

WEDNESDAY, 29 May 1957. 1.30—4.30

TRAGEDY

Answer four questions, of which not more than two should be taken from any one section of the paper.

SECTION A

1. **Either** (a) "No Greek of Aeschylus' time or earlier thought of Zeus as having a special relation of patronage and protection towards mankind. . . Zeus is indeed the champion of Dike, a rough and retributive justice; he insists that men, like Gods, shall keep his law" (LLOYD-JONES). In the light of this remark, compare the primitive Zeus of *Prometheus Bound* with the Zeus of the *Oresteia*.

Or (b) "We may now inquire what is the relation of Aristotle's theory to Aeschylus. The answer is, roughly, none whatever." Discuss this view, reinforcing your answer with comparative references to Sophocles if these seem to you in place.

2. "The burden of the Oedipus story as it had been in its earlier stages was no doubt simply that man cannot escape his destiny. To this Sophocles added something—for the great fact in the play is the character of the hero. His greatness can be measured by what it overrides—the plot. We always feel that it is Oedipus and not Sophocles who is directing it." How far does your reading of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* bear out this account?

3. **Either** (a) Consider the role of the Chorus in any one tragic drama of the Greeks, indicating its importance as spectator, as lyric commentator, and as dramatic participant.

Or (b) "The Chorus had been threatened with extinction more than once—notably by Euripides himself when he found it such a nuisance at certain points in the *Medea* and the *Hippolytus*; but its inherent vitality (that is, the fact that the Greek poets were not conservative) found a new use for it again and again." Can you justify these suggestions from your knowledge of Greek Tragedy?

4. **Either** (a) "My choice, at any rate, be this! to grow old in no great station, but in safety. The Modest Measure has first title to be named with praise, and its experience is best for mortal men." Discuss the significance of the Modest Measure in one of the following plays: *Medea*, *Electra*, *Bacchae*, *Hippolytus*, *Trojan Women*.

Or (b) "Euripides did not handle the traditional tragic form with much more freedom than Aeschylus; and yet there is a deep disharmony between his thought and the traditional form of state tragedy." Examine this suggestion in relation to two or more tragedies of Euripides.

5. **Either** (a) Examine the effects of an imitation of the Greek in the *Phèdre* of Racine or in any other single play of the period 1650–1850.

Or (b) Give a critical account of the revival of Greek myth on the stage during the last thirty years, with special reference to one French, English or American dramatist.

SECTION B

6. "True Tragedy has very rarely made its appearance at all. In the modern world it has been always, directly or indirectly, influenced by the Greek or Roman drama. There seems to be no parallel to its independent growth in Greece" (CORNFORD).

"When we come to estimate the sources whence the Elizabethan drama derives the particular vigour and depth which it possesses above all the literary forms of the time, who shall say just how potent was the fact that drama alone could boast...an uninterrupted descent from the English literature of the Middle Ages?" (TUCKER BROOKE.)

Discuss the descent of Shakespearean tragedy in the light of these pronouncements.

7. **Either (a)** Discuss the difficulties that have been found in appraising *Antony and Cleopatra* as one of the great Shakespearean tragedies.

Or (b) "*Coriolanus* is the least of Shakespeare's tragedies; the only one set entirely within the confines of the everyday world, devoid alike of the music of the gods and of the darkness of the abyss." **Either** examine *Coriolanus* in the light of this remark, **or** show from any one of Shakespeare's other tragedies the interplay between the everyday world and what may be said to transcend this.

8. **Either (a)** By a consideration of any two of Marlowe's plays, indicate the poetic variety of his treatment of the theme of power.

Or (b) How would you rebut a charge of crudity and barbarism if brought against Marlowe, or Webster? Or do you accept it?

9. **Either (a)** Illustrate from any two Elizabethan revenge plays the dramatic and poetic opportunities which this kind of play afforded.

Or (b) "A villain in a play can never be anything but a *diabolus ex machina*." Apply to a study of one of the following characters: Vindice, Iago, Sejanus, de Flores.

Or (c) It has been suggested that tragic writing centres upon a "Lament." Consider in relation to one of the following: Ford, Fletcher, Otway, Milton in his *Samson Agonistes*.

10. **Either (a)** "L'action n'est pas dans le fait; ce n'est pas une nécessité qu'il y ait du sang et des morts dans une tragédie." Wherein lies the action in a Racinian tragedy if not in events?

Or (b) "Ils ont cette extraordinaire possession de soi-même que l'homme n'acquiert que dans les mouvements du cœur les plus violents, et à l'approche de la mort. . . De là, les deux caractères de la lucidité tragique; lucidité parfaite, lucidité impuissante" (FERRIER MAULNIER). Apply this to any tragedy of Racine.

Or (c) "But Racine alone in his century possessed the sense of the tragic (Corneille did not), and so was the only one to fit passion and social convention into a tragic opposition by taking passion at the point the others dared not contemplate, where it broke the bounds decorum set for it." Test the felicity of this account of Racine by considering (with comparative references to Corneille) one or more of Racine's plays.

11. What do you understand by the grandeur of Corneille?

SECTION C

12. **Either** (a) Discuss the sensational in tragedy with reference to **one** of the following: Dryden, Schiller, Zola.

Or (b) Consider the function of the grotesque in tragedy with reference to **one** of the following: Goethe, Victor Hugo, Andreyev, Strindberg.

13. **Either** (a) "The intellect of man is forced to choose
Perfection of the life or of the work. . . ."

Consider the role of the thinker or the artist in **one** of the following plays of Ibsen: *Brand*, *Ghosts*, *Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Master Builder*, *Little Eyolf*, *When We Dead Awaken*.

Or (b) "It is through such devices [i.e. symbolism] that Ibsen makes credible the irrational elements in human nature, the desire for revenge, atonement, self sacrifice." Examine Ibsen's domestication of the irrational in any **two** plays.

Or (c) Discuss the theme of guilt in Ibsen **or** in Strindberg **or** in Tolstoy's *Powers of Darkness*.

14. **Either** (a) To what extent is the theatre of Chekhov **or** of Pirandello based upon scepticism?

Or (b) "His purpose in the use of ceremonial social occasions, parties, arrivals, departures, is to focus attention upon an action which all share, instead of upon the reasoned purposes of any individual" (FERGUSON). Illustrate some of the ways in which Chekhov gains the effect of a choric action, and its effect upon his plots.

Or (c) "Reticent objectivity." Does this seem to you a fair description of the method of Turgeniev, **or** of Hebbel, **or** of Chekhov?

15. Do you find that the writer's direct social aim seriously reduces the significance of the work of Hauptmann, **or** Toller, **or** Brecht?

16. Discuss some of the conventions of naturalism and their effect upon any **one** tragic writer of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

17. **Either** (a) "Tragedy is the drowning of the dykes that separate man from man and upon these dykes comedy builds her house." Apply Yeats's distinction **either** to his own plays **or** to those of Synge.

Or (b) Discuss the importance of Time Past and Time Future in shaping the action of the plays of Yeats **or** of T. S. Eliot.

SECTION D

18. "I wanted an audience of fifty or a hundred. . . if there are more than a hundred I won't be able to escape people who are educating themselves out of Book Societies and the like. . . ." (YEATS, Prologue to *The Death of Cuchulain*). What are the implications of this demand for a limited audience?

19. What is the usefulness, if any, at the present time, of the word "tragedy"?

20. "It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single instant, was ever credited" (JOHNSON). Discuss.

21. "To move wild laughter in the throat of death. . . ." Describe some varieties of so-called "comic relief" in tragedy.

22. "Tragedy developed out of a choral song performed as an act of worship" (PAGE).

Either (a) Expand this statement, and consider such of its implications as seem to you significant, with some indication of the different views which have been put forward in the last fifty years.

Or (b) Discuss any feature of tragic writing in modern times on which the statement seems to throw light.