
ENH 306 - Classics in Translation - Exam 2024

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DU 7 College

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Suggestion for Part C (Essay-type)

by Literature Xpres

Classics in Translation - ENH 306

The Iliad

1. "The subject of the *Iliad* is the wrath of Achilles." Do you agree? ★★★
2. Who do you consider the hero of the *Iliad*, Achilles or Hector? Justify your answer. ★★★
3. Discuss the themes of realism in Homer's *The Iliad*. Or, write on Homer as a realist with reference to his epic poem *The Iliad*.

Agamemnon

4. Sketch the character of Clytemnestra. ★★★
5. Describe the House of Atreus. Or, how does Aeschylus treat the theme of hereditary guilt in *Agamemnon*? Or, describe the family curse as revealed in *Agamemnon*. ★★★
6. Discuss the dramatic suspense around Agamemnon's homecoming.

The Frogs

7. Evaluate *The Frogs* as a literary satire. ★★★

8. Make a comparative study of Aeschylus and Euripides as depicted in *The Frogs*. Or, narrate the literary debate between Aeschylus and Euripides in *The Frogs*. ★★★
9. Analyze the salient features of *The Frogs* in the light of the definition of Old Comedy.

Medea

10. Discuss the significance of the Chorus in the play *Medea*. Or, how does the chorus serve as a reflection of the public opinion and morality in *Medea*? ★★★
11. Evaluate Medea as a tragic heroine. ★★★
12. Consider *Medea* as a revenge tragedy. ★★★

Phaedra

13. "*Phaedra* is a tragedy of unrequited love."—Do you agree? Justify your answer. ★★★
14. Discuss the role of the nurse in *Phaedra*. ★★★

Answers

1. "The subject of the *Iliad* is the wrath of Achilles." Do you agree? ★★★

Homer's (c. 800 BCE - c. 701 BCE) "*The Iliad*" (762 BCE) is one of the oldest and greatest epic poems in world literature. It deals with a short period of the Trojan War. The main theme of this poem is the wrath of Achilles. The poet shows how his anger brings great suffering for both the Greeks and Trojans. The whole epic moves around his rage, pride, grief, and final change of heart.

The Source of Achilles' Wrath: Achilles becomes very angry when Agamemnon takes away Briseis. Briseis is a woman who was his prize. Agamemnon's action hurts Achilles' pride and honor. Achilles feels insulted and refuses to fight. Homer says,

"The rage of Achilles - sing it now, goddess."

Achilles' anger is not just about losing Briseis; it's about feeling disrespected as a warrior.

Prayer to Thetis: After the quarrel, Achilles prays to his mother Thetis. He asks her to speak with Zeus, the king of the gods. Achilles wants Zeus to give victory to the Trojans. His aim is to make the Greeks suffer without his help. This prayer shows how deep his wrath goes. The wrath here is not only against Agamemnon but also against the whole Greek army.

The Effects of Achilles' Anger: When Achilles refuses to fight, the Greeks start losing battles. Hector and the Trojans to gain the upper hand. Many Greek soldiers die because Achilles is too angry to help. His stubbornness shows how one person's pride can bring disaster to many.

Death of Patroclus: The wrath of Achilles takes a new turn with the death of Patroclus. Patroclus, his close friend, goes to fight wearing his armor. He is killed by Hector, the prince of Troy. This loss shakes Achilles badly. His grief mixes with his wrath. Now he forgets his anger with Agamemnon. Instead, his rage turns against Hector and the Trojans. Achilles says,

*"I will not stop killing Trojans until . . .
I meet Hector and fight him
man to man, and he kills me or I kill him."*

This new fire of wrath leads to a cruel and bloody battle.

Killing of Hector: The climax of Achilles' wrath is seen in his fight with Hector. Achilles returns to the war with new armor made by Hephaestus. He kills many Trojans in wild anger. Finally, he meets Hector outside the walls of Troy. With the help of Athena, Achilles kills Hector. His wrath is so strong that he ties Hector's body to his chariot and drags it in front of the city. His actions shock even the Gods. This shocking act shows how extreme his anger has become:

*"But the more Achilles kept looking, the more his rage
at Hector grew."*

This cruel act shows the dark power of his anger.

Change of Heart: The end of the poem shows a change in Achilles. Priam, the old king of Troy, comes to beg for his son's body. He reminds Achilles of his own father. Priam says,

*"Have pity on me; remember
your father."*

Achilles feels pity for Priam. His heart softens, and he returns Hector's body. This scene shows that even great wrath can end in mercy. The subject of the epic starts with anger but ends with humanity. It proves that wrath is the key theme of *"The Iliad"*.

In *"The Iliad"*, the wrath of Achilles is the central subject. His anger shapes the plot from beginning to end. It causes suffering, death, and destruction. At the same time, it also shows human feelings of grief, love, and mercy. Through this theme, Homer shows the power of pride and anger in human life.

2. Who do you consider the hero of the *Iliad*, Achilles or Hector? Justify your answer.

★★★

"The Iliad" (762 BCE) by Homer (c. 800 BCE - c. 701 BCE) presents two great warriors: Achilles, the strongest Greek fighter, and Hector, the bravest Trojan hero. Both fight with courage and skill. Both know that death is close. Yet their attitudes toward war, family, anger, and duty are very different. When we judge true heroism not only by strength but also by character and humanity, Hector appears as the real hero of the epic.

Achilles—A Hero of Strength and Rage: Achilles is the greatest warrior among the Greeks. No one can stand before him in battle. His fighting skills are almost god-like. However, Achilles fights mainly for personal honour. When Agamemnon insults him, Achilles withdraws from battle. Because of his anger, many Greek soldiers die.

After the death of Patroclus, Achilles returns to war. But now his anger becomes cruel. He kills without mercy. When a Trojan begs for life, Achilles says,

***"Come, friend, you too must die. ...
Even Patroclus died, a far, far better man than you."***

This shows that his heart is closed to pity. He even abuses Hector's dead body by dragging the body behind his chariot. Achilles is powerful, but his rage makes him inhuman. Even Homer writes:

"The rage of Achilles - sing it now, goddess."

The wrath of Achilles is the subject matter of this epic. Achilles's heroism is based on strength, not moral goodness.

Hector—A Hero of Duty and Responsibility: Hector is the defender of Troy. He fights not for personal pride. He fights for his city and people. He knows Troy may fall, yet he does not run away. He believes it is his duty to protect the city. Hector also respects honour. He believes that a warrior must face danger bravely. When signs warn him against fighting, he says,

“Fight for your country—that is the best omen!”

This shows his courage and sense of responsibility. He fights because Troy depends on him.

Hector as a Loving Family Man: Unlike Achilles, Hector is deeply connected to his family. The scene with his wife, Andromache, and his baby son is one of the most touching moments in *“The Iliad.”* Hector knows he may die, and his wife may become a slave. Still, he returns to battle. Hector prays for his son, saying,

“May he be like me, first in glory among the Trojans.”

This prayer shows his love and hope. Hector fights not only as a warrior but also as a husband and father. This human side makes him the real hero.

Hector’s Death and Moral Greatness: When Hector finally faces Achilles, he knows he will die. Still, he stands his ground and fights hard. He even asks Achilles to promise a proper burial for the loser. This shows Hector’s respect for human dignity. After Hector’s death, Andromache cries,

“You... were their greatest glory while you lived.”

This line proves that Hector was not only a fighter but the heart of Troy. His death means the fall of the city. Hector dies with honour, courage, and concern for others.

Why Hector Is the True Hero: Achilles fights for himself, for his honour, and glory. Hector fights for others. Achilles is driven by anger. Hector is guided by duty. Achilles wins battles. Hector wins respect and sympathy. True heroism is not only about killing enemies. It is about human values, sacrifice, and moral strength. Hector shows all these qualities throughout the poem.

In fine, both Achilles and Hector are great warriors. Achilles represents strength and rage. Hector represents courage, duty, love, and humanity. While Achilles may be the strongest fighter, Hector is the true hero of *“The Iliad”* because he fights for his people.

3. Discuss the themes of realism in Homer’s *The Iliad*.

Or, write on Homer as a realist with reference to his epic poem *The Iliad*.

Homer's (c. 800 BCE – c. 701 BCE) *"The Iliad"* (762 BCE) is one of the greatest epics in world literature. It presents the Trojan War with deep truth and detail. Homer is a realist because he shows human life in a very real way. He not only describes gods and heroes. He also shows real war, pain, sorrow, and daily life. His work reflects true human feelings and real experiences of war.

Real Picture of War: Homer presents war in a realistic way. He does not hide blood or pain. Soldiers die in cruel and direct scenes. We see wounds, cries, and death in detail. For example, Homer shows how spears cut flesh and blood flows.

"Like the generations of leaves, the lives of mortal men."

These images are not fantasy. They are real pictures of war. This realism makes the story powerful. Readers can feel the real suffering of the warriors. It shows that Homer is a master of realism.

Human Emotions: Homer shows real human emotions. We see love, anger, fear, and grief.

"Rage—Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles..."

Achilles loves Patroclus like a brother. When Patroclus dies, Achilles cries in deep pain. Priam feels sorrow for Hector. He reminds Achilles of his own father. Priam says,

"Have pity on me; remember your father."

Achilles feels pity for Priam. His heart softens, and he returns Hector's body. Even soldiers feel fear before death. These feelings are true to life. Homer makes heroes look like real men with human hearts. This is not a simple imagination. It reflects human reality. Homer's focus on emotions makes *"The Iliad"* very close to real life.

Daily Life Details: Homer also describes daily life in detail. We see food, clothes, ships, and houses. He shows how people cook meals, play games, and prepare armor. During the funeral of Patroclus, Homer shows games and contests. These details are very natural and true. They reflect the culture of his age. Such daily scenes make the story real. Readers can imagine the life of that time. This strong use of daily images proves Homer's realism.

Realistic Characters: The characters in *"The Iliad"* are very real. Achilles is strong but also proud. Agamemnon is brave but selfish. Hector is noble but afraid of failure. Even women like Andromache show deep truth. Andromache speaks these words after learning of Hector's

death.

“You ... were their greatest glory while you lived—/now death and fate have seized you.”

These characters are not gods. They are real human beings with both strengths and weaknesses. Homer does not make them perfect. He shows them as they are. This realism makes the poem universal.

Blend of Gods and Humans: Though gods appear, Homer shows their actions in real ways. The gods behave like humans. They feel jealousy, anger, and love. Their actions are like real human actions. Homer also shows how people believe in divine power in daily life. This mixture makes the story real for that age. It shows the belief of the Greek people in gods as part of real life. Thus Homer keeps even the divine part within realistic limits.

In *“The Iliad”*, Homer is a true realist. He presents war with real pain and blood. He shows daily life and human feelings with truth. His characters are close to real human beings. Even the gods act in human ways. His realism makes the poem timeless and universal.

4. Sketch the character of Clytemnestra. ★★★

Clytemnestra is the most powerful and striking character in Aeschylus’s (c. 525–456 BCE) tragedy *“Agamemnon”* (458 BCE). She is the queen of Argos and the wife of King Agamemnon. During her husband’s long absence in the Trojan War, she rules the kingdom alone. In the play, she appears as a woman of strong will, sharp intelligence, deep anger, and hidden cruelty. Her character is shaped by pain, revenge, and ambition. Through Clytemnestra, Aeschylus shows how revenge can destroy family and peace.

A Strong and Intelligent Queen: Clytemnestra is shown as a very strong and intelligent woman. While Agamemnon is away at war for ten years, she rules Argos confidently. She is not weak or silent like ordinary Greek women. She speaks boldly and thinks clearly. When the Chorus doubts her news about the fall of Troy, she explains the system of signal fires used to pass the message quickly. This shows her sharp mind and planning power. Even the Chorus praises her:

“O Woman, like a man faithful and wise.”

Clytemnestra proves that she is capable of leadership and control.

A Woman of Revenge: The strongest part of Clytemnestra's character is her desire for revenge. She never forgets that Agamemnon sacrificed their daughter, Iphigenia, to please the goddess Artemis. This cruel act breaks her heart forever. From that moment, she waits for the chance to punish her husband. For her, Agamemnon is not a hero returning from war but a murderer of her child. She says,

"New blood spurts out before the old wound heals."

This line shows her vengeful attitude. She means that she will never forgive her husband's crime. She plans his death slowly and patiently.

Cunning and Deceptive Nature: Clytemnestra is very clever and deceptive. She hides her true feelings under sweet words. When Agamemnon returns home, she welcomes him warmly. She speaks like a loving wife. She praises him and pretends to honor him. She even persuades him to walk on the purple/red carpet, which is a sign of pride and a sin against the gods. Agamemnon hesitates at first, but her loving talk makes him walk on the carpet. Clytemnestra says:

"There is the sea. Who will drain it dry?"

It means nothing can end Agamemnon's good fortune. Behind this loving behavior, she is already planning his murder. This shows her skill in deception and manipulation.

A Ruthless Woman: Clytemnestra is not afraid of bloodshed. She kills Agamemnon herself. She traps him with a net in the bathtub and stabs him to death. After the murder, she does not feel shame or fear. Instead, she proudly declares what she has done:

*"My moment's come at last,
I stand now where I struck."*

She believes her act is justified. This shows her cruelty and cold-hearted nature. She acts more like a warrior than a traditional woman. Her violence shocks the Chorus and the audience.

Defying Gender Roles: In ancient Greek society, women were expected to be quiet and obedient. Clytemnestra completely breaks these rules. She rules a kingdom, plans a murder, and speaks openly in public. The Chorus often criticizes her for behaving like a man. But she does not care about their opinions. She proves that women can be powerful, dangerous, and decisive.

Complex Morality: While Clytemnestra's desire for revenge is understandable, her morality is ambiguous. On one hand, she seeks justice for her daughter's death. On the other hand, she has an affair with Aegisthus, who is Agamemnon's cousin and enemy. Her affair corrupts her motive. She proudly stands beside Aegisthus after the murder and rules Argos with him.

In conclusion, Clytemnestra is a complex character made of strength, intelligence, pain, revenge, and infidelity. She is a loving mother, a clever ruler, a deceptive wife, and a ruthless murderer. Through Clytemnestra, Aeschylus shows that revenge never brings peace. Instead, it continues the cycle of bloodshed and tragedy.

5. Describe the House of Atreus.

Or, how does Aeschylus treat the theme of hereditary guilt in *Agamemnon*?

Or, describe the family curse as revealed in *Agamemnon*. ★★★

Hereditary Guilt is the idea that sins or curses pass from parents to children. In Aeschylus's play "*Agamemnon*," first performed in 458 BCE, the theme of hereditary guilt is central. The play is the first part of Aeschylus's *Oresteia* trilogy that focuses on the cursed House of Atreus. Aeschylus shows how past crimes haunt future generations—trapping them in cycles of violence and revenge.

Curse on the House of Atreus: The play centers on the family of Agamemnon, known as the House of Atreus. This family has a long history of violence and betrayal. The curse begins with Tantalus, Agamemnon's great-grandfather. Tantalus killed his own son and served him as food to the gods. The gods punished Tantalus and cursed the family lineage. Later, Atreus, Agamemnon's father, killed the children of his brother, Thyestes, and fed them to him—as revenge for stealing his wife. This act of cruelty deepened the curse. The gods punish such crimes, so the family is doomed to suffer. This curse is already in motion when the play "*Agamemnon*" begins. In the play, Cassandra comments about the House of Atreus:

"A house that hates the gods... house full of death, kinsmen butchered... heads chopped off..."

Agamemnon's Sin: Agamemnon, the Greek king, faces a terrible choice during the Trojan War. To get favorable winds for his ships, the goddess Artemis demands he sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia. Agamemnon does this as a duty. But killing his own child is a sin. Even though he is pressured by the gods, his action adds to the family's guilt. This shows how past sins force new crimes—Agamemnon is both a victim of the curse and an evil-doer.

Clytemnestra's Revenge: Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, kills him when he returns from war. She claims it is revenge for Iphigenia's death. But her act is not just about justice—it is also driven by her own anger and her affair with Aegisthus (who is Agamemnon's cousin and Thyestes's son). However, Clytemnestra's actions only continue the cycle of hereditary guilt, because her son, Orestes, is now bound to take revenge on her for killing his father.

The Cycle Continues: The play ends with Clytemnestra and Aegisthus ruling the kingdom. However, we know from the Chorus and Cassandra's prophecy that Agamemnon's son Orestes will return and kill his mother, Clytemnestra, to avenge his father. Cassandra predicts:

"Another man will come and will avenge us, a son who'll kill his mother, then pay back his father's death."

This endless loop of violence—parent killing child and child killing parent—stresses how hard it is to escape hereditary guilt. Each generation repeats the same mistakes.

Fate vs. Free Will: Aeschylus makes us wonder: Are the characters truly free, or are they controlled by the curse? Agamemnon chooses to sacrifice Iphigenia, but the curse pushes him toward that decision. Clytemnestra chooses murder, but her rage is fueled by years of pain. The play suggests that while curses influence people, they still have agency—the power to act. The characters act only, thus they cannot break free from the curse.

Justice or Vengeance: The chorus in the play often talks about Zeus, the god of justice, and the idea that *"sin begets sin."* But in "Agamemnon," *"justice"* looks a lot like revenge. Clytemnestra thinks she is punishing Agamemnon fairly, but her methods are brutal. Aeschylus seems to question whether violence can ever bring true justice—or if it just continues the cycle. The Chorus says:

"The man who sins is sinned against, the killer pays the price."

This remark represents the cyclical nature of revenge.

To wrap up, in "Agamemnon," Aeschylus uses the theme of hereditary guilt to show how families and societies can be trapped by their past. The characters suffer not just because of their ancestors' crimes, but also because they keep making selfish, violent choices. The play is a warning: without mercy, wisdom, and new ways of seeking justice, the cycle of guilt and revenge will never end.

6. Discuss the dramatic suspense around Agamemnon's homecoming.

In Aeschylus's (c. 525–456 BCE) tragedy *“Agamemnon”* (458 BCE), the homecoming of King Agamemnon is full of tension and fear. From the very beginning of the play, the audience knows that something terrible is going to happen when Agamemnon returns from the Trojan War. The playwright slowly builds suspense through signs, speeches, and hidden plans. Agamemnon's return is not a joyful event but a moment filled with danger, silence, and waiting violence.

The Watchman's Fear: The play opens with the Watchman standing on the roof of the palace at night. He has been waiting for many years for the signal fire that will announce the fall of Troy. When he finally sees the light, he is happy. But his happiness is mixed with fear. He says:

“But this house, if it could speak, might tell some stories.”

It means the house of Atreus is full of secrets and suffering. This opening scene creates suspense at once. The audience understands that Agamemnon's home is not safe. Something dark is hidden inside the palace, waiting for his return.

The Chorus and Dark Memories: The Chorus of old men adds to the suspense. They remind the audience of past crimes. They recall how Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to please the goddess Artemis. This memory shows that Agamemnon has already committed a terrible sin. At one point, the Chorus says:

“Old violent aggression loves to generate new troubles.”

This line tells us that Agamemnon's act of sacrificing his daughter is not without danger. The Chorus fears that blood will again be paid with blood. Their words prepare the audience for revenge. Even before Agamemnon appears on stage, we feel that his homecoming will end in tragedy.

Clytemnestra's False Welcome: When Clytemnestra appears, she pretends to be a loyal and loving wife. She speaks sweet words. However, the audience knows she is hiding her true feelings. She has planned her husband's murder for years. This dramatic irony creates strong suspense. The audience knows the truth, but Agamemnon does not. Every word Clytemnestra speaks sounds dangerous because it hides betrayal. For example, Clytemnestra says Agamemnon should come home quickly and be—

“More loved than he was loved before.”

The audience knows her sweet words contain hidden threats.

The Purple/Red Carpet Scene: One of the most suspenseful moments is the purple carpet scene. Clytemnestra asks Agamemnon to walk on a rich purple carpet as he enters the palace. She says:

“Let there be spread before his feet, at once, a purple path.”

Agamemnon hesitates because he knows this act shows pride and may anger the gods. The audience feels nervous during this moment. Will Agamemnon listen to his wisdom, or will he fall into the trap? When he finally agrees and walks on the carpet, the suspense increases because it feels like his final step toward death.

Cassandra’s Prophecy: The suspense becomes even stronger with the arrival of Cassandra, the Trojan prophetess. Agamemnon brings her as a war prize from Troy. She sees visions of murder and blood inside the palace. She speaks about the crimes of the past. She also predicts Agamemnon’s death. She says:

“The house is reeking with blood— it drips all over the place!”

At first, no one understands her, but the audience slowly realizes she is telling the truth.

Silence Before the Crime: After Agamemnon enters the palace, there is a long silence. The audience waits anxiously. When Agamemnon’s screams are finally heard from inside, the suspense turns into horror. The murder happens offstage, but its impact is very strong.

To sum up, the dramatic suspense around Agamemnon’s homecoming is built slowly and carefully throughout the play. From the Watchman’s fear to Clytemnestra’s deception, from the purple carpet to Cassandra’s prophecy, every scene increases tension. Agamemnon walks unknowingly toward his death, while the audience watches helplessly.

7. Evaluate *The Frogs* as a literary satire. ★★★

“The Frogs” (405 BCE), written by Aristophanes (c. 446–386 BCE), is both a brilliant comedy and a powerful satire. The play mocks foolishness in society but with humor, not hatred. Aristophanes uses fantasy, like Dionysus’s journey to Hades, to express real problems of Athens. The mixture of satire and imagination makes *“The Frogs”* both funny and meaningful. Through laughter, Aristophanes criticizes political corruption, poor leadership, and weak literature. His satire is full of moral light, presented with humor and poetic beauty.

Satire on Athenian Society: Aristophanes uses *“The Frogs”* to attack the moral fall of Athens. The city is weak after the Peloponnesian War. Citizens have lost faith and courage. The Chorus says,

*“But now,
you silly fools, it's time to change your ways.
Use worthy people once again.”*

This shows the poet's concern for Athens. His laughter hides a serious warning. He satirizes selfish leaders and lazy people. His goal is not to insult but to awaken moral sense. His satire teaches and amuses together.

Satire on Poets and Art: The play satirizes the rivalry between poets. The debate between Aeschylus and Euripides is comic but meaningful. Euripides says,

*“I taught them to think,
... to understand, to love new twists
and double-dealing,”*

Aeschylus answers,

*“My poetry did not die with me,
but his did once he died.”*

These lines show Aristophanes's love for moral poetry. He mocks false art that makes people cunning. His satire defends literature that inspires goodness. The laughter here is soft and full of wisdom.

Fantasy in Dionysus's Journey: The play begins with a fantastic journey to Hades. Dionysus, the god of wine, travels to the Underworld to bring back Euripides. He says,

“Forget my courage. Show me the highway ... to Hades.”

This journey is full of fantasy and humor. The frogs' song—*“Brekekekex koax koax”*—adds music and fun. Yet, behind the fantasy lies truth. Dionysus's trip symbolizes the search for true art and moral strength. Aristophanes uses dream-like events to reflect real human struggles.

Comic Characters and Social Criticism: The characters are funny but carry deep meaning. Dionysus is cowardly, foolish, and vain, yet he is lovable. His servant Xanthias is clever and brave. Their costume-changing scenes make the audience laugh loudly. But their actions reflect the weakness of Athenian citizens. The comic scenes of beating, disguise, and fear are

full of fun. Still, they point to real flaws—cowardice, pride, and greed. Aristophanes blends laughter and truth so naturally that the humor becomes a mirror for society.

Moral Message Through Satire: At the end, satire joins with moral advice. Dionysus chooses Aeschylus, who says, *“Use worthy people once again.”* Pluto also blesses Aeschylus, saying,

“So now farewell, Aeschylus—go, save our city with your noble thoughts.”

These lines reveal Aristophanes’s aim to save Athens through moral awakening. His satire is sharp but kind. His fantasy makes serious truth easier to accept. Thus, the play rises above mere comedy and becomes a moral masterpiece that laughs and teaches at the same time.

In termination, we can say that *The Frogs* is both a satire and a fantasy. Aristophanes mocks foolish people but never with cruelty. He uses gods, frogs, and comic scenes to reflect real life. His humor hides truth and wisdom. Through fantasy, he teaches morality. *The Frogs* makes the audience laugh and think. It remains a great example of laughter joined with moral satire.

8. Make a comparative study of Aeschylus and Euripides as depicted in *The Frogs*.

Or, narrate the literary debate between Aeschylus and Euripides in *The Frogs*. ★★★

“The Frogs” (405 BCE), written by Aristophanes (c. 446–386 BCE), is one of the finest comedies in Greek literature. It was written when Athens was weak after the Peloponnesian War. The play’s most famous part is the literary debate between Aeschylus and Euripides in the Underworld. Aristophanes uses this debate to judge two great tragic poets. It reflects the poet’s role in improving society and saving Athens.

Beginning of the Contest: The contest takes place in Pluto’s palace in Hades. The Chorus announces that Euripides wants to take Aeschylus’s chair, which is reserved for the best tragic poet. Pluto allows a debate to decide who deserves it. Dionysus becomes the judge. Aeschylus and Euripides enter, each confident of victory. The atmosphere is both serious and comic. Aristophanes mixes argument and laughter beautifully. This opening sets the stage for a debate full of wit, logic, and poetic pride.

Euripides’s Claims: Euripides argues that he improved tragedy. He says,

*“When I ... took this art of plays from you,
crammed with bombast to the gills.
... I ... reduced its weight.”*

He believes he made the plays more natural and realistic. His heroes and heroines speak in everyday language. He claims,

***“I taught them to think,
... to understand, to love new twists
and double dealing,”***

He thinks his plays make people clever. But his words also show that he taught Athenians to be doubtful and tricky.

Aeschylus’s Reply: Aeschylus strongly defends the greatness of old tragedy. He says,

“My poetry did not die with me, / but his did once he died.”

He believes his plays were noble and moral. He shows that poets should inspire people to be brave and virtuous. He praises Orpheus, saying,

“He taught us not to kill.”

Aeschylus criticizes Euripides for showing evil and immoral acts on the stage. He blames him for filling Athens “with apes who always cheat our people.” His words show his moral purpose in art.

Judgment by Weighing Poetry: To end the argument, Pluto orders a test. Each poet must recite lines of his poetry. The poetry is then weighed on a scale to see which is “weightier.” Dionysus watches closely. Aeschylus’s lines are full of strong and noble words, while Euripides’s are lighter and clever. The scale tips in favor of Aeschylus both times. This symbolic test shows that Aeschylus’s art has more power and dignity. Aristophanes thus praises the strength of moral and heroic poetry over the smart but weak modern style.

Final Decision and Message: When Dionysus still cannot decide, he asks both poets to give advice to save Athens. Euripides says,

“If we reversed our course, we might be saved.”

But his advice is unclear. Aeschylus suggests,

“Use worthy people once again.”

His words are wise and firm. Dionysus chooses Aeschylus as the winner. Pluto says,

“So now farewell, Aeschylus—go, save our city with your noble thoughts.”

The scene ends with joy and respect for noble art and good leadership.

In conclusion, the debate between Aeschylus and Euripides is the heart of *“The Frogs”*. It is serious yet humorous, critical yet kind. Aristophanes uses it to praise poetry that uplifts people and improves society. Through this debate, he honors Aeschylus as a true moral teacher. The scene shows that laughter and wisdom can exist together in great literature.

9. Analyze the salient features of *The Frogs* in the light of the definition of Old Comedy.

“The Frogs,” first performed in 405 BCE, is a famous comic play written by Aristophanes (446-386 BCE). It is one of the best examples of Old Comedy in Greek literature. Old Comedy is known for open satire, bold humour, chorus songs, fantasy, and direct criticism of society, politics, and writers. In *“The Frogs,”* Aristophanes uses laughter not only to entertain but also to teach important lessons to Athens. The play shows all the major features of Old Comedy very clearly.

Use of Fantasy and Imagination: One important feature of Old Comedy is fantasy. In *“The Frogs,”* the god Dionysus travels to the Underworld to bring back a great poet to save Athens. Gods talk like common people. Dead poets argue like living men. Frogs sing on the river. This kind of impossible but funny situation is common in Old Comedy. The journey to Hades makes the play lively and imaginative. It helps Aristophanes freely criticize society through a comic dream world.

Comic Portrayal of Gods and Characters: Old Comedy often shows gods in a humorous way. Dionysus, the god of drama, is shown as foolish, cowardly, and confused. He even says,

“Forget my courage. Show me the highway... that takes me directly down to Hades.”

This makes the audience laugh. Gods are not serious or divine here. They behave like ordinary, silly men. This bold treatment of gods is a strong feature of Old Comedy.

Role of the Chorus: The Chorus is very important in Old Comedy, and *“The Frogs”* clearly shows this. The chorus appears as singing frogs. They create comedy with nonsense sounds like:

“Brekekekex koax koax.”

Later, the Chorus speaks directly to the audience. They give advice about politics and society.

Parabasis and Direct Social Criticism: The Parabasis is a special part of Old Comedy where the Chorus speaks the poet’s own views. In *“The Frogs,”* the Chorus openly criticizes the leaders of Athens. They ask people to change their ways. They say that worthy people should be used again.

***“But now, you silly fools, it’s time to change your ways.
Use worthy people once again.”***

This open political advice shows that Old Comedy does not hide its message. Aristophanes uses comedy as a tool to correct society.

Satire on Literature and Poets: Old Comedy often attacks writers and intellectuals. In this play, Aristophanes presents a comic contest between Aeschylus and Euripides. They argue about whose poetry is better for Athens.

Euripides represents the new intellectual thinking of Athens. Euripides proudly claims that his plays taught people to think deeply and question everything.

“I taught them to think... to love double dealing, to suspect the worst.”

Aristophanes uses this line to criticize him. He suggests that this kind of thinking has made people clever but dishonest and morally weak.

In contrast, Aeschylus represents old values and tradition. He believes poets should make people noble and brave. Through Aeschylus, Aristophanes shows his belief that poetry should guide society toward courage, honor, and moral goodness, not confusion and deceit. Dionysus finally decides to take Aeschylus back because he can give better advice to the city. This literary satire is a major feature of Old Comedy.

Bold Language: Old Comedy uses bold language, jokes, and exaggeration without fear. Aristophanes freely mocks politicians, poets, and even gods. There is no restriction. This freedom makes Old Comedy lively and powerful.

In conclusion, *“The Frogs”* is a perfect example of Old Comedy. It includes fantasy, comic gods, an active chorus, open satire, literary debate, and a strong moral message. Aristophanes uses humour to teach Athens how to think and act wisely. Therefore, the play fully shows all the main features of Old Comedy in a clear and effective way.

10. Discuss the significance of the Chorus in the play *Medea*.

Or, how does the chorus serve as a reflection of the public opinion and morality in *Medea*? ★★★

"*Medea*" (431 BCE), written by Euripides (c. 480–406 BCE), is one of the finest Greek tragedies. In Greek drama, the Chorus often plays an important role. It is not only a group of singers or dancers but also a voice of society. In "*Medea*", the Chorus is made up of Corinthian women. They watch, comment, and sometimes guide Medea. They speak moral truths and show sympathy. Their presence adds meaning and depth to the play's tragic action.

Voice of Society: The Chorus speaks for the people of Corinth. They reflect social values and opinions. They worry about Medea's grief and anger. They also think about justice and law. The Chorus leader says,

***"I want to help you
holding to the standards of human law."***

This shows society's concern. Through the Chorus, Euripides expresses the social reaction to Medea's actions. They are not rulers or family, but their voice represents common human feelings and social order.

Sympathy for Medea: The Chorus often shows sympathy for Medea. They understand her pain as a betrayed woman. They listen to her cries and respond with care. At one point, Medea says,

"We women are the most unfortunate."

Here, they agree with Medea's view on women's suffering. They even promise not to reveal her secret plans. Their support gives Medea strength. Still, their sympathy makes the tragedy more painful, because they watch but cannot stop her violent choice.

Moral Commentary: The Chorus comments on human actions. They reflect on passion, love, and anger. In one passage, they sing,

"If Aphrodite comes in smaller doses, no other god is so desirable."

This shows that passion should be controlled. They warn that excess love brings destruction. Their words guide the audience toward moral lessons. They do not have the power to change

events, but they help the audience to judge. Their comments make the play more thoughtful and serious.

Witness of Tragedy: The Chorus plays the role of witness. They see and hear Medea's plans. They try to advise her, but they cannot stop her crimes. When Medea kills her children, the Chorus cries in shock. They say,

"It's a fearful thing for men to spill the blood of gods."

Their reactions strengthen the tragedy for the audience. They share the pain and horror. They connect the audience with the stage, acting as a bridge between the action and the viewers.

Concluding Message: At the end, the Chorus delivers the final message. They remind the audience that gods decide fate. Their closing words give a sense of order after chaos. The Chorus ends the play with wisdom. They leave the audience thinking about divine justice, human weakness, and the strange way tragedies reach their outcome.

In termination, we undoubtedly say that the Chorus in "Medea" is more than a group of singers. They act as society's voice, express sympathy, give moral lessons, and witness tragedy. Their presence guides the audience to understand the meaning of events. They cannot prevent disaster, but they add depth to the story. Through the Chorus, Euripides balances Medea's violent actions with moral reflection and social awareness.

11. Evaluate Medea as a tragic heroine. ★★★

Euripides' (C.480 BC - C.406 BC) "Medea" (431 BC) tells the tragic story of Medea. She is a woman betrayed by her husband, Jason. She is not only a wronged wife but also a tragic heroine. Medea's actions follow the pattern of a tragic hero. Medea fulfills all the conditions of a classic tragic heroine.

Hamartia (Tragic Flaw): Medea's tragic flaw is her overpowering passion. She loves Jason deeply but also hates him with equal intensity. Her intense love for Jason turns into uncontrollable rage when he betrays her for Glauce. This deep emotional tempest blinds her judgment. This pushes her to make destructive decisions. Medea's flaw is evident when she states,

"I understand too well the dreadful act I'm going to commit, but my judgment cannot check my anger."

Her inability to control her rage and her desire for revenge lead to tragic consequences.

Hubris (Excessive Pride): Medea's pride and sense of self-worth are deeply wounded by Jason's betrayal. Her pride makes it impossible for her to accept the insult and betrayal, especially after all she sacrificed for him. She declares,

"No, I'm a different sort—dangerous to enemies, but well disposed to friends".

Medea's hubris prevents her from considering forgiveness. Her excessive pride drives her to commit horrendous acts, such as the murder of her own children, to ensure that Jason does not escape without punishment.

Peripeteia (Reversal of Fortune): Medea's life takes a dramatic turn when Jason decides to leave her for the daughter of Creon, the king of Corinth. Her status as a wife and mother is shattered. She is forced into exile. This moment of peripeteia triggers her plan for revenge. Her reversal of fortune is also reflected in Jason's fate. While he believes his marriage to Creon's daughter will bring him power and happiness, it leads instead to the destruction of his entire family.

Anagnorisis (Recognition): Medea's moment of anagnorisis occurs when she realizes the full extent of the suffering her revenge will cause, not just to Jason but to herself as well. Despite recognizing that her actions will bring immense pain, she is unable to stop her rage and determination for revenge. She says,

*"I've made up my mind, my friends.
I'll do it—kill my children now, without delay".*

Medea acknowledges the horror of her own deeds but proceeds. She is driven by a desire to punish Jason at any cost.

Catharsis (Emotional Purging): The audience experiences catharsis as they witness Medea's internal conflict. The murder of her children is a shocking act that produces both pity and fear. Both Medea and Jason feel the pain of this loss. This creates a powerful emotional release for the audience. The Chorus reflects on this tragedy, stating,

*"It's a fearful thing for men
to spill the blood of gods."*

The play forces the audience to wrestle with the intense emotions of betrayal, revenge, and loss.

Nemesis (Retribution): Medea's actions bring about her own nemesis. Although she succeeds in destroying Jason's future, she is left with the burden of her actions. She acknowledges the weight of her crime, saying,

"The gods are aware who began this fight".

Medea's victory is open. She is forced to flee and live in isolation, haunted by the deaths of her children. Her desire for revenge ultimately consumes her. This leads to a tragic end where no true winner remains.

Medea is a tragic heroine whose journey is defined by the classical elements of tragedy. Her intense emotions, pride, and desire for revenge lead her to commit unforgivable acts. Though she achieves her goals, her actions bring only suffering and loss. This makes her story a timeless example of a tragic downfall.

12. Consider Medea as a revenge tragedy. ★★★

A revenge tragedy is a type of drama where the main character seeks revenge for a wrong done to them. Euripides' play "Medea," first performed in 431 BC, is a powerful example of a revenge tragedy. In this tragedy, the main character, Medea, is deeply hurt by her husband Jason's betrayal. Her pain turns into anger, and she decides to take revenge in the most extreme way.

Medea's Betrayal and Pain: The story of Medea begins with deep betrayal. Medea, a princess from Colchis, helped Jason win the Golden Fleece. She left her home and killed her own brother to be with Jason. She saved his life many times and helped him become a hero. However, Jason later betrays Medea by marrying another woman, the princess of Corinth. This breaks Medea's heart and fills her with anger. She feels humiliated and abandoned.

The betrayal is even worse because Jason does not think he has done anything wrong. He tells Medea that he married the princess to give their children a better future. But Medea sees this as an excuse. She feels that Jason has thrown her away now that he no longer needs her. Medea feels betrayed as a woman. She says:

"We women are the most unfortunate."

Medea's Revenge Plan: In revenge tragedies, the hero (or anti-hero) often plans their revenge carefully. Medea is no different. At first, she acts like she accepts Jason's decision. She even sends gifts to the new bride—a poisoned crown and robe. When the princess puts them

on, she dies in great pain. Her father, King Creon, also dies trying to save her.

Medea does not stop there. She wants to hurt Jason as much as possible. She believes the best way to do this is by killing their two children. This is the most shocking part of her revenge. She says:

“I’ll do it—kill my children now, without delay.”

Even though she loves her children, she decides that killing them is the only way to truly punish Jason. She wants him to suffer forever.

Violence and Destruction: Revenge tragedies usually end with bloodshed, and “Medea” is no exception. The deaths of the princess, Creon, and the children are brutal. Medea’s actions destroy Jason’s life completely. He loses his new wife, his children, and his reputation. Medea’s revenge is successful, but it comes at a terrible cost. She loses her children too, though she seems to care more about punishing Jason than her own grief. Medea says:

***“I’m ... dangerous
to enemies.”***

Hero or Villain: After carrying out her revenge, Medea escapes in a chariot sent by her grandfather, the Sun God Helios. Jason is left alone, completely destroyed. Medea is a complex character. Some people may see her as a villain because she commits terrible crimes. Killing her own children is a shocking and cruel act. However, others may see her as a tragic character because she was deeply wronged and acted out of extreme pain. The play does not give a clear answer. Instead, it makes the audience think about justice, revenge, and the consequences of extreme emotions.

Gender and Power: Medea’s revenge is also about fighting against a society that treats women as inferior. She is angry not just at Jason but at the unfair rules that let men abandon women without consequences. By taking revenge, she rebels against these rules, even if her methods are horrifying.

For these reasons, “Medea” fits the revenge tragedy genre. It has all the key ingredients: a betrayal, a clever revenge plan, violence, and themes of justice and power. Medea’s actions are extreme. The play shows how anger and hurt can drive a person to cross every moral line—and how no one truly wins in the end. Unlike some revenge stories, Medea does not die or show regret. Instead, she escapes, leaving chaos behind. This makes the play both thrilling and unsettling.

13. “*Phaedra* is a tragedy of unrequited love.”—Do you agree? Justify your answer.

★★★

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 B.C.–65 A.D.), a famous Roman philosopher and playwright, wrote “*Phaedra*” around 50 A.D. It is one of his greatest tragic plays based on a Greek myth. The play presents the painful story of *Phaedra*. Her forbidden love for her stepson Hippolytus remains unreturned. Her passion turns into suffering and death. The tragedy of *unrequited love*—a love that receives no answer—forms the heart of this play. It shows how love becomes both pain and punishment.

Love Turned into Suffering: *Phaedra*’s love for Hippolytus is strong but sinful. She cannot control her desire, though she knows it is wrong. Her love gives her only pain. She says,

“*A malady feeds and grows within my heart.*”

This line shows how love burns like a disease inside her. Her feeling is not answered by Hippolytus. His rejection deepens her sorrow. *Phaedra*’s love does not bring happiness or peace. It becomes a fire that destroys her body and mind. Seneca shows love as a painful human weakness.

Rejection by Hippolytus: Hippolytus hates all women and refuses love completely. His rejection makes *Phaedra*’s tragedy greater. When she confesses her love, he becomes angry and cruel. He says,

“*Away with thy impure touch from my chaste body.*”

His harsh words hurt *Phaedra* deeply. She feels insulted and hopeless. Her unreturned love turns into despair. Hippolytus’ coldness shows how pride can kill sympathy. His purity becomes heartless pride. Thus, Seneca shows that both passion and pride can destroy peace. The rejection turns love into death.

The Role of Destiny: Seneca shows that destiny rules human love and sorrow. *Phaedra* is punished not only for her sin but also for her bloodline. She says,

“*I recognize my wretched mother’s fatal curse.*”

Her mother, Pasiphaë, also loved wrongly. Venus makes *Phaedra* suffer because of this curse. Her unreturned love is part of divine punishment. *Phaedra* cannot escape this cruel fate. Her passion is not only a mistake but also a destiny written by the gods. Thus, unrequited love

becomes a tragic form of divine revenge.

Inner Conflict and Guilt: Phaedra's unreturned love creates a painful fight inside her mind. She knows her love is wrong but cannot stop it. She cries,

"Passion forces me to take the worser path."

This quote shows her helplessness. Her heart wants love, but her reason says no. The more Hippolytus rejects her, the more she suffers from guilt and shame. Her silence, tears, and final death reveal her deep inner pain. Seneca makes the audience feel pity for her as a victim of uncontrollable passion and rejection.

Death as the Only Escape: Phaedra's life becomes unbearable because her love is not returned. She finds peace only in death. She says,

"This is the only way, the one sole escape from evil."

Her suicide is both her punishment and release. Through death, she tries to wash away her guilt and sorrow. Her death proves that unreturned love leads to destruction. In this way, Seneca presents Phaedra's death as the final act of her tragic love. Her silent suffering and hopeless end make the tragedy complete and moving.

In *"Phaedra"*, Seneca presents love not as joy but as pain. Phaedra's love for Hippolytus is rejected, cursed, and fatal. Her unreturned passion destroys her peace and leads to her death. Hippolytus' pride and her guilt make the tragedy more powerful. Thus, *"Phaedra"* is a true tragedy of unrequited love, where passion without answer becomes the cause of ruin and sorrow.

14. Discuss the role of the nurse in *Phaedra*. ★★★

In Seneca's (4 BC - 65 AD) tragedy *"Phaedra,"* the Nurse plays a very important role in shaping the tragic events of the play. She is not just a minor character. She is deeply involved in Phaedra's inner struggle, her sinful love, and the final destruction of innocent lives. At first, the Nurse appears as a caring and wise woman. But later, her wrong choices turn her into a major cause of tragedy. Through the Nurse, Seneca shows how misguided loyalty and moral weakness can destroy everything.

The Nurse as a Caretaker: The Nurse is Phaedra's closest companion and caretaker. Phaedra trusts her completely. She shares her most secret and sinful feelings with her. When

Phaedra suffers silently because of her forbidden love for Hippolytus, her stepson, the Nurse is the first person to hear the truth. As a caretaker, she listens patiently and tries to understand Phaedra's pain. At this stage, the Nurse seems loving and responsible. She feels sympathy for Phaedra's suffering. She wants to protect her from shame and ruin. She warns Phaedra:

"Sinners are worse than monsters."

The Nurse as the Voice of Reason: In the beginning, the Nurse acts as a voice of wisdom and moral sense. She clearly understands that Phaedra's love is unnatural and dangerous. She advises Phaedra to control her emotions and fight against her passion. She warns her that desire, if unchecked, can destroy honor and life. The Nurse wisely says:

"Check, O my child, the rush of thine unbridled spirit; control thy passion."

This advice shows that the Nurse knows what is right. At this moment, she represents reason and self-control. But Phaedra cannot control her passion. She says:

"What can reason do? Passion, passion rules."

The Nurse's Moral Weakness and Change: The Nurse soon fails to stand by her own advice. When she sees that Phaedra is determined and emotionally broken, she changes. She chooses obedience over morality. She convinces herself that serving her queen is more important than honor. She knowingly chooses the wrong path. Her wisdom becomes corrupted. Her loyalty turns blind and dangerous.

The Nurse as a Deceiver and Plotter: The Nurse becomes most destructive when Hippolytus rejects Phaedra with anger and disgust. Instead of accepting the truth and stopping the sin, the Nurse plans a lie to protect Phaedra's reputation. She decides to accuse Hippolytus of an incestuous crime. She clearly says:

"We must throw the crime back on him himself, and ourselves charge him with incestuous love."

This false accusation becomes the turning point of the play. Because of the Nurse's lie, Theseus curses his own innocent son. Hippolytus is killed brutally. The Nurse's deception directly leads to this tragic death.

The Nurse as a Catalyst of Tragedy: The Nurse acts as a tragic catalyst. She does not kill anyone herself, but her actions push the tragedy forward. Without her support, Phaedra might have resisted or confessed her sin. The Nurse helps sin to grow and crime to succeed. In the

end, even she cannot escape guilt. Phaedra finally confesses the truth and admits that Hippolytus was innocent. Later, she kills herself because of guilt and shame. The Nurse's role is thus closely linked with the deaths of Hippolytus and Phaedra.

In conclusion, the Nurse in Phaedra is a complex and powerful character. She begins as a caring guide and a voice of reason, but her moral weakness turns her into an agent of destruction. Her misguided loyalty, fear, and deception play a crucial role in the tragic outcome. Through the Nurse, Seneca shows that wisdom without moral strength is dangerous.

LX Notes