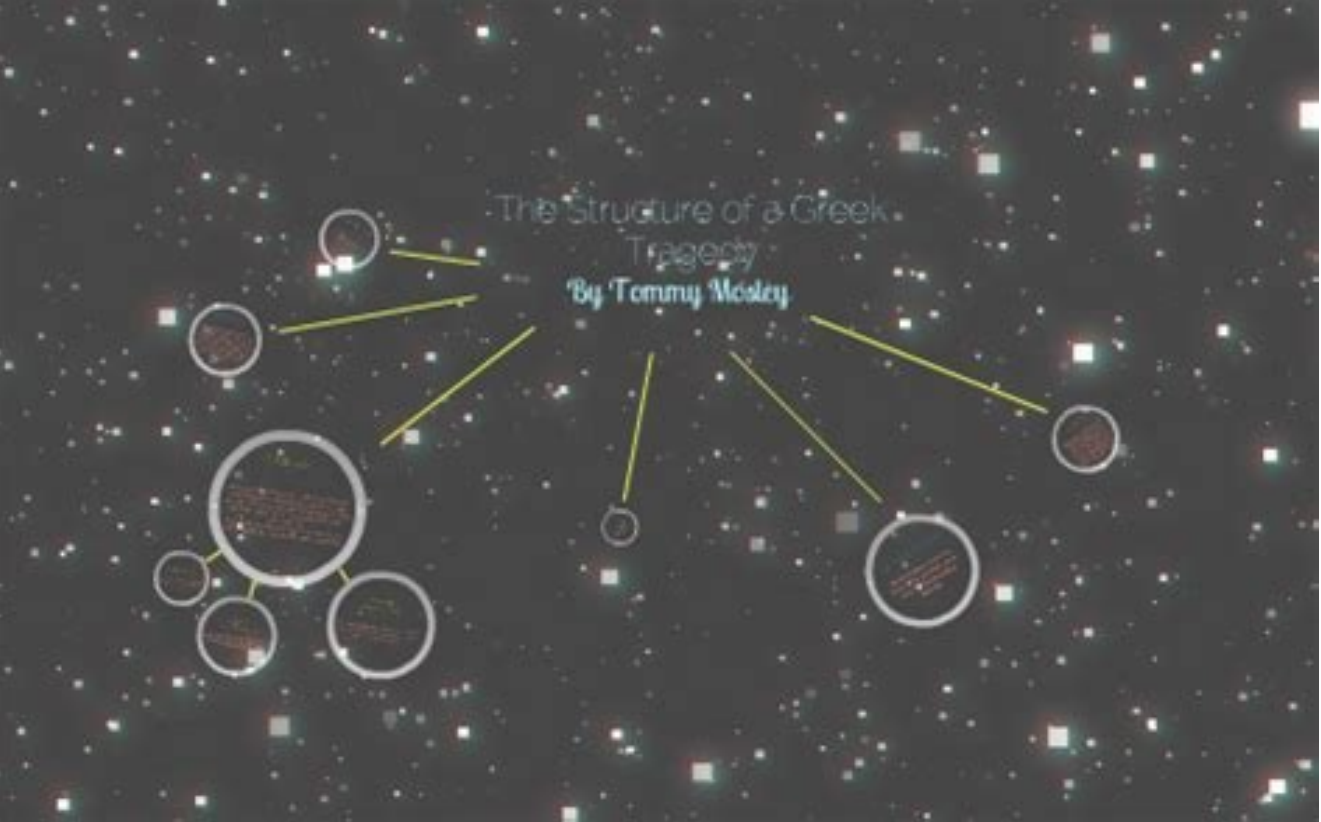


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Social Class in Tragedy

- Characters of classic tragedies are mainly from the royal or elite families. For example- Hamlet, Antigone or King Oedipus.
- Modern tragedies mainly focus upon the life of common people. Characters are mainly from the middle class, for example- “Desire under the elms”



Antigone

Analysis of Sophocles' Greek tragedy

GREEK TRAGEDY

Greek Tragedy was a popular and influential form of drama performed in theatres across ancient Greece. The term 'Tragedy' derived from the words 'tragos' meaning goat and 'oide' meaning song .

During the festival of Dionysus, tragedies were staged as part of competition. Choruses were dressed in loin skin of goat. A goat was the prize given for the best tragedy.

Today we are so familiar with plays and movies that it may be difficult to imagine a time when theatrical productions were still new. Like many of the public gatherings in the ancient world, the original productions in Greek theaters were rooted in religion. It didn't matter that they already knew how the story ended. Athenian audiences of up to 18,000 spectators expected to watch familiar old stories when they attended the "Great" or "City Dionysia" festival in March. It was the job of the playwright to "interpret" familiar myth, "slices (temache) from the great banquets of Homer," in such a way as to win the dramatic contest that was the center of the festival. Tragedy lacks a spirit of revelry, so each of 3 competing playwrights produced a lighter, farcical satyr play in addition to three tragedies. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragedians whose works survive, won first prizes between 480 BCE and the end of the 5th century. All three wrote plays that depended on thorough familiarity with a central myth, the House of Atreus: Aeschylus' Agamemnon, Libation Bearers (Choephoroi), and Eumenides Sophocles' Electra Euripides' Orestes Euripides' Iphigenia in Aulis For generations, these god-defying descendants of Tantalus committed unspeakable crimes that cried out for revenge: brother against brother, father against son, father against daughter, son against mother. It all began with Tantalus—whose name is preserved in the English word "tantalize," which describes the punishment he suffered in the Underworld. Tantalus served up his son Pelops as a meal to the gods to test their omniscience. Demeter alone failed the test and so when Pelops was restored to life, he had to make do with an ivory shoulder. The sister of Pelops happens to have been Niobe who was turned to a weeping rock when her hubris led to the death of all 14 of her children. When it came time for Pelops to marry, he chose Hippodamia, the daughter of Oenomaus, king of Pisa (near the site of the future ancient Olympics). Unfortunately, the king lusted after his own daughter and contrived to murder all her more appropriate suitors during a (fixed) race. Pelops had to win this race to Mt. Olympus in order to win his bride, and he did—by loosening the lynchpins in Oenomaus' chariot, thereby killing his would-be father-in-law. In the process, he added more curses to the family inheritance. Pelops and Hippodamia had two sons, Thyestes and Atreus, who murdered an illegitimate son of Pelops to please their mother. Then they went into exile in Mycenae, where their brother-in-law held the throne. When he died, Atreus finagled control of the kingdom, but Thyestes seduced Atreus' wife, Aerope, and stole Atreus' golden fleece. Thyestes went into exile, again. Eventually, believing himself forgiven, he returned and ate the meal to which his brother had invited him. When the final course was brought in, the identity of Thyestes' meal was revealed, for the platter contained the heads of all his children except the infant, Aegisthus. Adding another creepy element to the mix, Aegisthus may have been Thyestes' son by his own daughter. Thyestes cursed his brother and fled. Atreus had two sons, Menelaus and Agamemnon, who married the royal Spartan sisters, Helen and Clytemnestra. Helen was captured by Paris (or left willingly), thereby starting the Trojan War. Unfortunately, the king of Mycenae, Agamemnon, and the cuckolded king of Sparta, Menelaus, couldn't get the warships moving across the Aegean. They were stuck at Aulis because of adverse winds. Their seer explained that Agamemnon had offended Artemis and must sacrifice his daughter to propitiate the deity. Agamemnon was willing, but his wife wasn't, so he had to trick her into sending their daughter Iphigenia, whom he then sacrificed to the goddess. After the sacrifice, the winds came up and the ships sailed to Troy. The war lasted 10 years during which time Clytemnestra took a lover, Aegisthus, the lone survivor of Atreus' feast, and sent her son, Orestes, away. Agamemnon took a war prize mistress, as well, Cassandra, whom he brought home with him at the end of the war. Cassandra and Agamemnon were murdered upon their return by either Clytemnestra or Aegisthus. Orestes, having first obtained the blessing of Apollo, returned home to exact revenge on his mother. But the Eumenides (Furies)—only doing their job with respect to a matricide—pursued Orestes and drove him mad. Orestes and his divine protector turned to Athena to arbitrate the dispute. Athena appealed to a human court, the Areopagus, whose jurors were split. Athena cast the deciding vote in favor of Orestes. This decision is upsetting to modern women because Athena, who had been born from the head of her father, judged mothers less important than fathers in the production of children. However we might feel about it, what was important was that it put an end to the chain of cursed events. Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 325 F and put a large pot of well-salted water on to boil. Place the whole tomatoes (including the vine if your tomatoes have one) into a ceramic or metal oven dish. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and a good pinch of salt. Roll the tomatoes around a little to cover everything with the oil, then add the garlic slices distributing them evenly into the dish. Place the dish in the center of the preheated oven and cook for 15 minutes. The tomatoes will soften and the skin may split. While the tomatoes are cooking, prepare the sauce. Put the chopped parsley, mint, and oregano in a small bowl. Add the rinsed capers, red wine vinegar, and the remaining 4 tablespoons olive oil. Whisk together to create a thick, creamy looking dressing and put it to one side; do not place in the refrigerator. Boil your spaghetti as per the instructions until al dente. Once cooked, drain the pasta and tip back into the warm pan. Stir in the dressing while the spaghetti is hot; it will become very fragrant. Add in the chopped black and green olives and the tomatoes and garlic, including any juice from the cooking dish. To serve either, either transfer the pasta into a large warmed serving bowl for everyone to help themselves or into four individual warmed bowls. Before serving, cover the pasta with a generous helping of feta cheese and freshly ground black pepper. The dish can also be served cold as a pasta-style salad. Store in the refrigerator until serving (the same day is best). Let come to room temperature before serving. This recipe includes some of the most popular ingredients from Greece. Feel free to switch or add in some of your favorite herbs, and if you wish to add in some meat, try grilled chicken kabobs or Souvlaki. The chunks of skewered meat could be served alongside. Rate This Recipe I don't like this at all. It's not the worst. Sure, this will do. I'm a fan—would recommend. Amazing! I love it! Thanks for your rating! Boorish cannibals contrast with civilized Greeks in mythology except when it's the Greeks who prepare the ineffable dinners. Greek mythology has many stories involving cannibalism. Medea was a horrible mother because she killed her children, but at least she didn't kill them secretly and then serve them to their father at a "reconciliation" feast as Atreus did. The cursed House of Atreus actually contains two instances of cannibalism. A story from Ovid's Metamorphoses that is singularly nasty involves rape, disfigurement, and imprisonment, with cannibalism as revenge. Not himself a cannibal, Tantalus shows up in the Nekuia of Homer. He suffers eternal torture in the Tartarus region of the Underworld. He appears to have committed more than one transgression, but the worst is providing the gods with a feast for which he stews his own son, Pelops. All the gods except Demeter immediately recognize the scent of the meat and refuse to partake. Demeter, distracted by her grief over losing her daughter Persephone, takes a bite. When the gods restore Pelops, he lacks a shoulder. Demeter must fashion one for him of ivory as a replacement. In one version, Poseidon is so enamored of the boy that he takes him away. The reaction of the gods to the dinner suggests they didn't condone the eating of human flesh. Atreus was a descendant of Pelops. He and his brother Thyestes both wanted the throne. Atreus possessed a golden fleece that conferred the right to rule. To get the fleece, Thyestes seduced Atreus' wife. Atreus later retrieved the throne, and Thyestes left town for some years. During his brother's absence, Atreus brooded and plotted. Finally, he invited his brother to a reconciliation dinner. Thyestes came with his sons, who were strangely absent when the meal was served. When he had finished eating, Thyestes asked his brother where his sons were. Thyestes took the lid off a platter and displayed their heads. The feud continued. Tereus was married to Pandion's daughter Procne, but he lusted after her sister Philomela. After persuading Philomela to come with him to pay her sister a visit, he locked her in a secluded, guarded room, and raped her repeatedly. Afraid he might tell someone, he cut out her tongue. Philomela found a way to alert her sister by weaving a story-telling tapestry. Procne rescued her sister and, after seeing her, she decided on the best way to get revenge (and prevent the line of abusers from continuing). She killed her son, Itys, and served him to her husband at a special feast just for him. After the main course, Tereus asked that Itys join them. Procne told her husband the boy was there already—inside his stomach, and she showed him the severed head as proof. The oldest daughter of Agamemnon, leader of the Greek forces headed to Troy, was Iphigenia. She was brought to Aulis under false pretenses in order to be a sacrifice to Artemis. In some accounts, Iphigenia is spirited away and replaced by a deer just at the moment Agamemnon kills her. In this tradition, Iphigenia is found later by her brother Orestes whom the Tauri expect her to kill as a sacrifice to Artemis. Iphigenia says she is taking Orestes to be cleansed and so avoids actually making him a sacrifice. Sacrifices in Greek mythology meant a feast for the humans and bones and fat for the gods, ever since Prometheus tricked Zeus into picking the richer looking but insubstantial offering. Polyphemus was a cyclops and son of Poseidon. When Odysseus entered his cave—apparently breaking and entering and helping oneself to the contents of the frig was okay in those days—the giant with one round eye (soon to be rolling on the floor) thought the group of Greeks had presented themselves to him for dinner and breakfast. Grasping one in each hand, he smashed their heads to kill them, then dismembered and chopped down. The only question is whether the species of cyclops is close enough to human to make Polyphemus a cannibal. In Book X of the Odyssey, the companions of Odysseus in their 12 ships land at the citadel of Lamus, Laestrogonian Telepylus. It's unclear whether Lamus is an ancestral king or the name of the place, but the Laestrygonians (Laestrygonnes) live there. They are giant cannibals whose king, Antiphates, eats one of the scouts Odysseus sends out to learn who lives on the island. Eleven ships had moored in the harbor, but Odysseus' ship was outside and separate. Antiphates summons the other giant cannibals to join him in smashing the moored ships so they can then make a meal of the men. Odysseus' ship alone gets away. Cronus sired the Olympians Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus. His wife/sister was Rhea. Since Cronus had ruined his father, Uranus, he feared a child of his would do the same, so he sought to prevent it by eating his children one at a time when they were born. When the last was born, Rhea, who didn't much care for the loss of her offspring, gave him a swaddling-wrapped stone named Zeus to swallow. The real baby Zeus was reared in safety and later returned to overturn his father. He persuaded his father to regurgitate the rest of the family. This is another case of "is this truly cannibalism?" As is true elsewhere, there's no better term for it. Cronus may not have killed his kids, but he did eat them. The other Titans besides Cronus shared with him a taste for humanoid flesh. The Titans dismembered the god Dionysus when he was just a baby and ate him, but not before Athena rescued his heart which Zeus used to resurrect the god. In The Prose Edda, Attila the Hun, the Scourge of God, is a monster but hardly less so than his wife who shares with Procne and Medea the status of maternal son-slayer. Also shared with Procne and Tantalus is a gruesome taste in menu selection. The character of Atli, with no heirs left behind, is mercifully slaughtered by his wife after finishing his unholy repast.

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