

Exploring Story Adaptation

Enriching the Humanities Through Opera

**OPERA
AMERICA**

Made possible by the generous support from the **whiting**
FOUNDATION

What is story adaptation and how is it relevant to opera?

Today's Objectives:

- Analyze an opera synopsis based on a literary work.
- Compare a literary work with the opera adaptation synopsis.
- Identify elements of adaptation across multiple versions of the same key scene present in the literary source and opera.
- Collaboratively brainstorm a pitch for an opera adaptation of the literary work.



Write down the first word that comes to mind.

Opera

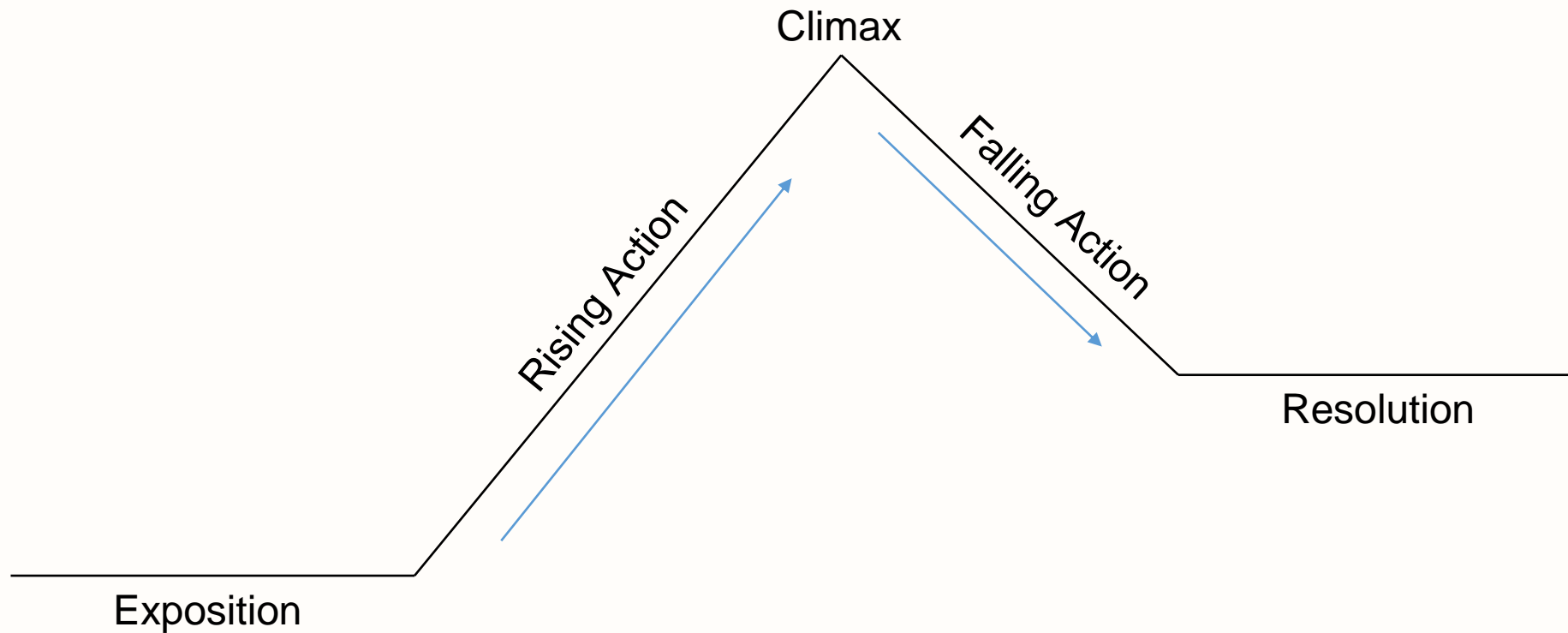
Everest

Into Thin Air

Adaptation



Story Arc Review



***Everest* Synopsis**

The opera *Everest* follows the harrowing true stories of climbers Rob Hall, Doug Hansen, and Beck Weathers during their 1996 attempt to summit Mount Everest. It shifts between the climbers' present struggles on the mountain, their past memories, and the perspectives of their loved ones, including Rob's wife, Jan, who is contacted in New Zealand about his perilous situation. As Beck battles delirium and Rob tries to save Doug during a fierce storm, the climbers confront haunting realizations and their deep connections to those they love.

Talk & Turn

Compare the story structure of *Into Thin Air* and *Everest*.

- Is the setting/time period the same for both the opera and literary work?
- Is there a difference in point of view? In historical context? In narrative structure?
- What else did you notice?

Key Scene #1

Scene 4. Doug's Ascent

Doug, nearing exhaustion, struggles to complete his ascent to the summit with Rob's encouragement. The chorus underscores the dangerous passage of time as Doug rests frequently, each pause marked by labored exclamations. In a climactic moment, Doug reflects on his arduous journey and determination before finally reaching the peak, only to realize the emotional toll of his quest.



Everest, Opera Parallèle (images: courtesy of Opera Parallèle)



Key Scene #1 continued



Everest, Opera Parallèle (video: courtesy of Opera Parallèle)

Key Scene #2

Scene 9. The Storm Hits

As a storm approaches, Jan anxiously receives troubling news about her husband, Rob, who is stranded on the mountain with Doug. Rob, desperate for help, radios for oxygen and assistance but is advised by Guy to abandon Doug and save himself. Despite the dire situation and Doug hearing the conversation, Rob resolves to stay and help his friend.



Everest, Opera Parallèle (images: courtesy of Opera Parallèle)



Key Scene #2 continued



Everest, Opera Parallèle (video: courtesy of Opera Parallèle)

Key Scene #3

Scene 12. The Phone Call

As the chorus counts the agonizing hours, Jan, at home in New Zealand, receives a phone call from her husband, Rob, who is stranded on the mountain. Despite their dire situation, they share a tender conversation about their love and the future, contemplating the name Sarah for their child. Rob reassures Jan, asking her not to worry, while Jan expresses her deep concern and affection, trying to comfort him from afar.

Additional Reference: [Phone Call Scene from 'Everest' \(film 2015\)](#)



Everest, Opera Parallèle (images: courtesy of Opera Parallèle)



Key Scene #3 continued



Everest, Opera Parallèle (video: courtesy of Opera Parallèle)

Why do we adapt stories?

Adaptation Guidelines

Adapting the Who, What, When, and Where.

- **Who:** character/character identity

Note: character identity can be adapted, but characters may not be eliminated or added.

- **What:** key scene, action in the story - what is happening?
- **When:** time period, time of day, year, etc.
- **Where:** location and setting

Adaptation Pitch



Who (characters in the scene):

What (scene action):

When (time period, time of year/day):

Where (location/setting):

Why did you choose to adapt the opera this way?

How will these changes affect the rest of the story?

Present 

Reflection

Share thoughts on the story adaptation pitch process.

How did your understanding of the story change as you adapted it?

Have any new insights or perspectives emerged?

OperaParallèle 

whiting
FOUNDATION

OPERA
AMERICA