

English 9

Review for *Agamemnon* Test Passages

1. If my daughter dies—the winds change,
Artemis is happy.
Our allied armies revive, as at a word
The sail fills with a breath.
And I have done no more
Than sacrifice myself—myself...

- a. There's a kind of dual speaker for this passage, as one speaker is reporting what another speaker has said. Explain.
 - b. Explain, using names, the context of this passage. What is happening?
 - c. Explain how the "I" feels about himself/herself. How does this feeling influence the tragic effect of the play?

2. He brings a great flame of light—
Out of the darkness.

 - a. Who is the speaker of the passage? Who is the "he"?
 - b. Discuss the light and darkness image as it occurs here. Relate it to one other instance of the imagery in the text.

c. What is the “great flame of light” he brings?

3. And now since you have conquered me in this matter
Of treading on the crimson path—
Let me enter my house at last.

a. Name the speaker of the passage. Also, who is the “you”?

b. Give the context in which the passage is spoken. What has just happened? What will happen next?

c. Explain the symbolism of the color called “crimson” in this passage. Give at least two answers and briefly explain them.

d. What is the relationship of this passage to the Greek idea of *nostos*?

e. What is the relationship of this passage to the Aristotelian idea of *hamartia*? Be specific in your answer.

4. Ah!

Perfect vision is agony.
Hideous things, the brain crammed
With unbearable things.

a. Name the speaker of the passage.

b. Generally, what is the context?

c. Explain the relationship between suffering and truth, both in this passage and as we see it through the Chorus.

5. Help! Help! They have killed me.

a. Name the speaker of the passage.

b. What is the context of the passage? What has just happened? What will happen next?

c. What is the relationship of this passage to the Aristotelian idea of *anagnorisis*? Be as specific as you can, reaching all the way to effect.

6. The spider's web
swaddled him
helpless...like a spinning fly.

- a. Name the speaker of the passage.
- b. Give the general context of the passage.
- c. Explain the use of the web/net imagery here. Give one other moment where you have seen this imagery. How does it work?
- d. What does this passage say about the “him” in the play?

7. The law of Zeus demands
A life for a life.
All—for all.
But this law of Zeus
Is a kind of disease
Inherited through the blood.

- a. Name the speaker of the passage.
- b. What is the relationship of the passage to the murder of Agamemnon? Move past mere revenge to explain the significance of the last line.

8. Justice! At last the day of justice has dawned.
This is perfect proof that the gods
Watch men and punish evil.

- a. Name the speaker of the passage.
- b. Give the context of the passage. What has just happened? What will happen next?
- c. Explain the imagery of the dawn as used in this passage and give one example from elsewhere in the play that reinforces your idea.
- d. How is the act referred to in the passage (the context) considered justice for the speaker?
- e. Since the audience would know the whole of the myth of this character, explain the dramatic and situational irony at play in the passage.

dramatic:

situational: