

# Elements of Tragedy

From Aristotle's Theory of Tragedy found in his work *POETICS*

Greek

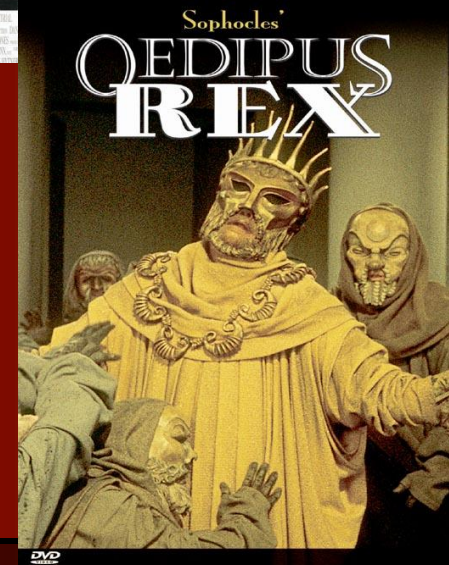
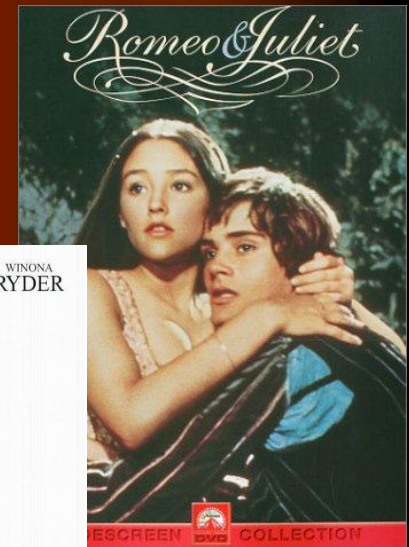
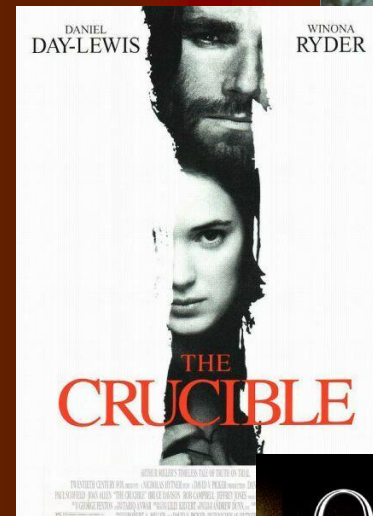
Elizabethan

American Theater

- **Aristotle's elements of tragedy** -- In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Aristotle (Greek) noted that a tragedy must contain the following elements.
  - **tragic hero** – generally of high status who possesses a weakness
  - **tragic flaw** – this ultimately causes the character's downfall
  - **catastrophe** – The concluding action of a drama, especially a classical tragedy, following the climax and containing a resolution of the plot; this and the resolution leave the audience with a feeling of catharsis
  - **catharsis** – a cleansing through emotions

# Basic Elements

- Hero faces an overwhelming conflict
- Hero has a tragic flaw
- Hero takes a fall
- Order is restored



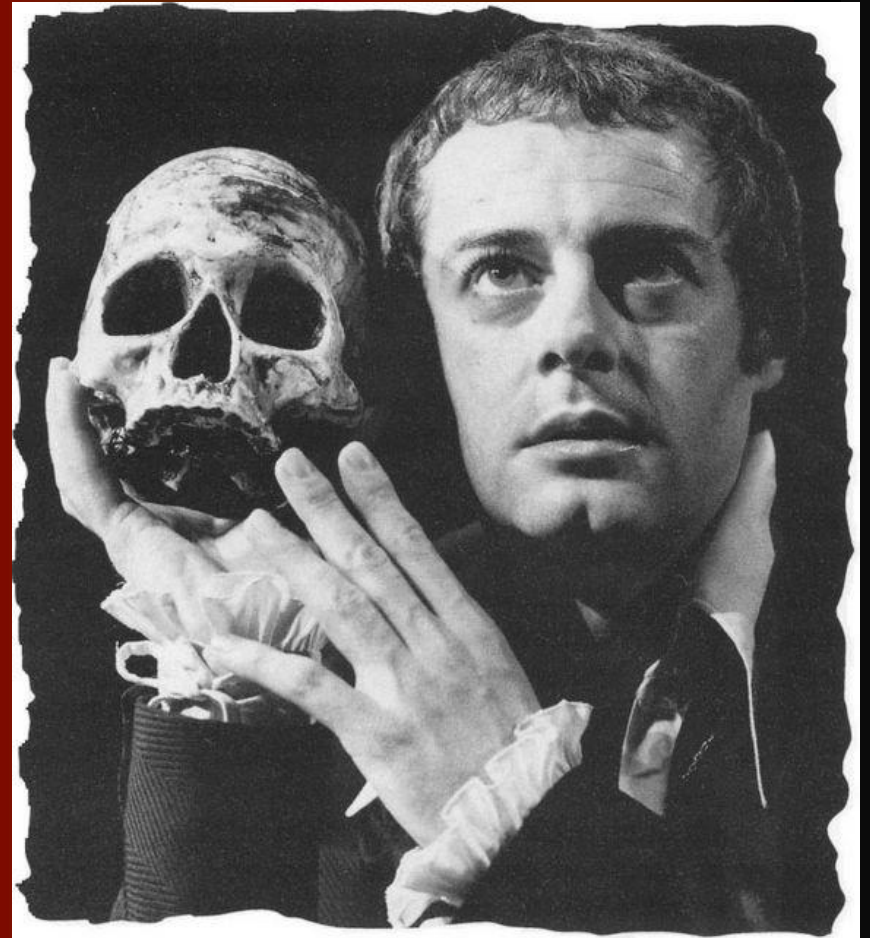
# Greek Tragedy

- Hero is elevated
- Story has to occur within 24 hours
- Little or no humor
- Religious in nature:  
Gods and Goddesses
- Audience has catharsis
- Supernatural elements



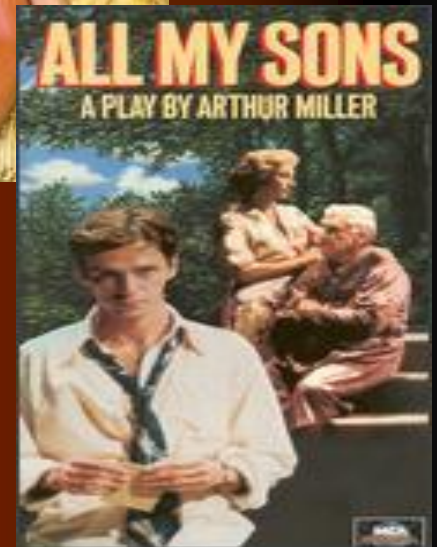
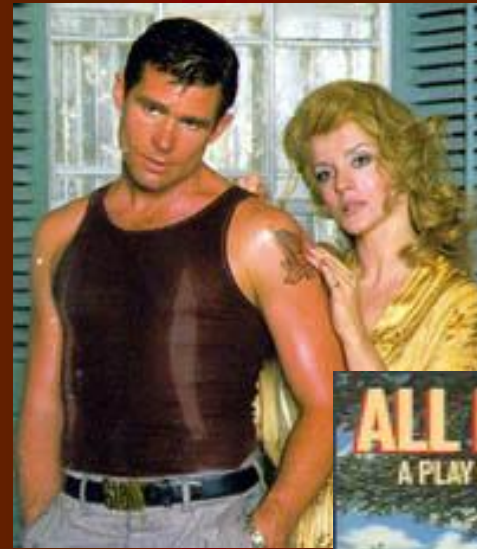
# Elizabethan Tragedy

- Comic Relief included
- May last more than 24 hours
- Characters elevated
- Revenge is very often involved
- Supernatural elements



# American Tragedy

- Character need not be elevated
- Humor may or may not be included
- Not necessarily a religious background
- Focuses on failure, guilt, responsibility for one's own actions,
- The effects of society on the individual



# Works Cited

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- [http://www.bachelorandmaster.com/globaldrama/death-of-a-salesman-as-a-play-about-american-tragedy.html#.VR1BJU\\_ws5s](http://www.bachelorandmaster.com/globaldrama/death-of-a-salesman-as-a-play-about-american-tragedy.html#.VR1BJU_ws5s)