

Rhetoric' In Rhetoric, Aristotle observes and analyzes public speaking with scientific rigor in order to teach readers how to be more effective speakers. The meaning of the Greek word is closer to "mistake" than to "flaw," and I believe it is best interpreted in the context of what Aristotle has to say about plot and "the law or probability or necessity." In the ideal tragedy, claims Aristotle, the protagonist will mistakenly bring about his own downfall—not because he is sinful or morally weak, but because he does not know enough. The role of the hamartia in tragedy comes not from its moral status but from the inevitability of its consequences. Hence the peripeteia is really one or more self-destructive actions taken in blindness, leading to results diametrically opposed to those that were intended (often termed tragic irony), and the anagnorisis is the gaining of the essential knowledge that was previously lacking. Application to Oedipus the King. (Aristotle, Poetics, Book V) Tragedy is drama – not narrative; it shows rather than tells. Tragedy deals with the fundamental order of the universe; it creates a cause-and-effect chain that clearly reveals what may happen at any time. Tragedy arouses not only pity but also fear, because the audience can envision themselves within this cause-and-effect chain. The plot must be "a whole," with a beginning, middle, and end.

'Prior Analytics' In Prior Analytics, Aristotle explains the syllogism as "a discourse in which, certain things having been supposed, something different from the things supposed results of necessity because these things are so." Aristotle defined the main components of reasoning in terms of inclusive and exclusive relationships. These sorts of relationships were visually grafted in the future through the use of Venn diagrams. Other Works on Logic Besides Prior Analytics, Aristotle's other major writings on logic include Categories, On Interpretation and Posterior Analytics. In these works, Aristotle discusses his system for reasoning and for developing sound arguments. Works on Science Aristotle composed works on astronomy, including On the Heavens, and earth sciences, including Meteorology. By meteorology, – 38 – Aristotle didn't simply mean the study of weather. His more expansive definition of meteorology included "all the affectations we may call common to air and water, and the kinds and parts of the earth and the affectations of its parts." The plot must be "of a certain magnitude," both quantitatively (length, complexity) and qualitatively ("seriousness" and universal significance). Aristotle argues that plots should not be too brief; the more incidents and themes that the playwright can bring together in an organic unity, the greater the artistic value and richness of the play. Also, the more universal and significant the meaning of the play, the more the playwright can catch and hold the emotions of the audience, the better the play will be. The plot may be either simple or complex, although complex is better. Simple plots have only a "change of fortune" (catastrophe). – 39 – Aristotle's Theory of Tragedy in the Poetics: Definition of Tragedy: "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its katharsis of such emotions. . . . Every Tragedy, therefore, must have six parts, which parts determine its quality—namely, Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, Melody." According to Aristotle, tragedy is higher and more philosophical than history because history simply relates what has happened while tragedy dramatizes what may happen, "what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity." History thus deals with the particular, and tragedy with the universal. Events that have happened may be due to accident or

coincidence; they may be particular to a specific situation and not be part of a clear cause-and-effect chain. Therefore they have little relevance for others. Tragedy, however, is rooted in the fundamental order of the universe; it creates a cause-and effect chain that clearly reveals what may happen at any time or place because that is the way the world operates. Tragedy therefore arouses not – 40 – only pity but also fear, because the audience can envision themselves within this cause-and-effect chain. Plot is the "first principle," the most important feature of tragedy. The plot must be "complete," having "unity of action." By this Aristotle means that the plot must be structurally self-contained, with the incidents bound together by internal necessity, each action leading inevitably to the next with no outside intervention, no deus ex machine. Playwrights should exclude coincidences from their plots; if some coincidence is required, it should "have an air of design," i.e., seem to have a fated connection to the – events of the play. 1. – 45