

# ENG 114

**INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH DRAMA**

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# Aristotle

- Greek philosopher and polymath during the Classical period in Ancient Greece.
- Student of Plato.
- Mentor of Alexander the Great.
- In 335 he founded his own school (Lyceum) in Athens.
- He made pioneering contributions to all fields of philosophy and science, invented the field of formal logic, identified the various scientific disciplines and explored their relationships to each other.

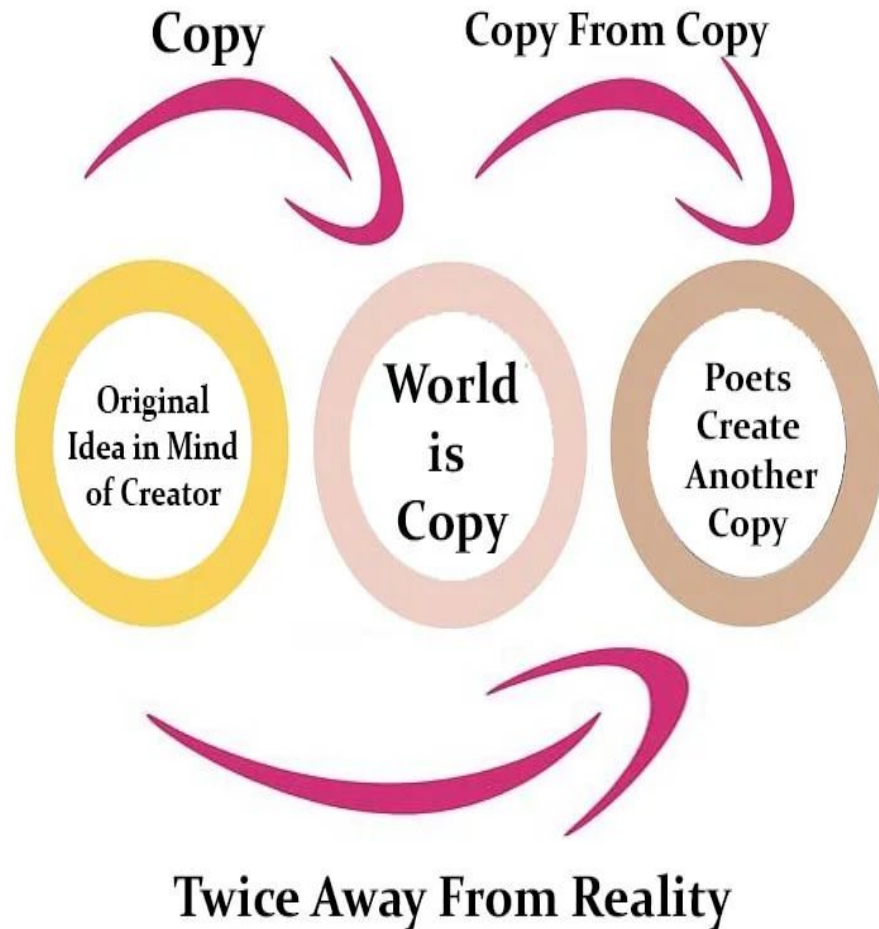
What is Poetry?  
What do the Poets do?

Plato VS Aristotle

# Plato

Poetry is a copy from copy, hence, it is twice away from the reality.

Poets talk against the gods and create imaginary worlds for their readers which seems impossible in real life.



# Aristotle's *Poetics*

- Composed around 330 BCE, had a profound impact on Western aesthetic philosophy and artistic production.
- The earliest surviving work of Greek dramatic theory and first extant philosophical treatise to focus on literary theory.

# Mimesis

- Greek word for “imitation” (though in the sense of “re-presentation” rather than of “copying”)
- An idea that governed the creation of works of art, in particular, with correspondence to the physical world understood as a model for beauty, truth, and the good.
- Mimesis is a term used in philosophy and literary criticism. It describes the process of imitation or mimicry through which artists portray and interpret the world. Mimesis is not a literary device or technique, but rather a way of thinking about a work of art.

# *Poetics*

- The portion of the *Poetics* that survives discusses mainly tragedy and epic poetry.
- Poetry is the mimetic, or imitative, use of language, rhythm, and harmony, separately or in combination. It creates a representation of objects and events in the world, unlike philosophy, for example, which presents ideas.
- Aristotle identifies tragedy as the most refined version of poetry.

# 7 Characteristics of Tragedy

- 1) Mimetic
- 2) Serious
- 3) A full story of an appropriate length
- 4) Contains rhythm and harmony
- 5) Rhythm and harmony occur in different combinations in different parts of the tragedy
- 6) Performed rather than narrated
- 7) Arouses feelings of pity and fear and then purges these feelings through **catharsis**.



# Catharsis

- The purification and purgation of emotions through dramatic art, or it may be any extreme emotional state that results in renewal and restoration.

# Hamartia

- From Greek hamartanein, “to err”
- Tragic flaw
- Aristotle introduced the term in the *Poetics* in describing the tragic hero as a man of noble rank and nature whose misfortune is not brought about by villainy but by some “error of judgment” (hamartia).
- In Greek tragedy the nature of the hero’s flaw is even more elusive. Often the tragic deeds are committed unwittingly, as when Oedipus unknowingly kills his father and marries his own mother.

# The 6 Aristotelian elements

- **Plot:** What, the main action, which can be described through the character's objectives.
- **Character:** Who, the protagonist and their relationship to the other characters and to the world they inhabit.
- **Thought:** Why, the psychology behind the character's action.
- **Diction:** How, the dialogue, which in addition to action, is a tactic characters utilize to achieve their, often opposing, objectives.
- **Spectacle:** Where, that which we can see on stage, also known as setting.
- **Song:** Rhythm of speech or the use of literal music. Both of which are utilized to drive a narrative forward, or delineate character and emotion.

Thus the 6 elements we utilize to build drama are what, who, why, how, where, and rhythm of speech.

# **Three Unities of Drama/ The Classical Unities/ Aristotelian Unities**

## **Unity of Time:**

The action of the play should take place in a short internal chronology, ideally, no more than 24 hours.

## **Unity of Place:**

It was said that in drama there should be no change of place, and even if the scene changes it must not be too great a distance.

## **Unity of Action:**

It is the unity of action which makes the plot intelligible, coherent, and individual. The events and incidents are connected with each other logically and inevitably on the principle of probability; they move towards a common goal, the Catastrophe, aimed at by the dramatist.

# Characteristics of a Tragic Hero

- **Hubris:** “excessive pride that blinds.”
- **Hamartia:** a tragic error of judgment that results in the hero’s downfall.
- **Peripeteia:** the hero’s experience of a reversal of fate due to his error in judgment.
- **Anagnorisis:** the moment in the story when the hero realizes the cause of his downfall.
- **Nemesis:** an unavoidable consequence that usually comes because of the hero’s pride.
- **Catharsis:** the feeling of fear and pity that the downfall evokes in the audience.

# *The Birth of Tragedy*

- *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* (German: *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*)
- Publication date: 1872
- Author: Friedrich Nietzsche
- Language: German
- Examines the origins and development of poetry, specifically Greek tragedy.
- Divided into twenty-five chapters.

- Arthur Schopenhauer: *The World as Will and Representation* (metaphysics, art)

- Account of will, more than desire, Examples: plants, gravity
- Transcendental metaphysical force that explains movements in the universe, principle of movement-reality

- Nietzsche takes Schopenhauer's notion of will and modifies:

- The will is not one faced, has 2 different faces
- The Apollonian will/driver, The Dionysian will/driver
- Culture and Art also have these drives



Apollo	Dionysos
Order	Chaos
Reason, rational thought	Irrationality, impulse
Control	Excess
Dream	Intoxication
Form and identity	Loss of self
Structure	Nature, wildness, animalism
Beauty, purity	Lust; fertility and abundance
Protection	Cruelty
Art of images (e.g., sculpture)	Imageless art (i.e., music)

- Nietzsche: The Apollonian & the Dionysian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGQzyb5fgrQ>

- Nietzsche and Dionysus: Tragedy and the Affirmation of Life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9zSQ2uGCoI>