

MASTER OF ARTS EXAMINATION 2017
First Year Second Semester
ENGLISH
Theban Plays of Sophocles

Time: 2 hours:

Full marks: 30

Answer *any three* questions. Questions carry equal marks.

1. a. In the Ode to Love (781-800) the Chorus says: "The just themselves have their minds warped by thee to wrong, for their ruin: 'tis thou that hast stirred up this present strife of kinsmen; victorious is the love-kindling light from the eyes of the fair bride; it is a power enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws; for there the goddess Aphrodite is working her unconquerable will" (Jebb's translation). In what sense is love the cause of tragic loss? Could such a view be justified? Give reasons.

OR

- b. "The corpse of Polyneices is the silent presence around which action and speech is constructed in *Antigone*. Buried thrice in the play, it nevertheless appears to act as the ground for divine retribution for impiety". Do you agree? Discuss fully.

2. a. Would you agree with George Steiner's view that "we find in Hegel's successive, and, at decisive points, internally contrasting interpretations of the *Antigone* of Sophocles one of the high moments of the history of reading"? Give reasons.

OR

- b. "[...] in the *Antigone*, the 'spiritual power' of family piety is independently personified in her, while Creon is the independent personification of law and the state. The drama exposes the one-sidedness of both; and the tragedy is the result of the hostility arising from this one-sidedness, which is 'dissolved' in the sense that both powers are ultimately and truly seen to be complementary and not independent of one another." Locate and annotate the passage.

3. a. How does Kierkegaard's narrator justify the need for writing posthumous papers?

OR

- b. Kierkegaard's narrator says that he rewrote Sophocles' *Antigone* and created a modern counterpart of the ancient heroine in order to bring out the "truly tragic" in modern drama. Do you think he succeeded in doing this? Give textually supported reasons for your answer.

4. a. "The Greek word *deinon* has that strange ambiguous ambiguity with which the Saying of the Greeks measures out the counterturning confrontations of Being." (Heidegger) Elucidate.

OR

- b. Comment on Heidegger's notion of "*technē*" and "*dikē*" as the two types of violence that oppose each other. What, according to Heidegger, are the limitations of the effect of "*technē*"?

5. a. Comment on the dialectic of reason and passion in *Antigone*.

OR

- b. Discuss the weaknesses in *either* Hegel's *or* Heidegger's argument about *Antigone*.