
CLASSICAL STUDIES

9274/43

Paper 4 Classical Literature – Sources and Evidence

October/November 2019

1 hour 30 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

This paper contains two questions.

Answer **one** question.

Each question is marked out of 50.

You are advised to spend 20 minutes reading and thinking about the three passages in the question you have chosen to answer, and then 10 minutes planning your answer.

Answers need to make use of all three passages given for the question you are answering.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answer.

This document consists of **4** printed pages and **1** Insert.

1 Drama: the idea of tragedy

Read the following passage and answer the question that follows:

The modern concept of tragic drama takes for granted the existence of a single central character, whose actions and suffering are the focal point of the play – what we call ‘the tragic hero’.

Bernard Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (1964) (adapted)

Explore critically Knox’s assertion that the actions and suffering of a single character are the focal point of a tragedy. In your answer you should consider the passage above and your wider reading of tragedy, as well as the following two passages: [50]

CLYTAEMNESTRA:

Leave all the rest to me.

The spirit within me never yields to sleep.
We will set things right, with the god’s help.
We will do whatever Fate requires.

AGAMEMNON:

There

is Leda’s daughter, the keeper of my house.
And the speech to suit my absence, much too long.
But the praise that does us justice,
let it come from others, then we prize it.

This –

you treat me like a woman. Grovelling, gaping up at me –
what am I, some barbarian peacocking out of Asia?
Never cross my path with robes and draw the lightning.
Never – only the gods deserve the pomps of honour
and the stiff brocades of fame. To walk on them ...
I am human, and it makes my pulses stir
with dread.

Give me the tributes of a man
and not a god, a little earth to walk on,
not this gorgeous work.
There is no need to sound my reputation.
I have a sense of right and wrong, what’s more –
heaven’s proudest gift. Call no man blest
until he ends his life in peace, fulfilled.
If I can live by what I say, I have no fear.

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 904–925

OEDIPUS: What I did was best – don't lecture me,
no more advice. I, with *my* eyes,
how could I look my father in the eyes
when I go down to death? Or mother, so abused ...
I have done such things to the two of them,
crimes too huge for hanging.
Worse yet,
the sight of my children, born as they were born,
how could I long to look into their eyes?
No, not with these eyes of mine, never.
Not this city either, her high towers,
the sacred glittering images of her gods –
I am misery! I, her best son, reared
as no other son of Thebes was ever reared,
I've stripped myself, I gave the command myself.
All men must cast away the great blasphemer,
the curse now brought to light by the gods,
the son of Laius – I, my father's son!

Sophocles, *Oedipus The King*, 1369–1383

2 Gods and Heroes: the importance of epic

Read the following passage and answer the question that follows:

We do indeed meet women ... and they are made convincing, but all are seen in their relationship to the hero.

J Griffin, *Homer: The Odyssey* (1987) (adapted)

Explore critically to what extent female characters in epic exist solely to help us understand heroes more fully. In your answer you should consider the passage above and your wider reading of epic, as well as the two passages below: [50]

Achilles is speaking to Odysseus:

‘All the other prizes he gave to the kings and leading men stay safe with their owners. I am the only Achaian he has robbed. He has taken my wife, my heart’s love – let him lie with her and take his pleasure. Why is it that the Argives must fight the Trojans? Why did the son of Atreus raise an army and sail it here? Was it not because of lovely-haired Helen? Are the sons of Atreus the only ones of humankind to love their wives? No, any good man of sense loves his own wife and cares for her – as I too loved this girl from my heart, even though I won her by my spear.

‘Now that he has taken my prize from my hands and cheated me, let him not try me. I know him well now – he will not persuade me.’

Homer, *Iliad*, 9.330–344

‘Odysseus,’ she [Penelope] cried, ‘do not be angry with me, you who were always the most understanding of men. All our unhappiness is due to the gods, who couldn’t bear to see us share the joys of youth and reach the threshold of old age together. Don’t be cross with me now, or hurt because I did not give you this loving welcome the moment I first saw you. For I had always the cold fear somebody might come here and deceive me with his talk. There are many who think up wicked selfish schemes. Helen of Argos, born of Zeus, would never have slept in her lover’s arms had she known that her countrymen would go to war to fetch her back to Argos ... But now you have faithfully described the secret of our bed, which no one ever saw but you and I and one maid ... You have convinced my unbending heart.’

Homer, *Odyssey*, 23.208–231 (adapted)

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