

Classical Civilisation (JACT)

Advanced GCE 2751

Greek Tragedy 3

Mark Scheme for June 2010

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- A1 (a)** The Nurse opens the play, describing Medea's situation. The Tutor enters to tell the Nurse that Medea has been exiled. Medea is heard from inside the house, weeping and moaning. When she comes out, she is calm, and delivers a speech to the Chorus about the situation of women. When Creon comes in to banish her, she succeeds in persuading him to allow her one day for preparation, by exploiting his love of his daughter. When he leaves, she swears revenge on those who have hurt her. When Jason comes in, she makes a speech, expressing her grievances, to which Jason replies.

[AO1 = 10 marks]

- (b)** Passage 1 is the murder of Clytemnestra by Orestes. The murder takes place off stage, as is conventional, but it is heard. There is the contrast between Clytemnestra's pleas for mercy, and Electra's hatred. The pace is swift, with a three-way *stichomythia* involving Clytemnestra, Electra and the Chorus. The use of the Chorus contributes to the dramatic effect. The scene is the culmination of the play, but there is still worry about the return of Aegisthus.

[AO1 = 6 + AO2 = 9 = 15 marks]

- (c)** Both characters have reasons for their hatred, which are expressed in the two passages. Electra refers to her brother and father, and Clytemnestra's lack of mercy for them, while Medea talks about how Jason married her and abandoned her, as well as her exile. Elsewhere in the plays, we learn more about their hatred. Electra has a long discussion with her mother about the justification for Agamemnon's murder, while Medea in the scenes with Aegeus, and prior to the passage elaborates on her feelings. Both figures also have the support of other characters, Electra has Orestes and the Chorus, while Medea has the Nurse, Aegeus and the Chorus. However, both figures are also partly to blame for their situation. Electra could have made life easier for herself, like Chrysothemis, while Medea's exile is due to her threats to the royal family. Candidates' opinions must be backed up by evidence from the texts.

[AO1 = 6 + AO2 = 14 = 20 marks]

[Quality of Written Communication = 5 marks]

[Total AO1: 22 marks + AO2: 23 marks + AO3: 5 marks = 50 marks]

- A2 (a)** The play starts with the Watchman, who tells the audience of the situation in Argos, and notices the beacon flame. Following a Choral Ode about the death of Iphigeneia, Clytemnestra enters and reveals that she knows, via the Beacon system, that Troy has fallen. The Herald comes in with news of the victory, and that Agamemnon is on his way home. He describes to the Chorus the dreadful conditions suffered by the Greeks. Clytemnestra tells the Chorus she was right about Troy falling. She speaks of her love for Agamemnon, and sends the Herald to fetch him. When Agamemnon enters, he is greeted by the Chorus, who hint that there is trouble in the palace. He returns their speech, and is in turn greeted by Clytemnestra in a long speech stating her fidelity to him. She has the tapestries laid out for him to walk on in entering the palace.

[AO1 = 10 marks]

- (b)** In this passage, Pentheus is seen to almost be under Dionysus' control. He has a curiosity about the Bacchic women, but his masculine pride is at war with his curiosity. He is gradually conceding the initiative to Dionysus. This is at odds with his portrayal earlier in the play. From his first entry, he is contemptuous of the cult, chiding Cadmus and Tiresias for their participation. He imprisons Dionysus and threatens him again after his escape. After this scene, he is completely under Dionysus' spell, until he is led to his death, trusting Dionysus. It is only when he is about to die that he realises the truth, and repents.

[AO1 = 6 + AO2 = 9 = 15 marks]

- (c)** Both characters are persuasive speakers. In each scene, both Clytemnestra and Dionysus achieve their objective, and persuade Agamemnon and Pentheus to do as they wish. In both cases, death follows. Elsewhere in the plays, Clytemnestra is more persuasive. She eventually convinces the Chorus she was right about the beacons, and at the end, she stops Aegisthus from attacking the Chorus. Her only failure is with Cassandra. Dionysus' persuasion is mainly aimed at Pentheus, whom he succeeds in dressing up as a woman and taking him to his death, but this takes a long time. He is still arrested and locked up in the stables. Dionysus uses actions more than words, with the escape from prison, and the actions of the Maenads as examples. He also has no trouble persuading the women, and Cadmus and Tiresias, to join his cult.

[AO1 = 6 + AO2 = 14 = 20 marks]

[Quality of Written Communication = 5 marks]

[Total AO1: 22 marks + AO2: 23 marks + AO3: 5 marks = 50 marks]

- B3** Much of the answer will depend on how a tragic hero is defined. Many candidates will use Aristotle, but this should not be expected. Both figures are noble, keeping their word even though it costs them dearly. Oedipus is a king trying to solve the problems faced by his city, gradually discovering the truth of his origins. His fall is great, from a powerful king to a despised beggar. He has his pride and temper, which speed up his realisation of his fate. Hippolytus also is proud, but commits *hybris*. His fate is awful, dying because of the lies of Phaedra and accused of the one thing he would never have done. He is killed by his father. Both figures arouse pity in the audience, and their fate is tragic. The candidates will need to give reasons for their choice.

[Total AO1: 22 marks + AO2: 23 marks + AO3: 5 marks = 50 marks]

- B4** Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is written in a grand, formal style. There is not much action and little dialogue between characters. Most of the dialogue involves long speeches, mostly between one character and the Chorus. The Chorus have a major role in the play, with long choral odes. The themes of the play are elevated – justice and the gods. The characters are not so much real people as types. *Medea* by contrast is much more down to earth. The language is more everyday, and there is plenty of dialogue and *stichomythia* between Medea and various other characters. The role of the Chorus is limited. The play is about human emotion and revenge, with much more realistic characters. Most candidates, as an audience, will find the more realistic approach of Euripides much less of a challenge, as compared to the style and themes of Aeschylus.

[Total AO1: 22 marks + AO2: 23 marks + AO3: 5 marks = 50 marks]

- B5** Aeschylus deals with lofty themes, the cycle of revenge, the effects of a curse on different generations and the concept of divine justice. Sophocles' *Oedipus* is concerned with Fate and the futility of trying to avoid it. *Electra* also deals with justice, but is much more straightforward than *Agamemnon*. Euripides' plays have a more human message; *Medea* deals with revenge and the effects of a marriage breakdown, as well as considering the behaviour of women. Both *Hippolytus* and *Bacchae* consider the nature of the gods and worship. Each play has many other themes. All the playwrights wrote plays to make the audience think; which was the most successful is up to the individual candidate.

[Total AO1: 22 marks + AO2: 23 marks + AO3: 5 marks = 50 marks]

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