are to this day the basis of bourgeois theater culture. Until well into the 18th century, the works of classical authors were considered ideal. Criticism of contemporary theater plays was limited to examining whether the classical rules were formally observed. Lessing allowed neither ancient ideals nor the prevailing tastes of the aristocracy to serve as foundation for a valid criticism and evaluation of theatrical pieces. He put criticism on a rational basis.

Lessing's literary criticism is to be understood as a socially critical instrument within the framework of the bourgeois Enlightenment. He wanted to expand the intellectual freedom within the absolutist state. His reinterpretation of the Aristotelian rules established "a bourgeois-humanitarian theory of drama." Lessing's rule that tragedy should arouse fear and pity and thereby achieve a cleansing effect makes the theater a "school of the moral world." In it, Compassion has been made a virtuous skill. Lessing's “doctrine of catharsis” became so popular that its source, Aristotle, was forgotten or, worse, Aristotle was translated using Lessing's words. Lessing's doctrine of catharsis is basically a misinterpretation of the Aristotelian core terms Eleos, Phobos and, above all, Catharsis. Aristotle had no philanthropic sentiments in mind. He wanted theater to create horror, not moral fear, he wanted the viewers to feel with the hero and not to be compassionate about the virtues she or he displayed. In Aristotle's work, Eleos has nothing to do with Christian compassion, but can be translated as empathetic emotion that overwhelms the viewer in the face of an undeserved suffering.

With the Catharsis, Aristotle did not, as Lessing assumed, strive for a moral purification in order to produce a better person. Aristotle was concerned with a very real, physical cleansing. The viewer should be freed from physical and emotional excitement, these should be excreted through shudder and sadness. But Lessing's misunderstanding was also productive: his criticism of contemporary drama not only created a theory of bourgeois theater in the sense of the Enlightenment. The moral claim formulated by Lessing made drama the most important literary genre of the 19th century. Lessing's formal expectations of a drama are still effective today.

The book is a theatrical guide through the 18th century. Lessing uses a pointed, at times polemical and yet entertaining style. A large part of his dramaturgy is already contained in the detailed descriptions of the plays listed. The theoretical explanations are therefore scattered and not systematically recorded. It's not always easy to consume. But it is definitely worth reading the original and not one of the many interpretations and summaries.

Definition of a drama:

"Actions are the real subject of poetry," says Lessing in his treatise on the piece "Laocoon." He declares drama to be the most poetic of all literary genres, since it ideally combines a spatial idea with movement in time and thus creates a message. In this way a maximum illusion is achieved and the greatest possible effect on the viewer. Like Aristotle, he sees the task of dramatic poetry in imitating actions. Acting people should arouse passions in the viewer by generating pity and fear in order to purify them. “The dramatic form is the only one in which pity and fear can be aroused; at least in no other form can these passions be aroused to such a high degree. "

Structure of a drama:

“It is true that I wanted to be done soon with Aristotle's reputation, if only I knew how to come to terms with his reasons.” It is not so much Aristotle's reputation as the reasonableness of his system, which conforms to the rules of nature and reason, that justifies Lessing's high esteem for the philosopher. Lessing's criticism, imbued with the spirit of the Enlightenment, evaluates Aristotle's “Poetics” as “a work just as infallible” as the elements established by the mathematician Euclides: “These principles are as true as they are certain.” In the "Poetics" Lessing sees the outline of every drama

represented, so that "one cannot step away from Aristotle's guideline without straying just as far from its perfection."

In Lessing's detailed interpretation of Aristotelian doctrine, however, many significant shifts in emphasis become clear: Earlier Italian, French and German commentators saw the theater as a courtly art of representation. Therefore, in “Poetics” they focused on strict observance of the courtly rules and the class clause. Lessing, on the other hand, only deals with those rules that have an effect on the viewer, to whom he then assigns their formal aspects. “The unity of action was the first dramatic law of the ancients; the unity of time and place were only consequences of that." In contemporary French theater plays, Lessing consequently criticizes the mechanistic adherence to the rules, because they often lead to confused and improbable actions. In his review of “Merope” by Voltaire, for example, he says that you have to accept too many inconsistencies just so that all events can take place in one day: “Of course, it is not impossible to court a woman and be married to her within 12 hours; especially if you can drag her by brute force in front of the priest. But it is self-evident that a person who has only a spark of reason in themselves would actually never act in this way."

What is required is rather a “simplifying of the action itself, as had been done in antiquity, separating everything superfluous from it so carefully that it, reduced to its essential components, becomes nothing but an ideal of this action. The most happily developed form is the one that requires the least addition of circumstances of time and place. ”

The course of action must be designed in such a way that time and space coordinates naturally and probably result from them. Naturalness and probability are the criteria with which Lessing tries to determine the relationship between reality and drama in ever new attempts.

Basic dramatic principles:

For Lessing, art is not limited to the faithful imitation of nature: it is not enough “to imitate the nature of phenomena without paying the slightest attention to the nature of our sensations and forces of our souls.” For Lessing it is “the determination of art” to organize the diversity of nature through isolation and concentration into a beautiful whole that corresponds to human comprehension and arouses feelings. A good

tragedy is a “natural representation of human life”: this is based not only on a mechanical following of the “units”, but also on the “natural course” of the action, which must appear as a “chain of causes and effects in everything that happens so that it cannot happen otherwise.”

In the structure of the work, the natural corresponds to the probable, i.e. the totality of events must appear just as necessary and consistent as the order of nature. Only the probability guarantees the recognition of the depicted real life and the credibility of the depiction. Therefore Lessing excludes everything that is “intricate and novel-like, wonderful and heavenly”, but expects an action to be “simple and natural, true and human” so that the passions arise in front of the viewer, the illusion grows and he sympathizes. For Lessing, compassion is at the center of his catharsis interpretation: “This is the purpose of tragedy, it should expand our ability to feel pity. It should not only teach us to feel compassion for this or that unhappy person, but it should make us feel to such an extent that the unhappy person must move us and win us over at all times and in all shapes. The most compassionate person is the best person, the most inclined to all social virtues, to all kinds of generosity. So whoever makes us compassionate makes us better and more virtuous, and the tragedy that does that also does this or - it does that in order to be able to do this."

The emotional experience should develop socio-ethical habits through compassion. Lessing criticizes the plays of the French playwright Corneille, because in them “everything breathes heroism” and of the Christian tragedy he says that the martyrs like madmen “throw themselves to their deaths without any need, with contempt for all their civic obligations.” That is contrary to “the voice of common sense”. The bourgeois tragedy does not call for supermen, but rather middle characters who deserve our compassion. Lessing sees fear as the only necessary complementary term to compassion. Only fear guarantees the perfect effect of the tragedy. Fear, Lessing assumes, is an effect that does not relate so much to the hero, but rather is directed to the viewer him- or herself, increasing compassion: “It is the fear for ourselves that arises from our resemblance to the suffering person; it is the fear that the misfortunes which we see inflicted upon them may also affect us; it is the fear that we can become the pitied object ourselves: in a word: fear is compassion related to ourselves."

With fear being defined as self-centered compassion, the Aristotelian mean character takes on bourgeois traits, all the more when Lessing demands that the playwright let him “think and act as we would have thought and acted in his circumstances, in short describe him as very similar to us." Lessing also demands the portrayal of nobles as

normal people who speak passionately instead of ceremonially, to be shown in private rather than in public circumstances, because this is the only way to evoke emotions in the audience. "If we have pity on kings, then we have it with them as human beings, and not as kings." Of course, not every misfortune and not every character is dramatically effective. There are enough people who combine pathetic contradictions. "But for that very reason, these cannot be objects of poetic imitation. for they are not emblematic. A character that lacks being emblematic lacks also intention." They lack the firmness of character and determination that Aristotle demanded of a dramatic character, and thus they miss the purpose of drama and art.

Lessing does not go into more detail about the Aristotelian concepts of the change of luck (peripeteia) and recognition (anagnorisis); they certainly make the dramatic fable more complex and interesting, but for him they are "not essential pieces of the fable." For Lessing, the decisive characteristic of tragedy is that it arouses passions in order to develop our philanthropic emotions.

Lessing also sees the purpose of improving people as realized in comedy. “Comedy seeks to improve through laughter; but not just to laugh at something or someone; not exactly those bad habits at which it makes us laugh, still less just those in which these ridiculous bad habits are found. Their real general benefit lies in the laughter itself; in exercising our ability to see the ridiculous."

Molière's “The Miser” will never improve a miser, but it is enough for comedy “if it cannot cure desperate diseases to fix the healthy in their health. A preventive agent is also a valuable medicine; and the whole of morality has nothing more powerful or effective than the ridiculous. "

Creation of a drama:

“So what should the poet do? He succeeds in ensuring that we perceive nothing but the most natural, orderly course everywhere; that with every step that he lets his characters take, we must confess that we would have taken it ourselves, with the same degree of passion, under similar circumstances; that nothing alienates us except the imperceptible approach of a goal from which our makes our imagination cringe, and at which we finally find ourselves, full of deepest compassion for those who are carried away by such a fatal stream, and full of horror at the realization that we ourselves could be carried away by a similar stream; To commit things that we believed were far away from us when seen in cold blood.” The genius knows how to neither weaken the

interest through entanglements, nor to generate losses in probability: “to put oneself as the narrator in the very shoes of each person; not describe the passions, but rather "let them arise" before the eyes of the spectator.”

Lessing also opposes a superficial concept of action: “Showing characters who act on purpose is what distinguishes genius from the lesser artists who only write poetry to write poetry, who only imitate to imitate, who are content with the little pleasure associated with the application of their resources." In the theater we should not learn what this or that person has done, but what every person of a certain character will do under certain given circumstances." He justifies the encouragement that aristocrats should use a natural language which, beyond pomp and etiquette, “should transform machines in real people again,” as follows: People who talk in the privacy of “their four walls” do not need the rhetorical language of public representation; even noble people in a state of passion would speak with an eloquence “inspired by nature only.” Only nature bears witness of these sensations and only nature can arouse those sensations.

The drama is not about historical memories or facts, but about what is typical and possible in human terms: “In poetic imitation, all persons without distinction should speak and act not as they could on their own, but as each of them would and should speak or act in the same circumstances." The recording of history is therefore limited to the uniqueness and specialness of an event, the dramatist, on the other hand, aims at humankind itself: he has to show how each and every person would act under similar circumstances. The playwright can freely deal with the facts, the historical circumstances, as he wants," as long as they do not contradict the characters." The facts are not conceivable without people who act, and what is instructive is precisely that “these characters, under these circumstances, tend to and must produce such facts.”

Therefore, the characteristics of historical personalities must not be chosen or changed for no reason. The historical name is associated with certain typical ideas of their character that go beyond the unique life story. In comedy, eloquent names can indicate what is typical of the characters, while in tragedy the dramatist has to work out precisely what elevates the character above the particular fate of the individual. So the playwright chooses the subject because of the real characters who made history, but “the dramatic poet is not a historian”: he is not so interested in historical truth as he has “a very different and higher purpose”. History is only a means for him to do this. He reduces the complexity of the story to a “well-arranged fable” in order to deceive the viewer and “trigger compassion through deception”. Only the illusion as the true

appearance of art enables identification and compassionate feelings. The difference lies in the fact that history reports what happened or what certain personalities have experienced or achieved, while poetry depicts "the nature of what happened and what was possible according to probability or necessity." On the basis of this generalization, Lessing justifies, in agreement with Aristotle, that "poetry is more philosophical and consequently more instructive than history." When choosing the title, Lessing recommends restraint: “A title does not have to be a recipe. The less it reveals about the content, the better it is."

Chinatown according to the rules of G.E. Lessing

Lessing based his formal criteria heavily on Aristotle, so that with regard to the structure of the plot, reference can be made to the analysis using Aristotle's criteria. However, due to a misinterpretation of his ancient role model, Lessing set a completely different focus: for him, the intention of a dramatic work is to arouse pity and fear, which should contribute to a moral training of the human being. Chinatown fully meets this requirement:

Evelyn Mulwray's incestuous past, her struggle for her child and her death in the end are events that arouse compassion. The compassion generated arouses fear of the nefarious, completely amoral Noah Cross whose victim Evelyn is. The audience also feels sorry for the smart, arrogant and too self-absorbed J.J. Gittes. Gittes believes to be an expert, one who “has seen it all.” When Gittes realizes that Noah Cross is an adversary several seizes too big for him, it is too late. Even if Gittes is not the most sympathetic kind of character, the viewer is able to identify with him and asks himself whether he doesn't run the risk, too, of overestimating himself and grossly underestimating the mercilessness of an "evil god" like Noah Cross.

In addition, it was Roman Polanski's intention to portray his characters entangled in corruption in an opaque but superficial world. To a certain degree everybody in this story is in way over their head, yet they all suffer from the fatal delusion to be in control. Obvious parallels with our contemporary world trigger a frightened and compassionate reaction in the audience.

Chinatown breaks with the Hollywood convention of the victory of good over evil, the "happy ending", and makes the film almost a classic heroic tragedy. Gittes, the hero, makes the mistake of overestimating himself. He thinks he's an expert on the opaque balance of power in the city and knows which buttons to press. His grave misjudgment

of who really rules and even what rules really apply costs him and Evelyn Mulwray their lives.

Lessing's claim to educate the viewer to be a better person through emotions is fulfilled here in the most direct possible form. The viewer translates his sympathy for Mulwray and Gitte's fate into a lesson for himself: Never overestimate your limited ability to fight true evil. In addition, the story triggers a higher socio-ethical sensitivity to existing social structures.

Lessing's requirement to use the story only as a blueprint so that emblematic characters can appear is also met. The water scandal described actually happened in Los Angeles in the 1920s. It was of course much more complex and there is no incest story recorded in the context that would have played a role in it. However, the violence that Noah Cross inflicts on his daughter is, in the most effective way, a symbol of the violence that the actors of the capitalist system are wielding against the population by making the basic service, water, a commodity that they control in order to generate profit achieve.

Roman Polanski's distanced portrayal of the characters also puts the “teaching,” that is, their symbolic function, in the foreground: Gittes is the tragic hero, Mulwray is the innocent victim, many others are willing pawns of the antagonist, Cross, or assistants of the tragic hero. Polanski's unpretentious style harbors a high degree of authenticity: emotions are never exaggerated. Only well chosen dramatic circumstances force the characters to react emotionally. Little by little they become more understandable, more credible, more human in their actions. Lessing's other important demand is also fulfilled: At the end of the day, the viewer has to admit that he probably would have acted in the same way as Gittes or Mulwray.

The language used is authentic and always appropriate: Private Eye Gittes fluctuates between a formal, elegant style and a colloquial language. He shows that he is an expert in the various milieus in the city. Evelyn Mulwray's pronounced speaking style becomes simple and open in dramatic and emotional moments. In these moments she does not appear explicitly as a representative of the upper class, but as a real person who deals with real emotions and makes it easier for the audience to identify with her. Lessing's demand to "depict kings as human beings" and "let them speak as such in their private settings" is thus also fulfilled.

The laws of the unity of time and place are observed in Chinatown, as demanded by Lessing, without their observance leading to absurd situations: the spatial unit, the area of Los Angeles and County, is determined by the local water scandal. The temporal unit

is indicated by adequate means: Gittes always wears the same suit, the blue eye of the cheating wife, or also Gittes' famous cut on the nose, show us that there is a rather short period of time between the beginning and the end. The plot of the detective story begins with the assignment and ends with the revelation, all steps that Gittes takes, from whose perspective we experience the events, are logically and consequently built on one another. The film fulfills Lessing's demand that events do not simply follow one another, but are causally connected with one another. The process surprises the viewer again and again. For example, it is not immediately clear what Gittes is looking for in the godforsaken place in the Central Valley until he is almost killed by the masses of water and the viewer realizes that Gittes believes he has tracked down a gigantic scandal.

All in all, it can be said that Chinatown perfectly fulfills Lessing's demands for dramatic poetry in almost all points. It is certainly one of the reasons for the worldwide success of the film that it wants to convey a "message" in the best Lessingian sense by confronting its audience with the tragic consequences of a deeply moral dilemma.

The Technique of Drama by Gustav Freytag

Pages: 310

First publication: S. Hirzel, Leipzig 1886

“The poet thinks he is driving his characters, and he is secretly driven by them.”

Background information:

Freytag's “Technique of Drama” is described as “curious” in the epilogue of modern editions, “because it was created and published at a time when dramatic production in the German language was at a remarkable low, with the exception of Friedrich Hebbel and Franz Grillparzer. The explanation is often given that in Bismarck's era, the dramatic political and social reality preempted the stage drama: the stage drama had difficulties to succeed because the real drama on the stage of contemporary politics worked so well. Gustav Freytag was the speaker, writer and representative of the liberal bourgeoisie in the 19th century. In 1839 he became a lecturer in German language and literature in Breslau. However, when his lectures on cultural history, some of which were critical of society, were banned, he ended his academic career and became editor of the national-liberal journal “Die Grenzboten,” (The Border Sentinel) which set itself the task of of reconciling the bourgeoisie with the revolutionary mood that dominated in the society after the failed revolutions of 1848 / 1949 and bring about compromises in society’s power relations.

His successful contemporary novel “Soll und Haben” (Debit and Credit) gives a good insight into the bourgeois emotions and worldview of the time.

At the time of the publication of Freytag's dramaturgy, there was an inflation in theories of dramaturgy. “Das Drama der Gegenwart”, “Das neue Deutsche Drama”, “Zur Geschichte des Dramas” and “Das Moderne Drama” appeared in the same period. The intention of all these works was to "provide younger art lovers with some craftsmanship rules in an undemanding form."

The belief in the value of rules was reawakened after the turbulent Sturm und Drang period and the politically troubled times of the pre-March Era: “We easily think that restriction by rules means the death of free artistic creation. No error has never been greater. Precisely a well-developed system of individual regulations, a certain restriction

rooted in popular habit, in the choice of materials and the construction of the pieces have been the best aid to creative power at different times." Freytag's structural analysis of the drama as a five-act, pyramid-shaped work appeared to some of his contemporaries as a “cookbook for dramatists”, but it has retained its canonical value to this day. Freytag's structural sketch is still used today in schools to explain the structure of a tragedy. Freytag left out how a comedy should be structured, although he himself wrote one with “Die Journalisten”. Its methodically listed criteria cannot compete with the sharpness of mind and the wit of Lessing's dramaturgy, but the work is characterized by a precise clarity and orderliness, which makes the Structure of a drama more accessible to the reader than the extravagant, associating trains of thought by Lessing.

Freytag differs from Lessing, whom he appreciates very much, since he does not see the function of the drama in moral purification through compassion, but sees the drama as a means of spiritual elevation through the enjoyment of art. He interprets Aristotle differently than Lessing and is influenced by the high ideals of his time. In essence, Freytag agrees with Aristotle's predominance of plot or action. However, he describes in detail Shakespeare's strength in the character description and emphasizes that the importance of the characters compared to the pure course of the plot has increased compared to antiquity.

However, in accordance with Aristotle, he evaluates the plot as the determining element to which the characters subordinate themselves as dramatic elements. The book is clearly structured and a good read. The comparison of the Attic and Germanic mentality (to which he also counts Shakespeare) reflects the efforts of Freytag’s epoch to sort and classify things into tangible structures.

Definition of a drama:

"The drama represents action through characters through words, voices, gestures, those soul processes that a person goes through from the first occurrence of an impression to passionate desire and finally action, as well as the inner movements that are stimulated by their own and others' actions." “Dramatic are those strong movements of the soul which harden themselves to the point of will and doing, and those soul movements which are excited by an action; as well as the influences which one's own and other people's actions produce in the soul; thus the outflow of willpower from the deep mind to the outside world and the inflow of determining

influences from the outside world into the inside of the mind; thus the becoming of an action and its consequences on the mind.” Freytag describes the action itself and the passionate movement as not being dramatic.

“The task of dramatic art is not to portray a passion as such, but to portray the passion that leads to an action. The task of dramatic art is not the representation of an event itself, but its effect on the human soul."

Structure of a drama

The Structure of a drama is supposed to show the two opposites: outflow and inflow of willpower, the becoming of the deed and its reflexes on the soul, fight and counter-fight as a unity: “The content of the drama is always a fight that causes strong soul movements which pit the hero against opposing forces. "These two opposing forces of the drama are connected by a point, roughly in the middle of the plot, the climax. The climax forms the apex of the pyramid-like course of the drama." It rises from the introduction with the introduction of the exciting moment to the climax and falls from there to the catastrophe."

The five parts are both divided and connected by three dramatic moments that are between introduction and intensification, between climax and reversal, and between reversal and catastrophe.

Elements of the drama:

(d) (e)

(c) (f)

(b) (g)

(a) (h)

(a) Introduction

(b) Approximate location of the first dramatic moment (excitement)

(c) intensification

(d) Climax

(e) Approximate location of the second dramatic moment (tragedy strikes)

(f) Fall or Reversal

(g) Approximate location of the third dramatic moment (ultimate tension)

(h) Disaster

The introduction (a) characterizes place, time, social setting, living conditions and the active or passive behavior of the hero. The rhythm and the mood of the piece are introduced. It is at the discretion of the poet which part of which force he lets dominate in the course of the action: the active hero will act first, then, after the climax (d), provoke the hostile reaction of those around him and plunge into catastrophe(h). A passive hero reacts first to the pressure of the hostile environment until at the dramatic climax his opponents plunge him into disaster. The five parts of the drama: introduction (a), intensification (c), climax (d), falling plot or reversal (f), and catastrophe (h), are both separated and connected by three important scenic moments, the moment of excitement (b), the moment when ragedy strikes (e) and the moment of ultimate tension (g). The five parts of the drama roughly coincide with the five acts of classical tragedy already listed by Aristotle. Each act contains an introduction and a climax as a unit of action.

Freytag recommends “striking the first chord after the opening of the stage as strongly and emphatically as the character of the piece allows”, or, he suggests, to show the first ripple of the waves by “small soul movements of the main characters.” The introduction (a) usually includes the exposition, the exciting moment and the first scene of intensification (b). With the exciting moment (b) on the threshold between introduction (a) and intensification (c), the actual action takes place. In terms of content, it describes the moment at which the hero's need that has grown in the soul forces him to act, or at which the opposing element decides to use its levers to set the hero in motion. The exciting moment (b) can fill an entire scene or consist of just a few words. It has the function of a trend-setting, preparatory motif, it should not be insignificant, but also not stand out too strongly in order to allow further tension to be built up. The intensification (c) changes the state and quality of the action set in motion.

The main characters explained their nature and their motives and thereby justified their participation. Now mood and passion rise. This is where the antagonists are introduced at the latest. The intensification can include several scene sequences with increasing intensity up to the climax (d). The climax is the culmination of the action resulting in a fight. In terms of content, the “breaking out of the deed from the hero's soul or from the fateful impressions flowing into it, the first great result of the intensified struggle or the beginning of the deadly inner conflict” is dramatized. "The poet will have to use all the splendor of poetry, all the dramatic power he possesses to bring out this center of his work of art."

The dramatic climax of the event must stand in firm connection with both the preceding and the following. The moment of climax comprises moments that are grouped around a strongly protruding central scene. The tragic moment represents the beginning of the counteraction and stands exactly between climax and reversal. it is supposed to occur suddenly and unexpectedly to describe something “sad, terrible, dark” as a result of the causal connection of the events. Freytag attaches the following conditions to the tragic moment:

"1. It must be important and momentous for the hero.

2. It must pop up unexpectedly.

3. It must be reasonably related to earlier parts of the plot through a chain of secondary events and be as such visible to the viewer. "

Freytag describes this beginning of the reaction to the hero's deed as one of the most important moments in the drama, since it vividly portrays the hero's finite possibilities and his fateful situation and re-motivates the suspense for the second part of the play. The tragic moment, which is characterized by importance and a certain size, is what the Greeks called peripeteia, or recognition, because it must always be accompanied by a new and surprising insight.

The following reversal describes the falling action leading to disaster. The focus here is on the opponent's reaction to the hero, or how the hero's reaction to his opponents’ actions escalates into disaster. From this point on, the viewer can derive the idea, i.e. the intention of the poet, from the context of the events. Freytag describes this phase of the drama as the most dramaturgically demanding, since the aim is to re-establish the tension, which after the culmination fell considerably. Because of the saturation of the audience, a strong enhancement and intensification of the scenic effects and the fighting is usually necessary.

The reversal of the action should be shorter than the intensification. The more the climax is emphasized, the more vividly the end must be foreshadowed. The act of reversal usually consists of several scenes grouped around a significant central scene that contains the moment of the final tension.

The moment of final tension is located between reversal and catastrophe. A surmountable obstacle or a looming, unexpected solution nourishes hope for a conciliatory end and averting the catastrophe. However, the hope will be disappointed. In the following catastrophe, one last, great deed dominates, which demands full commitment and ultimate revelation from and of all characters involved. It must be a logical result from the previous course of action: Since the hero has put his whole life on the line, only the complete annihilation of this life can follow. Since the drama has to represent a self-contained, completed action, the epilogue is to remind us that nothing arbitrary was represented here, but an action that has received a general and understandable meaning through poetry. For the effective construction of a catastrophe, Freytag's rule is a reduction to the essentials: useless words or actions are to be avoided, but nothing should be left unsaid that helps to clarify the idea of the piece as derived from the essence of the characters. Besides the final act, the act of catastrophe contains the last stage of the sinking act.

The acts are subdivided into scenes, which Freytag describes as an amalgamation of units of action from dramatic moments. He also sees the five-part Structure of a drama reflected here: “An exciting moment must initiate the scene, the soul processes in it must be represented with clarity and by making use of effective intensification. The result should be shown in convincing strokes. Following the climax the conclusion must come about quickly and must be brief; for once its purpose has been achieved and the tension is released, every useless word becomes too much.” The scene as a unit of action, well versed by the poet, sometimes does not overlap with the director’s scene, since a change of decoration is not always necessary for the conclusion of a scene.

Basic dramatic principles:

Lessing's thesis on the function of drama is no longer relevant in Freytag's era. According to Lessing, “the tragic” should act on the viewer as an ethical force that stems from the plot and the characters. The viewer should be purified through fear and pity. Although Freytag also thinks that the humane, reasonable and sensible attitude of the viewer should rather be confirmed than hurt, he sees in expressions like “tragic guilt, inner purification and poetic justice” nothing but platitudes and clichés. "When a

poet puts his action together so that it becomes tragic, he should be given serious advice that he has little to worry about: he should leave pleasant words like guilt, purification, and elevation to others." Freytag, like Aristotle, sees the domain of dramatic art especially in entertainment. However, he also feels that it is the task of art and drama to transfigure reality. Only through the idealization of existence can man come to enjoy art. "The great representations of emotions lie like transfigurations on the essence of things. The person feels strangely moved, physically and mentally, and is lifted out of the moods of the day." Like Aristotle, Freytag grants artistic freedom when processing historical material, which always takes precedence over historical truth. However, the invention should not raise a sensitive contrast to a historical truth for his contemporaries. The plot of a serious drama is supposed to be probable. Not only the main topic should be causally linked to an inner unity, but also all secondary events should be understood as probable moments of the main event presented. The picture of reality emerges in the present as a product of the knowledge of the past and the currently prevailing moral code, which must also be observed in dramas with exotic content in order not to meet with rejection.

When the poet artistically transforms a subject based on a uniform idea, Freytag calls this process to "idealize." When the poet derives dramatically condensed characters from reality, then these characters become "ideals."

“The plot of the drama is the event arranged according to an idea, the content of which is presented by the characters” and mostly describes the dramatic actions of a hero, which result either from an internal need or the pressure of his external environment. The environment either promotes or inhibits the hero's passion. According to Freytag, the first process, namely man's inner struggle up to the point of action, is the most attractive. He describes the following process, the representation of the actual act itself, as "satisfying an aroused tension." Justifying events in a drama is called motivating. Individual parts of the plot are connected to an artistic whole through motifs. Within these limits, the action should move forward in unified contexts, so that “everything that follows can be deduced from the preceding as the effect of a previously presented cause.” The dramatic action must convey everything that is important for its understanding through its means of language, intonation and gestures of the characters in a continuous intensification. Internal processes that are not shown are just as unfavorable as processes that are technically too complex. The dramatic person should represent human nature in its "strong bias, tension and tendency to change," always provided with a great and passionately moving interior force. Those qualities that really come into their own in a fight with other people are preferable, such

as “emotional energy, force of willpower, or limitation through passionate desire”. With the words, "Characterization has always been popular with the Teutons, the joy of structure has always been more popular with the Romanic," Freytag grants the characters in modern drama a stronger influence on the plot, but he still shares Aristotle's thesis that the action is more decisive than the character: “But however much the action depends on the needs of the character, it will only ever be allowed to be put together from details that belong to a certain event, and this event must reach from the beginning to the end of the piece."

The dramatic unity of a plot must also apply to the characters. They should be characterized by probability, importance and size and show only those sides of human nature through which the action is continued and motivated, because “only what serves the idea and action belongs to art.” He describes Shakespeare's excellent character studies, as at the same time, “giving a deep insight into one's characters and yet leaving them ultimately unfathomable,” praising them as exemplary, which only superficially is a contradiction. For Freytag, the liveliness of a character only emerges under the pressure to be “part” of an action: only the properties that are useful for the action become a basic trait, all other characteristics must be subordinate. The fate of the characters will be equal to the course of events generated by their personality, which at every moment must be understandable by the audience as reasonable and probable. Coincidence should only be represented as a result of a character-typical action and not a motive that breaks in from outside. The characters have made a fateful decision dependent on the course of events, which they are no longer able to rule. Freytag sees subplots only justified if they provide additional information about the characters or the course of the plot. Likewise, the basic mood of the drama should always be maintained. Other tones such as comedic insertions are only justified as a contrast or complement. These decorative ingredients, called episodes by Freytag, enrich the piece when used cautiously. Freytag adopts two more rules of antiquity: the drama should have only one main hero, around whom all characters are grouped, his/her character should be a mixture of good and bad qualities, so as to make it easy for the audience to sympathize with them.

Creation of a drama:

The material for a work of dramatic art can be an anecdote from life, a legend, a novella, a poetic story or an entirely fictitious process. “In the soul of a poet, the drama develops gradually from the raw material, the report of something that has happened,

so vividly, forming connections with other events so that they can become the cause for the reorganization of the entire material, from which the dramatic idea then results. It is possible that the poet never develops this idea, “which he certainly carries in his soul, during his creative work, and only later understands it as the basic idea of the drama.” But Freytag recommends “to pour the idea of the developing piece into a formula and describe it in words, in order to be able to create and execute the basic idea of the piece in a dramatically stringent manner. A poet's power only needs a few moments of the original material, only a strong and momentous contrast to form a plot from it." Treason and its punishment, a passionate act of hatred and its consequences, a scene from a great family quarrel, a defiant fight or a clever game against superior forces give him plenty of material. " The creative work consists of the design of the main and secondary characters and new moments of action, all of which are to be guided by the dramatic idea. Freytag names four rules for a stringent course of action: “Short duration, few people, few transformations, and even with the first draft strong emphasis on the important parts of the plot." In order to make the work easier, the poet should determine the character of his heroes, their position in relation to one another and the results of each individual scene before executing it. Freytag sees the advantage of a written preliminary draft in the sense of an outline in the clarification of the individual intentions through reflection. The disadvantage in that this can easily paralyze the poet’s imagination and flexibility.

Even with a well-prepared work, changes in the plot or the character can occur at a later stage. Freytag recommends not to write after the first impressions and to study extensively before writing a historical drama: “The maturation of the pictures is a creative force that is also active in hours when the poet does not dwell on his work.” Freytag recommends a chronological process for the elaboration of the play, because the new situation must result always directly from the previously written situation and its mood. Freytag describes it as the poet's preeminent task to depict, with the greatest freedom and sophistication, the greatest influence of the power of passion. "The dramatic poet has to observe nature closely and continually. This applies most to the portrayal of the most violent of passions. But he should be aware that this is where he is least allowed to imitate nature." As a benevolent advocate for the performing artist, he should seriously study the laws and the art of acting. The number of players should be as small as possible: "What is created out of many things is less exciting and captivating than what comes to life from the soul of only the main characters." Extensive action excessively restricts the inner movement of the main characters. However, changes in the inner workings must be made comprehensible so that there

are no cracks. The most important part of the dramatic plot takes place in dialogue scenes: Their purpose is to generate a result from the conflict of thesis and antithesis that drives the plot further. Often after the third escalation of a conflict, the result is achieved. If the characters part without an agreement, at least the attitudes of the two towards each other must have changed. The poet has to intensify the effects from the beginning to the end of the drama, since in the course of the action the audience becomes more demanding and the ability to absorb new things becomes less. The dramatic climax does not always need to play out; sometimes a hint that stimulates the audience's imagination is enough. This is called concealment.

Since monologues represent a point of calmness in an ongoing action, an excited tension is required if a monologue is to be used. Freytag only considers a monologue appropriate if a rich, inner life of a character has been hidden from the viewer for a long time. Otherwise the character has to be shown through his behavior. It is dramatically inept to have the characteristics of the hero explained by third parties or to let the hero account for himself. In epic moments, such as a report by a messenger, the speech cannot be one line too long in order to avoid fatigue." If the narrative contains broader details, it must be divided into paragraphs, provided with short interludes that indicate the mood of those involved, and must contain substantial intensifications in content and language." Prose is more easily accessible, but, according to Freytag, it more easily pulls “the images of art” down to “representations of ordinary reality.” The meter, on the other hand, elevates the language into the realm of the noble. In reports from a distant time or a strange world, the corresponding attributes may only ever be used as aids that reinforce the basic color. The viewer must be familiar with the feeling and willingness of the character.

"Because not from the peculiarities of human life, but from the immortal core of it, from what we have in common with the old days, his successes blossom." Freytag does not banish the mysterious or the strange from the drama. The poet can use dreams, premonitions, prophecies or ghosts for occasional reinforcement, but primarily to work out the hero's inner need in the color and mood of the depicted time, and thus to set the dramatic plot in motion. When editing the play, the poet should carefully examine the plot, the character structure and the dramatic flow of his play. He should be his toughest judge: “The poet should respect and love his work as long as he carries it as an ideal; but the finished work must also be done for him."

Chinatown according to the rules of Gustav Freytag:

Freytag's definition still contains Aristotle's conception that the drama is a series of actions of its characters, but he extends this concept by an essential element. Freytag does not focus on the imitation of external reality, but above all on the representation of inner soul movements. He emphasizes here that it is not the portrayal of the passionate act itself, but the “becoming of an act and its consequences on the mind” that characterize what is actually dramatic.

Chinatown implements this claim in a cool, minimalist style. Right from the start, the viewer is invited to suspect the inner movements of the soul behind Gittes' cool facade, precisely because they only emerge in very specific moments. Gittes shows the viewer a rich but hidden inner emotional landscape that emerges though in full force when it comes to defending his honor or justice for the disadvantaged, and finally also when his love for Evelyn Mulwray breaks through.

In all other moments, Gittes acts as a professional who keeps his motives to himself. This makes him a passive hero. For a long time the audience believes that Gittes will be successful with this tactic. But by then, without realizing it, he has long awakened the anger of the mighty Noah Cross, who will ultimately destroy him.

It is different and yet similar with Evelyn Mulwray: She too tries not to let her inner emotional world show. But with Evelyn it happens from an attitude of weakness. She is afraid of the fatal consequences of her feelings, especially her anger at her brutal father. Evelyn is well aware that this disguised anger has already cost her husband's life. But her true essence breaks through again and again through the facade of the “cool, beautiful rich lady”. Her motive to protect Gittes from her father's anger is at the same time her own and Gitte's (symbolic) death sentence: if she had confided in him earlier, then Gittes might have had a fighting chance against Cross. Evelyn gives the viewer enough insight, however, so that they understand that her concealment of emotions is not, as it is with Gittes, a power game but a survival and protection strategy. Her final outburst is all the more dramatic because the emotional moment now coincides with a crucial information element. When she admits the incest to Gittes, it throws a completely new perspective on her character and twists the course of the plot one last time into the final fatal direction. The film dispenses with the excitement of pity for the main characters, Evelyn and Gittes. Instead, the grandeur of the "tragic moment" demanded by Freytag comes into its own in the finale. The world is so permeated with corruption and wickedness that even a hardened hero like Gittes has nothing to counter it. Here Freytag's demand for an exaggeration of reality finds its

correspondence. In addition, Towne and Polanski manage to bring together the story's past and the current American moral code at the beginning of the 1970s: Nothing has changed and even valiant heroes like Gittes fail in the overwhelming task of putting a stop to the power-obsession of an exemplary Noah Cross.

The fact that this drama leads to a “transcendence of the soul” can be traced back to the skillful and clear structure of the material. Gustav Freytag's structure of tragedy can be perfectly applied to the tightly constructed script. Here one of Gustav Freytag's great achievements can be seen: his Aristotle-based but expanded model has retained its relevance to this day. In the introduction, Gittes is presented as a character as is his world and his work. His character, introduced through deeds and words at the beginning of the first act, has hero potential: Gittes is an expert on the corrupt jungle, LA, and he is active without having to be provoked from outside. The triggering element of the action is not the assignment, but the humiliation that someone tried to fool Gittes with a ‘fake’ Mrs. Mulwray: ‘who dares?’ Gittes asks here’ “to test my coolenss and unfailing judgement?”. Chinatown quickly reveals the rhythm and basic mood of the story: Gittes' “coolness” contrasts with the inner overheating (also in the physical sense—it's consistently hot in Los Angeles) of his environment. While the other characters only appear as 'laid back' and are in reality exhausted or simply indifferent, or both, Gittes keeps his cool. In fact, he's the only one who's really 'cool' in this town. Each scene propels the story forward, in the direction of an inevitable defeat for the hero Gittes, who initially appears invincible. The motive to keep a cool head in the face of a heated situation is already established in the sketched plot about the betrayed husband: be it when observing sex between the wife and her lover, or when Gittes brings the betrayed the sad confirmation, leading to a nervous breakdown, Gittes always keeps his composure. In the background, Gittes’ powerful antagonist, Noah Cross, already takes measure of this character trait of Gittes in order to ultimately use it as a weapon against him.

The first research leads to an increase in the plot, which still belong to the first act, the publication of the photos and the appearance of the real Mrs. Mulwray. With the beginning of the second Akets the degree of intensity increases, also in emotional terms: Gittes feels attacked in his professional honor, and he is actually attacked, because Evelyn Mulwray threatens him with a lawsuit. Hollis Mulwray's body is discovered, and Gittes' nose is ripped open while the waterworks are under observation. Now the hero is challenged to the maximum.

The intensification begins when Gittes realizes the business connection between Cross and Mulwray: the first dramatic realization (peripeteia) that things are different than Gites expected. At the same time, Gittes shows himself vulnerable for the first time when he begins an affair with Evelyn Mulrwray, which corresponds to the required further intensification, before finally the second act culminates at the climax with the tragic moment when Evelyn reveals her incestuous past and thus the "sad, terrible and sinister "secret. All of Freytag's conditions for the tragic moment are met: It is important to Gittes because this statement absolves Evelyn of suspicion of murder and strengthens his feelings for her. It is momentous for Gittes because he now decides to make his emotions a priority and help Evelyn and her daughter to escape. Gitte also seals his fate here because he decides to work against both the police and Noah Cross. In addition, the dramatic moment occurs completely unexpectedly. The revelation provokes a number of realizations: Kathrin was not the lover of Hollis Mulwray but his foster daughter. The meeting of Hollis Mulwray and Kathrin was family related. Cross wants to own Kathrin, the product of his incestuous relationship with his daughter Evelyn. Cross' greed is completely limitless, morally and factually.

Cross real motive, in fact, is that his son-in-law kept his granddaughter / daughter away from him. Evelyn's opaque behavior is due to her fear for Kathrin, and now also for Gittes. The dramatic moment also fulfills two further demands of Freytag: the drama finds expression in a close relationship and thus gains cruelty, the dramatic revelation “she is my sister and my daughter.” actually represents a hint rather than a full revelation. What becomes clear here and yet remains veiled, makes the cruelty grow into the unspeakable.

As Freytag demands, the suspense is revived in this fateful moment. A realistic, achievable possibility of salvation and victory for the hero has opened. Gittes and Mulwery plan to escape and report Cross when they are safe. At first this seems to be successful: Evelyn and Kathrin flee under Kahn's protection to Chinatown, Gittes manages to escape from Escobar. The moment of the last tension is Gittes’ attempt to get Noah Cross arrested. There is still hope for a happy ending, but, as Freytag demanded, it will be disappointed. The final scene, in Chinatown, describes the catastrophe’s full extent. Escobar arrest Gittes and refuses to arrest Noah Cross. The panicked Evelyn Mulwray is shot by the police while fleeing from her father with her daughter / sister in the car.

Freytag shares the view that it is not the characters but the plot that is the determining element of the story, but admits that the characters shape the plot through their special

traits and that the plot must be an expression of the characters. Fate is the course of events brought about by the personality of the character. The characters are defined by their past actions: Gittes and Escobar worked together in Chinatown in the past. Gittes fights an uncompromising fight for justice; it brings him defeat and costs a beloved woman's life. He leaves the police force, never getting over this humiliation. This prevents him from realizing his fatal weakness: when it comes down to it, Gittes loses his coolness and becomes an emotional fighter, whereby he will always be inferior to opponents like Noah Cross.

Escobar, on the other hand, learned his lessons from what happened at that time. He has given up trying to fight evil. He does what is asked of him, nothing more. As a "reward" he was appointed lieutenant.

Evelyn Mulwray's behavior is motivated by her incestuous past. She got to know the limitless violence of her father first hand. She is torn between the longing for a white knight to save her and the terror that everyone she comes close to is doomed to certain death through Noah Cross.

The design of a character as being strongly influenced by his passion that Freytag wanted is most clearly fulfilled with Noah Cross. His incestuous desire, his greed for power, blinds him to the extent of his destruction. Gittes is in no way inferior to Cross: his passion for recognizing and destroying evil makes him blind to the lesson he could learn from the past. He also ignores Escobar's advice and misunderstands Evelyn Mulwray's behavior for far too long as insincere.

Evelyn lives in fear and terror of her father. Instead of confiding in Gittes, she believes that she is protecting him by keeping quiet. This inhibition ultimately leads to disaster.

The subject matter of the play has been modified in poetic freedom according to the poet's dramatic idea. However, the limits of probability were preserved. The postponement of the water scandal from 1905 to the 1930s brings it closer to the viewer's time, which is not only legitimate, but also speaks for the poet's dramatic talent. In addition, no interpersonal drama could have better expressed the boundless greed of the speculators active in the original water scandal than an incestuous relationship between father and daughter. The detachment from the actual events enables the poet to deal freely with this monstrous speculation about an incest as a background.

Dramaturgy of the Theater and the Film by Dr. Gottfried Mueller

Pages: 225

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“The beginning must burst like a bomb into the exposition, the middle must be the climax and the end a release.”

Background information:

The book published in Germany in 1942 is a document of its time. The tone is pithy, terms like “brutal” are used to describe how a director should enforce their staging of a play, or, a director is recommended to take on any “degree of self-denial” in order to achieve their goal. But Gottfried Müller is not an ideologist. He gives precise definitions, structures his material well, and explains dramaturgy in theater and film step by step, along the lines of its development as a tool from Aristotle to the present day. The author has implemented in this book his own demand on film: instruction should be entertaining.

The book is noteworthy because it is the first attempt to use dramaturgical rules on movies. Mueller is concerned with examining how the laws of storytelling deal with the technical specifics of a movie and draws some interesting conclusions.

The book is divided into two parts, the structure is simple and straightforward:

The first part deals with the history and technique of drama. The historical outline is a development of the artform of drama with numerous quotations from classical authors and is therefore very informative. The genesis of the dramaturgy leads to the dramaturgical rules of Aristotle, but seen from the perspective of the 20th century..

The use of these rules in movies is explained in the second part, in which Mueller also makes a comparison between American and German approach to storytelling and draws the conclusion: "Our art suffers from the excess of the rhetorical and the receding of the sensual moment of intuition that gave the drama its name."

The outline of the evolution of drama from antiquity to modernity is also an insight into the influence of the different authors on each other. Müller explains in detail the rules created by these authors concerning the structure and design of a drama. He explains for example the influences of Sophocles, Sribe, Dumas, Hebbel and Kleist on Henrik Ibsen’s drama technique in great detail and complements that with the detailed listing

of the 36 dramatic situations by Geoges Polti, Aristotle’s rules, Molière's comic means, and Scribe's technique.

Müller's remarks on the connection between film production and marketing are still valid today, if not forward-looking. Because of the high production costs, a film has to attract large audiences. Since audiences demand an equivalent value to the ticket price in entertainment, dramaturgical rules should be applied meticulously in movies so that suspense and contrast are generated and the audience is successfully entertained.

He calls the US American production method exemplary: “For an American, film is business. But he prepares this business like a work of art. The German likes to call the film an art. But he prepares this art like a forward deal." While the Americans dedicate a lot of time, especially to working on scripts, and work together in a collective exchange of ideas, in Germany scripts are rushed and written often by single authors in complete isolation.

Definition of a drama:

“Drama means action. Dramaturgy is the art of building a plot in such a way that its artistic rendering engages an audience with ever new suspense and surprise." The dramatic situation is a "heightened action" and is the core of the piece. Some of the dramatic situations are those 36 listed by Georges Polti in “Les 36 situations dramatiques” (Paris, 1895). Among these are: fatal imprudence, unconscious love crime, killing one of his own undetected, rivalry of unequals, adultery, erotic crime, loving the enemy, miscarriage of justice, recovery.

Structure of a drama:

“The purpose of tragedy is to create resignation, to paralyze passions. The prerequisite for tragedy is an afterlife."

The tragedy has five acts, here Müller strictly adheres to the rules of Aristotle, as adopted by Lessing and Freytag. In the first act, the characters are introduced and the conflict is built up. In the second act there is an intensification of the action and in the exchange of arguments, in which sometimes one side, sometimes the other, has the upper hand. The third act describes the climax of the conflict and the turnaround of

events. In the fourth act there is a retarding moment that apparently gives the plot a different course, but is smashed again. The fifth act leads to the catastrophe. The tragedy shows individual fates and is naturalistic in its essence.

"The purpose of comedy is life-affirmation." It holds up a mirror of everyday life for the viewer and shows them its shortcomings and ridiculousness. All the resulting consequences will be carried out within the world.

The comedy usually consists of three acts. In the first act, the characters are introduced. The conclusion of the first act indicates the possibility of a favorable outcome, against which, however, resistance is spreading. In the second act, resistance takes over and the hope for a favorable ending is dashed. In the third act, the resistance is resolved and the hopes are fulfilled. The characters in a comedy are universal types; it is idealistic in nature.

Molière distinguishes six mimic, six dialogic and eight content-based “comic means” for composing a comedy, which are based on misunderstandings, repetitions or grotesque weightings (a lot of importance is attached to an unimportant thing).

Basic dramatic principles:

As the three basic laws of drama, Müller describes the unity of plot, time and space called for by Aristotle: A play can only have one conflict and only one dramatic plot as its driver. The unity of plot is reflected by the fact that the final scene must be a result of all previous events. The time shown is the time of the action, the period immediately before the final act. Events that are important for the course but that have already taken place must be introduced indirectly.

The unity of space is conditioned by the connection of the action to the stage.

Modern drama differs from ancient drama in the ratio of fate to doom. In a fateful drama, deities are at work who can be named and whose control is undisputed. In doom, man is not in a relationship with a causative God. He is on his own and responsible for himself and his actions. Ancient drama displays a considerable influence of gods who determine a charcter’s fate, modern drama deals instead almost exclusively with doom caused by the characters themselves. If a god is mentioned in a modern drama it is almost always to decry its absence and indifference.

The fable, the actual story, is considered by Müller to be the most important element in line with Aristotle's “Poetics”, since, according to Aristotle, “there is no tragedy without a plot, but there could certainly be one without characters.” A story has a beginning, a middle and an end, it is dramatic through the struggle it is about. The hero is an ideal and a figure to identify with for the audience. He is “a person whose character traits are of general interest, but who also unites all the weaknesses and mistakes of the audience.” Because he lets the heart rule over the mind, the hero has the sympathy of the audience. The hero is either active or passive. The active hero culpably achieves his goal by exceeding his limits. After the turning point, the hero's opponents take the lead. The passive hero has character weaknesses and makes mistakes, but he is not really to blame for the tragedy. His opponents act dominantly until the turning point. Only then does the passive hero step in and become active.

The basic rules include the following: The dramatic action always depicts a conflict. Both opponents must be equally strong, only the hero can have the sympathy of the spectator.

The contrast between the two opponents must be elementary. All characters go through a transformation during the plot. Although both opponents are equal, one seems to have more power.

Tension is created by doubts and self-doubts on the part of the hero, by surprising twists and turns and the lack of information that the hero has compared wit the audience. According to Lessing and Diderot, the suspense increases when the viewer anticipates the element of surprise. The technique of gradually letting the viewer know more allows him to follow the piece with active and tense participation.

Retarding moments in which the event is postponed at the expected moment in order to occur later unexpectedly also increase suspense. "The secret of the theatrical effect lies not in the surprise but in the fulfillment of the expected."

According to Aristotle, happiness and unhappiness are created by four means in the course of the drama: peripeteia (a dramatic turning point at which the plot turns into the opposite of what was intended), recognition scenes (transition from ignorance to knowledge in a person. The recognition scenes usually coincide with the peripeteia moments and can take place through external features (scar, medallion), or someone revealing themselves (their true nature, for example) or someone who recognizes a person or a certain situation), pathos (a gripping, poignant situation that has a destructive and painful effect, for example a murder) and ethos (character definition, the specific law by which a character acts).

According to Schopenhauer, misfortune can be brought about in a tragedy in three ways: through extraordinary malice of a character who becomes the author of the misfortune, through blind fate; thus coincidence or error, or through the relationship of the characters to each other. Their relationship is designed in such a way to compel them to cause each other, knowingly and seeing, the greatest harm.

Film is not a documentary tool, but reproduces an unreal time, an unreal space and an unreal atmosphere, which, however, follow the classic laws of unity of place, time and action. Since there are no film-specific actions, the film is structured according to the same pattern as a drama. The cinematic space is the space artificially created by the camera positions. Settings recorded at different locations can be combined during editing as if all recordings were made in the same location.

The cinematic time is the impression of time generated by a film, which can be stretched (e.g. in the event of an explosion) or condensed (e.g. when an action is represented elliptically, i.e. only the key moments are reproduced).

The art of film is not about documenting, but rather the production of meaningful images. For example, the shot of boots in a marching column can represent the power and violence that the military wields. Not the things themselves, but the ideas on which they are based is shown. Every take must be an abstraction of the individual phenomenon in order to emphasize the universally valid, typical and eternal. The film is not naturalistic, but supra-realistic, because it shows universally valid truths in themselves. The editing gives a process its rhythm. In the case of successive images, the following image must be the continuation in time and space of the previous one, or the transition to a new time/space object. This transition can be via word (a word describes the following picture), picture (an object / situation / character evokes another object / situation / character), sound (a sound comes from the following situation), by dissolving or contrast (an object / situation / character follows its opposite).

The message of an action can be effectively reinforced by film effects such as slow motion, turning an action backwards or the use of a dummy or a background. Film manipulates acoustics through synchronization and vision through editing.

“The sound film is a total work of art that combines words and music, gestures and rhythms into a single action.” Film became folk art because it is the only art that makes visible images of things and people that are as “natural” as we are used to seeing nature or as we imagine nature. The sound film is folk art and everyday art.

The creation of a script:

When creating a script, the dramaturgical department of a film production consisting of editorial department, central dramaturgy, executive dramaturgy and developmental dramaturgy plays an essential role.

The editing department checks all exposés and manuscripts and prepares an expert opinion for each one. The brief reading reports (coverages) are passed on to the chief dramaturge of the central dramaturgy, who coordinates with the management of the company the decision for production. If the material is not yet a script, several authors are commissioned with an exposé, the best of whom receives the treatment contract. After the approval of the head of production and the chief dramaturge, the script assignment is given. The script production is supervised by the developmental dramaturge, who has to take into account both the production manager's budgeting plans and the creative wishes of the director.

The scriptwriter works on the material. If it is a dramatic work for the stage, it already has a structure and must now be reworked from a cinematic point of view. But the material can also be a real life event or the life story of an existing person: then the inherent dramatic conflict must first be defined. The difference between a screenwriter and a playwright is that the latter works creatively, the former works on the creation of a poet for it to become a movie. In order to be able to write appropriately for a film, the author must be able to think in pictures. The plot must never be committed to dialogue, a bad script can be recognized by long dialogues. The screenwriter has to overcome the word and translate it into action and pictures. “Since the style of our film art is naturalistic, the scriptwriter must make sure that his scenes appear realistic and natural." He must be a connoisseur of the environment described, know how the average person reacts and expresses their feelings.

While the synopsis shows the plot and the dramaturgical framework, the treatment brings the complete plot outline in a continuous sequence of images. Dialogue should not appear in either the synopsis or the treatment, except for characterization purposes. "The synopsis is written with the head, the treatment with a sense of time, the script is composed rhythmically and written with the eyes." Since the script is nothing more than a written definition of the film idea and not its implementation, the author does not need to worry about the implementation, this is the director's task.

Chinatown according to the rules of Gottfried Müller:

Like his predecessors, Müller defines the drama as a plot, but he sets a different accent: The function of the drama is to entertain the audience by creating suspense and well-structured storylines. This fact is fulfilled by the many surprising twists and turns in Chinatown: Gittes is surprised when his photos, which are supposed to prove that Hollis Mulwray had an affair and which he passed on to his wife, appear in the newspaper, he is even more surprised as another woman shows up claiming to be the real Mrs. Mulwray. When he tries to contact Hollis Mulwray about this affair, he surprisingly finds his body. The course of events remains unpredictable until the end, so that Gittes, who was only supposed to prove adultery, gets on the trail of a water scandal, reveals incest and is eventually forced to witness the murder of the woman he wanted to protect.

As much as Gittes, the main character, is surprised, so is the viewer, as he follows the action from Gittes' perspective.

Another function of a tragedy is, accoring to Mueller that it should create resignation and paralyze passions. Towne demonstrates with Chinatown with the victory of evil over good, corruption over truth, he creates resignation and a pensive mood, in other words the results Müller wanted.

Müller took over Freytag's considerations of structure, the unity of action, time and place from Aristotle, so that at this point reference is made to the respective Chinatown analyzes for these two aspects. However, Müller distinguishes one essential aspect between ancient and modern drama: in ancient times fate was determined by the gods, in modern drama man is "godless" at the mercy of his doom. The end of Chinatown is fateful, but it is also doom that hits the characters here: Gittes has to admit that he himself caused his own doom. On the other hand, as the viewer recognizes in retrospect, Cross determined the fate of Gittes, Evelyn Mulwray and all the other characters over the entire course of the plot, much like an angry god. Mueller also argues that the film has to show universal truths. Chinatown also lives up to this demand, because the end of Gittes, his forsaken love for Evelyn and his failure to protect her and her daughter generally convey that the individual is powerless against the violence of corrupt capitalists like Noah Cross.

Like Aristotle, Müller gives the plot greater weight than the character. For Müller, one of the fundamental laws is that the conflict between the two opponents must be elementary, that their goals are mutually exclusive. Cross appears late as an antagonist. But then it immediately becomes clear that only one of the two can win this

game: Gittes’ struggle for justice for the weak and Cross' merciless and ruthless claim to own everything and everybody are mutually exclusive. Mueller also wants the two opponents to appear equally strong for as long as possible and that the game of forces turns out to be in favor of one and then in favor of the other. Chinatown also fulfills this requirement: In the entire first half of the story, Gittes smartness seems to win the day. Cross, who pulls the strings in the background, on Escobar and of course on his daughter, shows but in the second half, about after it becomes clear that Cross had Hollis Mulwray killed, that in reality Gittes never stood a chance.

Müller's claim that “every take should represent the universally valid, typical and eternal” was long out of date in Polanski's time. Polanski's imagery even uses a pseudo-documentarist style in contrast to Mueller's demand: Polanski works with many long shots, like a documentarist, always takes the perspective that is necessary to fully show the action to be narrated. This leads to the fact that we as viewers are inclined to give factual belief to the (completely fictional) plot.

Polanski works with contrast. The story, which will reveal a terrible and gloomy secret, is for the most part told in the glaring daylight. He completely dispenses with symbolism and only works very sparingly with metaphors: an overheated car may represent the heated mood in the city due to the lack of water. Water and barrenness are symbolically used by Polanski, but they are also, in fact, the result of Cross' nefarious moneymaking. The scarcity of water can also be seen as the scarcity of the good in the world, without this ever having to be conveyed verbally or visually.

The Dramaturgy of the Film by Semjon Freilich

Pages: 197

Published by Henschelverlag Berlin, 1964 (DDR)

"*The drama must represent the conflicts of life, otherwise it is not drama.*"

Background information:

In this book, which was published in Moscow in 1963 and in the GDR in 1964, as in Müller's “Dramaturgy of Theater and Film”, there is a strong ideological zeitgeist: the descriptions of the “new dramatic form of revolutionary Soviet film art” breathe the spirit of the revolutionary Filmmaking in the becoming Soviet Union at the time of Pudovkin, Eisenstein and their colleagues.

The book thematizes the film dramaturgy and leaves out the pre-film forms of the drama. The author focuses mainly on the analysis of the Soviet films “Battleship Potemkin” (1917 - S. Eisenstein), “The Mother” (1919 - V. Pudovkin) as well as numerous examples of Socialist Realism.

The book is well structured, but its execution disappoints in some aspects. The definition of classic terms remains vague, terms such as “fable” and “subject” are interpreted differently in different contexts. In addition, when classic key terms are used, the original source is rarely referred to.

However, the author knows how to convincingly explain the difference between the craft and the art of writing dramatic texts and give an interesting insight into the history of Russian and socialist film art. Soviet film art is in the foreground, comparisons to American film mostly occur in the intention to upgrade the domestic film art. Even after 45 years, the film “Battleship Potemkin” is still the epitome of dramatic film art for the author.

The book gives an insight into the history of Russian film art, but above all it remains interesting because of its sometimes remarkable view of an outsider on the mechanisms of American film fables.

Definition of a drama:

The real contradictions of life form the content of the dramatic conflict. The artistic quality depends on the ability of the author to "capture the real contradictions of life and find ways to artistically embody the new forms of human community life."

Film drama means the ability of the respective work to give real-life contradictions a reflection in the dramatic conflict. However, an artist not only works on a specific topic, but also with specific design principles. As a result, the dramatic conflict can be expressed on the one hand through the content but also through a specific design. Therefore, a dramaturgy of film must describe the dramaturgical principles of the scenario on the basis of which a certain content is presented. Third, a dramaturgy of film also must include the rules of cooperation between the scenario writer and the director to produce the script and to translate it into a movie.

Structure of a drama:

“The subject of each scenario is based on the revelation of the dramatic situation, the intensification, development and solution of the dramatic conflict.”

After the introduction of the fundamentals of action, the intensification takes place, i.e. the increase in tension that leads to the climax of the drama. The backstory of the dramatic event is presented here. The main part of a drama is summarized by Aristotle as the stage of “peripeties and revelations.” Revelation is for Freilich to be equated with recognizing the character with which the viewer relives the story. The viewer is to be enabled to identify and thus participate in the dramatic development. The resolution answers the question that arises from the intensification of the conflict. The form in which the dissolution takes place results from the conception of the work. However, according to Freilich, this does often not apply to American film production: “In most Hollywood films, the focus on a happy ending does not result from formal reasons inherent in the development, but from the ideological focus on reconciliation [of the protagonist] with the bourgeois world. " so that sometimes the finale is changed in film adaptations even of classics in order to “optimize” the entire course of the dramatic ideological plot, which falsifies the actual message.

However, Freijlich does not see the art of dissolution in answering the questions raised by the plot within the boundaries of the plot. Materialistic dialectics does not see in the

dissolution the achievement of a state of calm, but the beginning of a new movement: the end of a drama is the beginning of a new one.

A new dramatic form in revolutionary art is the “optimistic tragedy”: the antagonistic conflict that underlies the tragedy culminates in the revolution, which is the true climax and at the same time a way out of the crisis. The way out of the crisis is to overcome the sufferings of the masses by overcoming the profound contradictions of society.

Basic dramatic principles:

Freijlich outlines the function of tragedy in socialist art in the words of Karl Marx: “The real topic for tragedy is revolution." The formal basis for this is provided by the dramaturge Nicolai Sarchi, who describes that “the hero's striving meets an opposing striving. The subjects of this opposing striving can be another hero or a group of heroes, a certain (social) elementary phenomenon and other things." The dramatic clash should not be generated by means generated from the scenario itself, but rather through an event introduced from outside into the dramatic action. This event must be of general importance, such as the strike, the war or the revolution." As a dramatic hub, this contradiction becomes the basic conflict of the drama: the goal-oriented striving of the hero is partly driven forward by the event, partly inhibited until it comes to the climax, the duel. This duel can take place openly or covertly in physical, dialectical, dialogical form In a movie it is mainly made visible in a series of physical actions, in a system of blow and counter blow. The opposing movements can be seen as two clashing moments: on the one hand the hero’s dream and his purposefulness on the other hand the means of its realization These two moments form the basic characteristics of the dramatic characterization. It is the task of the young Soviet cinematographic art of socialist realism to grasp the new reality in its historical concreteness and development and to express it adequately.

So far, the separation of being into idea and action and the overemphasis on one of the two has led to a distorted reality. In films based on the “inner realism” model, the idea was weighed too heavily: the “inner realism” hero is isolated from society, his motives for action are justified purely psychologically. In “direct film” the milieu is true to life, but the actors are only shown as elements of the plot.

With the October Revolution, socialist realism was proclaimed in Russian art, with the aim of resolving the contradiction between thought and reality, intellectual life and practical activity in art. Not a single individual, but an entire social class, the proletariat,

is now in the center of attention as the new “hero” as is the case with the movie “Battleship Potemkin.” The proletariat is shown for the first time as a thinking, acting and suffering entity. The novelty of the Soviet film is characterized by this new content, which is supposed to reflect the novelty of the social conditions. Instead of focusing on the suffering, success or failure of the individual in society, as is the case in contemporary bourgeois film art, especially in Hollywood's work, and instead of using social upheavals merely as a backdrop, framework or coloring of individual stories, Soviet filmmakers are interested in historical truth. They take a look at the main forces at work in historical events: the way of life of the peoples, the living conditions, those responsible and the methods of changing the conditions and holding those responsible to account, are the subjects of the filmmaker in the USSR. If love is shown, it should be respectable, the woman should not be shown as a seductive cocotte without a psychological profile, but as a person with an intellect. Since the task of the new Soviet film is to capture “the typical life on the road to communism”, a new theme in Soviet art is the relationship between people and their work. In the transition of social relationships, work is no longer regarded as compulsion, but the self-realization of man through free work. This becomes his highest task, his most intense effort. When making a film, both reality and the artist's relationship to reality must be visible.

The cinematic is the “art of representation of movements and acoustics,” or, according to Villegas López, “the art of time in the multiple forms of space.” Film is a synthetic art: it uses optics like painting and sculpture do, it makes use of harmony and rhythm as music does, it uses narrative action as literature does and the art of acting as theater does. However, film does not replace the other arts and is therefore not universal. While a certain artificiality is unavoidable in the theater due to the spatial and temporal limitation, the film is characterized by its closeness to reality: in a film, actors and surroundings are seen as a unit, the actor is also identified much more strongly with the role played.

Reality is represented according to cinematic rules: an approaching train does not have to be shown as such, it is sufficient to indicate, e.g. turning wheels, the sound of escaping steam and a pair of observing eyes.

The creation of reality as well as the focus on the central event is achieved primarily through montage (editing). The montage removes superfluous elements, it shapes the relationship between the essential and the inessential, the pace of action and the rhythmic development of the film. "The (individual) image is the cell and partial element of a take that the montage combines into a set to form a higher entity." The montage is

thus the transition of a conflict that initially exists within a one take into a conflict of two adjacent partial takes, which breaks down into a whole system when the action is continued and is brought together again into a unified whole with the help of the partial takes of an event.

The parallel montage, developed by D.W. Griffith, is straight forward parallel acceleration. Eisenstein criticizes Grifffith's editing technique for the inherent dualistic view of society, which uses bourgeois criteria and accepts a dichotomy of poor and rich, good and bad. Griffith lacks the socialist understanding that what he shows in a parallel plot are not parallel phenomena, but two sides of the same phenomenon: a society based on exploitation. Soviet cinematography, on the other hand, sees montage as an artistic means of revealing precisely such a dramatic conflict. Montage and dramaturgy are in a dialectical reciprocal relationship: where the connections made by the montage are not action-motivated, they have a mechanical effect, but if they are guided by the inner meaning of the action, they become dramatic in their essence. The director's creativity is based on the vivid implementation of the montage described in the scenario.

The synthesis of image and word characterizes the essence of modern film art. The dialogue, in interaction with image, composition and montage, is the main element of the dramaturgy. The dramatic forms of film are: the film novella, the film drama, the film poem, the film narration or the film tragedy.

Creation of a script:

The subject is the artistic idea that arises from observing reality. This observation defines the artist's attitude towards reality. The fable is the material through which the overarching idea, the intention, i.e. the subject, is conveyed. The story shows the conflict (the subject). As an example, the author cites Gogol's story “The Auditor”, which is based on an anecdote by Pushkin. Pushkin was mistaken for a governor-general in a small town. Gogol turns this anecdote into his subject: the auditor in his play is an involuntary cheat. He profits from the illegal acts of the civil servants - the actual fraudsters of society - who through his fraud finally get what they deserve and become the cheated themselves.

In various stages of the realization of a creative idea, both the fable and the subject are sometimes an expression of content, sometimes one of form. The interrelationship between fable and subject is to be understood dialectically: the fable is “the presence

of contradictions in the fact itself, which to a certain extent enable it to be explored through the artistic narrative (the fable). The fact here is to be understood as the true event on which the sketch is based. " The subject is considered to be a "means to recognize and discover the essence and the appearances in reality." The artistic value arises in the reciprocal relationship between subject and fable: the truthful is the source of the artistic, the degree of the artistic value is thus the best criterion for the truthfulness of a work. A film adaptation fails if subject or fable are neglected in the dramaturgical sense.

The “emotional scenario” of the cinematic art of the thirties reads like an expressionist poem, but it lacks the concrete and technical basis that the “technological scenario” provides. In the "technological scenario", however, the poetry and the representation of the author's relationship to reality are missing. Both scenarios are unable to reflect real reality. "The poetic course of the film's subject must be given in the concreteness of the fable."

The dialogue is expressive when it reveals the character. The word is an act and at the same time the coloring of the character. Since being determines the consciousness that in turn determines the choice of words, the character of the person speaking is revealed with objective necessity through the word.

The descriptive part of the scenario not only provides information about the characters and their milieus, but also develops the plot. Dialogues should not repeat what is shown. A good scenario enables insight into the truth of life and this is what distinguishes the craftsman from the artist: “The craftsman tends to dabble with reality, the artist expresses it. The craftsman can only show a small piece of truth, the artist, on the other hand, grasps the truth of the epoch. He helps the epoch to self-confirm on the path it has taken." The artist shows the general laws of life based on the individual fate of the hero. "We don't go to the movies to hear a lesson about the development of society, but to see the fate of society through the fate of real people." By recognizing the hero, we also recognize the time that produced him. Battleship Potemkin does not bring in the idea of the dialectical class struggle from outside, but lets it grow out of the circumstances. At that time, "the art of film learned for the first time to make an action dependent on the century in which it takes place." In this film, monumental and yet simple like a folk tale, “we have everyday life very directly, without the source of the revolution and its ideas being intangible.”

Chinatown according to the rules of Semjon Freijlich:

Freijlich's understanding of the essence of drama as a reflection of the real contradictions of life and of society is reflected in the film Chinatown. Two years before the film premiered, the Watergate scandal attracted a lot of public attention. The exposure of political corruption and ruthless striving for power at the expense of the inviolable good of democracy led to a disillusioning perspective on social justice. Screenwriter Robert Towne lets private detective Gittes comment cynically: “the rich even get away with murder”. The exposure of covert corruption and crimes by the private investigator are also formally implemented. Freijlich's demand to also communicate the dramatic conflict in a concrete way is fulfilled. Gittes has to work his way through a lot of Chinese mirror cabinets before he realizes - too late - the truth: the wrong Ms. Mulwray, the wrong lover, the long dead Hollis Mulwray.

In addition, Gittes needs visual aids in order to recognize the connections: first binoculars, several times a camera, photos provide information, and finally glasses serve as evidence for the conviction of the suspect. Freijlich’s accusations of the American film industry expose his interpretive approaches as outdated. That Hollywood is committed to a happy ending in order to strive for ideological reconciliation with the bourgeois world is not confirmed by the example of Chinatown. However, it must also be said here that Chinatown is an "unusual” Hollywood film that was only conceivable in this way in the seventies and the era of the" independent filmmaker.``

As can be seen from the Chinatown analysis according to Linda Seger's rules, the most tragic and most unforgiving of the three versions proposed by the author was chosen for production. Even Freijlich's accusation that social conflicts are merely a backdrop for a love intrigue cannot be traced back to Chinatown. In Chinatown, the affair between Gittes and Evelyn Mulwray forms a subplot to the actual main plot, which is about the exposure of Noah Cross’ corruption and perversion.

However, it must be emphasized here again that Chinatown is more of a socialist drama and therefore a very unusual Hollywood film. One can go so far as to apply Freijlich's requirement that a subject should reveal the author's attitude towards reality. Chinatown, in its cynical, pessimistic attitude towards the US economic system with its unleashed capitalism, certainly reflects in many respects Polanski's (East-)European worldview. The fact that this view could be implemented so drastically has to do with the focus of the era on the "filmmaker".

The artist (Polanski) uses the water scandal to present a truth about his epoch: Corruption and dishonesty undermine the basis on which America rests: equal

opportunities for everyone with the “American way of life.” Freijlich's demand is also fulfilled, that the general laws of life be represented by the individual fate of the hero.

However, Chinatown cannot comply with Freijlich's demand for an "optimistic tragedy". There is nothing optimistic in Gittes' cynicism about his failure. Instead of the audience being offered a new conflict after this conflict has been resolved, they are served hopelessness with no way out of the misery with the message: “The world is bad, we cannot change it”. Freijlich would certainly have preferred a “more socialist” ending, in which, for example, the hero of the story, Gittes, overcomes personal failure and uses the water scandal to overthrow the government and establish a “fairer” regime. This would be have altered the accent of the story from a psychological "inner" conflict between a detective Gittes who still firmly believes in basic values such as individual dignity and respect and a Noah Cross, who has turned away from all humanity in his greed, to the less dramatic "external" conflict of dissatisfaction with social conditions. Freijlich's recommendation that the dissolution of the drama also form the beginning of a new drama can be found here in exactly the wrong way: When Noah Cross takes care of his granddaughter at the end of Chinatown by pulling her away from her mother's corpse in a hug covering her eyes, it can also be understood that evil is now turning away from the current conflict. There’s nothing left to do here. This battle is won. Cross protects his daughter from the rigors of life and prepares himself and maybe she for new misdeeds.

Of course, the structure of the tragedy with intensification, development and resolution of the dramatic conflict corresponds to the three parts of an action in Aristotle and can be read in the interpretation approach of Chinatown according to the rules of Aristotle.

The Art Of Dramatic Writing by Lajos Egri

Pages: 305

Published by Simon & Schuster, INC., New York 1946

"*The premise is the seed that grows into a plant that was contained in it, no more and no less.*"

Background information:

Born in Hungary, Lajos Egri wrote and directed successfully in Europe and the USA for over 35 years and founded the “Egri School of Writing” in New York City, of which he was the director. At the age of 60 he moved to Los Angeles to teach and work with the film industry. The great success of his work “The Art of Dramatic Writing”, published in 1946, is based on a completely new interpretation approach in dramaturgy and can be seen as a trailblazer for Robert McKee's "Story" and Christoher Vogler's "The Heros Journey." Like Lessing, Egri gives the character a higher priority than the plot and is thus in contradiction to Aristotle. He even goes a step further and describes the character and his environment as inextricably linked, an aspect that is also important to McKee. For Egri, a three-dimensional character and a clearly formulated premise are the prerequisites for a functioning drama. Its course results organically from these two elements. To underpin his theory, Egri cites numerous examples from the latest findings of the time in the sciences, sociology, psychology, chemistry and physics. In his structure of drama, Egri rediscovered the laws of the universe and chemistry. Using socio-psychological methods, he describes the human being as one that can be completely analyzed. For Egri, the world can also be fully explained and these explanations can be conveyed. Hence his usage of the pattern of a dialogue between student and teacher, as Socrates used it, too. Egri derives the Structure of a drama on the one hand from the dialectical relationship of the character to his environment, but he also considers the classic triad an unshakable law. Egri explains the relationships between the acts solely from the development of the protagonist of a play, which represents a new approach to interpretation.

Definition of a drama:

“Emotion, or the elements in or of an emotion, constitute the essential elements of life. Emotions are life. Hence emotion is drama. Drama is emotion. "

Structure of a drama:

Aristotle's assertion that the structure of events make up a story is diametrically contradicted by Egri:

“We believe the obligatory scene, the tension, the atmosphere and the rest are superficial elements. They are the effect of something else, something much more important. There is a force that binds all these parts together, a force from which they grow naturally like limbs out of the body. We believe we know what this force is: Human character: in all its infinite expansions and dialectical contradictions."

Egri also describes Aristotle's statement that every story must have a beginning, a middle and an end as not applicable. According to Egri, a play begins at the point where a crucial need of the protagonist arises that steers the story in a dramatic direction. Egri describes this point as the "point of attack." It is triggered by a crisis or a far-reaching decision from the character’s previous history. The plot begins with the beginning of the play, but by then we may already be well in the middle of the character's story. In the course of the plot, the beginning of the character's story is then revealed to the audience. Egri therefore feels that the term “point of attack” is more appropriate for the beginning of the action than the usual term “exposition”, since exposition can be translated as revelation. The character is revealed not only at the beginning but during the entire piece up to the end. Every action or refusal of action gives information about the character and their history, as well as about the further course of the action. While drama is largely made up of emotion, no emotion has ever shaped a good piece if the emotion is not preceded by motivation. The premise is not only the prerequisite for the story, but also determines its structure, the course and the actual message. The premise is an assertion made by the author that he wants to prove as the story unfolds. Every good premise is made up of three parts. The first part of the premise indicates the character, the second the conflict, and the third the end of the piece. An action should follow the rules of dialectic: The thesis is followed by the antithesis, the conflict between the two creates a synthesis that becomes a thesis again when it is contrasted with an antithesis. In a story, thesis and antithesis result from the will of the character and the opposing will of his environment. The resulting

moment(s) of conflict is/are the real exposure or exposition of the character. Hence the premise of William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is: "Great love defies death." The “great love” describes the character of the protagonists, “defies” provides information about the conflict between the will of the protagonists and the will of those around them, “death” indicates the outcome of the story, ie the suicide of the lovers.

From the following synthesis the further action of the character and the reaction to it are derived, which causes another conflict. In the course of the piece, the conflict between thesis and antithesis increases to the climax. A growing conflict is the result of a clearly formulated premise and well-coordinated, three-dimensional characters. Transitions between the conflict elements connect disconnected elements. A crisis describes a decisive change in the danger it creates. Crises must be based on the choice of characters, which in turn represent thesis and antithesis. The climax follows the greatest possible crisis.

Basic dramatic principles:

The protagonist provokes the conflict which starts the story. There is no story without the protagonist. “Aristotle's assumption that the character is subordinate to the action ("a tragedy is possible without character but not without action.") is his fundamental mistake, because the character motivates the action and not the other way around. The protagonist is aggressive (active or passive) and has a strong need. Egri describes him as the central character around whom everything revolves (pivotal character). Without the central character, the conflict on which the story is based, and thus the story itself, would not exist. The central character desires something so strongly that in order to achieve its goal he/she destroys or is destroyed as a result. He is aggressive, uncompromising, even nefarious, whether in the positive or negative sense. The central character, even if he/she appears passive, is the driving force, which is the result of the external forces acting on it and its internal forces. The central character does not have to be the supposed hero, he/she is rather the one who insists on his goal. Egri describes Iago as the central character in “Othello,” as Krogstadt is in “The Dollhouse.” The antagonist is the protagonist's opponent. The two opponents are equally strong and driven by an equally strong opposite need. Characters should e formed after real human beings, therefore all actions should be motivated. A realistic representation is achieved through a three-dimensional drawing of the character. The three dimensions are the physiological, sociological and psychological levels of the character's being. Due to his physical attributes, the character occupies a certain position in society, and

thus has a certain perspective. A disabled person sees the world differently and is perceived by it differently than a non-disabled person. The physical appearance influences thinking, values and behavior.

The second defining dimension emerges from the sociological background of the character (sociological characteristics are: belonging to a social class, type of employment, income, upbringing, schooling, family structure, religion, race, nationality and role in society, group behavior). The psychological outline of a character is the third dimension and the product of the former two. (Psychological characteristics are: sexual behavior, moral attitude, personal premise, ambition, frustration, disappointment, temperament (choleric, relaxed, pessimistic, optimistic), attitude towards life (active, passive), obsessions, inhibitions, fears, extroversion, introversion, skills and talents, IQ). It includes the feelings, the temperament, the mood of a person as a result of his dispositions and his environment. How a character makes decisions and how they react to events derive from these three defining dimensions. "A character is revealed by conflict, conflict is initiated by a decision, a decision is made based on the premise of the play."

A conflict that is not related to the specific expression of a character is dramatically insignificant. The decisions of the character determine the course of the action towards its actual goal: the demonstration of the premise. The development of events takes a certain course through the character, but the character is changed by the course of the story. Because, firstly: "No person who has ever lived has stayed the same after a series of conflicts that touched his life: his perspective on life changes." And second: “Character and environment are so closely related that we see them as one. They react to each other. " The composition of the characters must be well coordinated. The types must not be too similar, but must differ in their character traits in order to create a unity of opposites. The needs of the opponents must be mutually exclusive (e.g. two men love the same woman). The storyline must be based on the inevitable force of necessity, as this motivates the characters to act in a way in which they would not have under normal circumstances. Action is always the result of an impulse, there is no unmotivated action.

A conflict describes the clash of mutually exclusive motives or actions. A real conflict only exists when the opponents, their actions, motivations and causes are balanced. A predictable outcome makes a fight uninteresting. Egri differentiates between four types of conflict: static, jumping, slowly growing and “foreshadowing.” When the protagonist is weak and doesn't make decisions that move the piece forward, the resulting conflict

is static. This indicates that you have chosen a "point of attack" too early and that you have to let the character mature before you put him into action. In a jumping conflict, the character acts in a way that makes his actions incomprehensible. Here transitions and motivations have to be checked. Egri describes the growing conflict as the only acceptable form of conflict. It is always accompanied by “foreshadowing”, an action that points towards the end. A piece consists of a certain number of conflicts. In the course of the piece, significance and consequences of the conflicts must increase. However, all conflicts must also be part of the overall conflict of the piece and thus confirm the premise. Small conflicts create the transition between two attitudes of the character until he is forced to make a decision that makes him grow. The central character generally grows less than the other characters because he is already at the beginning on a higher level of development, which determines the motivation for his action. Any good piece grows from one end of a given scale to the opposite extreme. "The intensity of the conflict is determined by the willpower of the three-dimensional individual who is the protagonist." Before a crisis occurs, every other possibility must be removed. A piece basically describes a crisis from beginning to end, including its inherent dissolution.

Creation of a drama:

Egri emphasizes that the creative process in making a play or a film is the same. He adds, however, that a one-act play in the theater only needs one set, while an hour-long film requires three or four. Information on film-related criteria such as camera angle and position are not part of the author's area of responsibility.

The creation of a drama can, but need not, begin with the formulation of the premise. Often the impulse for writing is a situation, a simple thought or a character. A deeper occupation with the psychological, sociological and physiological properties of the acting person leads to the reaction of his environment, which in turn creates a new situation before which the acting person is placed. The result is a rough synopsis. The premise can be derived from it. The preparatory work is finished when the premise has been formulated.

As an example, Egri gives a synopsis that follows the development of a middle-class girl from a suburb to a prostitute in a big city. The tragic course of action develops beginning with the girl's high ambition paired with pride and the unrealistic goal in life of becoming a dancer (that covers all three dimensions: physical attributes: the girl is

attractive. Sociological attributes: she comes from a lower class background. And finally psychological traits: she is ambitious, haughty and unrealistic) The premise to be derived is "Pride comes before the fall."

A clearly formulated premise, which can be related to every conflict in the plot, guarantees stringency and thus the possibility of a satisfactory resolution: "The moment you decide on a premise, you and your characters become its slaves."

The author must be absolutely convinced of the truth of the premise, since portraying a superficial belief will neither provide convincing motivations of the characters nor resultant convincing conflicts.

If the premise turns out to be inappropriate or the writer's opinion has changed in the course of writing, one must modify the premise or formulate a new one, because the intention of the author must remain to prove the premise with the aid of the story. A premise can be based on emotion, but this emotion must be reasonably motivated in the drama. (Eg in Shakespeare's Othello: "Jealousy leads to the destruction of the object of passion and oneself.") Neither the plot nor the characters may become mere instruments of the premise, otherwise the piece has a didactic effect. Plot, character and premise form a unit in which no part can be more important than the whole.

The characters' environment and its interactions with the character are determining factors. The smallest disturbance of a well-ordered life can lead to a mental-emotional upheaval of the character. Likewise, a character's decision must always have an effect on the environment. The only thing you really know about human nature is that it changes.

Before starting the scene design, all dimensions of the character must be explored and the premise as a conflict must be well anchored in the character. Contrasts within the characters guarantee conflicts. Without opposition there is no conflict, without conflict there is no piece. A playwright needs characters who are not only willing to fight for their beliefs, but who also have the strength to lead that fight to its consistent conclusion. A weak character is one who does not have the strength to fight, or one who cannot make a decision to act for fear of conflict. Only conflict can provoke further conflict. The first conflict is triggered by a purposeful will, the direction of which was determined by the premise of the piece. It is, for example, Blanche's goal in Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire to escape reality. It thus fulfills the first part of the premise of the piece "Those who indulge in illusions will be punished." Even an ostensibly passive character can pursue his goal (see Cary Grant in Hitchkock's North by Northwest, for example). He will grow with the resistances as the piece progresses.

Once the protagonist has been formulated, the composition of the other characters will be established. The unity of the opposites must be guaranteed by the diametrical opposition of protagonist and antagonist: both achieve their goal only if they prevent the other from achieving it. An uncompromising attitude is a prerequisite for conflict. The introduction to the dramatic situation and the characters should take place as soon as possible. There are various possibilities for the "point of attack" of a piece: A piece can begin when a conflict leads to a crisis (e.g. Kramer vs Kramer) or when a character has reached a turning point in his life (Groundhog Day). Likewise, the piece can begin with a decision that creates a conflict (Psycho) or a situation in which something very important is at stake (Green Card). The conflict should be prepared at the beginning by clever foreshadowing in order to build up all further steps logically. In Ibsen's The Dollhouse, for example, Helmer censures Nora for her little sins in the very first scene. The viewer now knows that their "real crime" of forging signatures will shake their relationship to its foundations. In every piece there is a great movement from one state to another, such as from love to hate. In order to avoid the sudden jump of a conflict, the character's journey from the initial stage to the crisis must run in stages (e.g. from friendship-disappointment, disappointment-anger, anger-threat, threat-warning, to warning-murder;) The dialogue grows out of character and conflict. Its function is to reveal the character and to continue the plot. To this end, every dialogue should represent the product of the speaker's three dimensions (using the example from Chinatown: "I don't get tough with anyone, Mr. Gittes. My lawyer does." This shows Evelyn Mulwray's psychological attitude as well as her economic background) The dialogue in the drama does not reflect life but the essence of life. "Art is selective, not photographic." The language style must correspond to the social milieu and the character's traits. "Good dialogue is the product of carefully selected characters that grows in dialectical form until the slowly rising conflict proves the premise."

Chinatown according to the rules of Lajos Egri:

The underlying premise of the film, which sums up the structure, the conflict and the end of the story, is: "Greed, once unleashed becomes uncontrollable." Greed is excessive desire, desire, lust, passion, insatiability, striving or longing. Noah Cross embodies this greed. The masses of water in which Gittes almost perished at the end of the exposure depict the unleashing as a foreshadowing. Noah Cross, however, went much further in his moral and human lack of boundaries. He made his own daughter his lover. This triggers a series of actions, some well in the past, like the birth of Evelyn

Mulwray's daughter / sister, some just recently, like the death of Hollis Mulwray. The "point of attack" is when Noah Cross instructs Gittes via the fake Mrs. Mulwray to expose Hollis Mulwray and his "lover." Cross does this because he wants to destroy Hollis because Hollis contests his "property," his daughter. Cross doesn't expect Gittes to be an upright moralist knight behind the façade of the disillusioned P.I.. Gittes, whose longing for justice lay idle for years after the tragedy in Chinatown, awakens to new life with the help of his equal opponent Noah Cross and sets off into battle. Greed is also the predominant motive in Gittes' life : Gittes is greedy for revenge. He feels that back in the day, in Chinatown, he didn't get a fair shake and he is still out for the 'bigwigs' who framed him back then. And Noah Cross is the biggest of them all. The ultimate boon.

Thus, Noah Cross holds the role of the central character and thus the actual protagonist, because he is the linchpin of the entire story, without him it would not exist. Greed is Cross' essential character trait. Although Noah Cross is late and rarely seen on screen himself, Gittes is constantly busy overcoming obstacles that Cross has built up. From about the middle of the plot he is busy with his unmasking. The viewer recognizes Cross together with Gittes through the investigations of the private detective and through the revelations of his daughter Evelyn regarding the incestuous drive. Cross' greed is not just a thirst for life but claims immortality. When Gittes asks Cross what the construction of a dam would bring, Cross replied: "The future!" His urge to absorb the future is also expressed in his incestuous desire to plant his "seed" in his daughter / granddaughter. Cross greed to own everything, to be omnipotent, makes him rule like a god. With his land speculation he absorbs the valley, he lets Hollis and the fake Mrs. Mulwray be killed, destroys the lives of his two daughters and decides on the water, symbol of life. As shown above, Gittes is perfectly positioned against Cross as a fighter against amorality. The world can only exist according to the law of one of the two men. Evelyn's whole life consists of avoidance, illusion, imprisonment, flight and fear: as a young girl she fled from him to Mexico. She was unable to visit the child she gave birth to for years after she returned to America in order not to be reminded of her father's deed. Her marriage to Hollis was an escape into an illusory world. Her numerous affairs and her lies reveal her as someone who lives a great lie and does not want to face the facts. Gittes forces her to tell the truth, and to see the truth, that her father killed her husband. But she cannot shake off her fear. Evelyn does not trust Gittes enough, for fear of her father's greed she sees no other way out than to flee again. She finally gives up in front of her father's omnipotence with her last words to

Gittes: "He owns the police." She is unable to kill her father, her shot only grazes him. Her last escape with her daughter leads to her death.

Cross is the rampant greed, his daughter the victim, Gittes the opposite pole. But Gittes also has a greed for justice, and he has a triggering moment in the past, his earlier failure in Chinatown. There he was humiliated, his honor was trampled. Now he is ready to make any sacrifice to get revenge for it. The fact that someone is kidding him with a fake customer hits exactly this nerve and is therefore the ideal "point of attack." His curiosity (greed) is aroused, as a foreshadowing it gives him a slit nose at the beginning of the film. This points to the end: Gittes will be injured again (in his pride) in his attempt to overcome the earlier injury. His greed makes him blind to dangers: Gittes believes he can take on Cross alone, and at least convict him of the murder of Hollis Mulwray. This blindness led to the destruction of a life once before: the woman he loved and wanted to protect in Chinatown had to die. Evelyn is the second woman he cannot protect. Gittes is the protagonist (not the central character, that's Cross) whose goal, according to the premise, is not achievable (The greed that is uncontrollable is Cross' greed).

Gittes is a three-dimensional character: he attaches great importance to attention (his clothes are always noticeable), which makes him a target. He is an outsider who purposely puts himself outside the social context, which makes him weak because he has no friends. And he succumbs to his greed for justice, which makes him fight battles in which he has to fail, making him even the henchman of destruction: Gittes leads Cross to his daughter and granddaughter and thus ensures their destruction. Because of his blindness, Gittes cannot read Lieutenant Escobar like any other character. Escobar doggedly pursues Gittes because he has long since surrendered to the power of Cross: his career is more important to him than the truth. Gittes' arrest scene lets him realize too late that he should never have allowed himself to fight alone. The following confrontation between Noah and his daughter and granddaughter comes when Gittes is defeated. Evelyn realizes that, as she had feared, she has bet on the wrong card again (as before with Hollis). Gittes may not be dead, but Cross rendered him harmless forever. Gittes will not recover from this humiliation. Evelyn is therefore only able to flee to death.

Cross is the clear winner. With Evelyn's death, he now has free access to his granddaughter, who will now become the victim of Cross's immortality claim. He covers her eyes because he will determine which reality she will see. In any case, it will not be the light of truthfulness that Gittes wanted to light. In addition, after Gittes'

defeat, he can now tackle the construction of the dam unmolested. The "greedy" city of Los Angeles, which will soak up all water, all life and destroy the fertile valley, has won. She cannot see that she will destroy herself in the process, because the valley is also her own livelihood, since she too is “a slave” of the premise.

Screenplay. The Foundations of Screenwriting by Syd Field

Pages: 262

Publisher: Dell Publishing, New York, 1984 (3rd edition, 1st edition 1979)

"*Writing is the ability to ask yourself questions and get the answers.*"

Background information:

Syd Field's “Step By Step Guide from Concept to Finished Script” attracted a lot of attention when it was published in 1979, as it is considered the first systematically deferred guide to writing a script. The great success of his book triggered a wave of easily implementable and manageable theories on the dramaturgy, especially of the film script, in the eighties. Field held seminars all over the world and worked as a so-called "Script Doctor." Syd Field started out as a screenwriter himself, but after a few years as a freelancer, he accepted a position as an editor at the Los Angeles production company Cinemobile Systems, where he later rose to head the story department. Working at Cinemobile Systems gave him a new perspective on scriptwriting, formulated in the question of why he had selected only forty out of 2000 scripts that he had reviewed within two years.

The book is clearly structured: after the basic terms have been clarified, the reader is confronted with exercises that help him to create his own script while reading the book. Field peppered his pragmatic and goal-oriented book with experiences from his seminars, with clear film examples for explanations and with practical tips from an experienced writer and reader of scripts for novices.

The classic drama structure is packaged in a timely manner. The many examples make the drama structure easy to understand, and, most importantly, give structure and order to the scriptwriting process. Of course, when it comes to structure, Field makes use of the "Poetics." The book is a concrete guide, a help for self-help. The point is not to weigh the elements of the dramatic structure against one another, or to examine the relationship between historical reality and a dramatic action, but rather to create applicable rules for writers. Sometimes this leads to formalism. The process is looked at and presented from the outside in. Field wants to help the author create the form. This form can be filled with content either beforehand or later.

Field emphasizes that the instructions are a sketch, not a script-writing formula. But he uses examples to show that deviations are likely to lead to failure. He recommends sketching a script on index cards first so that the structure is constantly checked. As a result, the creative process is continuously analytically dismantled and all content is subject to forced structuring.

Field explains how a character has to be formed, but he restricts insights into a character to the "want" "need" dichotomy (see below), from which he derives all internal motivation. The book is a practical guide to scriptwriting and focuses on structural issues. Even if Field asks the author to start with a blank page, he basically assumes that the preparatory work, i.e. the process of finding a subject, the author's examination of his material and the resulting formation of one or more characters has already taken place.

Definition of a drama:

“Drama is all about conflict. Without conflict you have no characters, without characters you have no action, without action you have no plot, without a plot you have no script. "

Structure of a drama:

“A story is a whole that consists of several parts: the action, characters, the scenes, sequences, Acts I, II, and III, incidents, episodes, events, music, locations etc. - everything together forms a story.” Structure holds the story together. All dramatic stories are based on a structural model: the paradigm. Field suggests that all good scripts conform to the paradigm concept, emphasizing that the paradigm is a "form", not a "formula". The paradigm formally structures a story, serving as its backbone, so to speak. It is not a formula because it is used to generate new stories over and over again. "Story determines structure, not structure the story." A paradigm is the following outlined execution of the dramatic structure of a script:

first act	second act	third act
(pp. 1-30)	(pp. 30-90)	(pp. 90-120)
exposition (10)	mid point (60)	resolution
confrontation (30)		
plot point I (30)	plot point II (90)	

An average film is between 90 and 120 minutes long. Since one page of the script corresponds to about a minute of film, the key moments of the paradigm can be pinpointed:

Act I / The Setup

On the first thirty pages the exposition (referred to by Field as “setup”) takes place, the context of the story is presented: the characters and their relationships to one another, the situation, the plot and the dramatic premise are presented. "The dramatic premise is the trigger for the story, it provides the decisive impetus that will lead the story to its resolution."

Act II / The Confrontation

The second act extends as the main part (the confrontation) over the following 60 pages, i.e. from pages 30 to 90. The protagonist tries to realize the “dramatic need” which was established in the dramatic premise, but obstacles of increasing intensity stand in his/her way.

Act III / The resolution

From the end of the second act to the end of the third act (the resolution), i.e. from pages 90 to 120, the story is resolved. This does not mean that it ends here, it does mean that there is a resolution to the particular premise and to the confrontations that the main character experienced.

The transitions from the introduction to the main part and from the main part to the resolution are the plot points. Their function is to give the story a decisive turn.

"A plot point is an incident, episode, or event that interferes with a plot and steers the story in a new direction." The plot point I at the end of the first act should be placed on pages 20-30. It leads the protagonist into a new situation and is his first step into the confrontation inherent in the premise. The second plot point II indicated at the end of the second act on pages 85-90 denotes an event that brings about the consequence of the confrontation laid out in the premise.

The midpoint divides the second act into two parts of about the same length. It is the moment in which the story takes a decisive turn. Here the protagonist recognizes the core of his mission, circumstances are reversed, he sees the way to the resolution of the story. Field compares the dramatic events with an upward and downward movement. At the midpoint, the basic conflict set in the premise and announced in plot point I rises to its highest point; the protagonist achieves an unstable solution to the conflict, only to then move downwards towards an albeit tragic final solution. In the case of a story with a positive outcome, the protagonist is in the situation of a false ending, an unstable tragic solution, and then moves towards the final positive outcome of the event in an upward movement.

Basic dramatic principles:

"The character is the heart, soul and nervous system of a story." There is only one protagonist per story, other characters can play major roles, but only the most active of all counts as a protagonist. Characters have an inner life and an outer life. The inner workings, his biography from birth to the start of the film, shaped the character and his needs. This constitutes the context of the story. The outward life of the character describes his action from beginning to end of the film, which is controlled by his need. The outside life reveals the character. There are three ways to reveal a character: 1. through the conflicts he experiences in order to achieve his goal, 2. through interaction with other characters, 3. in dealing with one's own emotions. In order to create a complete character, the three basic components of life must be shown: the professional, the private and the intimate. "Form your character by creating a character biography, then reveal it by their actions (...) ACTION IS CHARACTER."

A successful film character is defined by the following characteristics: Dramatic goal, point of view, behavior, change, attitude, identification and action. A dramatic goal

means what the character wants to achieve, get or work out in the course of the action. The point of view is the way the character looks at the world. A good character always has a strong point of view. The character is mostly revealed in his/her behavior and reaction to the incidents in the story. The main character goes through an emotional change during his story. The character's demeanor describes their mood. If the character and his actions are relatable for the viewer, an identification takes place, which is essential for the viewer's participation. In summary: action is character: a person is defined by what he/she does, less by what he says. Every action is followed by a reaction. The reaction by the character's environment can be positive or negative. The conflict arises for the character from obstacles to the character's need, which gives the story dramatic tension.

Action and reaction scenes of a conflict must be coordinated with one another in the script to be effective. To structure this, Field defines elements that are related to each other. Field sees the sequence as the most important sub element of a script, below the layer of acts. A sequence is a series of scenes that are held together by a basic idea. It forms a complete unit of dramatic action. (e.g. an escape could be an act of a screenplay. The sequences of an escape could be: the outbreak, enjoying freedom, the capture) The number of sequences in a script is variable (and depends on the genre). A sequence usually consists of several scenes. A scene is a unit in which a certain action happens in a certain place. The action is supposed to move the story forward. It is the smallest structural element that Field defines. The length of a scene is also variable and depends heavily on the genre. A scene is determined by place and time. If one of the two elements changes, a scene ends and a new scene begins. Field distinguishes between two types of scenes: visual and dialogical scenes. In visual scenes, actions define the perspective; in dialogical scenes, the perspective is determined by the dialogue. A scene often consists of both components.

Creation of a script:

"A script is a story told through dialogue and action within a dramatic structure." A script describes one (or more) people who are pursuing their goal. The main subject of a script is the character and her/his actions. "Action" defines all action, "Character" defines all triggers or recipients of action. The primary requirement when writing a screenplay is knowledge of all aspects of both elements. The author should be able to

grasp his story thematically in one sentence. Only this level of knowledge guarantees that, when creating a story, the essential requirements for the structure (the "need" and "want" of a character, acts, plot points) can be met by the writer.

The idea for a script can come from any source: reality, literature, other scripts, imagination, etc.. Before the writing process begins, the writer must first thoroughly explore the idea and gain specific insight into the matter and its effects on the elements, action and character. The genre should also be determined before writing. A genre (e.g. the superordinate genres comedy, drama, tragedy, tragicomedy and the sub-genres, e.g. family drama, adventure, thriller, crime, etc.) determines the tone and color of a story and abstractly defines the two plot points (rising and descending dramatic curve, definition of the midpoint, wrong ending or supposed triumph).

The theme of the story gives rise to the "want", i.e. what initially prompts the protagonist to take action (In Tootsie, an unemployed actor goes as far as to disguise as a woman) and the "need" of the protagonist, i.e. what drives him to take action against the obstacles that confront him in the second act. (In Tootsie, the protagonist has to accept their true identity). So Tootsie's theme is "Identity."

The way the character reacts to obstacles determines the (superordinate) genre of the story (in Tootsie the protagonist acts extremely against his true identity in the first and second acts, which makes the story a comedy)

In comedy and drama, the obstacles that create conflict are the essential elements of the story. "A story must always move forward, towards its dissolution."

In order to write a story stringently and in a dramatically effective form, the author must know its end. Only in this way can the author define each scene as a step towards this end.

Since dramatic efficiency requires a story to transform the character or his environment, it is effective to have the beginning and the end e.g. in the same place or at the same time in order to prove this efficiency. (E.g. the character returns to his hometown after she/he has achieved a victory (place) or the plot is an experience that the protagonist describes, which has made him into a different person. (time))

Field sees two different ways of developing a script: Either you work out the idea (the topic) for the story and then develop the characters, or you first have a character in front of you and then build the story around them. For both processes, Field recommends proceeding from the outside to the inside: If the character design is first in the foreground, one first develops the environment (the context) of a person, and

then turns to his inner life. The inner life is defined by the biography and this must focus on the "want" that triggers the story and the "need" revealed by it. (So the protagonist in Tootsie had to prove his “worth” over and over again to his mother. This led to an inner devaluation of his true identity. When the circumstances undercut his own devaluation (the role as a tomato he is forced to take), this triggers the above-mentioned act of desperation).

If the action is at the beginning of the considerations, a list of the sequences should first be created in chronological order. Here Field advises the index card system as a structural aid, since the topic is often only recognized in the course of dealing with an action, which, once properly defined, can influence the sequence of actions. First, a sequence should be recorded on an index card. The idea for sequences can already be divided into scenes. It is helpful to use different colored index cards for each of the three acts. Field recommends planning four days for structuring: the first day for act I, the second day for act II up to the central point, the third day from the central point to the end of act II, the third day for act III. Once the story has been structured and this structure has been internalized, the writing of the scenes should begin.

An intermediate stage before writing actual scenes is to write a treatment. A treatment is a summary of the story, on around 20-30 pages, in which the central points (plot points) should be clearly defined. It can also involve dialogue. Once the sequence and structure of the characters have been thought through, the plot structure is transferred to the paradigm model in order to check its dramatic efficiency. Then sequences and scenes should be worked out. When designing a scene, as with a sequence, the context should be created first, then the content. First of all, the function of the scene for the whole story must be clear in order to then formulate its content.

There are no superfluous scenes in a stringent script. When designing scenes, attention should be paid to their visual quality: a certain location has an effect on an action, a certain time of day allows for emphasizing certain elements of an action. Another means of achieving additional dramatic efficiency is through physical obstacles. (An escape leads to a maze, the search for a person in a packed stadium, a declaration of love on a construction site, etc.) Field advises against flashbacks, the character should explain himself through his actions and his reactions to given events in the now.

According to Field, the viewer decides after just 10 minutes of runtime time whether he likes the plot or not, the same applies to the assessment of a reader while reading the script: the first 10 pages decide. The author must therefore create an introduction that

announces the essential elements of the story (action, character, genre, tone) in an efficient manner. The dramatic premise and the context of the story must be clearly defined. Dialogue should communicate facts, reveal emotional stages of character and announce conflicts. The scriptwriter should not mention any camera positions. "The scriptwriter's job is to tell the director what to shoot, not how." He should adhere to the formal guidelines when creating a script, which in the US are standardized up to the millimeter-precise specification of the distance between stage direction and dialogue. This is the only way to guarantee that one page of a script takes up about a minute in a film, which of course only applies if it is a “standardized” situation, for example a dialogue between two people and not a description in the form of an instruction of a complex action.

When actually writing, Field recommends a fixed schedule of about three hours a day. The first draft should be finished in six weeks. When writing the first draft, the first thing to do is to write, i.e. to produce material, and to stick with the designed structure even if there are doubts. In this way, this structure can be checked efficiently. Extensive changes should be left to the second draft. Self-criticism when creating the first draft hinders the creative process. The rewriting process should take three weeks. Above all, the author should check whether he has favorite scenes that do not fit into the concept. In a third phase, the structure should be weighted to check whether individual acts are too long or too short compared to others.

Chinatown according to the rules of Syd Field:

Field's request to introduce the main character in the first 10 minutes of the film, to define the dramatic premise and the dramatic situation, as well as the genre and the tone, is fulfilled: Jack Gittes is an elegantly dressed private detective for “delicate investigations” and we meet him in his everyday world, his office. When talking to a client, Gittes is empathetic. But his statement: "You need to be rich to kill somebody and get away with it." testifies to a "need" to heal the cause of the deeply rooted cynicism. Gittes’ point of view on privilege and justice introduces the premise and theme of the story. Gittes "want" is to take revenge on the mighty abd the powerful of the city who have robbed him of his self-respect. His "need" is to accept himself as he is and to know his limits.

The alleged Mrs. Mulwray delivers after five minutes of film time the triggering element of the film, with her assignment for Gittes to find out with whom her husband is having an affair. This sets the story in motion.

Gittes does the job routinely. But then his weak spot is touched several times: his honor is violated. First his photos of evidence get in the newspaper and he is accused of breaking a code of honor for private detectives. Then the real Mrs. Mulwray threatens with a formal complaint: the woman who gave Gittes the job was not Evelyn Mulwray, another severe humiliation. Ultimately, Gittes' risks to lose his license as a detective.

Plot Point I of the story is when Gittes' sees first indications that he (as well as the alleged Ms. Mulwray, who is now dead) was the victim of an operation to cover up a huge scandal over the water supply of the city of Los Angeles. Gittes hunting instinct is awakened.

The real culprits he is to track down now are precisely the arrogant powerful people who have severely humiliated him in the past. Gittes is on the hook.

Field's demand has been met that Plot Point I should turn the story into a different direction: a routine research into adultery has now turned into a hunt for life and death. Gittes 'will risk his life to restore his honor, but there is much more to it than that: He wants to regain the dignity that was taken from him in Chinatown.

In the second act, which is now beginning, Gittes first recognizes the gigantic extent of the scandal he has tracked down: it is about the water supply for the entire city, about land speculation with amounts in the three-digit million range.

At this point at the latest, a hero who is not subject to the special premise of this story would turn to the authorities or ask for help in some other way. But for Gittes it's about everything, that's too tempting.

Hollis Mulwray dies, like the supposed Mrs. Mulwray before, and Gittes encounters other significant obstacles. Police officer Escobar and his cronies try to prevent him from investigating, they even slit his nose, and threaten with license revocation, all warnings that Gittes is playing a game he is not up to.

After 63 minutes, the central point is reached when Gitte discovers Noah Cross. Cross and Mulwray used to jointly own the waterworks. Gittes now knows that Cross, Evelyn Mulwray's father, is the real antagonist. He also knows what Cross is capable of, two people are already dead. But Gittes continues unabashedly. Gittes' goal shifts, now he

wants to convict Cross. He meets Cross to assess him. Cross surprisingly assigns him to find the (supposed) lover of Hollis Mulwray (who is actually Hollis Mulwray's stepdaughter). Gittes believes he is still in control of the game, so he accepts the assignment. This is the supposed triumph from which Gittes will go steeply downhill. Because with the assignment Cross has made his decisive move, Gittes is already defeated here, the tragic thing is that he not only doesn't know, Gittes believes, just like Cross planned it, that he controls the game.

Now a love affair is developing between Evelyn and Gittes. Gittes follows Evelyn to a house where Mulwray's lover is said to be. He confronts Evelyn. She says the lover is her sister, but Gittes no longer believes her because of her many excuses.

Gittes is now already in Cross' world and area of influence. Hollis Mulwray appears to have drowned in the ocean. A remark by the Chinese gardener puzzles Gittes: "Salty water is not good for the grass." The Mulwray Estate garden pond contains salt water. Gittes finds Mulwray's glasses in the pond and realizes that Cross must have drowned Hollis Mulwray in the pond. When he meets Evelyn again to tell her that, Gittes realizes that Evelyn and the supposed lover are very intimate. He confronts Evelyn: She then provides the decisive revelation and plot point II: The over is her sister AND her daughter!

Here the movement of the story takes a last turn: Gittes now only wants one thing: to stop the amorality, i.e. to stop Cross. With Evelyn's revelation, Cross has shown that he is beyond all laws that play a role in human coexistence. Gittes could have recognized the full extent of Cross greed here, assessed that he may not beat Cross but still be able to save himself, Evelyn and her daughter. But he can’t let go of the obsession to revenge his past humiliation.

This introduces the (short) third act. There are now only a few steps left to resolution. Gittes believed that Evelyn and her daughter could be best protected from Cross in Chinatown, but in the end he himself brings Cross on their trail (and thus to his destination). Gittes tragically repeats the experience of his defeat as a police officer in this neighborhood: “I tried to help somebody but all I did went in the opposite direction”.

His unsuccessful attempt to arrest Cross shows Gittes his decisive mistake: he is all alone, no one, not even the police (Escobar), are on his side. This is the world of Cross, in it there is no place for Gittes and his claim for decency and morality for everyone.

Gittes' appeal to Escobar therefore also goes nowhere: "Hey is rich! Understand? The rich always get away with it! " He is deep in the world of Noah Cross in which he has no more allies and will not find any.

The result is that he again, and this time definitely, loses his dignity: he cannot keep his promise to protect Evelyn and her daughter.

The Writer's Journey by Christopher Vogler

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Background information:

Christopher Vogler was working at the renowned USC (University of Southern California) film department as a professor of screenplay when he wrote “The Writer's Journey’. He later headed the story development department at Twentieth Century Fox, Fox 2000. When Vogler was appointed to USC in 1975, Aristotle's "Poetics" were taught and Shakespeare's plays were analyzed concerning the structuring of a drama.

“The Writer's Journey” is essentially based on the studies of the ethnologist Joseph A. Campbell. In his book “A Hero with a Thousand Faces”, Campbell worked out the universality of narrative structures, based on the theory of archetypes of the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung. The “hero’s journey” by Vogler after Campbell is supposed to form the basis of all stories. The journey describes in an abstract form the trials, challenges and dangers that the hero encounters during the course of a story. For Vogler these are also the stations on the path of the human soul through life. He had initially summarized his concept in a seven-page script. This was copied so often that he decided to use it to develop a book that became a bestseller.

Vogler insists that “The Journey” should not be seen as a guide to scriptwriting, like Syd Field’s books, but that the journey conveys to the viewer or reader the universal stages of development of a character who undergoes change because he/she interacts with something or someone. The twelve stages of the arc of development have a long tradition in Western culture: above all, they touch on the twelve stages of the Passion of Christ but are of course also a reflection of the twelve months on the calendar, divided into seasons, which could be understood as acts.

Vogler uses terms borrowed from Aristotle, such as turning point, climax, as well as Campbell's and Jung's terms. References to classical or modern drama theories are omitted. Vogler sees his work as located on the meta level of a dramatic structure and avoids any impression that it is a manual.

Therefore, he does not go into how the practical creation of a script works. The book can therefore best serve the author who considers in more detail the aspects of a story that deals with the development of a character through external and internal influences.

Definition of a drama:

“All stories basically consist of a handful of recurring components that we come across again and again in myths, fairy tales, dreams and films. The generic term for all of these components is: the hero's journey. "

Structure of a drama:

According to Vogler, the hero's journey is divided into 12 stations, which represent the character's development curve within the story. These stations are a "framework" or a guide. The journey (or dramatic movement) must emerge from inner necessity. Therefore, duration or lengths in terms of pages are all relative. The function determines the form. Nor does Vogler insist on keeping the stages in sequence of: "Every element from the hero's journey can appear at any point in the story." The element is used according to the requirements of the story. For example, the figure of the mentor does not necessarily have to appear in the first act, but might appear only in the second or third act.

<u>The 12 Stations of the Hero’s Journey</u>

<u>Act I - (30 pages)</u>

1. Familiar world (exposition)
2. Call of Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Mentor
5. First Threshold (first turning point)

<u>Act II - (60 pages)</u>

6. Tests, Allies, Enemies

7. Advance to the deepest Cave

8. Ultimate Test (Climax)

9. Reward

10. Return (second turning point)

III. Act - (30 pages)

11. Resurrection

12. Return with the elixir

In summary, the story proceeds as follows: First, the usual world of the hero is shown in order to illustrate the contrast to the upcoming new, strange world of adventure. The call to adventure comes when the hero is faced with a problem or a challenge. Here it is revealed what the reward will be; the hero's goal and the theme of the story are staked out. The first reaction to the call is the hero's refusal, which results from his fear of the unknown. An additional motive is needed, the occurrence of unforeseen circumstances or the encouragement of a mentor until the hero overcomes his fear and prepares himself for the journey. The mentor can be a human being, a tool or an imagination. Their task is to prepare the hero for the encounter with the unknown, to show him the way and to equip him with magical weapons or clever clues. The hero has now overcome his fear and is equipped to cross the first threshold to the unknown world of adventure.

In the new world the hero learns to understand the rules, wins allies, creates enemies and has to pass tests.

Finally, the hero arrives in the immediate vicinity of a dangerous place where the goal of his desires resides, the deepest cave. Here the hero meets his fate. He goes into direct confrontation, a struggle for life and death, with the antagonist. In order to pass the decisive test, he must overcome the opponent and / or resistance within himself (greatest fear). Physically, he has to go through a metaphorical death situation. The old self dies, the hero is ready to take on a new identity. In a sense, until this point, the hero is not yet a hero. He is merely the protagonist of his story. The moment he faces the fight and comes out on top of it, he becomes the true hero of his story.

After surviving the threat of death, or the metaphorical death, the hero takes possession of his reward. Tragic heroes can also die at this point in the story. The doomed hero then experiences the resurrection in a metaphorical sense: he lives on in the memories of the afterworld, the people for whom he gave his life. He, of course, also lives on in the hearts of the audience.

The way back to the familiar world shows the consequences of the fight: the hero has to face a new reality, or reality has to come to terms with a changed hero. Next, the hero faces once again the danger of death. Now he has to prove that he has really renewed himself, that he has become a hero and is not the mere protagonist any more. The opposing powers have not yet been completely defeated, and they strike out again for a powerful counter-attack that leads to a second death of the hero and his final resurrection. Now the hero has been fundamentally transformed and is able to return to a normal life as a reborn being with new insights.

In the familiar world it is now a matter of applying the reward in order to remedy the grievance that caused the trip. The reward was the decisive reason for the trip: it can be real goods (objects, money), as also non-material goods (justice, love, respect, wisdom)

Basic dramatic principles:

Fairy tales and myths have characters with comparable properties and functions. The Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung called these typified characters archetypes. Archetypes have specific properties, Vogler understands the appearance of these characters, or the presence of the corresponding properties, as a fundamental component of universal storytelling. It is not about the rigid assignment of a certain property to a certain character. A character can represent several archetypes throughout the story. Or, several characters can together form a certain archetype. The specific traits can best be seen as a “mask” that a character puts on in order to influence the course of the story using the traits assigned to them.

Vogler lists the following archetypes as relevant:

Hero

Mentor

Threshold guardian

Herald

Shadow

Trickster

The word hero comes from the Greek “heros” and means “to protect and to serve.” A hero is ideally a person who puts his own needs aside for the benefit of the community. This can go as far as self-sacrifice. This trait is yet not always present in a hero. What is though defining a hero is that his goal lies beyond the factual horizon of a story. The hero wants to change the conditions, wants to change himself, challenges the rules of his world, or doubts in the legitimacy of the ruler.

At the beginning of the journey, the protagonist is not yet a hero, but an individual who sets out in search of his or her identity. Since this search has a universal character, the hero-to-be who at this point is still a mere protagonist of the story becomes a figure of identification for the viewer.

With his decision to go on this search, the protagonist also explains or defines his shortcomings. The search is an expression of the awareness of this shortage (e.g. the search for love, confirmation, honor, justice). The initial decision makes the protagonist the most active figure who in the course of the events also changes the most. The uncompromising nature of the hero, his willingness to give everything for his goal, his readiness to die, and the subsequent survival confronting the antagonist, transform the protagonist into a hero.

The hero himself can also embody all archetypes at times. Especially if the main source of resistance or antagonism can be found inside the protagonist himself (as is the case in all stories that deal with character development, i.e. coming-of-age) he will also appear as a trickster and rogue or be his own shadow. However, only the hero himself can take part in the decisive battle with the antagonist and he must do so in his capacity as a hero.

The hero can initiate the entire development as an active character or let the circumstances provoke actions passively. After the central fight (penetration into the deepest cave), the passive hero must also take action in order to carry out the transformation from protagonist to hero. The antihero acts according to the same pattern as the hero, but he hides his heroism for as long as possible behind other masks (often the rogue or the trickster). The antihero can also be a tragic hero; he then

as the protagonist does not offer any identification potential to the audience. In the decisive fight he is defeated because he has taken or accepted the role of the hero too late and is consequently beaten by the antagonistic forces and fails.

In short, the hero can have any quality. However, in contrast to all other characters of the story, he must pursue an overarching goal. If the hero survives and returns to his familiar world, he has always replaced negative qualities with positive ones (an antihero becomes always a true hero if he survives). A hero does not always have to be more active compared to the other characters; he also can primarily act as a catalyst: He is the focus of the action, but he brings about changes in other characters or the external world through his behavior. As a rule, however, the hero carries out the most important action in a story himself, he makes the greatest sacrifice, he comes closest to death, he overcomes the greatest fear and thus develops from protagonist to hero during the journey.

According to Vogler, types of heroes are: the innocent, the orphan, the martyr, the restless, warrior, seeker, lover, destroyer, creator, ruler, the wise, the twisted.

The original type of the mentor is the “wise old man,” (or woman). Mostly, this is a figure with positive connotations, often a role model or predecessor of the hero (a former hero who has retired), one who trains and supports the hero Just as learning is a key quality of the hero, teaching is a central quality of the mentor. He can also give the hero things to prepare him for his adventure. That can be a magic weapon or smart advice that the hero will use in the conflict with the antagonist. The gift also has the function of a first reward after passing a test, because the hero should only receive it when he has made the decision to cross the first threshold. The mentor helps the hero to overcome his fear. The mentor can himself be a threshold that the hero must overcome in order to begin his journey. Dark mentors can hide behind the mask of a good mentor. Their advice or help endangers the hero but he will only learn that in the further course of his journey.

The role of mentor can be assumed by several characters who also fulfill other functions. The mentor can also be immaterial (code of honor, memory, inheritance, obligation).

The threshold keeper is an obstacle on the hero's journey. At first it should look terrifying, but on closer inspection it can be defeated, bypassed or made an ally. The threshold keeper does not act as an opponent. The dramaturgical function of the threshold keeper is to test the hero: is he ready and experienced enough for the next step of the journey? Can he continue the struggle on a higher level? The guardian of

the threshold can be a locked door, a riddle, the protagonist's own inner demons, such as dependencies or negative behavior patterns. Instead of going head-on against the guardian of the threshold, the hero must learn to adapt his means to the task, perhaps he must also say goodbye here, give up a piece of himself. In doing so, he again gains strength.

The Herald brings the call to adventure by announcing the need for change. He has a motivating effect, presents the hero with a challenge and thus gets the story going. The sign of a necessary change can also be a natural event, a dream, or a blatant change in the environment. Usually this request occurs in the second half of the first act of the story.

By definition, the shapeshifter always takes on new traits and puzzles the hero. Often it is a love interest or some other close or intimate relationship. The shapeshifter can have a positive or negative effect: it can help or become dangerous. The shapeshifter is characterized by a very flexible morality. At first he seems to be superior to the hero (who has a set code of values). Only in the further course does it become clear that only the hero, because of his stable worldview, will be able to face the antagonist.

Another function of the shapeshifter is to act as a sparring partner to prepare the hero for upcoming obstacles. In order to be prepared for the further challenges of the journey, the hero has to find further, previously unknown sources of energy: A masculine hero can discover his gentleness and vulnerability, or a soft character shows determination and aggressiveness in order to mature into a more complete personality. Dramaturgically, shapeshifters have the function of arousing doubts about the protagonist's suitability and thus increasing the tension of the story. The shapeshifter teaches the hero to look behind the facade and recognize the core of the personality of the antagonist.

The archetype of the shadow represents the dark forces. These can be suppressed characteristics of the person. The hero fears these negative aspects of the self and often sees them in other people first instead of himself. If the psychological aspect of a story is in the foreground and the hero's struggle is one against his own dark side or weakness, the shadow can represent the first encounter with this inner antagonist. The shadow does not stand, like the guardian of the threshold, for neuroses that hinder the hero but that can be overcome. The shadow stands for tangible psychoses that threaten to destroy the hero.

The function of the shadow is to enter into conflict with the hero and to bring him into a life-threatening situation from which he rises as a grown personality. This antagonist

does not have to be identifiable as evil. On the contrary, like a real shadow, it must be difficult to read and may even appear to have good properties at first.

Behind the archetype of the trickster, or rogue, hides the energy of anarchy, and with it the desire for change.

This energy is chaotic, however, and thus the change is arbitrary, which can create strange moments of relaxation. The trickster's intervention often has beneficial effects.The trickster can alert the hero to an obsession that is preventing him from making any progress. The hero can initially appear as a trickster. This type of hero hardly undergoes any change, but acts as a catalyst that influences the development of the other characters. The typical example is the wise fool type.

The archetypes can appear at all twelve stations of the hero’s journey. Vogler refrains from a fixed assignment, but he indicates where their occurrence is obvious and favorable in order to define the function of the respective station of the journey.

According to Vogler, certain principles must be observed when designing each station.

At the beginning of the journey, it is important to arouse the viewer's interest and reveal the tone of the story. This can be done through an allegation to a myth, a powerful title or a strong opening image that already suggests the “strange world” of the second act. However, the strange world can only be perceived as such if the everyday world of the hero has been made tangible as a comparison. The introduction of the everyday world and the hero must be accompanied by a clear indication of the relevant problem, the possible danger and the reward. In his first appearance, the future hero should reflect the coming conflicts and his own most outstanding qualities. In order to enable the viewer to identify with the hero, universal goals, wishes or problems must be made tangible here. Often this moment also shows a deficiency, or what has thrown the everyday world out of balance. The hero can also indicate here that he has made a serious mistake or suffered a defeat in the past and what he has irrevocably lost in the process.

At the beginning the audience has to learn what the hero can win or lose. In order to create tension and / or to generate identification it has to be a high and understandable cost.

The background of the main character, her biography and the familiar world should be conveyed through action rather than dialogue or monologue. The exposition can also raise questions, only provide fragments. The theme of the story should be named in the familiar world and must remain consistent. The call of adventure can be a message

delivered by a messenger. The call must point to a fundamental disorder in the familiar world. Something threatens the stability. The call can be a loss or a challenge. At first, the hero should refuse the call to indicate the danger associated with it. The hero may have failed in a similar task in the past. Before accepting the call, a threshold guard generates doubts and fears. With the appearance and support of a mentor, the hero is sent on an adventure. Negative mentors seduce (tragic) heroes into potentially destructive actions that will destroy the hero. Crossing the first threshold equates with the first turning point of a three-act structure. Something or someone has to give the hero the motivation for the adventure. The transition from one world to the other should be made visually tangible. The strange, new world into which the hero enters should differ greatly from the everyday world through other laws, other characteristics, and as many unknown elements as possible. The conditions for survival should be defined, as well as the price for failure. The trials prepare the hero for the great central task (what awaits him in the lion's den). It doesn't yet have to be a matter of life and death here. Learning the rules of the new world has to be quick and easy to understand, no matter how complex the new world may be. This world has traps, obstacles built for the hero. It is dominated by one or more antagonists. Allies the hero will find in this world can have any shape and character. The shadow and his servants should also meet the hero here. Making use of allies and recognizing the shadows as such is part of the learning process. The hero is between the first threshold and the center of his search (lion's den). Tests become more difficult and dangerous. Threshold guards are becoming more threatening. Before tackling the central conflict, the hero must know the mechanisms of the alien world. Now the allies leave him, for example in order not to endanger themselves, or they perish in trials. The hero can succumb to errors here, for example accept the supposed help of evil. Serious setbacks are possible, "dramatic complications" occur.

The hero gets to know the antagonist better and better. The audience must be reminded regularly of the importance of the mission. There may be references to the fact that the familiar world depends on the outcome of the coming struggle. This is the last chance for a love scene or for comic relief" before the storm. The ultimate test of the hero takes place in the lion's den. This moment is to be equated with the climax of the second act, the mid point, roughly the middle of the film The focus of the story is the confrontation with the antagonist, the shadow. The hero lives through the death of his past self. This distinguishes him as a hero and makes him god-like for a moment. The result should be delayed as long as possible. The tension should be also defined by the fact that the hero's death can appear factual or final. This increases the feeling

of triumph over the rebirth of the "new hero". The mentor's death can also take place here, because the mentor helped the "old self" of the hero. The conflict with the antagonist, the shadow, can be an external fight or an internal conflict. Killing the enemy should only be possible for the hero when he has stepped into his new form. It should be associated with emotion (such as sadness, memory). The hero must stand by the consequences of his deed. The antagonist is not finally beaten here. The antagonist benefits from knowing the hero in his new guise. He reappears in the third act for the final battle. In the event of an internal conflict, it changes its shape decisively and surprisingly. The mentor can prepare the hero for the next fight. At this point there is often a point of rest, the audience should recapitulate the story. This can be connected with messengers from the old, familiar world. The hero now receives his reward: the elixir, a means to bring the everyday world back into balance. Recognition and respect from former opponents are also possible here. However, the hero has not yet brought the solution to its destination. With the return to the normal world, the tension increases again. The return to the old world is initiated by the struggle with the strengthened shadow.

This is the transition from the second to the third act (or Plot Point II). For the last time the hero crosses a threshold. A final turning point has been reached. The course of the story is set to change fundamentally once again. The hero may want to seek revenge, he recognizes the scope of the enemy's plans, the enemy may have taken over the familiar world, or the rules in the "old" world may have fundamentally changed. The hero may have to make another great sacrifice here. The final battle of life and death shows that the "new hero" has learned his lesson and accepts his new role. In the event of an internal conflict, he is tempted to succumb to his old weaknesses again. At this point the tragic hero finds death, albeit as a "new person," that is, purified what posterity recognizes and why it pays him tribute. The return to the old world can result in a synthesis of the old personality and the new one. In any case, the hero has to prove that the old ego has been overcome and the new ego is viable. The return only satisfies the audience if, in the end, an overriding justice prevails: the punishment of the antagonist must be proportionate to his offenses. The hero's reward must be in proportion to his sacrifice, his performance. The reward is either recognition as a hero, or it can be material in nature, symbolized by the elixir, which can also be material or symbolic.

A bracket that ties beginning and end together (comparable situation but completely new conditions) can show the development of the hero: a situation that he did not

master at the beginning is now easy for him. A temptation he could not withstand is no challenge any more.

The topic must have remained consistent: in the end, it should appear from a new perspective.

Vogler equates the hero's twelve stations with the character development of a hero:

Limited insight into problem	-	familiar world
Increased Insight	-	call of adventure
Defense against change	-	refusal of call
Overcoming defenses	-	meeting the mentor
Willingness to Change	-	first threshold
Try the change	-	trials, allies, enemies
Approaching the Big Change	-	approaching the danger
Making the Big Change	-	in the lion's den
Effects of Change	-	reward
Insight into constant change	-	the way back
Last effort	-	resurrection
Mastery of the Problem	-	the teaching / the elixir

Creation of a script:

Vogler advises laying out the hero's twelve stations on twelve index cards first. Since the 12 stations do not necessarily have to run in a specified order, the index card system is recommended because it makes it easier to swap the order. Parallel to the hero's journey, the archetypes of all characters are to be checked.

Vogler emphasizes that the journey is a guide, not a formula. It may not even apply to every story: "To force a story into the corset of a scheme would be to put the cart before the horse."

Vogler recommends breaking rules when the story demands it: "The audience loves it when well-known conventions and expectations are violated in a creative way." A story can break all the rules and still appeal to universal human feelings.

Chinatown according to the rules of Christopher Vogler:

The hero's journey is accomplished in its entirety by two characters in the film Chinatown who support and also hinder each other, JJ Gittes and Evelyn Mulwray. Other characters, such as Lieutenant Escobar and the antagonist, Noah Cross, go through partial journeys, most of which take place off-screen.

The first hero to be featured is JJ Gittes. First, the hero, a private detective, is introduced in his everyday world.

The world is ostensibly in a balance. However, Gittes himself is an unbalanced character. He fluctuates between overt empathy (for the customer, to whom he has to show the photos of his wife's betrayal) and cynicism (in dealing with his acquaintances - he has no friends) and when he talks about those in power (the rich).

The background to this is a previous serious injury that Gittes sustained while fighting injustice. He was a police officer in Chinatown and had to choose between love for a woman and his zeal for justice. Gittes opted for justice, messing with those in power. It cost his wife her life.

So the world is in serious disorder. Those in power prevent justice and even go so far as to kill the innocent. Gittes knows about it. He has spent the past years to forget but of course that is not an option.

The call to adventure is the appearance of the fake Mrs. Mulwray, who wants Gittes to catch her unfaithful husband in the act.

Gittes initially refuses the call: "Let sleeping dogs lie."

The false Ms. Mulwray is also the first appearance of the antagonist, because she is only a tool of Noah Cross. Cross knows how to get Gittes to accept the call, he uses Gittes' greed, and offers him a lot of money.

Giites has not yet qualified for being Cross’ opponent, he is too insignificant for that. Cross’ attention to Gittes is drawn by his daughter. (This is Cross call to the adventure

if one wants so). Evelyn, in cooperation with her husband, wants to take a “possession” away from Cross (his daughter with Evelyn, who is also his daughter), which Cross cannot allow.

Gittes discovers that he was duped after completing the job. Enter the real Mrs. Mulwray, Evelyn. Evelyn here functions as a mentor, because she prompts Gittes to cross the threshold into the adventure, she gives him a target (her father) and also the tools (the emotional connection between them that follows)

Gittes enters the realm of Noah Cross without knowing anything about him. Here, Evelyn develops into a second protagonist who accomplishes her hero’s journey. She makes choices, at this point her choice is to not reveal that she is Noah Cross’ daughter, as well as she also does not reveal that she knows what her father is after.

Evelyn Muwray has fled (Gittes is not yet aware of that either) from her overpowering father in Gittes’ world.

Noah Cross has left his "Olympus" at this point, from which he has ruled the world up to now. He moves into reality, so to speak, which has to suffer from his deeds (the artificial scarcity of water). Here he has to fight a real fight with Gittes, because his daughter choses Gittes to fight on her behalf.

Cross (without the audience being yet aware of it or him for that matter) has all the advantages here: While Gittes needs still to learn the rules of the world he now enters, make allies (Hollis Mulwray, the Chinese gardener) Cross already knows everything and controls everybody (Hollis, the wrong Ms Mulwray, Escobar)

Gittes believes that he can determine or influence the rules of the world he enters. Someone broke the code of honor. This person needs to know that he will find out who placed the fake order and punish that person for defamation.

Evelyn Mulwray offers to pay him his fee (she acts now as a conflicted mentor) and to refrain from filing a lawsuit. She tries to tie in with Gittes' old behavior patterns (greed), but that no longer works because Gittes is already on the transformative path to the central battle with the antagonist. He senses that the same people who inflicted the past wound on him are behind this. Nothing will stop him now.

Evelyn herself is drawn into the adventure by Gittes fatal decision to take up the fight, instead of going into it herself. For her (as a protagonist), Gittes is now the mentor. His virility lets her hope that he can defeat her mighty father.

In his search for Mr. Mulwray and his lover, Gittes soon comes across an old friend: his superior from his unfortunate time in Chinatown: Lt. Escobar. Gittes should recognize Escobar as a trickster, but he makes the fatal mistake of misinterpreting him as a shadow, which prevents him from recognizing the real shadow, Cross.

Escobar himself makes a choice here. He could help and save Gittes, but he doesn't. It is his move across the first threshold, into a world without morale, in which he will be taken care of as a pawn of Cross but has lost entirely the meaning of his existence.

When the body of Mr. Mulwray is discovered, Gittes meets again with Evelyn Mulwray, who is now a shapeshifter: She was a mentor, one who provided him with crucial information, but also lied.

Evelyn finally gives Gittes the order to find the murderer of her husband and supports him in the search, with a reference to the upcoming test. This is Evelyn's entry into the Lion's Den. She now wants to trigger Gittes to challenge and fight her father. Here, however, it turns out that she is not the real protagonist, because she allows Gittes to lead the fight on her behalf.

During his further research, Gittes comes across numerous clues from the true shadow, Cross: Escobar's men, the guards of the waterworks who slit his nose, and also the clerk of the property office. They are all in Cross' service. Gittes still believes he has an advantage, as he has the moral concern to restore justice and, more importantly for him, his honor.

Gittes acts here like a romantic, medieval knight who believes that fighting for the just cause gives him extra strengths. This stance becomes more and more absurd as he ventures deeper into Cross' world that is profoundly amorale.

With the death of the wrong Mrs. Mulwray and the death of Hollis Mulwray discovered by Gittes later, Cross sets precisely these conditions for the upcoming fight. Cross knows no morals, he uses land, water, and people and throws them away when he no longer needs them. Gittes is not yet aware of this.

Gittes now penetrates the lion's den: he visits Noah Cross without suspecting (since Evelyn refuses him this support) that he is the shadow:

Ultimately, Cross takes action: he instructs Gittes to find Hollis Mulwray's mistress (in reality, his daughter with Evelyn); with that he has Gittes in his hand. And he makes Gittes believe that he still controls the game, because Cross has not challenged him to fight, but instead gives him an assignment and even pays for it.

Cross makes the fight even more difficult for himself, that is how sure he is at this point to win. He gives Gittes the barely hidden hint: "You think you know, what you're dealing with, but you don't." Gittes who sees himself close to the ultimate win, doesn't heed the advice.

As years ago, in Chinatown, Gittes again does not accept the warning. Gittes has lost the fight in the lion's den and he doesn't even know it.

Cross himself sent Gittes over the second threshold, into the world in which there is only one result for Gittes: (symbolic) death.

But first, there is a fake reward: Evelyn and Gittes have a love scene in which he suggests his painful experience in Chinatown. Before Gittes leaves the house to follow Evelyn, the Chinese gardener acts as an additional mentor: he gives Gittes the crucial information that the garden pond is filled with salt water and fishes out his glasses, another hint that Gittes does not read. The glasses stand to mean: See if you can and do not blindly run into your demise.

But it is too late for Gittes.

Gittes follows Evelyn into the house of the supposed lover of Mulwray. He believes he is penetrating the lion's den and suspects Evelyn of coping with the shadow. Now that it is too late, Evelyn shows Gittes the true extent of Cross' amorality and ruthlessness. The 'lover' is her sister AND her daughter. Gittes recognizes the real shadow: Noah Cross. But the realization comes too late. He's in Cross's service.

Gittes could have convicted Cross for the murder of Hollis Mulwray, but Cross has long since set the course. By evoking the danger of destroying Evelyn and her daughter, Cross forces Gittes back to Chinatown (Gittes' true familiar world, because he never left Chinatown in his head), where Evelyn and her daughter are hidden. There, Gittes now experiences the same defeat again: the woman he loves has to die, just as she did years ago. His elixirs: the prospect of satisfaction and salvation of his honor have been snatched from him.

Gittes experiences a fate that is more terrible than death: He is now condemned to live this defeat over and over again, for all eternity. That Escobar "graciously" grants him his freedom in the end is irrelevant or better, even part of this terrible punishment.

Evelyn Mulwray's heroic journey ends in her death.

The photos that Gittes took of Hollis Mulwray and her daughter as a alleged lover reached the newspaper via dark paths (Cross' doing, of course) and became her call to adventure:

Evelyn's threshold is the risk that her father Noah Cross learns of the whereabouts of her sister / daughter. When her previous ally and protector, her husband Hollis Mulwray, is dead, she gives in to the call for adventure, takes the risk and trusts Gittes with the task of finding her husband's murderer, which amounts to taking her father out of circulation so that she is no longer in danger.

Gittes' topic is self-respect, Evelyn's topic is trust. She trusts Gittes too late and he has to force her to open up to him again and again and finally tell the truth. Evelyn's big mistake is that she does not trust Gittes enough to take up the fight against her father herself and to count on Gittes' support. Gittes even has to beat the unbelievable, ultimate truth out of her: her incestuous relationship with her father.

Evelyn does receive her elixir: Gittes' support in the fight with her father. But for him this realization comes too late. If Gittes had known earlier how amoral and unscrupulous Cross is, he would have been warned, would have acted more carefully and thus stood a fair chance in the fight.

In Chinatown, Evelyn flees in panic from her father, who thanks to her inaction caused by her lack of trust, has become immortal and almighty (she can't even shoot him). In the absence of the necessary trust to open up and let the world know about her ordeal, she is punished with death as a tragic heroine and takes her truth with her to the grave.

Story. Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting by Robert McKee

Pages: 455

Published by Harper Collins Publishers, New York 1997

"Story is a metaphor for life."

Background information:

McKee's "Story" is the most extensive work on the subject of dramaturgy for scripts. The review of this work must also be longer than the others. The excellence of this work is based on the range of elements of dramaturgical texts McKee examines and the depth of his analysis. The author uses the principles of Aristotle but also questions him. McKee also uses the Field paradigm, but in a modified form. In contrast to Field, McKee names the structural principles but also their deviations. This allows him to look at the complexity of story creation better than his colleagues.

Unlike Field, McKee understands scriptwriting not as the execution of an abstractly formulated idea. The actual form of the script emerges for McKee as the result of an overall creative process. This process consists partly of analysis, then also of concrete applications of the results and a creative process, which, however, has so many irrational and emotional aspects that it cannot be subject to any regularity. In order to give a work emotional depth and truthfulness, McKee borrows methods from "Method-Acting"

In addition, McKee broke his vision of a “good story” vividly by using many examples from recent film history.

McKee's approach is more extensive, but also more complex than that of his colleagues. He conveys to the learner that writing scripts has a creative dimension that cannot be expressed in formulas, but at the same time he is not afraid to define terms and even go further than his colleagues.

Structure of a drama

A story after McKee describes a great event. Between the beginning and the end of the story there is a significant change in the protagonist's situation.

The structure of a drama is determined by the selection of events from the life story or entire life circle of the central characters. These events are brought into order and if so, feelings and insights are provoked in the audience, which then collectively define an attitude.

Stories are therefore best organized in acts, sequences, scenes and beats.

Supposing a length of approx. 120 minutes:

The first act introduces the world of the action. This act should end with a climax after about 25-30 pages/minutes. Until then, the audience must have a feeling of dynamism towards the climax.

The second act takes about 70 pages/minutes. It connects lines of action and functions in them separately as an act, sometimes also as first or third act, which can result in different narrative speeds.

The climaxes of individual storylines are arranged in relation to one another so that the dynamics from the first act are retained.

The last/third act is reserved to define the central change in the situation of protagonist. The climax is the realization of the immutability of this change.

The last act should last about 20 minutes and is therefore relatively short.

According to McKee, three acts are the minimum requirement for a complete story, so it is not a fragment. At four acts , each act is approximately 30 to 40 minutes long, The middle of the second act is here the moment of significant change.

Since an act is defined by the fact that it ends with a turn of events, and a story can only have a limited number of really significant turns, the effect of the respective turning point decreases with the number of acts.

There are also five-act stories in which a turn should take place after 15 to 20 minutes / pages

The three-act model has become the standard primarily because of its ease of use in analysis. A story in three acts usually contains four memorable scenes:

The inciting moment, which introduces the main plot (central plot), as well as the highlights of the first, second and finally the extremes (climax) of the third act.

Act I	Act II	Act III
Setting inciting incident		
	Central plot Climax	
30	30-100	100-120

This sketch is for McKee the foundation of a story, but not a formula for creating stories.

The introduction to the story defines the four Dimensions of the framework for action:

epoch

Duration

place

Content of conflict

The triggering moment is the first big event. An incident that is either triggered by the protagonist himself or happens to him, and which throws his life out of balance. The

The triggering moment for the central plot should be as early as

possible within the first 25 minutes

of the first act. The viewer should through other elements of the

Be prepared for the triggering moment within the framework of the action.

be. The triggering moment should contain all the elements that make the climax possible or inevitable in the last act. He also defines action dynamics, action color, and action movement in the following second act. The protagonist is confronted with all three aspects of what lies ahead. His first reaction to this is the conflict that defines the end of the first act.

This conflict is meant to contain the essence of the following story. Tension is generated here, because the audience should now be able to guess what is coming.

The generated conflict should increase steadily during the second act. To this end, it will often take place on several levels of action at the same time. While the protagonist approaches the central conflict, other characters should experience a variation of the same quality of conflict

Every scene must contain an event that is decisive for the course of the story. Events are given importance by determining their "emotional value" for the character in question. This feeling value is defined by what the result of a conflict would be for the respective character.

“A story event creates meaningful change in the life situation of a character that is expressed and experienced in terms of a value and

achieved through conflict. "

Each scene thus represents either the preparation of a conflict or the implementation of the conflict or the consequence of the conflict for the individual participants in a space and time continuum. It must always be about whether a value that is decisive for the character is either questioned is, or is acutely threatened, or the character has to deal with the essential change in this value.

For example, if it is about the value of friendship, this will be shown in a preparatory scene e.g. B discussed as desirable. In the ensuing conflict scene, friendship is either offered and accepted, or refused and rejected. In the next scenes, all characters involved are confronted with the consequences of the previous decision in terms of friendship. A new starting point has been created, the circle begins with new ones.

The character or characters must change their emotional mood significantly in the course of this sequence as a result of the events described. If this is not the case, the viewer has the feeling that a lot is happening, but actually nothing is happening. So the scene is superfluous.

A scene will always be linear in space and time

expand. If it is divided into several parts, the temporal and spatial connection with the preceding and following part must be made clear.

A scene ends when a change in the emotional value has been brought about.

Making a good Script Great by Linda Seger

Published by Silman-James Press, 2010

“As with any other art, it is the same with scriptwriting: In the beginning there is chaos”

Background information:

"When it comes to good scriptwriting, it depends not only on the writing but also on the revision for a good script to become a great one." Linda Seger, the author of this book, states after eighteen years of experience as a script consultant and collaboration on more than 1500 scripts, over 70 films with writers, screenwriters, directors and producers. Seger runs script writing seminars worldwide and has published five books on scriptwriting, including this international bestseller "Making a Good Script Great."

The focus of Seger's work is on the revision process. As she puts it: “This book was written to investigate what “works,” i.e. to take a closer look at concepts that improve a good script and to show how to write and revise quickly and efficiently and still save the magic for your last draft.”

This pragmatic approach is reflected in the “checklist” of questions for the writer to ask themselves at the end of each chapter. Other very hands-on features are the many film examples and Seger's take on how to work with Syd Field’s and Christopher Vogler’s methods.

Seger also describes a new path in the creative process, namely when it comes to the generation of ideas. She defines it as “clustering", and we will come back to it in this analysis. But, as mentioned before, her book doesn't focus on the creation of stories. It's a very practical guide of specific writing instructions; Seger wants to help writers deal with problems in editing their work.

This is an important contribution to the overall complex of screenwriting as a craft. We often forget that the main part of the work on a script is its revision. One could go so far as to say that only when the art of revision is mastered, the creative process as such is fully realized. If one were to name two elements that make the US film and TV industry so exceptionally successful, it would undoubtedly be the process of selecting successful stories and the process of editing scripts.

Definition of a drama:

“Conflict is the foundation of drama. It's the stuff-from which drama is made. (...) Conflict is the main constituent or inherent part of any dramatic form."

Structure of a drama:

Whether a Greek tragedy, a work in five acts by Shakespeare, a limited television series in four episodes or the Movie of the Week, they all share a basic structure of three acts, beginning, middle part and end - or exposition, development and dissolution, regardless which medium you are in, film, television or theater.

The individual acts of a movie usually contain a 10-15 page exposition, about 20 pages development in the first act, a 45-60 page long second act and a short third act of 20 to 35 pages. The transition between acts is achieved through an action or event that marks a turning point.

Act 1

Exposure

(Pp. 1-15)

1st Turning point

(Pp. 25-35)

Act 2

2nd turning point

(Pp. 75-90)

Climax

(about 5 pages

before the end)

Act 3

resolution

(1-5 pages before

the end)

Basic information is conveyed in the exposition (set up). The 15-minute introduction gives an idea of the structure and direction of the story, introduces the characters and condenses a situation into a logical initial plot.

The characterizing introductory image should be a multi-dimensional approach to the plot and convey a feeling for the environment, for the rhythm and style of the film and the basic theme.

Dialogue should be used sparingly in the set-up of a story. Seger calls the event that triggers the action, sets the story in motion “impetus". The exposition is complete when the impetus has resulted in the central question to which the story refers throughout its course. The further course of the first act introduces the remaining elements of the backstory, the dramatic situation and the basic motivation of the character.

The first turning point takes place after half an hour. It is supposed to steer the plot in a new direction. Often the main character is supposed to make a decision or a commitment, which requires the introduction of a new environment or a new perspective into the action.

After not less than an hour into the main plot, the second turning point causes another change of direction and thus the transition to the third act.

In addition, the second turning point should accelerate the action so that the level of tension is highest in the third act. The second turning point often consists of two steps: the “darkest moment” followed by a new impulse. The second turning point is supposed to give the story a feeling of inevitability or inner logic in hindsight and drive it towards a resolution. The finale (climax) takes place on the last five to ten pages of the script. In the climax the central question is answered and the problem is solved, all tension is released. A final resolution answers any open questions, also from all subplots.

In addition to the three acts, two other elements are helpful in structuring a script: the title sequence and the midpoint. The title sequence can be designed in different ways: A title sequence can begin and end before the start of the actual story. Titles can be displayed over a dialog-free action sequence and establish for example a dramatic situation, introduce a character or create context. Alternatively, the title sequence can also take the form of a montage or a short sequence. In the latter case, it can be a mini exposition and reinforce the impact of the upcoming full length exposition.

The midpoint, which, according to Syd Field's paradigm, represents the most significant change in direction and divides the story in two halves, is, according to Seger, an excellent means of structuring. Often the central point is a subtle moment and only a more detailed analysis shows that the protagonist is making a decisive change in his behavior or his attitude at this moment.

Basic dramatic principles

A successful script is characterized by marketability, which ideally is based on creativity and structure. The basic idea of the story is intended to captivate the audience and bring about identification; it provides an insight into the causes, meaning and effects of events and thus makes a contribution to the understanding of the meaning of life.

Most of the time, a story expresses a personal experience or discusses a fundamental belief of the author. Both must be understandable for the audience.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a seven-part hierarchy of human needs:
1. Survival
2. Security
3. Love and belonging
4. Respect and self-esteem
5. The need to know and understand
6. Beauty - in the sense of a spiritual or artistic need
7. Self-realization

The main characters' motivations should be based on one or more of these basic human needs. An emotional connection with the audience is achieved through a comprehensible need and the emotions expressed in connection with the search for a satisfaction of the need. What is at stake for the characters, i.e. the danger of their failure in the search for this satisfaction, on the other hand, determines the degree of tension experienced by the audience, as this results from an increased risk to fail or a difficult-to-reach goal.

The most powerful connection with the audience is achieved through a recognizable universal myth that underlies the story. A very popular myth is the hero story, which is about the transformation of a real character into a person with ideal character traits. Heroes' stories reflect the general experience of overcoming misfortunes and the longing to accomplish deeds whose dimensions go beyond that of the familiar everyday world.

Seger connects her take on the plot structure with Christopher Vogler’s twelve stations of the hero's journey: In the exposition the hero still moves “unhero-like” in his everyday life situation until, at the first turning point, he decides to follow the call of adventure into a new, unknown world full of dangers, obstacles and enemies, but also new allies. Often the hero is at the end of his tether soon after entering this world. This is the black moment, the hero’s lowest moment, which, as a reversal, leads to the decisive action that brings the hero the treasure and initiates his return journey, on which he has to overcome obstacles for the last time until he is recognized and accepted as a hero in

his old world. In addition to the hero's journey, for Seger this is also the way towards healing: A broken character is healed through her “journey”.

Seger gives a brief overview of the archetypes that, according to Vogler, accompany the hero on his journey. Extending the interpretation of the wise old man as a teacher, she also mentions the nourishing and intuitive mother who, like the gatekeeper, gives the main character a helping hand. She mentions the shadow character, who represents the hero's opponent or his dark side, as well as the trickster who constantly changes his shape.

While the plot of a story should be such that it can be told in a few words, the complexity of a story should be understood from the main character’s perspective. How a character deals with achieving the goal gives the story the direction. The plot as well as the main character go through the process of transformation. What is the arc of suspense for the plot is the arc of development for the character. The development arc shows the main character first discovering his need through relationships and motivations, then he defines the goal and finally he seeks the way to this goal. The motivation to start this endeavor can take place on three levels: A) an action by the main character followed by a reaction, B) the acquisition of information which concerns the main character directly, or C) a series of incidents that result to form a whole together.

According to Seger, it is unfavorable if the motivation of the main character derives entirely from his past or back story. It forces the writer to explain the motivation through a monologue or a flashback. Long exposure monologues about the past hold up the plot. In the visual medium of film, action must be in the foreground and determine the dramatic power of each scene. Flashbacks stop the action because they depict action from the past that cannot influence the immediate present, especially if they are of informative nature and not dramatic. For Seger, real motivation can only arise from the present moment: the result of a series of events occurs immediately and presently, regardless of whether the character is ready or not. The introduction of the protagonist into the action is most understandable if a crisis situation triggers her motivation.

The motivation has to be conveyed clearly and distinctly, sometimes actions and dialogue have to be repeated so that the audience can understand the motivation. Even a passive character must be motivated to act, at the latest once the story passes the midpoint. Only if the character clearly manifests that their goal is important to them will the audience develop interest in a character’s goal. The character's motivation leads them to a goal and the first contact with this goal forms the climax.

Three criteria determine a goal: It is driven by an essential need (the motive), it brings the protagonist into direct contact with the antagonist (the conflict), who then tests his strength and determination (the test). Achieving the goal must require the character to undergo a transformation. The main character needs to show that they have the

qualities that are needed to achieve the goal; only then will they become the protagonist of the story. "We recognize the truth of a character through their attitude and their actions in a crisis, not through their worldview." To achieve the goal, the main character must become active, even if he is passive in nature.

Each action can be broken down into the decision to act and the act itself. A crisis is the moment of revelation of the main character. The main character himself can have a revelation about himself in the moment of crisis. Motivation, action and goal give the plot direction and dynamic, but the basis of a drama is the conflict. Seger distinguishes between five types of conflict situations, all of which take place on the interpersonal level.

- The primal conflict arises because the goals of the protagonist and the antagonist are mutually exclusive. But only in the moment of the climax does the main character become aware of this fact.
- Characters who are uncertain when acting according to their goal usually struggle with an inner conflict. However, the inner conflict must be projected outwards at the latest when the climax occurs.
- A person's conflict with a group is often centered on issues such as justice, equality, and oppression. However, the given issue should always target a specific person in order not to become abstract.
- In the situational conflict the main character is confronted with death and can only escape it if he can understand and finally overcome an interpersonal conflict.
- A cosmic conflict happens between a character and a cosmic force, which should, however, also be projected onto a human being who controls this force.

As a rule, it takes the entire three acts to bring about the decisive and final transformation of the main character. Only the extraordinary nature of the situation, and the extraordinary emotional reactions which it generates, can convince the audience that the main character has undergone a development and has acquired new characteristics. Once this has been achieved, he still has to prove that he is able to influence the course of the action by means of these properties.

A movie should have a maximum of six main characters. Each character must fulfill an essential function in the story.

Seger distinguishes between four character types:

Main character

Supporting character

Characters that add another dimension

Mass and weight characters

As multidimensional characters, main characters are at the center of the plot and provide the main conflict. Supporting or secondary characters help the protagonist to achieve his goal, also by confronting him with his weaknesses. Characters that give the story an additional dimension are often confidants, who reveal a new side of themselves to the main character. They can be divided in these types:

The catalyst character

The balance character

The representative character

The catalyst character causes an incident or represents an obstacle, which activates the protagonist and thereby transforms him. The balance character represents an alternative point of view on the subject of the movie, and the representative character embodies the complexity of an idea. The mass and weight figures emphasize the importance of a main character through their function, for example as bodyguard, secretary or fan. A character can fulfill several functions in the course of the story.

The perspective from which a story is told can be identical to that of the main character and thus promote identification with him. The perspective can also be omniscient and explain facts that are unknown to the protagonist. A topic should not be communicated in dialogue but through decisions and actions.

In addition to the dramatic turning points at the end of each act, other dramatic plot points are:

The obstacle

The complication

The reversal

Obstacles bring the action to a standstill for a moment and force the character to make a new decision for a changed course of action. Too many obstacles slow down the action: and create a sense of repetition.

A complication stands in the way of the character's intention. The response which a complication triggers often forms the beginning of a new plot or subplot that propels the story to a new turning point.

A reversal, the most dramatic form of plot point, changes the direction of the story by 180 degrees, from positive to negative or vice versa. Reversals can occur on a physical or emotional level and as the first or second turning point they are the most dramatic events. The reversal gives a story a strong momentum of its own. The audience has the

feeling that "fate" has intervened. This should only be used once or twice in the course of an action, otherwise the effect will flatten or the tone will lapse into the absurd.

The action-reaction scenes caused by the dynamics of a dramatic plot point form their own plot sequence with a beginning, a middle and an end, without being interrupted by a subplot. For the benefit of the flow of the story, scenes should always be integrated into a sequence. Each scene has to develop from the previous one and form a step towards the climax. Scenes should be multi-layered building blocks that give insights into a character or the topic. Contrasts in dimensions, space or time, or in type of content make scenes more interesting. By emphasizing the difference, they allow the author to show connections that may mean changes in the characters or the actions of two opposing characters. In addition to contrasts, there are other techniques to give the story homogeneity and to clarify its thematic context: namely repetitions, motifs, the implementation of conditions. A condition is a visual cue or dialogue that prepares an action or information to be revealed at a later point in time. A motif is a consistently recurring image, rhythm or sound in the film that adds complexity to the topic. It takes at least three steps or repetitions for the viewer to focus on a certain element. The repetition can occur as image, dialogue, sound, as a recurring character trait or as a combination of these elements.

Film is action, told in scenes. The climax needs to be shown not communicated in dialogue. Static scenes, too much dialogue and information have to be replaced by an action or a visual element. A dialogue-heavy scene should be replaced by distributed, smaller expositions.

A strong story needs a strong storyline and subplots that are tied together. Subplots are intended to potentiate the underlying conflict or to further reveal the main character. They drive the course of the plot of the A-story (main plot) and also steer it in a different direction, cross it, or temporarily take its place. Every subplot needs its own dramatic structure, beginning, middle and ending. The turning points of subplots placed just before or just after a turning point in the main story ideally reinforce it. One or two subplots prevent a story from becoming too linear, with too many subplots a story becomes unstructured.

Creation of a script:

The five main components of a script, story, character, subject, visuals and dialogue, take shape at different times during the writing process. Some writers start with the character, others with the story or the subject. In order to tap into the main theme of the story, Seger advises the clustering technique. The basic idea of the script is written in one sentence in a circle, all associations are placed around it. The function of this

creative technique is to recognize the relationships between the ideas, to get an overview of the boundaries of the topic and to get initial ideas for implementation. A good method of connecting ideas without yet assigning them a definite place or shape, is to work with colored index cards. They can become functional elements that promote the creative process. Seger recommends different colors of cards for each area, i.e. story, characters, subject, visuals and dialogue. The number of cards is not specified, as is the length of the notes. The creative process proceeds from chaos to order, so after a trial and error phase the writer will discover the best possible combination and then move on to a short description of all individual scenes of the story in around 50 to 100 lines in the form of a scene outline. The resulting storyline should be summarized in the form of a short story (treatment) of around 8 to 15 pages. This first summary provides an overview of the structure and reveals the inner logic of the plot, which, however, usually requires several revisions before the final version of the script. In order not to succumb to the impression of something finished, Seger recommends working with paper until the structure is in place. A treatment or scene outline serves primarily to develop the course of the story. A diary is suitable for developing characters and themes. The entries can be used to explore the inner workings; the biography, the main traits of the characters and the scope of the basic topic can be discussed. Sound recordings are also helpful in capturing dialogue ideas and checking them in spoken form.

Seger suggests using computer programs for the construction of the script. However, they only help to sort the information or to remind you of certain points that need to be considered when writing the script. The aim of all techniques is to prepare for the writing process. She recommends that you “write through” the first draft so as not to interrupt the writing process once it has started, and only then start revising it. As a rule, a script takes three to six months from the idea to the first finished draft. The closer the relationship between scenes, the clearer is the flow and focus of the story. In order to find the beginning of a scene, its end must first be determined. Although nothing should be imposed on a story that is not inherent in it, Seger advises against being afraid to be too drastic: the second act in particular needs energy and drive for tension and a functioning momentum.

Finding the myth of one's own story is part of a writer’s work. Seger recommends reading fairy tales, and Christopher Vogler’s preferred sources, Joseph Campbell and C.G. Jung. However, this should not be done before the first rough draft, as the development of the myth should naturally arise from the story. The elaboration of the myth during the revision process gives the script liveliness and depth.-A myth can paralyze creativity however, if used too prematurely or as a guiding principle.

Seger puts particular emphasis on the revision process. "Not every excellent writer is necessarily a brilliant structuralist." The main part of the revision is to give the story a

strong structure in order to create momentum, clarity and a focus on the essentials. A first version according to Seger usually has a good story or interesting characters but not a good structure. During the revision, an overview of the whole and consideration for the details must be maintained. The design of the acts is often unbalanced: Acts are not clearly structured, one act is stronger than the others, parts do not fit together, the end is stronger than the beginning or the second act has boring passages. A slow exposition or a first act with little action strains the patience of the audience too much. Sometimes the first turning point comes too late, causing too high a density in the second act. If the second turning point comes too early, the third act becomes too long, which weakens the tension building up towards the finale. In Seger's experience, this often results from authors confusing the midpoint and the first turning point, so that the second act does not begin until after the first half of the script. The midpoint often comes up automatically after a thorough revision. If the resolution is too long, the audience will perceive the end as unclear. Unstructured subplots that stray from the topic, are unrelated to the main plot, or mistaken for the main plot, can lead to confusion. Seger advises looking at the individual storylines separately and checking their function and dramatic structure to rearrange or revise them if necessary. The main challenge with the second act is to give 45 to 60 pages of script a good structure. Inconsequential and confusing scenes result in a less than perfect second act that weakens the overall narrative structure.

Seger advises to look at individual storylines separately and to check their function and their dramatic structure in order to rearrange or revise them if necessary. The main problem with the second act is the structural management of 45 to 60 pages. At this point the plot runs the risk of deviating from its actual narrative structure through irrelevant and/or confusing scenes. To increase the tension, action-packed sequences are often incorporated after the first half of the second act or in preparation for the second turning point. The writer has to pay attention to the inner necessity. Action-packed scenes do not replace the plot. If sequences revolve around more than one idea, a scene selection must be made that is focused and creates clear connections. The revision is the best time to work out links. Images and topics that require a clearer drama can be replaced or adapted, specifications can be checked for their implementation. The script must be visually reconsidered and checked for originality and homogeneity. Recurring picture elements have to be identified. Every scene has to be checked for its impact on the entire story. If a screenplay is the adaptation of a novel that primarily addresses an internal conflict, the inner life of the character should find expression as a plot. Doing justice to a novel often means rebalancing subplots and main plots.

Chinatown according to the rules of Linda Seger

Linda Seger does not offer a new method, but instead a synthesis of Syd Field's and Christopher Vogler's findings. Regarding the action's structure, her approach is based on Syd Field, and in character finding on Christopher Vogler. We therefore refrain from analyzing the structure of the action, with the exception of a few examples at the end, because it would not reveal any new findings. The focus of Seger's essay is on script revision in order to develop the plot structure and character arc.

Fortunately, Syd Field describes the revision process of the script in his book in great detail, so many elements of Linda Seger;s approach can be demonstrated using Chinatown as an example.

Screenwriter Robert Towne wrote the screenplay in 1972 when the Watergate Affair shaped the zeitgeist and casted a disillusioning perspective on justice, the common good, and politics in general. Towne wanted to show that "classic" crimes like murder, robbery or rape are punished with life imprisonment, but crimes against a whole community lead to their perpetrators later acting as namesake for streets and squares or being honored in the town hall.

In the first version of the script, Robert Towne shows Noah Cross being punished for his incestuous relation with his daughter, but also that Los Angeles owes its current position as a world metropolis to the robbery of "Owens Valley", which was essentially Cross' work.

In the first version of the script, there is a significant shift in the balance of power, as the following summary of the finale shows: When, at the end of the story, Evelyn Mulwray learns that Noah Cross has hired Gittes to find her daughter / sister, she realizes that only Cross' death will prevent him from engaging in incest with his granddaughter / daughter. This motivates her to kill him herself. She asks her father to meet her in a lonely place where she tries to run him over, but misses him. She then shoots him. Shortly afterwards, Gittes and Escobar appear on the scene. In a voice-over commentary, Gittes explains how the story ended: Evelyn Mulwray spent four years in prison for the murder of her father, Gittes managed to bring her daughter / sister back to Mexico, the property speculation brought the city of Los Angeles substantial income and contributed considerably to its boom.

This finale is still predominantly shaped by the belief that justice and order will in the end prevail. It contradicts the initial statement that the rich can get away with murder. Director Roman Polanski was instrumental in changing the ending of the second version: Gittes plans to meet Evelyn Mulwray in Chinatown to help her and her daughter / sister escape to Mexico. Cross, however manages to get him arrested for the murder of Hollis Mulwray and for the water scandal. Gittes is to drive Cross to see his daughter

and granddaughter, but manages to overpower Cross when they arrive. Evelyn flees in a panic in her car and is shot dead by Escobar's men. In the final scene, Noah Cross weeps over his daughter's corpse while Gittes tells an astonished Escobar about Cross's guilt.

The third and final script version is the most unforgiving. It most clearly reflects Towne's central idea: Cross forces Gittes to reveal Evelyn's hiding place. Evelyn dies, Gittes cannot even intervene to help. Escobar does not arrest Gittes but only to avoid an even bigger scandal. Cross emerges as the clear winner: He will benefit substantially from the water scandal and will not be bothered for the murder of his daughter or Hollis Mulwray, or for his incest. This example proves Seger's right when she says that several revisions are necessary in order to adequately meet the core message of a story.

Other structurally relevant elements which Seger enumerates can be shown on the basis of Chinatown, too: Seger's demand that every form of conflict should be eked out in the form of a relationship for reasons of dramatic effectiveness is fulfilled. Gittes' internal conflict with his past in Chinatown is concretized by his reluctance to trust Evelyn. Noah Cross embodies the unscrupulous power and the injustice Gittes suffered back then. Seger's recommendation to distribute the exposition of conflicts instead of revealing the entire conflict-related circumstance in one place is implemented, too: Gittes' bitter experience from his past as a police officer in Chinatown is discussed several times, but only revealed after the love scene with Evelyn Mulwray. Although Gittes' past is complex, flashbacks, which Segers advises against, are completely dispensed with, It is not the past events themselves but Gittes' resulting flawed judgment that reveals the injury and drives the action forward.

Seger's classification of the characters, which goes beyond Vogler's classification into archetypes, can also be understood using the example of Chinatown: The main characters are Gittes, Cross and Evelyn Mulwray. The fake Mrs. Mulwray is the catalyst character. Supporting secondary characters are the daughter Kathrin and Evelyn's servant Kahn, who is also a mass and weight character, just like Gittes' employees and Escobar's, or Cross' people.

The shepherd, who disrupts the vote on the construction of the dam in the parish hall with his herd of sheep, is a representative figure that illustrates the complexity of the topic. He stands for the little man and his sacrifice: The citizens of Los Angeles had to pay for the construction of the dam and Noah Cross' profits through their taxes and the inhabitants of the dried up valley could no longer provide for their livelihood. Based on this scene, another one of Seger's requirements is fulfilled: with the shepherd's appearance, a relatively static, information-heavy scene is upgraded, because the physical consequences of the discussed plans are clearly demonstrated.

Gittes' character also corresponds with Seger's demands on a protagonist. Gittes' inner truth is different from the creed that the rich can even get away with a murder. This radical stance reflects instead Towne's intention as the author. Gittes is at his core an idealist who, despite bitter experience, still believes in justice and has a code of honor. While the writer of the script is already disaffected, Gittes, a hopeless romantic, fights the battle against amoral power, only to be confronted in the end with the bitter truth that Towne communicates to the audience with the story.

The Toolbox - your start to a journey to become an accomplished storyteller with ToTellAStory.NET

The Pitch

The right advice to tell your story when you need it. No more and no less. I offer fast, efficient and no-frills development support with an eye on the result.

The Promise

From Aristotle to Linda Seger, there are a dozen great approaches to help a writer tell their story

But how do you know which one is best for you and the challenges you face right now?

You can read a dozen long books – or you use Totellastory's service and learn to use The Toolbox.

I have analyzed the most important works about writing, extracted the wisdom, and condensed it into ten short, digestible papers

You can find them for free in The Toolbox

Choose your ToTellAStory package

The STARTER PACKAGE is a detailed assessment of your idea. Send us your idea in any shape or form, a video or audio file, ideas jotted down, graphics or your product description.

You will get an assessment that will be the first step on your journey to a complete story!

And much more! (see below)

Choose the BASIC, STANDARD, PRO or ULTIMATE PACKAGE if you are ready to start your journey to a complete story. You'll get professional development coverage, 2, 4, 8, or 12 bi-weekly 30 min 1:1 consultation meetings (Skype/FaceTime/Zoom/Hangout) on story arch, characters, story structure, creating suspense and how to sell your story.

Questions & Answers about ToTellAStory.NET and The Toolbox

Is a free trial of your service available?

Each package comes with a 7-day-money-back guarantee. If you are not convinced after seven days, you will get your full amount paid back, no questions asked.

What does the STARTER package do for me?

It does what the name says, it gets you started. Finding a way to start is often the most difficult and sensitive moment on a storyteller's journey. This package contains the tools you need to make the first steps. It will also provide you with a roadmap for the rest of your journey and give you a very good idea on what to expect if you continue to work with me.

What do I need to get started?

Come with what you have. The most important thing is the drive, will and resolve to write. Everything else follows. No matter if you have an idea jotted down on half a page, or if you have a recording of your unordered thoughts, or a bunch of designs of your characters. We will take it from where you are.

What is in the emails that are part of the packages?

The emails are tailored to you, your story and the stage of development you are in. Each email will contain an assignment directly related to your story. You will also receive a manual for a creative game, a reading or watching recommendation, an excerpt of **The Toolbox** with advice that is applicable to your story, and an assessment of your previous homework.

Do the packages build on each other?

You can start where you want. If you are at the very beginning of your journey as a storyteller you want to try the STARTER or BASIC PACKAGES. If you have already created some material and want to go the whole nine yards, the STANDARD or PRO PACKAGEs are a good choice. And if you are already half way down the road, the PREMIUM PACKAGE is for you, because it includes the necessary steps to get your material out there.

What if I do not get to "The End?"

Do not worry. You will get there. Sometimes, the way may be a winding road, and you may lose sight of the end. But I will guide you through the process. I have worked successfully with hundreds of writers and I have been in the process of writing myself many times. I know what it takes to make it through it and I will make sure you have what you need to succeed.

What is The Toolbox all about?

The Toolbox is an instrument I have worked on for more than 15 years. I analyzed the works of most famous story consultants, from Aristotle to Linda Seger, and summarized their approach to understanding a story and to help writers on their journey to complete their stories.

How can I use The Toolbox?

In order to make this a tool as useful as possible to writers, I took a very famous movie, Chinatown (Robert Towne/Roman Polanski) and put each theory to the test. I chose Chinatown because it is widely regarded as a movie with a perfect structure, a pinnacle of storytelling to this day. The test I did shows you the tools of each story consultant at work and it enables you to understand if these tools are useful to you at the given moment of your journey.

What if I like to work with you and I want to come back?

If you have completed one package, no matter which one, and you want to continue your journey to become an accomplished storyteller with us, you can choose among the other packages and you will get a 10% discount on the package that you chose.

Can I bring all my stories?

You certainly can, however the packages are designed to deal with a single story at one time. You can of course take a package with one story and later take the same package with another story.

What makes you different from the many courses on writing out there?

You can try these courses out. Some are very good, some of the best teachers are my dear friends. I have made the experience that writing and helping writers is a very personal business. My method gives you the time you need to develop your material and the tools that are best suited for you in 1:1 sessions. Groups are sometimes great, but they can also be intimidating. If you feel comfortable sharing your material in a group, by all means, try one of the courses. If you feel that you need some time before going out, consider taking one of my packages and enjoy the safe and personalized approach of one or more 1:1 meetings.

What kind of stories do you work on?

I like, and have worked, on all kinds of stories, from TV series, to biographies, from documentaries to thrillers, very personal material as well as company histories. I am versatile, very experienced, flexible and endlessly curious. Be assured that I will dedicate my craft and my tools to get you where you want to be with your story.

How do you know so much about stories?

Check out **The Toolbox**. I have researched each and every theory out there about how to write stories and I have put them all to a test. I have learned a lot, especially that there is not one tool that fits all sizes. I will find what is best suited to your needs.