

ENGLISH TRIPOS. SECTION A.

TUESDAY, *May 27, 1919.* 9—12.

TRAGEDY.

Five questions should be attempted.

1. 'Tragedy was at first mere improvisation. Originating with the authors of the Dithyramb, it advanced little by little, improving each new element as it became manifest: and so, after many phases, it found its natural form, and there stopped.' [ARISTOTLE.]

Discuss the alleged origin of Tragedy in the ritual of Dionysus: and trace its theatrical development down to the death of Euripides.

2. 'Som time let Gorgeous Tragedy
In Scepter'd Pall com sweeping by,
Presenting *Thebes* or *Pelops* line,
Or the tale of *Troy* divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the Buskind stage.' [MILTON.]

To what varying extent, and on what principles, have tragic writers ancient and modern inclined to deal with the fortunes of great houses and of heroic or princely personages?

3. Briefly describe the staging and mounting, with the acting-company, of (a) an Athenian, (b) an Elizabethan play. Contrast them with the apparatus of a modern theatre: and show how Tragedy has from time to time obeyed its physical limits or enlarged its liberties.

4. Compare **either** Æschylus and Euripides in their understanding of women: and give a general picture of woman's social position in Athens during the period covered by their plays;

or Sophocles and Shakespeare as men of genius writing for normal citizens.

5. Draw any **two** of the following comparisons:

(a) Æschylus, *Eumenides* with Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

(b) Sophocles, *Antigone* with Ibsen, *Ghosts*.

(c) Euripides, *Hippolytus* with Racine, *Phèdre*.

(d) Euripides, *Suppliant Women* with *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

(e) Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* with Ben Jonson, *Sejanus* and Addison, *Cato*.

(f) Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*; Calderon, *El Magico Prodigioso*; Goethe, *Faust*.

(g) Shylock with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.

(h) Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* with Dryden, *All for Love*.

6. **Either** Set down Aristotle's definition of Tragedy and apply it critically to *Othello*.

Or Discuss the relative importance he assigns to Plot and Character as parts of a tragedy, and carry the discussion into the Novel.

7. 'Almost everywhere throughout our cities the theatres are falling...falling the very doors and walls within which their devilments were practised.' [AUGUSTINE.]

Write a short account of the end of the Roman theatre.

8. Illustrate and account for the indebtedness of our Elizabethan playwrights to Seneca.

9. Writes notes upon **two** of the following texts :

(a) 'I am determinèd to be a villain.' [*Richard III.*]

The right use of the Villain in Tragedy.

(b) 'How now, you secret black and midnight hags!' [*Macbeth.*]

The use and abuse of the Supernatural.

(c) 'Here a dance of Eight Madmen, with Music conformable thereto.'

[*Duchess of Malfy*, stage direction.]

The use and abuse of the Grotesque.

10. Educe, with evidence, the theory of tragedy implied (a) in *Samson Agonistes*, (b) in Hebbel's *Herod and Mariamme*.

11. 'All harmony is founded on a relation to rest—on relative rest.' [COLERIDGE.]

'The most noteworthy remark to be made about this point of rest is, that it is in itself not the most but the least interesting point of art. It is the *punctum indifferens* to which all that is interesting is more or less unconsciously referred....In proportion to the extent and variety of points of interest in a painting or a poem the necessity for this point of rest seems to increase. In a lyric or idyll, or a painting with very few details, there is little need for it. It is accordingly in the most elaborate plays of Shakespeare that we find this device at its fullest value.' [COVENTRY PATMORE.]

Discuss this: and, if you agree, illustrate it with examples from great tragedies in which either a Chorus or some inconspicuous normal character forms the point of rest amidst the passionate excess of the protagonists.

12. Write short notes on **four** of the following plays: *Troades*; *Bacchae*; *Everyman*; *Troilus and Cressida*; *The Maid's Tragedy*; *The White Devil*; *The Atheist's Tragedy*; *The Mayor of Zalamea*; *Polyeucte*; *The Morning Bride*; *Venice Preserved*; *Emilia Galotti*; *The Robbers*; *Ruy Blas*; *Emperor and Galilean*; *Pelléas et Mélisande*; *Justice*; *Abraham Lincoln*.

13. Briefly analyse *The Book of Job* into dramatic form.

Say how it bears upon Maeterlinck's demand for a 'Static Theatre,' and how far it meets his attack in the following passage:

'Indeed when I go to a theatre I feel as though I were spending a few hours with my ancestors, who conceived life as something primitive and brutal. I am shown a deceived husband killing his wife, a woman poisoning her lover, a son avenging his father...murdered kings, ravished virgins, imprisoned citizens—in a word, all the sublimity of tradition—but how superficial and material! What can I learn from characters who have but one fixed idea, who have no time to *live* for that there is a rival or a mistress to be put to death?'

14. Discuss **either** (a) the sudden glory of the French Theatre in the Seventeenth Century;

or (b) the imperative of the sense of honour in the 'Cloak and Sword' dramas of Lope de Vega and Calderon.

15. Examine the operation, and summarise the effect, of the 'Romantic Revival' upon serious drama in the first half of the Nineteenth Century.

16. 'As soon as spoken parts came in, nature herself found the appropriate metre. The iambic, we know, is of all measures the most colloquial.' [ARISTOTLE.]

Reconcile this with the iambic's proved capacity as a vehicle of the highest emotion: and estimate what we have profited or lost by adopting the Greek ten-syllabled iambic and using it in preference to the French Alexandrine or the lyrical measures of Spanish tragedy.

17. 'But the crucial test of a play's quality is only applied when it is read.'

[COURTHOPE.]

'If poets mean to serve the stage, their dramas must be dramatic.' [BINYON.]

The above quotations indicate two sides of an unsettled controversy. Set out, with particular reference to Tragedy, the points at issue and write a reasoned judgment upon them.

18. Write a brief essay, **either** on the natural affinities and differences of Epic and Tragedy;

or on the paradox that in the finest products of an art which, by name (drama) and definition, exhibits men and women as 'doing something,' so prominent a part has been played by ineluctable Fate.

19. The present condition of serious drama has been said to be one of *malaise*. Can you, on a survey of the modern theatre, and after pointing out various quarters in which it has sought, or is seeking, a cure, determine where it may most hopefully set up its rest?