Tragedy
Classic Tragedy

- depicts the downfall of a noble hero or heroine, usually through some combination of hubris, fate, and the will of the gods.
Aristotelian Tragedy

Aristotle’s *Poetics*

- "Tragedy, then, is a process of imitating an action which has serious implications, is complete, and possesses magnitude; by means of language which has been made sensuously attractive...; enacted by the persons themselves and not presented through narrative; through a course of pity and fear completing the purification of tragic acts which have those emotional characteristics."

- Six elements of tragedy: plot, characters, verbal expression, thought, visual adornment, and song-composition
Aristotelian Tragedy (cont.)

Elements of Plot

• **Reversal** (*peripeteia*): when a situation seems to develop in one direction then suddenly "reverses" to another

• **Recognition** (*anagnorisis*): a change from ignorance to awareness of a bond of love or hate

• **Suffering** (*pathos*): a destructive or painful act
• “...the man who is neither a paragon of virtue and justice nor undergoes the change to misfortune through any real badness or wickedness but because of some mistake*”

*hamartia (mistake, flaw)
Modern Tragic Hero

• Hero need not be legendary or noble; often the hero is the common man
• The hero may not necessarily learn from his fall
• The “fall” may be from the height of his aspirations or self-delusions
Works Cited
http://faculty.gvsu.edu/websterm/Tragedy.htm