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Topic : - Aristotle Poetics (2)

This foregrounding of action as opposed to being in Aristotle's theory of literature is what constitutes the universal in drama. Now, action springs from character and thought. So, character, as the source of moral judgement is distinguished from thought, which informs the mind of the agents and thus is given expression. Aristotle's conception of action, that is, the plot or the 'fable' as such is of an organic nature and presses likewise **a beginning, middle and end**. Magnitude or length is another requirement of a good plot, and ideally the length of the plot should allow a change or reversal in the fortune of the chief protagonist. In subsequent chapters Aristotle then proceeds to describe the concepts of simple and complex plots (Poetics X), the elements of complex plots (Poetics XI), and the discussions of tragedy in terms of quantity (Poetics). In Poetics XIII and XIV, Aristotle talks of the aims of a good tragedy; and the cause and nature of its effects. In stating that a poet's function is to describe not the thing what is but what 'might be' he differentiates and privileges poetry over history. He explicitly esteems

poetry as something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature of the ‘universals’.

When talking about the aims of a successful tragedy, one that arouses pity and fear, Aristotle formulates the following requirements:

1. The plot must have unity of action.
2. The characters should be good, appropriate, like real and consistent-neither pre-eminently just or virtuous nor extremely bad.
3. The tragic deed be done in the family – when murder or the like is done or contemplated by brother on brother, for example.
4. The Discovery should arise from incidents-the cause of change in the hero's fortune must be in his ‘hamartia’, that is, a great error on his part. Discovery, along with Peripety and suffering are three essential elements of a good tragedy.