

Poetics Characters

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Major Characters

Aristotle: Aristotle was a great Greek thinker. He wrote Poetics, where he explains poetry, especially tragedy. He says poetry is natural, and tragedy gives fear, pity, and catharsis.

Oedipus: Oedipus is a tragic king in Greek stories. He kills his father, marries his mother, and blinds himself. Aristotle uses him to explain recognition and reversal in tragedies.

Iphigeneia: Iphigeneia is a princess from Greek stories. She almost gets sacrificed but escapes. Later, she meets her brother. Aristotle uses her story to show sudden recognition in plots.

Odysseus: Odysseus is a famous hero from Greek myths. He hides his identity but is recognized by a nurse. Aristotle uses this scene as an example of recognition and reversal.

Sophocles: Sophocles was a Greek playwright. He wrote tragic plays, such as "Oedipus Rex." Aristotle praises him for adding a third actor and using stage painting to improve drama.

Homer: Homer was a Greek poet who wrote the epic poems "Iliad" and "Odyssey." Aristotle admires him for the good use of plot and language. He says Homer helped shape poetry in early times.

Achilles: Achilles is a hero from Homer's "Iliad." He kills Hector, but Homer still shows him as a good man. Aristotle suggests that poets should create balanced and moral characters.

Aegisthus: Aegisthus is a villain in Greek mythology. He kills Agamemnon with help from Orestes's mother. Orestes later kills him. Aristotle uses him to illustrate the theme of violence in tragedy.

Aeschylus: Aeschylus was an early Greek playwright. He added a second actor in the plays. Aristotle mentions his Oresteia to show examples of good tragedy and character development.

Ajax: Ajax is a Greek hero. After losing a prize to Odysseus, he becomes sad and kills himself. Aristotle says poems about Ajax are full of suffering and pain.

Creon: Creon is a king in Greek stories. In “Antigone,” his son Haemon tries to kill him but fails. Aristotle uses this as a weak plot because there is no real suffering.

Hector: Hector is a brave prince from the “Iliad.” Achilles kills him after chasing him around Troy. Aristotle says such actions are silly in tragedy but fine in epic poetry.

Medea: Medea is a tragic woman. She kills her children after her husband leaves her. Aristotle uses her story to show how fear and pity can be created in tragedy.

Menelaus: Menelaus is a king and Orestes’s uncle. In Euripides’s play, he refuses to help Orestes. Aristotle says this is bad writing because the character acts cruelly without reason.

Merope: Merope is a queen who almost kills her own son without knowing. She stops after recognizing him. Aristotle calls this the best tragic plot, characterized by pity and recognition.

Orestes: Orestes is Iphigeneia’s brother. He kills his mother and stepfather. His identity is initially hidden but later revealed. Aristotle uses him to show how recognition works in good tragedies.

Minor Characters

Euripides: Euripides was a famous Greek tragedy writer. In “Poetics,” Aristotle mentions his plays “Medea” and “Orestes” to illustrate how tragedy evokes fear, pity, and profound emotional effects.

Aristophanes: Aristophanes wrote funny Greek plays. Aristotle mentions him briefly in Poetics. Aristotle did not write much about comedy, and the comedy part of his book is now lost.

Herodotus: Herodotus was a Greek historian. Aristotle says that history tells us what really happened at a particular time. Poetry shows what could happen through actions. That is why poetry is more artistic.