

科目 西洋文學概論 類組別 026 共 2 頁第 1 頁 \*請在試卷答案卷(卡)內作答

Please answer TWO of the following questions in English. (100%)

**Question 1 (50%)**

The following excerpt is taken from Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. At the final scene Clytaemnestra, standing over the corpses of Agamemnon and Cassandra, is glorying in her deed and justifying it to the Chorus (the Old Men of Argos and their LEADER).

Please read this excerpt carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

CLYTAEMNESTRA: Words, endless words I've said to serve the moment—

Now it makes me proud to tell the truth.  
How else to prepare a death for deadly men  
who seem to love you? How to rig the nets  
of pain so high no man can overleap them?

I brooded on this trial, this ancient blood feud  
year by year. At last my hour came.  
Here I stand and here I struck  
and here my work is done.  
I did it all. I don't deny it, no.  
He had no way to flee or fight his destiny—

*[Unwinding the robes from AGAMEMNON's body, spreading them before  
the altar where the old men cluster around them, unified as a chorus  
once again.]*

our never-ending, all embracing net, I cast it  
wide for the royal haul, I coil him round and round  
in the wealth, the robes of doom, and then I strike him  
once, twice, and at each stroke he cries in agony—  
he buckles at the knees and crashes here!  
And when he's down I add the third, last blow,  
to the Zeus who saves the dead beneath the ground  
I send that third blow<sup>1</sup> home in homage like a prayer.

So he goes down, and the life is bursting out of him—  
great sprays of blood, and the murderous shower  
wounds me, dyes me black and I, I revel  
like the Earth when the spring rains come down,  
the blessed gifts of god, and the new green spear  
splits the sheath and rips to birth in glory!

So it stands, elders of Argos gathered here.  
Rejoice if you can rejoice—I glory.  
And if I'd pour upon his body the libation  
it deserves, what wine could match my words?  
It is right and more than right. He flooded  
the vessel of our proud house with misery,  
with the vintage of the curse and now  
he drains the dregs. My lord is home at last.

LEADER: You appall me, you, your brazen words—  
exulting over your fallen king.

CLYTAEMNESTRA: And you,  
you try me like some desperate woman.  
My heart is steel, well you know. Praise me,  
blame me as you choose. It's all one.  
Here is Agamemnon, my husband made a corpse  
by this right hand—a masterpiece of Justice.  
Done is done.

CHORUS: Woman!—what poison cropped from the soil  
or strained from the heaving sea, what nursed you,  
drove you insane? You brave the curse of Greece.

You have cut away and flung away and now  
the people cast you off to exile,  
broken with our hate.

CLYTAEMNESTRA: And now you sentence me?—

you banish *me* from the city, curses breathing  
down my neck? But *he*—  
name one charge you brought against him then.  
He thought no more of it than killing a beast,  
and his flocks were rich, teeming in their fleece,  
but he sacrificed his own child, our daughter,  
the agony I labored into love,  
to charm away the savage winds of Thrace.<sup>5</sup>

Didn't the law demand you banish him?—  
hunt him from the land for all his guilt?  
But now you witness what I've done  
and you are ruthless judges.

Threaten away!

I'll meet you blow for blow. And if I fall  
the throne is yours. If god decrees the reverse,  
late as it is, old men, you'll learn your place.

CHORUS: Mad with ambition,  
shrilling pride!—some Fury  
crazed with the carnage rages through your brain—  
I can see the flecks of blood inflame your eyes!  
But vengeance comes—you'll lose your loved ones,  
stroke for painful stroke.

CLYTAEMNESTRA: Then learn this, too, the power of my oaths.  
By the child's Rights I brought to birth,  
by Ruin, by Fury—the three gods to whom  
I sacrificed this man—I swear my hopes  
will never walk the halls of fear so long  
as Aegisthus lights the fire on my hearth.  
Loyal to me as always, no small shield  
to buttress my defiance.

Here he lies.

He brutalized me. The darling of all  
the golden girls who spread the gates of Troy.  
And here his spearprize . . . what wonders she beheld!—  
the seer of Apollo shared my husband's bed,  
his faithful mate who knelt at the rowing-benches,  
worked by every hand.

They have their rewards.

He as you know. And she, the swan of the gods  
who lived to sing her latest, dying song—  
his lover lies beside him.  
She brings a fresh, voluptuous relish to my bed!

(continued on next page)

## Question 2 (50%)

The following story of Pygmalion is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Please read this story carefully and give a close reading of your understanding of it.

*The Story of Pygmalion*

One man, Pygmalion, who had seen these women  
Leading their shameful lives, shocked at the vices  
Nature has given the female disposition  
Only too often, chose to live alone,  
To have no woman in his bed. But meanwhile  
He made, with marvelous art, an ivory statue,  
As white as snow, and gave it greater beauty  
Than any girl could have, and fell in love  
With his own workmanship. The image seemed  
That of a virgin, truly, almost living,  
And willing, save that modesty prevented,  
To take on movement. The best art, they say,  
Is that which conceals art, and so Pygmalion  
Marvels, and loves the body he has fashioned.  
He would often move his hands to test and touch it,  
Could this be flesh, or was it ivory only?  
No, it could not be ivory. His kisses,  
He fancies, she returns; he speaks to her,  
Holds her, believes his fingers almost leave  
An imprint on her limbs, and fears to bruise her.  
He pays her compliments, and brings her presents  
Such as girls love, smooth pebbles, winding shells,  
Little pet birds, flowers with a thousand colors,  
Lilies, and painted balls, and lumps of amber.  
He decks her limbs with dresses, and her fingers  
Wear rings which he puts on, and he brings a necklace,  
And earrings, and a ribbon for her bosom,  
And all of these become her, but she seems  
Even more lovely naked, and he spreads  
A crimson coverlet for her to lie on,  
Takes her to bed, puts a soft pillow under  
Her head, as if she felt it, calls her *Darling*,  
*My darling love!*

And Venus' holiday  
Came round, and all the people of the island  
Were holding festival, and snow-white heifers,  
Their horns all tipped with gold, stood at the altars,  
Where incense burned, and, timidly, Pygmalion

Made offering, and prayed: 'If you can give  
All things, O gods, I pray my wife may be—  
(He almost said, *My ivory girl*, but dared not)—  
One like my ivory girl.' And golden Venus  
Was there, and understood the prayer's intention,  
And showed her presence, with the bright flame leaping  
Thrice on the altar, and Pygmalion came  
Back where the maiden lay, and lay beside her,  
And kissed her, and she seemed to glow, and kissed her,  
And stroked her breast, and felt the ivory soften  
Under his fingers, as wax grows soft in sunshine,  
Made pliable by handling. And Pygmalion  
Wonders, and doubts, is dubious and happy,  
Plays lover again, and over and over touches  
The body with his hand. It is a body!  
The veins throb under the thumb. And oh, Pygmalion  
Is lavish in his prayer and praise to Venus,  
No words are good enough. The lips he kisses  
Are real indeed, the ivory girl can feel them,  
And blushes and responds, and the eyes open  
At once on lover and heaven, and Venus blesses  
The marriage she has made. The crescent moon  
Fills to full orb, nine times, and wanes again,  
And then a daughter is born, a girl named Paphos,  
From whom the island later takes its name.