***Greek Drama Notes***

Tragedy: A drama in which the protagonist (main character) who is usually a hero of noble birth or position and a morally upright person, suffers a downfall or death due to a tragic flaw. The antagonist is the person who opposes the protagonist.

Hamartia/Tragic Flaw: Fatal character flaw or fatal error in judgment that brings about a hero's downfall.

Hubris: Greek word for excessive, inordinate pride; often the most frequent character flaw (hamartia/tragic flaw) in Greek drama.

Anagnorisis: A startling, epiphanic moment when a character discovers his own identity (as in Oedipus Rex).

Catharsis: The purging of negative emotions of an audience by the audience experiencing these emotions during the course of watching a tragedy.

Chorus: The chorus in Greek drama serves as a sort of narrator for the play. They comment on the action that is taking place, give the characters advice, convey the thoughts of the townspeople, etc. They also perform an introductory song (parodos) and songs in between the dialogue at various times during the play. The leader of the Chorus is called Choragos.

Dramatic Irony: The character(s) fail to understand or realize something critical that the audience already knows.

Deus Ex Machina (day-use ex mak-ina): This is a term for plot events/actions that don't seem to have a logical basis, and don't seem to correlate to characterization that had been established--literally, god from machine, as in a mechanical device in Greek drama that was used to place a god onstage as needed.

Thespian (n.): actor or actress

Thespian (adj.): anything pertaining to Greek drama