

Introduction to Literature

Drama terms:

1. Theater: Physical building in which plays are performed (a place where the stage is).

2. Drama/Play: Is usually told in dialogue and action.

The audience listen and see the characters talking and the action they're doing.

3. Playwright: The one who writes the play.

4. Act (فصل): A major division in the action of a play, the act is then divided into **scenes**.

5. Theme: Included in the act (subdivision).

6. Script: Written version of the play that each actor has.

7. Stage direction: A playwright's descriptive or interpretive comments that provide readers (and actors) with information about the dialogue, setting, and action of a play (things that are not said by the characters themselves). **"normally put between brackets"**

8. Costume: The clothing, or what the actors wear. It can indicate the time period of the play.

9. Props: Articles or physical objects that appear on stage during a play (not including costume or set).

10. Set: Physical construction placed on the stage.

11. Blocking: Arrangements of the actors on stage/ Tells the actor where they should be during the play.

12. Closet drama: A drama meant to be read rather than acted out, since it doesn't have any stage directions (just like a story). If it is made as a play, the directors themselves add stage directions to it.

13. Tragedy (Aristotle): It is an imitation of an action that is:

a) **Serious:** Realistic and is something that the people can identify.

b) **Complete:** The play has a beginning, a middle, and an end

c) **Of a certain magnitude:** The play has a universal theme that can be applied to any society.

3 types of action:

1. **Represented action**: Action that is done in front of the audience.
2. **Reported action**: Action that is done backstage (not in front of the audience). Someone comes to the audience and tells them what happened.
3. **Antecedent action**: Action that happened before the opening of the play. The writer gives a summary to this action before the play starts (spoken).

“All the events of the play are in just 1 day”

Terms specially for the tragic Greek play “Oedipus the King”:

1. **Discovery point**: When the hero moves of a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge.

This has to do with the **reversal of fortune**, of which the tragic hero moves from someone in power to powerless/ rich to poor/ has a family to no family (from something positive to negative).

The hero goes through the discovery point due to a tragic flaw or weakness, known as **hamartia**.

There are 3 types of tragic flaws/ weaknesses:

1. Suffer from pride or Arrogance (hubris)
2. Extreme anger, to the point of hurting or killing someone.
3. Extreme stubbornness.

“these flaws can cause the downfall of the hero”.

The tragic hero can express one or a combination of these types.

2. **Catharsis**: The release of emotions of pity (sympathetic towards the tragic hero since they know that what happened to him is not his fault) and fear (in the sense that what happened to him can happen to anyone) by the audience at the end of the play.

3. Principles of a tragic hero (Aristotle)

(Note) Aristotle did not believe that women can be tragic heroines.

- a) Tragic hero is from a noble birth.
- b) The hero is neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly evil.
- c) The hero has to go through a discovery point.
- d) The hero has to go through a reversal of fortune
- e) The hero has to be realistic and consistent in his actions.

4. Complex plot

Aristotle favored the complex plot. He defined the plot as the life of a tragedy.

A complex plot has to:

- a) Have a discovery point and reversal of fortune.
- b) Have a catharsis
- c) Maintain the 3 unities: time (all events happen within 24 hours), place (it's limited with inside the palace or the little bit outside the palace), and action (the same action).

5. **Chorus:** Consists of 12 men who represent the city of Thebes.

Functions of the Chorus

- a) Entertain the audience.
- b) Comment on the action or characters taking place.
- c) Provide an emotional outlet.
- d) Guide the emotions of the audience.
- e) Act as a mediator between characters.

Oedipus the King

To understand Oedipus, knowing his background (before meeting him) is important.

Reading this one time and understanding it is enough.

Antecedent action

There were a king and queen called Laius and Jocasta ruling Thebes city, who had a baby boy called Oedipus. During that time, they had a tradition of knowing the fortune of new-born kids. The king and Queen went to their god Apollo, who told them a prophesy:

"The son is going to grow and kill the father, marry the mother, and have children with her".

The only choice they had was to get rid of the baby by exposing him to the cold elements (snow). Therefore, they sent the baby with a servant to achieve this mission, who did not do that out of pity, instead, he gave him to another servant from the city of Corinth, who took the baby and gave it to King Polybus and Queen Merope, raising him as their own biological son without telling him that he's adopted as he grew up (since they couldn't have any kids).

Oedipus Grew up, and eventually heard rumors about him not being the biological son of King Polybus and Queen Merope. Not being convinced enough, he went to Apollo, who told him the same prophesy that was told when he was born. Oedipus was shocked, so he wanted to save them by going to Thebes city. On his way, he meets a rich man on a chariot with 5 servants. The rich man ordered Oedipus to move and hit him, consequently leading Oedipus to killing that man and his servants and continuing his way to the city. The dead man was actually his biological father. With that, the first part of the prophesy was fulfilled.

When Oedipus reached Thebes city, there was a Sphinx (monster) that was destroying the city. The Sphinx had a riddle, with solving it the city could be at peace:

"what could walk on 4, then on 2, then on 3?" (Man)

Oedipus was able to solve it and the Sphinx was destroyed. The people of Thebes rewarded him by making him the new king. Oedipus then married Jocasta and had 4 children with her. By that, the prophesy was fulfilled.