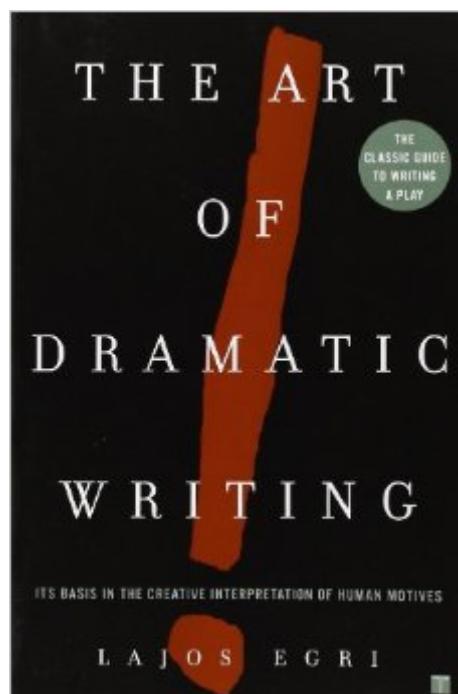


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The Art Of Dramatic Writing: Its Basis In The Creative Interpretation Of Human Motives



Synopsis

Learn the basic techniques every successful playwright knows. Among the many "how-to" playwriting books that have appeared over the years, there have been few that attempt to analyze the mysteries of play construction. Lajos Egri's classic, *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, does just that, with instruction that can be applied equally well to a short story, novel, or screenplay. Examining a play from the inside out, Egri starts with the heart of any drama: its characters. All good dramatic writing hinges on people and their relationships, which serve to move the story forward and give it life, as well as an understanding of human motives -- why people act the way that they do. Using examples from everything from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Egri shows how it is essential for the author to have a basic premise -- a thesis, demonstrated in terms of human behavior -- and to develop the dramatic conflict on the basis of that behavior. Using Egri's ABCs of premise, character, and conflict, *The Art of Dramatic Writing* is a direct, jargon-free approach to the problem of achieving truth in writing.

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Customer Reviews

For many years, Lajos Egri's highly opinionated but very enjoyable *The Art of Dramatic Writing* has been a well-guarded secret of playwrights, scriptwriters, and writers for television. Unlike many other books on playwrighting (several of which Egri criticizes during the course of this one), the author's systematic breakdown of the essentials for creating successful realistic plays and screenplays effectively demystifies the process of creative writing. Egri, who formulated his thoughts about "a

"well-made play" during its heyday (the 1940s and '50s), places a premium on an exhaustive analysis of characters and discussion of their psychological motivations. The writer is exhorted to find a premise to explore and to discover which characters will most effectively demonstrate this thesis, then is shown how most effectively to place them into conflict with each other. Conflict itself is also discussed, particularly how to create scenarios in which the crisis develops at a pace that feels unforced and natural. While Egri's view of the well-made play has little space for either the spare musings of Beckett and Pinter or the conscious excesses of non-narrative and other experimental writing, it nonetheless remains an essential text for writers drawn to realistic drama, and to any writer interested in the fundamental motivations of human behavior. --John Longenbaugh

Moss Hart I found Lajos Egri's book enormously interesting -- one of the best I have ever read.

What Lajos Egri will show you:^{*} Formulate your premise. Premise is a statement, idea, or conviction that your story proves true. For example, the premise of Romeo and Juliet would be something like "Love defies even death." * Choose a pivotal character who will force the conflict. * Orchestrate the other characters. The unity of opposites must be binding. Polar opposites must form a dialectic which creates a unified tension. * Be careful to select the correct point of attack. Every point of attack starts with conflict. * There are several types of conflict, such as jumping conflict, but you only want rising or foreshadowing conflict. * No conflict can rise without perpetual exposition, which is transition. For example, a character going about his daily life doesn't suddenly become a NAZI, it happens in gradual steps--transition. * Rising conflict, the product of exposition and transition, will ensure growth. * Characters must conflict--there must be some polarity. * Crisis will lead to climax. Climax will lead to conclusion. * Dialogue should come from the voice of the character, not the writer. Many TV, film, and novel plots and characters lack compelling conflict. The characters are just floating by... until something big happens. Lajos Egri illustrates how to change all this.

This book is a classic. One of the things that makes this book a classic is its simplicity. The book starts exploring how you as a dramatic writer can use Premise as the guiding sign through out the whole process of writing a story. Once you have a premise you can work on creating your characters (using the premise to do that). To do this you'll have to know your character's physiology, sociology, psychology, etc. Once you have your characters you can work on creating the story using the principle of contradiction, thesis, antithesis and synthesis. You'll have to use clashing forces... (again, you use the premise as explained at the beginning of the book). Then the author covers

some of the most important elements in writing dramatic material of quality. In my case I found the chapter of "Jumping" quite enlightening. Once you read this chapter you'll understand why many, many stories just don't work. The characters jump and then... they fall to their death... and to the apathy of the audience. What is it that I like about this book? Well, I read it... time passes... come back to it again... time passes... and I come back again to read it! Where as most books make you feel like writing is extremely difficult, this one always makes me feel like I'm in command and that great story telling is within my grasp.

carries so many authors, but Lajos Egri is the best (in my opinion) in the field of creative writing. Thank You . In the first chapter, titled Premise, Mr Egri tells us "A man sits in his workshop, busy with an invention of wheels and springs. You ask him what the gadget is, what it is meant to do. He looks at you confidently and whispers: 'I really don't know.'" This is apt for not only the play write or author with the first draft, it can pertain to the reader of Steinbeck or Faulkner or Joyce, BUT if person has read or at least browsed The Art of Dramatic Writing, then he/she will have a path to follow whether towards a finished play or novel or the thrill and enjoyment of understanding great writing. This book is a must in anyone's library.

This is a review of the Kindle edition of the book. The content of the work is five stars. It is a very readable and essential introduction to storytelling. The problem is that the formatting of this Kindle edition is a travesty. I admit the book is a bargain price, but that does not excuse the poor formatting. The book borders on unreadable due to this indifferent conversion to an e-book. My advise, buy an older print edition and save yourself some frustration.

This is not a typical book about writing screenplays or plays which you can find almost anywhere. This book delves deeper into psychology and how you can humanize your characters and create a storyline which is way, way up in terms of excellence. Brilliant!

Egri's book is an outstanding work for narrative writers seeking to move to the next level in their storytelling. Egri's idea on establishing a strong, focused premise around which to develop the narrative has many disciples today--Robert McKee's Story and Stanley Williams's The Moral Premise being two good examples--but Egri's focus on stage plays sets it apart from almost all of those subsequent works, which are directed toward screenwriting. Nevertheless, in spite of its emphasis on the theater, Egri's ideas work for writers of any narrative form--novels, plays,

screenplays. I would recommend this book to any writer seeking to improve his or her sense of story. But I wouldn't buy this edition again under any circumstance!! The formatting is bizarre. The text is in a tiny, tiny font with unindented paragraphs with no space between the paragraphs. The only way to determine where a paragraph ends is when a line stops partway across the page, but occasionally lines end somewhere in the middle of the page as well as the middle of a sentence and continue the incomplete sentence on the next line. Throw in occasional misspellings, entire sections omitted from Ergi's original book, no index...this version is a trainwreck! Any publisher who would do this to a book and its readers has a pretty low regard for both books and readers.

I loved this book. It really helped me in my class for a better understanding of how to create a good story for cinema.

Ever wanted to write a story or a script? This is the first step you can take to learn the rules. The book has very clear and apparent structure, good writing, and it keep you focused until the end, proving its points with so many examples, that you finally have the right understanding of the matter

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