

Compare tom's narrative function in

Literature



Both Tom in "A Glass Menagerie" and the chorus in "Oedipus the King" play a pivotal role in leading the stories through suggestive influences. The Chorus is a subtle feature grounded in the background while Tom is seen taking an active and passive part in the play.

The Chorus plays a leading role in "Oedipus the King" and portrays important parts of the main plot. In the beginning the Chorus portrays the horrors of the plague and tells of the message of the oracle of Delphi. The oracle states:

"Mate with [his] own mother, and shed / With [his] own hands the blood of [his] own sire"

The mood on stage is also set in various instances by the Chorus such as their role as peace makers and their reflection on the dominant mood and aid in deepening the mood. Subtle messages that can also be interpreted as moral lessons are also delivered by the Chorus such as the message that all of man's generations finally add up to nothing. This is not just a depressing undertone but rather displays the greatness of the human spirit along with the transitory nature of human happiness and man's insignificance.

The Chorus has also been featured in the dialogues as well such as when Oedipus consults the Chorus about ending the plague in the city. Although the Chorus plays no direct part in the events of the story but their role through subtle guidance cannot be overruled either. For example, Oedipus is asked the riddle of the Sphinx:

"What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three in the evening?"

The Chorus do not provide a direct answer to Oedipus for this riddle but provide him subtle clues as to the riddle's answer which is man who crawls

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on all fours as an infant and walks on two legs as an adult and uses a walking stick when old. Based on these examples and others, it can be inferred that the Chorus acts as a central guide to the play and influences various parts in it through their subtle reflection on issues.

On the other hand, Tom represents another form of narrative in "The Glass Menagerie" and he can be seen as narrating such that his inner thoughts and feelings are reflected along with the play's plot. The play itself begins as one of Tom's recollection of his home. The play can be seen as a struggle between actual and perceived reality and Tom's narrative expresses such thoughts often such as when Tom answers Amanda in a fit of rage by stating:

"On those occasions they call me - El Diablo! Oh, I could tell you things to make you sleepless! My enemies plan to dynamite this place. They're going to blow us all sky-high some night! I'll be glad, very happy, and so will you! You'll go up, up on a broomstick, over Blue Mountain with seventeen gentlemen callers!"

The internal struggle of Tom with his surroundings and his eventual escape are all reflected by Tom's narrative and dialogues throughout the play.

Tom's dialogues already carry a hint of rebellion and escape especially after he sees the magic show, he tells Laura:

"But the most wonderfullest trick of all was the coffin trick.... There is a trick that would come in handy for me-get me out of this 2 by 4 situation."

Overall Tom's narrative serves the purpose of narrating the story from his perspective while also offering insights into why he chose to escape and what convinced his escape from his household.