

## Asian, Persian & Arabian, Greek, and Medieval English Literature

### Wisdom Literature

The influence of Asian Literature and Medieval Literature on the modern world. Contributions from Asia include several schools of thought that have slowly gained popularity and understanding in the Western world:

Yoga

Non-violent protest-Passive Resistance

Buddhism

Taoism

Confucianism

Zen

Feng Shui

Tai Chi

Chinese PHILOSOPHIES stress meditation and self-reflection to live a right life that does not harm others or the earth. Not true religions (no god, hell)

### **Chinese Literature Introduction—1500 BC to 1800 AD—pages 418-433**

*The Analects of Confucius—551-479 BC—pages 434-438—proverbs, parables—lessons to meditate on*

Teacher, philosopher, scholar—longed for the order and stability of the past, sought to reestablish order in his society—taught peasants—not just the aristocracy.

- Authority to rule comes from MORALITY, not just heredity
- Good Character and the need for ORDER and DISCIPLINE in all areas of life.
- Justice comes from order and morality
- Conformity, Duty, Honor, Respect
- Those in authority and the educated are obligated to act with loyalty, courtesy and respect.
- Central Concepts—Humanity (respect, truthfulness, generosity and love), Gentleman (ethics), and Ritual (conduct, manners, religious observances)—essential for order and respect

*Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu—500 BC—pages 440-443—proverbs and parables—lessons to meditate on—a contemporary of Confucius*

Teacher and philosopher—described the TAO or the WAY. The source and purpose of all existence. Live close to nature and practice nonaction (passive). Give up competitiveness, ambition, and striving. Instead, just let things happen. Get rid of all desires.

Lessons are contradictory in nature -*If you want to be reborn, let yourself die. If you want to be given everything, give everything up.* (similar to Jesus 500 years later—*But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the*

*other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.)*

Central Concepts—Harmony with the Universe—the Balance, Virtue, and Simplicity

### **Japanese Literature Introduction—pages 486-497**

**Zen Buddhism—Musō Sōdeki—1275-1351 AD**—was a disciple of Buddhism and longed for enlightenment. When he attained it, he became a teacher of Zen Buddhism and had many powerful followers—including Samurai and Shoguns. Musō also taught the Emperor of Japan. He is responsible for the widespread success of Zen Buddhism and the creation of monasteries and temples in Japan.

- Meditation
- Discipline and Simplicity
- Art that is stylized—Noh drama and haiku
- Enlightenment—called Satori

### **Persian and Arabian Literature Introduction—pages 562-575**

The influence of Persian and Arabian Literature on the modern world. Contributions from Persia include two key concepts that influenced everything after them.

First: the concept of an anti-god. Ancient religions had polytheistic backgrounds but it wasn't until the Persians that evil was personified in an 'Evil God' (concept that someone was IN CHARGE of the evil). Allowed for battles between good and evil (can't have a fight without a good guy and a bad guy) Good God: Ahura Mazda aka Ormazd. Evil God: Ahriman.

Second: the concept of ZERO and the numbers place. This revolutionized mathematics, allowing for complex calculations and formulas. All Math and Science has its basis in the Arabic number system with just ten numbers being used in infinite combinations.

Nomadic people—Persians (originally Aryans -remember them from their conquest of India?) settled and became city dwellers. Along come the Arabs (another nomadic people) who conquer Persia (after it had been kicked in the butt by the Greek Empire). Nomadic people make excellent conquerors because they have no cities to defend, they are highly mobile and skilled at fighting from horseback and they can hit a target and then disappear.

Hospitality is huge in Persian/Arabian cultures—that's why it is so important to know how to approach them and not insult them without knowing it. Three days of hospitality was the rule in the desert.

Original religions were very "Eastern" in that they were full of mysticism and philosophy. After the Arabs bring Islam to the region, most people become Muslim. However, the

Sufis still exist. Sufis can be compared to the 'guru' or teacher in other eastern philosophies.

Jews, Christians (including Catholics), and Muslims all worship the same god. They just call him by a different name (Yahweh, Jehovah, Allah) and worship him in different ways. They all have the Old Testament (from the Bible) in common. The Jews call it the Torah. The Christians also follow the New Testament because they believe Jesus was the messiah (the Jews and Muslims do not—they think Jesus was just a great rabbi and prophet). The Muslims also follow the Koran—which was dictated by Muhammad (whom they believe was the LAST prophet). With all this in common, the conflicts arise because each group believes the other two are wrong and the "Holy Land" in the Middle East is holy to ALL three groups and all three groups want to have control of it.

**Khayyam— *The Rubaiyat*—pages 594-597**—Persian poetry around 1100 AD—insightful poems for contemplation. The oldest translation was made by Fitzgerald in the 1800s. The author, Khayyam was actually a scientist and mathematician, writing books about algebra and astronomy. It was only after his death that his poetry became popular.

Each poem is separate and has a separate message. When you take notes, keep track of which one you are talking about.

**Sadi—a Sufi—1213-1292 AD *The Gulistan*—pages 606-609**—poet and mystic—wrote a collection of poems, stories and meditations called the *Gulistan*. A Sufi is a member of an Islamic sect; sufis do not own property and travel around as teachers/philosophers. They devote their lives to meditation. In the *Gulistan*, Sadi teaches lessons through short anecdotes.

Each anecdote should be read and examined separately, make sure to keep track in your notes, which one you are working on.

**West African Proverbs—pages 664-667**—These proverbs come from various cultures in the West African Region. Each proverb should be worked on individually, then you will look for trends among them.

## **Folktales and Legends**

### ***The Arabian Nights/ The Thousand and One Nights***

Sultan Shahyar betrayed by wife, has her killed. He starts marrying a new wife every day and having a wedding night and then killing her in the morning so that she can't betray him. He marries Scheherezade, and she tells him a story on their wedding night, she leaves it with a cliff hanger at dawn. The sultan doesn't kill her so that he can hear how the story

ends. The next night she finishes the first story and starts another, leaving it with a cliff hanger at dawn. This continues for A THOUSAND and ONE nights, by which time the Sultan has fallen in love with her and does not kill her.

**"Sinbad the Sailor"—*Thousand and One Nights*—pages 582-588**—frame story that contains ancient tales from all over Persia. Wasn't written down until the 1400s but the stories are much older than that. Can be compared to Canterbury Tales, the Pillow Book, Beowulf, Epic of Gilgamesh, and King Arthur Legends.

### **West African Folktale**

**The First Bard Among the Soninke:** The Soninke founded the Ghana empire 300-1170. Soninke had several classes of people, Bards were very important in the society as storytellers, musicians, advisers, genealogists and historians. They were called dieli—singer of family history/blood—your family history was as important as you were.

Two brothers go hunting but become lost. After days without food the younger brother stops and says he will die where he is. The older brother goes in search of food, but unable to find any, he cuts meat from his own thigh and brings it to his younger brother. He cooks it and saves his younger brother's life. On the way home, the younger brother sees the blood on his older brother's leg and realizes what he has done. Since giving your flesh and blood is the ultimate sacrifice you can make, the younger brother promises a blood-oath that he will become his older brother's dieli and devote his life to singing of his brother's accomplishments.

### **The Legend of King Arthur**

Part True / Part Legend / Part Parable

- Tribes consolidated into cities, towns
- People started thinking of themselves as a group: "French," "British," "Swedish."
- Rise of kingdoms - small, localized - much warfare between "Kings"  
    Thanes - Lords - Barons - supported their "king"
- Knights - specialized warriors - Calvary, lance, sword - held to higher standard
- King Arthur united all the Briton "kings" under his rule - OVERLORD or HIGH KING
- A lot of struggle between old religion - Pagans - goddess  
    new religion - Christians - god
- Uther Pendragon - Arthur's father - was king - fostered Arthur to Merlin to be taught the old ways
- Arthur marries a Christian to unite both old and new religions

- Lady of the Lake - Excalibur - whoever weilds it is invincible
- Sword in the Stone - Sword of Destiny - whoever pulls it out will be king of England

Uther - Morgana - Cornwallis

I I  
Arthur Morgane

Morgana - Priestess

- Morgane  
- Arthur

Arthur - Morgane → tricked into having a child - Mordred

I  
Mordred

Vivian - Lady of the Lake

High Priestess  
- her son is Lancelot

Arthur - Guinevere → cursed to have no children by Morgose

Morgose - Priestess

- Gawain  
- 2 other sons

Lancelot falls in love with Guinevere - will not dishonor the king Merlin - "wizard"

Priest of the goddess

Mordred accuses them of adultery to destroy King Arthur - tries to take over kingdom

### **MORE NOTES**

Romantic poetry—Idealized visions, striving for perfection

Imagery—very vivid descriptions to capture audience-these poems were recited/sung

Chivalry—Respect, honor, bravery, kind, courtesy, humble

Quest—Prove yourself, fulfill an oath—Arthur's quest for the HOLY GRAIL

Round Table—Equality motif, open, see all and be seen by all

Religion—Pagans vs Christians, Goddess vs God, Celts, Britons, Jutes, Swedes, Geats,

Danes, Anglos, Saxons—Tribes moving from old religion to new religion

Legends—Excalibur-sword-who holds it is invincible

--Lady of the Lake-goddess/priestess—caretaker of the sword—approves of Arthur becoming king-gives him the sword

--Sword of Prophecy—sword in the stone—whoever pulls it out will be king of England

--Merlin-wizard/mentor/teacher-priest of the goddess—arranges Uther Pendragon and the affair with Arthur's mother—takes Arthur to raise him

Politics—Kingdoms were not secure—no guarantee from father to son—many wars and conflicts

Characters-

Arthur-King, illegitimate son of Uther Pendragon and Morgana (married to Duke)

Morgane-His HALF-SISTER, daughter of Morgana and Duke

Mordred-His illegitimate SON

Guinevere-His wife

Vivien-His AUNT, Lady of the Lake, High Priestess of the Goddess, Morgana is her sister

Merlin-wizard, Priest of the Goddess, arranges the affair between Morgana and Uther

Lancelot-Son of Vivien and a King of France, Arthur's COUSIN

Gawain-Arthur's COUSIN, son of Morgose/Vivien's sister

Galahad-A knight of the round table

Kay-A knight of the round table

Ector-A knight of the round table

Some movies on the timeline—Gladiator, 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior, King Arthur/Excalibur, Braveheart

Perspectives: Male version (most stories), Female version (Mists of Avalon), Alternative view (I am Mordred, I am Morgan le Fay—both by Nancy Springer)

CODE OF CHIVALRY NOTES:

### The Code of Chivalry

- Live to serve King and Country.
- Live to defend Crown and Country and all it holds dear.
- Live one's life so that it is worthy of respect and honor.
- Live for freedom, justice and all that is good.
- Never attack an unarmed foe.
- Never use a weapon on an opponent not equal to the attack.
- Never attack from behind.
- Avoid lying to your fellow man.
- Avoid cheating.
- Avoid torture.
- Obey the law of king, country, and chivalry.
- Administer justice.
- Protect the innocent.
- Exhibit self-control.
- Show respect to authority.
- Respect women.
- Exhibit Courage in word and deed.
- Defend the weak and innocent.
- Destroy evil in all of its monstrous forms.
- Crush the monsters that steal our land and rob our people.

- Fight with honor.
- Avenge the wronged.
- Never abandon a friend, ally, or noble cause.
- Fight for the ideals of king, country, and chivalry.
- Die with valor.
- Always keep one's word of honor.
- Always maintain one's principles.
- Never betray a confidence or comrade.
- Avoid deception.
- Respect life and freedom.
- Die with honor.
- Exhibit manners.
- Be polite and attentive.
- Be respectful of host, women, and honor.
- Loyalty to country, King, honor, freedom, and the code of chivalry.
- Loyalty to one's friends and those who lay their trust in thee.

PROWESS, JUSTICE, TRUTH, LOYALTY, DEFENCE, COURAGE, FAITH, HUMILITY, LARGESSE, NOBILITY, and FRANCHISE

### **The Lay of the Werewolf—Marie de France—1140-1190 pages 725-731**

Marie is one of the few female authors that existed in history. She wrote many *Lais*, narrative poems that focused on love and adventure. Many of the themes are tied to courtly love and chivalry. They would often have been performed like one-act plays.

In this *Lai*, a young nobleman has a terrible affliction, he is a werewolf. Out of love for his wife, he reveals his dark secret to her. She betrays him by telling a knight. The knight steals the man's clothes and marries the wife. The man is left as a wolf in the forest. Later, the king finds the wolf in the forest and adopts it as a pet. At a banquet, the wolf viciously attacks the knight and bites the wife. Finally the wife confesses to her betrayal. The king puts the clothes in the room with the wolf, and the nobleman returns to human form. The knight and wife are banished, and the nobleman regains his lands and fortune.

## **Drama**

### **Greek Drama**

Greek Drama began with very religious themes, many gods involved and almost always tragic in nature. Only one Greek Dramatist excelled at Comedy-Aristophanes, he used satire, parody and exaggeration to mock prominent people and ideas (similar to *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *South Park*). All the other Greek Dramatists focused on Tragedies,

The best, Aeschylus, started the role of characters in plays, diminishing the chorus. Sophocles built on Aeschylus' work, adding more characters to plays. He won many competitions in Greece. Euripides, was the third, he diminished the chorus and wrote plays that actively questioned the religious element in dramas and introduced psychological elements. He allowed the move toward dramas becoming more entertaining and less religious teaching.

### **Background Story for Oedipus and Antigone**

Oedipus is the son of Laius and Jocasta. They take the baby to a soothsayer/fortune teller/prophet to find out what FATE the child has. They are told he will "kill his father and marry his mother". Horrified at that fate, the parents (Laius and Jocasta) have a servant tie the baby's legs together and abandon him in the mountains to die.

The servant does not do as he is told. Instead he gives the child to a shepherd, who in turn, gives the child to King Polybus of Corinth. The king and queen name him Oedipus and raise him as their own child.

Oedipus grows to adulthood and discovers that Polybus and Merope are not his real parents, he goes to a prophet to find out the truth about who he is. The prophet tells him the same fate that was given at his birth, he will "kill his father and marry his mother." Oedipus is horrified at this fate and flees Corinth to try to avoid his fate (he believes he is from Corinth although not the king & queen's son).

On his way to Thebes, he encounters a group of men blocking his way through a mountain pass. They fight and Oedipus kills the leader of the men. Oedipus continues on toward Thebes and when he gets there he discovers the Sphinx. The Riddle of the Sphinx has cost Thebes many lives. Oedipus answers the riddle and destroys the Sphinx. The city is overjoyed and offers to make Oedipus king. Oedipus accepts the Kingship and marries the widow queen.

Oedipus and the queen have four children and rule Thebes for 20 years. After 20 years, the gods send a plague upon the city. Oedipus sets out to save his city from the plague and discovers a terrible truth.

### **Oedipus by Sophocles (Part One of the Trilogy)**

Laius—King of Thebes

Jocasta—Queen of Thebes

Creon—Brother to the Queen

Oedipus—Son of Laius and Jocasta

Polyneices—Son of Oedipus and Jocasta

Eteocles—Son of Oedipus and Jocasta

Antigone—Daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta

Ismene—Daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta



### **Scene One**

Priests enter carrying offerings, wailing and crying because of all the suffering of Thebes, the plague is destroying the city.

Oedipus is upset and promises to do whatever he can to save the city.

The priest speaks and tells Oedipus of the awful suffering in the city. Describes the shrines to Athena and Apollo. Describes the city overrun with sickness and death. He compares Oedipus to the greatest of all men, says the gods favor him and have helped him in the past (referring to the Sphinx). He begs Oedipus to once again save Thebes from destruction.

Oedipus answers that he sent Creon to Delphi to ask the prophets there why the plague has been sent down from the gods.

The priest says, he comes Creon.

Oedipus prays to Apollo for a quick solution to save the city. And then asks Creon what the gods have to say about their situation. Creon is reluctant to speak in front of the gathered priests, but Oedipus insists on hearing the report.

Creon answers: Apollo wants us to root out the corruption that is in our midst. The former king was murdered, and his murderer has never been found. Once that man is caught and punished, the plague will be lifted.

Oedipus questions why the king's murder was left uninvestigated when it happened but Creon says they were still trying to deal with the Sphinx. Creon tells Oedipus that Laius had left Thebes to go to Delphi to seek help to get rid of the Sphinx. According to the one witness, the king's band was attacked by a group of thieves and only he escaped with his life.

Oedipus vows to discover who the murderer is and save the city from the plague.

### **Chorus**

The chorus enters and makes several pleas to the various gods for help (Zeus, Apollo, Athena, Artemis). They wonder what sacrifice and what price will have to be paid to be saved from the plague. They describe the crops dying in the field, children dying in the womb, everything in Thebes is dying. Lots of imagery of the destruction throughout the city. They end with another series of pleas to the various gods.

Oedipus appears and addresses the chorus: We must find the murderer of Laius. If anyone knows anything, they need to speak up now. They will not be harmed, even if they

took part in the murder—they will only face exile. If they know where the murderer is hiding, Oedipus will pay them a reward. Then he tells the chorus that the murderer is the plague within the city and everyone must do whatever it takes to drive him out.

Oedipus promises to do whatever it takes to find the murderer and curses the murderer to suffer pain all the rest of his days. He asks the gods to curse the murderer and all his family.

One of the chorus tells Oedipus to find Tiresias, the blind Prophet. Oedipus says he has already sent for him.

Tiresias appears before Oedipus and the Chorus.

Oedipus addresses him: We have been told by Apollo that we must punish the murderer of Laius, but we have no idea how to find him. Can you help us?

Tiresias answers: The truth is too terrible to tell, I just want to go home.

Oedipus becomes increasingly irritated with Tiresias' words and behavior. He demands to know what Tiresias knows. And when Tiresias doesn't tell him, Oedipus accuses him of being part of the conspiracy to kill Laius. When Oedipus accuses Tiresias of the murder, Tiresias tells Oedipus "You are the murderer, the plague on the city".

Oedipus can't believe what Tiresias is saying, calls him a traitor and a liar, although Tiresias is telling the truth. Oedipus can't wrap his mind around the fact that Tiresias is saying the Oedipus killed Laius.

Tiresias hints at more trouble for Oedipus, but Oedipus isn't listening to him anymore. Oedipus begins to wonder if Creon was a part of the conspiracy too. Oedipus accuses Tiresias of not caring about Thebes, talks about the Sphinx and asks why Tiresias wasn't able to free Thebes then.

The Chorus butts in and says let's not get angry, let's look for the answer to this latest riddle: Who killed Laius?

Tiresias tells Oedipus that his entire life is corrupted. His entire family is corrupted and will be destroyed.

Oedipus sends him away, still thinks he is crazy and a traitor.

Tiresias ends by saying, in a kind of roundabout way, that Oedipus killed his father, married his mother and had four children with her. Making him a brother/father to his own children and a son/husband to his mother.

The Chorus is dumbfounded. They can't believe what Tiresias has said. They can't accept the accusation that Oedipus killed Laius. Oedipus is the hero of Thebes, he saved the city from the Sphinx. The Chorus still believes that Oedipus is the son of Polybus NOT Laius.

## **Scene Two**

Creon enters and tells the Chorus that Oedipus' accusations have destroyed him. He has done nothing wrong and had no part in the murder of Laius.

The Chorus says that Oedipus was speaking out of anger because Tiresias got him all wound up and angry.

Oedipus re-enters and verbally accosts Creon. He is still angry and accuses him of putting Tiresias up to saying lies about Oedipus. Oedipus is convinced that Creon wants to take over the kingdom, but Creon points out that he already has everything he wants, without any of the headache that comes with being in charge. Creon defends himself and tells Oedipus to ask the prophet in Delphi himself, if he doesn't believe Creon.

The Chorus tells Oedipus not to jump to conclusions, but to think things through.

Oedipus wants to put Creon to death. Creon says Oedipus is crazy. Just as things start getting out of hand, Jocasta comes in.

Jocasta tells the two to calm down. The Chorus also wants Oedipus to accept Creon's oath of loyalty. Oedipus is frantic. If Creon is right, then Oedipus is a murderer (because Tiresias must be right). Oedipus demands whether or not the Chorus wants him to leave the city, but the Chorus wants him to stay. It is a no-win situation. They can't BOTH be right. Finally Oedipus lets Creon go, but he is still very angry.

Jocasta asks the Chorus: What is going on? They don't want to get into the whole argument again, but reiterate their support of Oedipus and their hope that he will be able to save the city from the plague.

Jocasta and Oedipus talk. Oedipus tells her that Creon is scheming against him, but Jocasta wants to hear the story from the beginning.

Oedipus says it all started when Creon accused him of murdering Laius. Creon sent in the prophet Tiresias to make the accusation. Jocasta tells him to ignore the prophet because

they are not true. She knows prophets tell lies because she and Laius had a prophet tell them a prophecy that never came true. Jocasta then tells Oedipus the story of the prophecy about their son who was supposed to kill Laius, and yet Laius was killed at a crossroad by strangers and her son had his ankles bound and was thrown into the wilderness when he was only three days old.

So obviously the prophecy was a lie and the gods will deliver an answer to Thebes when they want to.

Oedipus is very shaken when he hears Jocasta's story. He asks for more details and she says that Laius was killed on the road to Delphi and that it happened just before Oedipus came to Thebes. She also describes what he looked like.

Oedipus is horrified and cries out to the gods. He is starting to come to the realization that Tiresias is right and he is the corruption in the city and his whole family is corrupted and doomed.

Finally Jocasta tells that the king had only been accompanied by a small number of men, and that just one had made it back alive. And the man, when he saw Oedipus married to the queen had begged to be allowed to leave the city (because he knew the truth about who killed the king).

Oedipus wants to question the survivor, but before he does, he tells Jocasta the story of how and why he left Corinth, and what happened on the road to Thebes. He is almost convinced of the truth. He is ready to live out his life as a cursed exile, doomed by the gods.

The Chorus says to wait until he speaks to the survivor. Jocasta wants to know what difference it will make (she still has no clue who Oedipus is). Oedipus says that if the survivor keeps to his story that a whole group of thieves attacked them, then it could not have been Oedipus. However, if the survivor changes his story and says they all died due to one man, than that man is Oedipus and he is guilty.

Jocasta denies that Oedipus could have done it. Her son was killed when he was only 3 days old.

Oedipus insists on talking to the survivor.

### **Chorus**

They sing about fate and the destiny of man. Describe how Pride destroys men. How everyone must be obedient to the gods and that all prophesies do come true.

### **Scene Three**

Jocasta enters the temple to Apollo and prays for guidance for Oedipus. A messenger from Corinth arrives and tells the Queen that Polybus has died and the people of Corinth want Oedipus to be king. Jocasta is overjoyed, to her this proves, again, that prophets are wrong. She thinks this because Oedipus fled Corinth so that he wouldn't kill his father. And Polybus died of natural causes.

Oedipus appears and listens to the messenger. He becomes convinced, like Jocasta, that the prophets must be wrong. He is very relieved.

Jocasta tells him not to worry about the future. Fate and time happen to everyone. Live for today.

Oedipus says he is still afraid because his mother (Merope) is still alive—he doesn't want to end up sleeping with her.

The messenger asks for clarification from Oedipus and Oedipus tells him why he fled Corinth (to avoid the prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother). The messenger laughs and says that Oedipus has nothing to fear, Polybus and Merope were not his parents. Oedipus is astounded. The messenger says that he, himself, found Oedipus as a baby in the mountains and gave Oedipus to the King to raise as his own. He tells of a servant who gave him the baby, and the servant belonged to Laius. At this Jocasta realizes the truth and begs Oedipus to stop. But Oedipus is determined to discover the truth of who his parents are. He sends for the servant and Jocasta flees into the palace.

Oedipus thinks that Jocasta is only afraid that he won't be of noble birth. Oedipus doesn't even care if he is the son of a slave (he had completely forgotten that he may be Laius' son). The Chorus is concerned that Jocasta may be overcome by grief.

The Chorus is swept up by Oedipus' optimism and jump to the conclusion that they may discover that Oedipus is actually the son of a god.

The messenger/survivor/shepherd enters. He is reluctant to speak to Oedipus. Both messengers acknowledge that they are part of the story of Oedipus' birth. Oedipus threatens the shepherd to make him talk (he doesn't want to admit that he disobeyed the king's order to kill the baby).

When the messenger admits to who the baby was/is, Oedipus realizes that he really did kill his father and marry his mother. He runs screaming from the stage.

### **Chorus**

Sing of the doom of Oedipus. How he was the best among men and how now he is the most cursed of all men.

#### **Scene Four**

A messenger comes from the palace and tells the Chorus that the queen is dead. She has hanged herself out of grief and horror. He also says that after Jocasta hanged herself, Oedipus burst in and took the brooches off her gown and used them to pluck out his eyes. He says that Oedipus is determined to exile himself and remove the curse from the city.

Oedipus appears, he is being led by a boy since he is now blind.

The Chorus is dismayed and can barely look at Oedipus.

Oedipus calls himself agony, he is tortured by the knowledge of what he did. He calls himself darkness. The Chorus can't believe he plucked out his eyes, but Oedipus says he doesn't deserve to see anymore. Oedipus curses the man who took pity on him as a baby, because of the servant's pity, Oedipus has fulfilled the dreadful prophecy. Oedipus recounts his entire life, and yet all his great deeds have come to ruin and disaster.

Creon enters and tells the guards and Chorus to treat Oedipus with respect. Oedipus begs forgiveness for his false accusations and then begs Creon to drive him out of the city to save Thebes from the plague. Creon has sent for a prophet to find out what they should do. Oedipus asks to have Jocasta properly buried. He tells Creon to be kind to his children, innocent victims of his horrible fate. He asks to "see" them one last time. Creon allows the girls to come in (Antigone and Ismene) and they hug their dad. Oedipus is worried about what will happen to them as they grow older. He begs Creon to take pity on them and be a "father" to them.

Creon drives Oedipus from the palace and addresses the Chorus. Don't be too secure in your life, you never know what may befall you. Only when you are dead will you be safe from any more pain.

#### **Antigone by Sophocles (Part Two of the Trilogy)**

Antigone, Ismene, Eteocles, and Polyneices are siblings.

Their parents are both dead—Jocasta hung herself and Oedipus dug out his own eyes because of the curse.

Eteocles and Polyneices both died in the rebellion. Eteocles fought for Thebes (making him a hero and patriot) and Polyneices fought against the current government (making him a traitor).

Creon has become King with the death of both Princes. He has made a law forbidding the proper burial of Polyneices.

Ismene is a weaker character than Antigone. Ismene will not rebel against Creon and the law. Blames her weakness and indecision on being a woman.

Antigone is strong-willed and determined to do the morally correct thing, even though it has been declared legally wrong.

**Prologue**—Discussion between Antigone and Ismene.

Antigone tells Ismene she intends to bury Polyneices because it is the correct thing to do. She asks Ismene to help her.

Ismene says they can't do anything because it is illegal and they are just women, too weak to fight against men and the law.

Antigone tells her to go away—she will do the right thing, even if it means she will have to die. Says the gods will support her decision, and that Ismene will live as a dishonored coward.

### **Chorus**

Describe the battle in which Thebes was defended against the rebellion. The gods themselves were upset with the rebels. The two princes have died.

### **Scene One**

Creon enters and tells the Chorus (who represent the people of Thebes) that he has decided to leave Polyneices' body for the scavengers because he was a traitor. He believes the gods will approve of his decision because the gods hate traitors too.

A sentry enters and tells Creon that someone has buried Polyneices. It was a ritualistic and symbolic burial, not an actual burial. Someone just covered the body with dirt.

Creon is enraged and threatens to torture and kill the sentry unless he finds out who has broken the law. Accuses the Sentry of taking a bribe to bury the body.

The chorus wonders if the gods have done it—and this enrages Creon even more.

The sentry complains that he is being punished for a crime he has not committed.

### **ODE 1-Chorus**

With all of man's might and intelligence, we still are unable to control each other and prevent calamities

### **Scene Two**

Sentry enters with Antigone in chains and describes catching her in the act of burying her brother. Antigone had returned after a windstorm and recovered her brother's body with more dirt. She admits to her crime.

Creon asks her why she would defy the law and she answers that god's law is more important than the king's law. She says that the gods will support her decision to bury Polyneices.

Creon ridicules her for her actions, now she will face the punishment.

The Chorus says that it is only Stubbornness and Pride that are making this into an issue. (both Creon and Antigone are being stubborn in their beliefs).

Antigone insists that Creon cannot know what the gods are thinking. She believes the gods will honor her actions and condemn Creon.

Ismene is brought in and Creon accuses her of helping Antigone. Ismene, feels guilty and tries to take the blame with Antigone but Antigone denies that Ismene has any right to take the guilt. Refuses to let Ismene be a part of her death.

Creon tells the Chorus that the two girls are insane and stupid. Tells Ismene that Antigone is already dead (he has condemned her to death) Ismene protests that Antigone



is engaged to Haemon (Creon's son) Creon refuses to show mercy and calls Antigone a wicked woman

The Chorus tries to speak up for Antigone, and Creon gets more upset and says that Antigone already belongs to Death.

### **ODE 2-Chorus**

Speaks of the gods vengeance and how the gods destroy mortals for defying them

### **Scene Three**

Haemon comes in to speak to Creon—Haemon begins by saying he will obey his father and Creon gives a speech where he describes how it is correct for sons to obey their fathers. How people must obey their leaders, that law and order is the way a society must be. He also reveals his insecurities when he gets angry about Antigone's defiance and he says that women should know their place and should never speak out against men.

Haemon says that he has heard in town that people are upset with Creon decision and are honoring Antigone for her decision to bury Polyneices. He stresses that society must have reason and logic, not blind obedience. He urges Creon to try to see things from other peoples' points of view but Creon becomes angry at the suggestion and says that he is the only one in charge in Thebes.

As their discussion becomes more heated, Haemon vows that if Antigone dies, so will he. Creon is so self-absorbed he assumes that Haemon is threatening to kill him, instead of threatening to kill himself. As Haemon storms out the chorus tries to warn Creon to listen but Creon gets upset with them too and insists that he is in charge.

Creon decides lock Antigone up in a tomb.

### **ODE 3-Chorus**

The chorus talks about love and how people have died for love in the past

### **Scene Four**

Antigone is going to her death and speaks with the Chorus. She says farewell and asks Thebes to remember her and protest her unjust punishment. For a moment she blames

her fate on the Curse on Oedipus, but the Chorus reminds her that she is condemned because of her own choices and actions.

Creon comes in to gloat over her, on her way to her death. He feels no guilt for her punishment. Antigone looks forward to seeing her dead family members and says that if Creon is wrong—that she hopes the gods will curse him.

#### **ODE 4-Chorus**

Chorus sings about stories where gods have punished mortals for their sins

#### **Scene Five**

Teiresias—a Prophet—reveals the truths from the gods (he was the one who told Oedipus the truth about his marriage)

Teiresias enters and tells Creon that he has sinned against the gods and is bringing doom to Thebes, the gods will ignore their prayers until Creon does what is right. Creon has committed two sins 1) refusal to bury Polyneices—which has offended the gods and 2) condemned Antigone for doing what the gods decreed to be right

Teiresias warns Creon that his pride is making things worse and that the only way to make things better is by correcting these two sins

Creon denies any guilt and refuses to repent—he is so convinced that he is right that he accuses Teiresias of taking bribes to give this false report and says that even if the gods came and took Polyneices piece by piece he would not repent

Teiresias warns Creon that he has committed a third sin—PRIDE and now he will be doomed by the gods—he will lose everything he holds most dear.

The Chorus urges Creon to repent because Teiresias has never been wrong. Creon finally admits that he may have made a mistake and leaves to correct his two sins (bury Polyneices and release Antigone)

**Paean**—A group of chorus singers who are praying to help Antigone's soul find its way to the underworld

## **Exodus (Epilogue)**

A messenger arrives to tell the Chorus everything that has happened

- Creon has buried Polyneices—at least the pieces they were able to find
- Creon rushed to the tomb but found Antigone had hung herself and was dead
- Haemon was there and he spat at his father, tried to stab him, then committed suicide
- The Queen, Eurydice, hearing that her son is dead, commits suicide also
- Creon returns with his son's body and discovers that his wife is dead too
- Creon finally admits he was wrong, arrogant and foolish—he asks to be put to death also

The Chorus delivers the message of the play to the audience—

There is no happiness where there is no wisdom;

no wisdom but in the submission to the gods;

big words (PRIDE) are always punished;

and proud men learn to be wise through their downfalls.

## **English Drama**

By the time of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and his contemporaries, Dramas had become primarily a form of entertainment. Shakespeare wrote many plays, some were tragedies, some were comedies, and some were "historical fictions" stories about real people from the past.

### **Julius Caesar by Shakespeare**

Character—Virtues like Loyalty, Integrity, Honor, Generosity are challenged

Character Vices like Wanting Power, Ambition and Greed causing people to BETRAY others is the theme of Julius Caesar.

Julius Caesar—100-44BC—General of the Italian Government who conquered all of Gaul (France and Belgium) as well as England, and Egypt. He became so powerful his government told him to disband his army—he refused.

When he returned to Italy, General Pompey and he fought a CIVIL WAR which Caesar won.

This is a historical fiction play. Real people, real events-dramatized for entertainment. Similar to Hollywood's "based on real events" movies.

## **Literary devices**

Soliloquy-thinking out loud

Aside-speaking directly to the audience

Dramatic Irony-audience knows things the characters don't

Blank Verse-no set rhyme scheme

Iambic Pentameter-10 beats per line

Tragic Hero-has a fatal personality flaw that leads to his downfall/death

Nobles speak in rhyme, Peasants and Servants speak in Prose

### **Act One: Scene One**

Merchants celebrating in the streets (Caesar has just won the Civil War against Pompey)

Senators are angry at the merchants and want them to all go home. The Senators don't like Caesar because they are afraid they will lose power now that Caesar is so popular.

Senators were in charge in the democracy—now Caesar threatens to turn it into an empire and become a tyrant.

### **Scene Two**

Soothsayer warns Caesar to beware the ides of March (March 15<sup>th</sup>)

Cassius is trying to convince Brutus that Caesar is a threat to the Roman Senate and the government. He uses the following arguments to try to sway Brutus to his side:

1. Flattery—tells Brutus how admired he is by the people
2. Criticizes Caesar—calls him weak-had to save him from drowning
  - --he is ill and unfit to rule
3. Plays on Brutus' fears of the senate losing power and Caesar becoming a tyrant
4. Caesar has no children (no heirs)

Caesar enters and tells Antony that he doesn't trust Cassius because Cassius is too ambitious. Caesar does trust Brutus.

Cassius, Casca and Brutus talk about Caesar-Casca tells them that Antony offered Caesar a crown and Caesar refused it THREE times, then he had a Seizure—this shows us how much the people LOVE Caesar and how much the Senators hate Caesar. Cicero and others even talk against Caesar in Greek so that people won't know what they are saying.

After Brutus and Casca leave, Cassius talks in an **ASIDE** and reveals his plan to the audience of how he will manipulate and corrupt Brutus. And that he will send fake letters to Brutus to convince him that the people have turned against Caesar.

### **Scene Three**

One month later—evening of March 14<sup>th</sup>—Cassius has been plotting and corrupting people for a month.

\*Shakespeare uses a technique of mirroring the Supernatural and Natural worlds.

Tempest and bad omens reflect that something evil is being planned.

Sigs=lions, fire, winds, strange animals, screams in the night

Cicero and Cassius love the storm and evil signs because they believe it means that Caesar will be overthrown

Casca is afraid of the storm and omens because he feels that heaven is at war and that something terrible will happen.

We learn that 1-Caesar is going to the senate tomorrow, 2-they plan to crown him as emperor. Cassius vows to destroy Caesar, he sends others to deliver more fake letters to Brutus.

### **Act Two: Scene One**

Brutus is up all night wondering what he should do. In a soliloquy he thinks out loud about his decision. Should he 1-let Caesar live and rule all of Rome, losing his power in the senate, or 2-kill Caesar to preserve Rome's senate and power

His dilemma is that he knows Caesar is a good man—but he fears Caesar's ambition may turn him into a tyrant once he has complete power.

He finds another fake letter and remarks that he has found these for the last month or so.

The Faction/Conspirators enter his garden and they meet to make a pact to kill Caesar. Brutus says that they don't need to make a pact since their cause is right. Some of the conspirators want to add Cicero but Brutus says no because Cicero will never follow their plan. They have to decide who they will kill. Cassius wants to kill both Caesar and Antony but Brutus says No! Just Caesar must die to protect their government. Brutus says that they must act out of righteousness not out of rage or hate. They will serve Caesar up for the gods. What if Caesar won't go to the senate? They plan how they will lure him there. Brutus warns that they must hide their true emotions. They plan the murder for 8 o'clock.

Portia & Brutus talk for a bit. Portia wants to know what is WRONG. Brutus claims he's just sick. Portia asks then why are you standing in the rain? And why were 7 or 8 men here? Brutus tells her that he can't tell her the secret. Portia says she must not be his wife then, since he doesn't trust her. She stabs herself in the thigh to prove she is loyal to Brutus. Brutus agrees to tell her the secret and tells her to go in.

### **Scene Two**

Calpurnia tells Caesar not to go out. Caesar heard Calpurnia having nightmares all night about his murder. All the omens are bad, fortune-telling sacrifice had NO HEART. Calpurnia convinces Caesar to stay home. Caesar agrees to stay home.

Just then Decius comes in and tells Caesar he has to go to the Senate. Can't be afraid of superstitions, the vision of Caesar's death is reinterpreted to mean that blessing will flow from Caesar. Decius convinces Caesar to go.

All the conspirators show up at 8 o'clock and talk him into coming to the Senate.

### **Scene Three**

A true follower of Caesar has discovered the plot and written all about it in a letter to give to Caesar. If he reads it, he will live; if he doesn't, he will die.

### **Scene Four**

Portia is afraid of what is happening today. She wants to send the servant to find out how Brutus is and how Caesar is.

The fortune teller has no idea what is going on either, but he is heading to the Senate also.

Portia sends the servant to Brutus to find out what is happening.

### **Act Three: Scene One**

A wants Caesar to read his letter (the warning about the plot) but Caesar says he'll read it later. When A presses him, the conspirators realize that he must know about the plot and they chase him off. Caesar does not read the letter.

The conspirators surround Caesar with a fake plea. As Caesar is defending his decision, the men attack him. As they all stab him Caesar looks at Brutus and says, "Et tu Brute?" Which means, "and, you Brutus". This moment marks the **ultimate betrayal** as Caesar's friend kills him.

As he dies, Antony runs away and secretly sends for help from Octavius Caesar and Lepidus. These three will combine forces to combat the conspirators in a **POWER STRUGGLE**.

As the crowd realizes what happened there is the threat of a riot. Brutus tells the conspirators to bathe in Caesar's blood up to the elbows and run through the streets rejoicing that tyranny is dead (this fulfills the images in Calpurnia's prophetic dream).

Antony sends a servant to find out why Brutus killed Caesar, gives Brutus the benefit of the doubt. Allows Brutus to explain why Caesar needed to die. Antony asks them if they plan to kill him to. Brutus denies it and begins to explain why they had to do it. But first they want to address the crowd.

Antony comes in and shakes all their hands to show he is their friend, but he wants to know what Caesar did to earn it. He asks their permission to speak at Caesar's funeral. Cassius is against it because he hates Antony and fears what Antony will say to the crowd. Brutus gives him permission to speak, but only after Brutus himself speaks. Antony has a moment alone and speaks in a soliloquy revealing his hatred for the conspirators and his desire to get revenge for Caesar's death.

Octavius' servant enters and swears that he is loyal to Antony. And so Octavius and Antony will join forces against the conspirators.

### **Scene Two**

Brutus addresses the crowd and calls it a mercy killing, says he loved Caesar, that he honored him, that he killed Caesar only to protect Rome from Caesar's ambition (which would have made them all lose their freedom).

He sways the public to his side and they all call him a hero. They want to make him a statue.

Antony speaks to the crowd-What evidence of Ambition is there? Everything Caesar did showed he wasn't ambitious. Makes the people realize that Brutus is not an honorable man by using sarcasm when he calls Brutus honorable.

Reads the last will and testament of Caesar. Caesar left all his wealth to the people.

Antony is very good at playing the crowd. First turns them against the conspirators (honorable men), tempts them with the will, uncovers the body of Caesar (showing the wounds), stirs them to mutiny-attack the conspirators.

Antony, after stirring up the crowd, leaves to Caesar's house to join Octavius and Lepidus. Brutus and Cassius have fled Rome.

### **Scene Three**

Cinna the poet is caught in the streets and the mob kills him even though they know he is not the conspirator. Shows the madness of the mob and the rioting in the street.

### **Act Four Scene One**

Antony, Octavius and Lepidus are now ruling Rome. They determine a list of all the people who are conspirators and who must die. Antony doesn't like Lepidus too much, but Octavius says he is a good and loyal man.

They do three things 1) decide who shall die, 2) want to change Caesar's will, 3) discuss how to defeat Brutus and Cassius

### **Scene Two**

Brutus and Cassius have a meeting. Brutus doesn't trust Cassius anymore, thinks Cassius may betray him. When Cassius arrives, he is upset with Brutus. Brutus tells him to quiet down in front of the armies. They have to LOOK like they are still getting along, or they will lose the battle.

### **Scene Three**

Inside Brutus' tent, Brutus and Cassius discuss their differences. Cassius is upset with Brutus for condemning people to death (Brutus is doing it because it is the honorable thing to do—HIS MOTIVATION for the murder of Caesar) Brutus is upset with Cassius for accepting BRIBES from the condemned men—Brutus feels that Cassius is acting dishonorably (greed and corruption)

They are arguing for two reasons: they had different motivations for killing Caesar, and Brutus asked Cassius for money to pay his troops but he didn't get it. Cassius tells Brutus to go ahead and stab him already. Then they calm down a bit and they are OK.

Brutus tells Cassius that Portia has died. Cassius fears the mob got her, but Brutus tells him that she died of self-inflicted wounds (stab in the leg and ate fire).

They discuss their strategy for war. They hear that Antony and Octavius are approaching with their armies. Cassius wants to stay where they are, but Brutus says they have to move because the people there don't like them. They decide to move their army to Philippi.

After everyone else leaves, Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar. The Ghost tells Brutus he will see him at Philippi (foreshadowing Brutus' death).

### **Act Five Scene One**

Antony and Octavius bring their armies to the field; Brutus and Cassius bring their armies to the field. They insult one another. Antony and Octavius withdraw to plan the battle. Cassius is nervous, and is convinced he will die. Brutus and Cassius say farewell as if they will never see each other again.

### **Scene Two**

Brutus sends his men into battle

### **Scene Three**

Cassius sends his scout to find out how the battle is going. His servant watches the scout ride into a group of men and thinks he has been taken prisoner by the enemy. Cassius becomes convinced that they will be overtaken soon and asks his servant to kill him. The servant stabs Cassius and Cassius says that Caesar has his revenge. The servant runs away



and the scout returns to find Cassius dead. The scout kills himself for grief of Cassius—the real report is that they were willing the battle, not losing. Brutus arrives and finds Cassius and the scout dead. Promises a fitting funeral for Cassius and then returns to battle.

#### **Scene Four**

More of Brutus' men are captured and killed. Brutus vows to never be taken alive.

#### **Scene Five**

Brutus knows they will lose the battle and he asks three of his friends to help him commit suicide rather than be taken alive. They all refuse and tell him to run away. Finally one man is willing to hold the sword while Brutus runs on it—stabbing himself in the heart. Brutus says that he is sorry for the death of Caesar as he dies.

Antony and Octavius come in and see Brutus dead. They find out that he committed suicide to avoid being captured. Antony says that Brutus killed Caesar out of love of Rome, not hatred/jealousy of Caesar.