Life And Fate Of Women Of Troy

Introduction Fate and Suffering (Downfall)

Set in a world where the impact of war has the power to manipulate the idea of fate and future, Euripides' "Women of Troy" illustrated the vulnerability of not only men, but women as well. By mirroring the historical context of the Peloponnesian war, Euripides uses Hecuba to encapsulate his audience with the reality of the impact war has on those who are innocent and powerless. As a result of the merciful Greeks, as well as her crushed fate, Hecuba's "throned in dust" status showcases her quick downfall to an immoral future, creating a moral unease in his audience. The impact of her suffering is further intensified through her grieving process and heart-to-heart conversations with the Chorus, signifying the end of an honourable life comparing slavery and death to be equal. Euripides' choices in language use alongside his use of literary devices in presenting Hecuba's clear defeat exemplifies the agonizing pain and consequences as a result of such pointless, unnecessary acts.

Hecuba (Women Values)

To contradict the prevailing views that people had during the Peloponnesian war, where women were seen as inferior to their male counterparts, Euripides puts together a strong female character base throughout the text. It is significant in the way that Euripides chooses to present Hecuba, a powerful female protagonist, as she herself acts as a diatribe against patriarchal society, juxtaposing any engrained beliefs that were saturated into society during this war time. This can be clearly seen in the technique in which Hecuba dominates the stage as she presents her opening lamentation. As Euripides set women to take centre stage rather than men, the lengthy nature of her monologue allowed Euripides to set forth his proto feminst ideas and perspectives. Parallel to this, Hecuba is portrayed as a passionate and understanding leader, despite the overwhelming pain and sorrow she felt, which is clearly seen through her interaction with the Chorus. Although the stichomythia between Hecuba and the Chorus of their "grief" and "suffering" exemplifies their song of sorrow as they weep to each other, she chooses to bring what she has left of her leadership role within the women, into their changed futures as slaves. Through this, Euripides presents to the audience the idea that women should not be degraded for their gender as they are also capable of leading others in a way that gives rise to companionship which is seen between herself and the Chorus, along with all the women of Troy.

Euripides's Use of Language & Literary Devices

Euripides' specific use of language and literary devices in portraying the grief women suffered, adds further emphasis towards the ways in which he presents women. He consistently refers to all the women of Troy as innocent bystanders who are oppressed in times of war, revealing their harsh future realities as a result. In addition to this, his use of animal imagery in which is displayed through the Chorus, exemplifies the emotions women felt, referring to Hecuba's pain as a "howl of agony". The use of this expressive tool intensifies the magnitude of Hecuba's pain, implying that Hecuba suffered an emotional turmoil that is far beyond tolerable, which in

turn not only further reinforces the audience's sympathy, but the Trojan women as well. Furthermore, the act of Hecuba being “dragged as a slave” underscores the substantial change in circumstances of her lifestyle and status, enhancing the immense amount of loss she experienced. Consequently, Euripides' use of this technique to present an image of Hecuba's demolished physical and mental state, elevates the dramatist’s condemnation of war, allowing him to reveal the unfortunate impacts imposed upon women.

Men Suffering

While Euripides primarily focuses on portraying the pain and suffering of women, he does not completely vilify men or victimize women, ensuring that he maintains an unbiased view, underscoring the importance of integrity through his characterization of both male and female characters. Talthybius, the bearer of bad news, is the only male character that shows sympathy towards the women, establishing himself as an intricate figure. This is presented through ways in which he employs youthful mystique language when announcing the dreadful news to Hecuba. It is clearly seen that he tries to be sensitive and mitigate the impacts of Polyxena’s death to her, announcing that Polyxena is to “serve Achilles at his tomb” where her “fate is settled” and “all her troubles are over”. While he represents an enemy stage, his character shows the audience that men can also be passionate and sympathetic, contradicting the biased belief that men should only be governed by masculine logics. In contrast to Talthybius, Euripides presents Helen in a complicated figure as she is both a victim of fate and a selfish character. Due to this, it becomes possible for the audience to sympathize with her as she is merely a victim of fortune in which she was bewitched by Aphrodite and governed by her love for Paris. However, the ways in which she shifts the blame to Hecuba prevents the audience from completely sympathizing with her and instead renders her as a self-absorbed and repugnant character. This notion is further fortified by the fact that she cares so little about the “tens of thousands dead” on behalf as the phrase quantifies and magnifies the catastrophic consequences of her lust for Paris.

Conclusion Fate and Suffering

The influence power has when combined with fate and downfall is presented throughout the text as the core idea of hierarchy and class based on gender. Characters within the text share the plethora of emotions and grief which is clearly presented through Hecuba’s suffering, which ultimately doesn’t change, as the root of her grief remains lost. Underscoring the whole text is the realisation that the repercussions of war destroys the fate of those who were destined for a good life or even a royal life, accentuating that war brings nothing but damaging torment and heartache.