

Tragedy:

“The representation of serious actions that lead to a disastrous end for the protagonist” (Kennedy, et al 174).

Tragic Flaw: “A fatal weakness or ignorance in the protagonist that brings him or her to a bad end” (175).

Tragic Hero: “A tragic hero is the central figure in a tragedy, the person whose misfortune and suffering constitute the tragic meaning of the play” (176).

Aristotle’s Tragic Hero: An “everyday” man who is of good character, of high standing in society, and whose fall is due to his own action or fault (176).

Archetype: “A recurring symbol, character, landscape, or event found in myth and literature across different cultures and eras,” “a model from which writers create different versions or copies,” often related to the human condition (12).

Allusion: “A brief, sometimes indirect reference in a text to a person, place, thing, or prior text, be it fictitious or actual” (6).

Theme: “The prevailing topic or issue conspicuously running through a literary work” (173).

Motif: “An element that recurs significantly throughout a narrative . . . can be an image, idea, theme, situation, or action. Can also appear across multiple literary works” (116).

Example: the motif of a JOURNEY in works from the Odyssey to Huck Finn to Harry Potter.

Sources:

Kennedy, X. J., Dana Gioia and Mark Bauerlein. *Handbook of Literary Terms: Literature, Language, Theory*, third edition. Pearson, 2005.