

Hollywood, Here Come the Maenads

YOUR TASK: Imagine you are a play director or a filmmaker. You've been looking for material for a new film, and you've just stumbled upon *The Bacchae*, a play you read in high school. You realize that it's filled with complex characters, morally ambiguous characters, opposing forces, lots of action, and possesses a dark, psychological side; however, you know that the ancient Greek theater style may not appeal to today's audience, so you need to rework it. How will you modernize this play to suit a modern audience's palette while still remaining faithful to the frame Euripides made?

Working alone or with a partner, decide on what you can do in your modern adaptation. Will you throw away this polytheistic god stuff and make it a more believable modern conflict? Or, will you maintain the story and names and add special effects? Decide on a setting, the characters.

What's this play really about? Some things to consider:

- Turf war
- Differing ideologies/politics
- Wild vs sane
- Revenge
- Groups, gangs, cults, following
- Tradition vs. New
- Fear vs. Following
- Wisdom vs. Irrationality
- Femininity vs. Masculinity
- Faith vs. Skepticism
- Supernatural, miracles

Choose to write a **STAGE PLAY** or a movie/television script in **SCREENPLAY FORMAT**. Be familiar with the conventions of that style. Use the models as reference.

Stage Play Pros

You are already familiar with the format!

Stage Play Cons

You are limited to ONE SETTING. On stage.

The audience cannot get up close and personal with the actors because they can only see from their seats.

Movie Script Pros

You can use camera angles to get up close to the characters and move angles.

You can move setting easily with cuts.

Easier to use special effects.

Movie Script Cons

You may not be familiar with the format, and it is very different than a play.

Re-Write a Scene

Once you have established your modernized setting and characters, choose a scene from the play that you think would translate well into a modern film or play. Use the original play as reference, but you may combine and/or omit parts of a section. Be sure that your scene/s feel/s complete. Your finished scene should be the same number of pages as in the play. Work to develop the theme of opposing forces as Euripides does in each of his scenes. Be sure to include two footnotes explaining how you use/illustrate two literary techniques as

defined on page 3 of your play terms packet. (Hubris, amathia, stichomythic dialogue, hamartia, dramatic irony, etc.)

REQUIREMENTS

1. **PITCH PARAGRAPH.** Write a “pitch” which sets up the premise of your remake. Please write a thoughtful and detailed paragraph summary explaining your overall adaptation. What have you changed and why/how?
2. **TITLE and CHARACTERS.** Have a title and Character List. Provide a brief description of the characters: who’s who? If changing the names of the characters, make it clear.
3. **SET UP PARAGRAPH:** Describe your setting. You need to clearly paint the scene. What place makes a good fit for the scene? An urban setting? A country-western? A suburban high school? Be **VIVID:** show us the location.
4. **CHORUS MUST REMAIN.** You may NOT eradicate the Chorus, yet it can’t remain in the same format, so how will you change it? Will its role be broken down into other parts? You might incorporate a gimmick like a news broadcast or a homeless crazy person cautioning the characters... They serve an important purpose: advising, providing back story, enhancing theme/s, and/or questioning and judging character behavior. If you decide to cut it, its purpose/role needs to be worked in some other way, through the characters’ dialogue, for example.
5. **DIALOGUE.** Rewrite the dialogue to fit the time and place you have selected. The play is graphic, but please be appropriate for a classroom audience. Be faithful to all that is in *The Bacchae*. Adapt but do not omit.
6. **ACTION DIRECTIONS A MUST.** Be sure to have *action directions*. Follow the conventions of play or screenplay format depending on your chosen medium.
7. **ANCIENT TECHNIQUES.** Incorporate **at least TWO** literary devices cited on the Aristotle’s *Poetics* page (plus the add ins) in your packet into your scene and footnote how you used it: *anagnorisis*, *nemesis*, *peripeteia*, *hubris*, *hamartia*, *tragic hero*, *dramatic irony*, *stichomythic dialogue*, *deus ex machina*, etc. Show that you know what these terms mean. In the footnote, explain **HOW** the term appears and **WHY**.
8. **HOW LONG?** Be faithful to the scene/s you select. It should feel complete
9. **SLOPPINESS IS A NO NO.** All sentences should be capitalized. All names, too. Stage directions are italicized and in parentheses with punctuation in a play. Movie scripts show location (INT or EXT for example). **FOLLOW CONVENTIONS and PROOFREAD.**
10. Please submit to turnitin. One copy per pair. The partner NOT submitting the document should submit a document that says, “I worked with ___ and he/she submitted our copy.”

Scene Selection Ideas:

- Tiersias, Cadmus and Pentheus clashing on how to handle the new god.
- Dionysus being imprisoned and breaking out.
- The Bacchae’s magical and violent field scene.
- Dionysus tempting Pentheus to spy on the Bacchae.
- The death of Pentheus.
- The aftermath of Dionysus’ revenge.
- Some version mixing the above in a clever way

PLAY FORMAT

Title

Byline

Character List:

Dionysus = New name. Describe the character. Age, gender, background.

Tieresias = New name. Describe the character. Age, gender, background.

Setting. *Blah blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah. Please provide scenery. SHOW the place where we are.*

Dionysus: Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. *(Stage directions. What does the actor need to do?)*

Tieresias: *(Stage directions. What does the actor need to do?)* Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah.

OR

Dionysus

Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah. *(Stage directions. What does the actor need to do?)*

Tieresias

(Stage directions. What does the actor need to do?) Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah. Blah blah blah. Blah blah. Blah.

For movie format, see links posted.