**Tragedy vs. Comedy**

**TRAGEDY**

*Purpose & Effect*

* Emphasizes human suffering
* Emotional response
* Audience identification with the hero
* Laments man’s fate
* Offers some hope (man can learn), but stresses limitations of the human condition

*Hero/Protagonist*

* Recognizes great mistake, but too late to change it
* Demonstrates a personal flaw
* Exercises free will
* Suffers terrible downfall and fails through error
* Aspires to more than he can achieve
* Larger than life, considerably above the audience in status or responsibility

*Conflict*

* Serious and painful struggle
* Struggle against unchangeable
* Struggle dominated by Fate or necessity
* Discovery of true nature leads to hero's isolation
* Struggle against predictable and inevitable
* Struggle between man and destiny, or between man and social forces beyond man's control

*Plot/Method*

* Tragedy depends on validity of universal norms
* Causation dominates pattern of deed, which leads to suffering, recognition or understanding
* Plot moves from freedom of choice to inflexible consequence

**COMEDY**

*Purpose & Effect*

* Emphasizes renewal of human nature
* Intellectual response
* Scorn or approval of protagonist/others
* Celebrates life
* Criticizes folly, self-delusion, and complacency
* Suggests cynicism (man a fool), but offers hope of renewal.

*Hero/Protagonist*

* Awakens to better nature after folly exposed.
* Undergoes improbable improvement.
* Frequently intolerant
* Finds selfhood by joining flow of society and community, rejecting individuality
* Comic mechanism
* Triumphs by luck, wit, acceptance
* Pretends to be more than he is
* He is just like everyone else, or might even be an anti-hero or buffoon.

*Conflict*

* Less serious and painful struggle
* Struggle against movable
* Struggle dominated by Fortune (chance)
* Discovery of true nature leads to hero's conformity with group norms.
* Struggle against coincidence (unpredictable)
* Struggle between individual and group or between groups (e.g., men and women)

*Plot/Method*

* Plot more intricate, less plausible
* Coincidence dominates a patternless coping with the unpredictable and the absurd.
* Plot forwarded by chance discoveries and accidental encounters.
* Plot moves from rigidity at the beginning to greater freedom for characters at end.