

Drama

By Prof. Hamdi Hameed Yousif

Drama is a literary genre that includes all literary works that can be transformed into theatrical performances. It may be written in poetry or prose.

Main Elements of Drama:

- 1. Plot:** The sequence of related events in the play mostly as cause and effect. The plot of conventional drama is linear; the plot of the Absurd drama is circular while the plot of epic theatre is episodic.
- 2. Conflict:** It is the clash of actions, ideas, desires or goals in the play; it may be external between the main character (the protagonist) and some other person(s) or internal, within the main character's psyche, e.g. the conflict between man and fate in *Oedipus*; the conflict between Hamlet and Claudius in *Hamlet* and Hamlet's internal conflict.
- 3. Characters** are the dramatic figures involved in the plot of the play. The main character is the protagonist or the hero.
- 4. Setting:** the time and place of the play's action.
- 5. Theme:** the main idea in the play.

Main Types of Drama

- 1. Tragedy:** Aristotle defines Tragedy as: "The imitation in dramatic form of an action that is serious and complete, with incidents arousing pity and fear wherewith it affects catharsis of such emotions". The plot of a tragedy involves the fall of the protagonist from happiness to misery, from happiness to depression and discomfort and it ends with the death of the hero, e. g. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.
- 2. Comedy:** It is a funny or humorous play that ends happily. It ridicules the absurdity of human behaviour and highlights man's limitation.
- 3. Tragi-Comedy:** A play which involves a mixture between tragic and comic events, e. g. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

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King Oedipus

Points for Discussion

1. The information which the messenger from Corinth intends to bring to Oedipus is that Polybus was not his father. The other information which he is used to convey is that Polybus is dead.
2. Jocasta attempts to persuade Oedipus not to summon the Herdsman in order not to let him know the truth. Her words do not prevent him.
3. Jocasta was the one who gave Oedipus to the Herdsman. The Herdsman is unwilling to speak because he was afraid.
4. Line by line dialogue is used in this passage because it is a series of questions and answers; an investigation.
5. The dramatic purpose of the speech of the Chorus is to show how miserable Oedipus is now.
6. The dramatic justification for the physical horror of the death of Jocasta and the blinding of Oedipus is to create catharsis by arousing the feelings of pity and fear.
7. Through reporting the play gains avoiding the audience scenes of violence but it loses reality and lessens feelings of pity and fear.
8. Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus's blinding of himself are examples of hubris in the play.
9. The Chorus comments on the events of the play and prepares the audience for what will happen. It stands apart like an "ideal spectator".
10. Nemesis is just punishment for wrong doing. Jocasta's suicide and the blinding of Oedipus are good examples.
11. Feelings of pity and terror are aroused in the play Jocasta's suicide and the blinding of Oedipus.
12. The conflict in this play is between man and Fate