ARISTOTLE'S BIG SIX

Aristotle was born in Stagirus, Macedonia, Greece in 384 BC and died 62 years later in 322 BC. He was a student at Plato's Academy and later became one of the greatest philosophers of Ancient Greece. He is said to have been the Tutor of Alexander the Great. In one of his treatises, *The Poetics*, he outlines the Six Elements Of Drama, based on the Ancient Greek belief that tragedy was the highest form of Drama. This outline has become a guideline for many playwrights throughout history, and is especially emphasized in the works of William Shakespeare.

Aristotle’s Definition of Tragedy

“A tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in appropriate and pleasurable language... in a dramatic rather than narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish a catharsis of these emotions.”

Aristotle's Big Six (Elements of Drama)

1. **PLOT** – what happens in a play; the order of events, the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.  (See Freytag's Triangle)

2. **CHARACTER** – the personality or the part an actor represents in a play; a role played by an actor in a play.

3. **THOUGHT** – Goethe's Big Three – What were they trying to say? Did they say it? Was it worth saying?

4. **DICTION** – the pronunciation and accentuation, rhythm, and melody of the words, primarily, then the acting, gesticulation, and other carriers of vocal information.

5. **MUSIC** – by music Aristotle meant music - not necessarily the sounds, rhythm, and melody of the speeches – there is no written evidence to prove that he meant anything else but music.

6. **SPECTACLE** – the visual elements of the production of a play; the scenery, costumes, and special effects in a production.