

Rules of the Greek Stage

The Three Unities

Aristotelian rules were those relating to the so-called unities of time, place and action. The unity of time limits the play to the duration of a single day. Unity of place limits it to one general location; and the unity of action limits it to one single set of incidents which are related as cause and effect - "having a beginning, middle and end."

More Plot, Less Character

Aristotle conceived the action, or plot, of a play far more important than the characters in the play. "Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of actions." He insisted very clearly that in tragedy the plot does not rise out of the characters, but on the contrary the plot tests the characters through the working-out of destiny -- "blind fate."

The Three Actor Rule

Besides the chorus, only three actors performed all the speaking roles in tragedies. In most cases, three actors played several different roles. The non-speaking roles were believed to be young actors in training. Actors must be masked!

Chorus

There is a chorus present that comment on the action, life, surrounds, background information, etc. - not necessarily in unison. Sometimes stands between the actors and the audience. They are the *guide* to the audience's emotions.

Parados

Entrance of the chorus song.

Action: Off-Stage!

All fight scenes and violent scenes occurred off-stage.

Verse

All Greek dramas are poetic dramas. The characters speak in verse; this is true of both dialogue and choral song. Mostly in **iambics (iambic trimeter in dipodic = 6 iambs)**

Prologue

Any part before the chorus enters is called a prologue.