THET110 Final Exam Review – Rewrite of Notes

Greek Theatre

- It is difficult to study theatre history because we must make large generalizations about time-periods ands geographies.
  - -We have to do this because theater is ephemeral and there is limited extant material
- Sources of information about Greek Theatre come from extant texts, archeological remains, primary sources, visual art (statues and vases), and government records
- Greek's main loyalty was to their polis (city states) where the people of each polis spoke Greek and all worshiped the same set of gods
  - -Greece is very mountainous with limited travel other than by boat on the coastline
- They were 167 theatres around Greece. They were centered in Athens, were a civic event, and were costly
- The Origins of theatre are Dionysia, Dithyrambs, and Thespis
  - -Dionysia (G-d of fertility, wine) festival celebrated Dionysus and occurred every march in Athens
  - -Dithyrambs were hymns in praise of Dionysia and included a chorus of 50 men and boys with dancing and singing
  - -Thespis was the first actor
- Behind the Scenes: city Dionysia included archons, choregos, theatrones, theoric fund, playwrights and Greek actors
  - -An archon was a government official that selected plays, sponsors, and judges
  - -Choregos were men who were paid to house, feed, and train the chorus and actors as civic duty
  - -Theatrones were building managers
  - -Theoric fund consisted of free tickets for poor Athenians
  - -Playwrights were upper-class men who were well educated and not making money
  - -Greek Actors were men who were always amateurs, exempt from the military, and became teachers
- Three types of Greek plays were comedy, tragedy, and satyr plays
  - -Comedies were about everyday people and had "happy ideas" (Lysistrata-all women stop having sex with husbands until peace treaty is signed). They are full of sex and jokes—scatological (potty jokes) and political comedy
    - ~In comedies the costumes were stuffed body parts, there was a chorus of humans and animals, and masks that let actors play multiple roles and tell us things about the characters
    - ~Aristophanes is the only extant comedic playwright
  - -Tragedies consisted of mythic kings, queens, and warriors and involved a hero with a character flaw. A *trilogy* is composed of 3 tragedies (only 1 extant) that were meant to go together and a *tetralogy* is 3 tragedies and a satyr play
    - ~The main characters in tragedies wore very decorative and elaborate outfits such as robes. The chorus all dressed alike with good shoes

to dance in. And there were masks that were different skin colors and hairstyles to distinguish age, class, and status

-Satyr Plays were always performed after tragedies and there is only one extant (Cyclops). A satyr is part man and part goat that attends Dionysus. The satyr interacts with heroes in mythical stories

- Writers of tragedies and satyr plays were Aeschylus, Sophicles, and Euripides
  - -Aeschylus added the 2nd actor and shrank the chorus; he focused on "fate"
  - -Sophicles added the 3rd actor and focused on "hubris"
  - -Euripides wrote disillusioned and violent plots
- The physical Greek Theatre consisted of the theatron (audience), orchestra (stage), skene (place to change), and parodos (entryways).
  - -Thorikos is the oldest surviving theater space
- Special effects in Greek theatre included ekkyklema (hidden platform) and mechane (crane)
- Aristotle and the Poetics: philosopher that attempted to analyze what makes an effective tragedy
- 6 elements of tragedy are **plot** (complex or episodic), character, thought/idea, verbal language, music, and spectacle

Theatre in Rome

- Performed at festivals called Ludi with other entertainments and was adapted from Greek drama. The actors were all male and masked and consisted of much more comedy (but in a different style than Greece)
- Para theatricals entertained the masses and kept them out of trouble. Consisted of mimes, gladiator combats, bestiarii (beast fights), and Naumachia (flooded coliseum floor and naval ships battled)
- The medieval period was approximately 500 years without theater and the power of the church was dominant
  - -Medieval theatre was full of very Christian views
- Renaissance was the rebirth of classical culture, was a return to the classics of Greece and Rome, trade and age of exploration, idea of humanism or free will

Elizabethan Theatre

- Queen Elizabeth was a patron of the arts and the leading playwrights of this time were Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare
- King James I wrote a book on witches, was formerly king of Scotland, and Shakespeare wrote Macbeth for him
- Theatre companies in this time were invested in by shareholders and were compromised of men and boys, boys played girls
  - -Lord Chamberlain's men, Richard Burbage, touring
  - -Actors wore clothing of their own time and spent a lot of money
  - The stage had no scenery, no scene changes, and doubling (one man playing many parts)

- Plays were performed at court, at private playhouses (indoor, pricey, candlelight), and public playhouses (outdoor, bare stage, daylight)
- Audiences were poor and could not afford while the rich did not attend theater
- Other forms of entertainment were bear baiting, dog fights, bull baiting and cock fights
- Audiences ate and drank and were interactive with the actors
- Theatres consisted of the swan theater, the globe, and black friars
    -The Swan Theater had three levels of seating, a thrust stage, a balcony, and a tiring house
    -The Globe was Shakespeare's theater and caught on fire during Henry the 8th
    -Blackfriars was indoors and in the city and was built by Shakespeare's company

- Shakespeare was an actor, shareholder, and a playwright; he was a householder of the globe and blackfriar, and he wrote three types of plays: historical dramas, comedy, and tragedy
- Othello was a play in London where Richard Burbage (who played Othello) performed in blackface, then the first African American played the role, the play then moved to American, and in DC Othello was played by a white man while the rest of the cast was black
- Transition out of Elizabethan occurred when plays started to become more bloody and dark

Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism

- Neoclassicism (BORING) is rigid and rule based, unites time place and action, had tragedy about nobility, and there were 5 acts
- Romanticism was the opposite of neoclassicism and consisted of revolutions which led to shifts in literature (Hunchback of Notre Dame, Les Miz, Franenstein) that went against law and had ugly characters that were virtuous
    -Individual can have inspiration, not rules or laws
    -Richard Wagner directed operas at the Beyreuth Opera House and was a master artist that oversaw the entire production, he unified productions, and his operas were mystical chasms (orchestra pit come in to theater world)
- Melodrama is a subset of Romanticism and is most popular in America. It involves middle class characters, threats that resolve in a happy ending, spectacle, and where good is rewarded and bad is punished
- Influences of Realism and Naturalism were the industrial revolution (poor population, disease), photography (daguerreotype), and that people wanted to see the "real"
- Iconoclasts (destroying truths) of the 19th century were Karl Marx (Marxism, communism), Gregor Mendel (father of genetics), Charles Darwin (natural selection), Freud (unconscious, superego), and August Conte (father of sociology)
- Naturalism was brought up by Emily Zola who aid that theater should be a slice of life
    -Not long lived, creating a beginning middle and end
- Naturalism=germs under a microscope, Realism=germs in a Petri dish
- Realism focuses on the artist and asks what happens when someone of a certain heredity exists in a certain environment (inherited traits, direct observation of contemporary life, looking at reality around him, must remain impersonal toward the subject)