

Prehistoric greek
tragedy "the
bacchae" by
euripides essay



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The Bacchae is a prehistoric Greek tragedy written by the Athenian playwright called Euripides. He was in his final years in Macedonia. The play has won attractions across the main cities in the world. Apart from the first prize in Dionysian city, it has won several awards.

The Bacchae is a religious drama. Many people have discussed it with regards to the source of its myth. Others have alluded to the fact that it is a religion resulting from Dionysus. It is not easy to explain the origin of Dionysus' religion. People have relied mainly on hearsays. Those who had accepted the faith also believed in its power. The religion kept evolving, and there have been fluctuations in the faith.

In this work of art, Euripides seeks to express that there are two opposing views about the nature of man; Pentheus represents the rational and civilized side. He was the King of Thebes and a cousin to Dionysus. Dionysus portrayed the human nature. Though he was God, he came in a human form. He could easily connect with the man and at the same time display his beastly nature.

The play was supposed to pass certain knowledge to the audience. Dionysus had the human feelings because of his origins with Semele. He influenced his believing subjects to become spiritually powerful.

Just like the other gods, Dionysus's worshippers had come up with many names for their God. He grew and became strong. As a result of his power, he received acceptance into the Olympian hierarchy as the youngest god.

The Greek myth inspired Euripides. The story informs us about the King Pentheus of Thebes and his mother Agave and their punishment by the god Dionysus (cousin to Pentheus).

At the start of the play, Dionysus arrives at Thebes. It reminded him of his birth. His mother Semele prematurely gave birth to him at Thebes. Semele was the daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia. Cadmus was an old man who had left the kingship to his grandson Pentheus.

Some tradition claims that, Zeus, who was the Father of Gods and men, had a priestess called by the name Semele. One day as he was flying over the temple, he saw Semele slaughtering a bull at his altars. Then she went swimming in river Asopus to wash off the blood of the sacrifice. They started having a relationship.

The secret relationship continued for some time until one day Semele became pregnant. Hera, Zeus's wife, learned about it and became jealous. She, being a god, was able to change her looks and went to see Semele. Semele fell for the trick.

Semele and Zeus managed to make a vow to each other so that she could please his friend. Zeus, under oath, had to fulfill his pledge to Semele. On a specified date, Zeus appeared to her in his glory.

It was not easy to save her beloved. He struck her to death with his lightning. Zeus sewed the fetus into his thigh to hide him from Hera and other enemies until his time of delivery came.

Zeus delivered Dionysus. As he grew up, Zeus told him about his past.

Dionysus, in order to save his mother, he conquered Hades. He then made his mother a goddess on Mount Olympus. She changed her name to Thyone so that his enemies could not recognize her.

He had for a long time lived with the intention of avenging his mother. His cousin, Pentheus, and his aunts had scorned at the new religion he had started. They claimed that Semele was struck by lightning because she claimed she was made pregnant by Zeus. They said that Zeus punished her together with her unborn child.

Before he arrived at Thebes, he first made his aunts mad. They moved from one place to another under the influence of Dionysus. He came from the East and started telling the people of Thebes, who he was.

Dionysus managed to convince Pentheus to go and watch the celebrations on the mountain. Upon arrival, he drove his followers into a frenzy. Agave unknowingly tore his son into pieces and carried his head back to Thebes.

The first song in the Greek plays was used to set up the background and history of the play. For instance, the introduction of The Bacchae could have inspired memories that were very familiar to the audiences of the time.

Dionysus was able to interact with mortal men and women. The chorus inspired the interrelationship because of how he possessed them and made them lead him. He controlled their every movement with his power.

Euripides begins the play and introduces Dionysus. The other characters do not know who he is. He comes in as a stranger from Lydia. Many who hear <https://assignbuster.com/prehistoric-greek-tragedy-the-bacchae-by-euripides-essay/>

him think that he is the prophet or a servant of the god Dionysus. It resulted in a tragedy that they could not avoid.

The chorus is mainly used to sing in unison but not involved in the action of the play. The chorus is traditionally a combined group of singers. They dance and move in honor of their God, Dionysus.

The chorus mainly expounds on themes. They do this in a poetic manner. The Bacchae chorus mainly comprises of religious women. He comes with them from Asia after they willingly accepted to follow him and honor him as their God.

The Chorus seeks to influence the teaching and acceptance of Dionysian rites. They heighten the drama through their song and dance. They caress and raise the emotions in the play.

The structure and plot of the play do not involve the chorus. It only brings out the purpose of the play. Whether they are active in the play or not, they play a vital role.

Thus, A. W Schlegel refers to the Bacchae as the ideal spectator. When Pentheus binds Dionysus and tells his soldiers to throw him into the dungeon, the chorus only warns Pentheus. They tell him that he cannot escape the punishment that Dionysus will bring upon him.

There is a section in the Bacchae's poems that explicitly warns Pentheus. They cry because of the pain that the king is causing by talking harshly. They remind him about Cadmus, his grandfather. He had ruled well and still had respect for the new religion.

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The chorus plays an all important role in the Bacchae. They bring out the best of Dionysus as a god and contribute to convincing the new subjects to honor him. If one does not want to listen, they sound a warning. It also shows how the Bacchae's role was not that of action but singing and watching.