

विश्वविद्यालय की परीक्षाओं का सर्वश्रेष्ठ मार्गदर्शक

नई परीक्षा प्रणाली पर आधारित

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B. A. Part III
English Literature
Paper II

2023





**B. A. Part – III
English Literature
Paper – II**

(Drama)

Important and expected stanzas for explanation and questions with their answers.

Note : Question No. 1 is compulsory. Attempt the remaining four questions from Unit II, III, IV and V, selecting one questions from each unit. In all attempt five questions.

Unit-I

Q. 1. Explain with reference to the context any four of the following passages, adding critical notes where necessary :-

(Murder in the Cathedral)

- (A) "Man's life is a cheat.....to unreality."
- (B) "Is there no way,.....without perdition?"
- (C) "Endurance of friendship.....know accord."
- (D) Ye mustn't mind.....fur me.
- (E) We do not.....partly living.
- (F) The same.....he turns.
- (G) For good or for ill.....or evil.
- (H) "Seven years and.....are left alone.
- Or King rules or.....are left alone.
- (I) "This is the creature.....betrayed his King."
- (J) "Martyrelom is always.....being a martyr."
- (K) "Forgive us, O Lord.....justice of God."
- (L) "We have fought.....OPEN THE DOOR!"

(Desire Under the Elms)

- (M) I'm not the worst.....others hums.
- (N) Why don't ye dance,.....be merry.
- (O) Even the music can't.....in the corners!
- (P) But I'll git my.....ew an' him.

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- (Q) Ye've no right! It's my farm.
 (R) It's spring an' I'm the prophets done.
 (S) What if I does kiss suinen' 'em with.
 (T) They hated me cause seek an find!
 (U) I'm ridin' out't old hypocrite!
 (V) But I'll take vengeance gold in the west!

(Hayavadana)

- (W) They forget themselves around and sang.
 (X) Magicians, Mendicants out of all this?
 (Y) I have become complete human voice?
 (Z) "Why should love a single flower?"
 (AA) No woman could resist real depth.
 (AB) How could I-in fight him.
 (AC) Be quiet, stupid to be incomplete.
 (AD) Hayavadana, what's be altered.
 (AE) Devdatta, my friend to her family.
 (AF) And have you asked me to.

(The Birthday Party)

- (AG) I've got a small private things change.
 (AH) You know one thing very busy man.
 (AI) The main issue is a myself Satisfied?
 (AJ) His father gave him could get out.
 (AK) My father said to me, ... home to your wife.
 (AL) My little room was any complaints.
 (AM) Look, why don't you a new room.
 (AN) She wasn't a Sunday came natural.
 (AO) I'll be all right would you?

Unit II

(Desire Under the Elms)

- Q. 2. Desire Under the Elms : Symbolism.
 Q. 3. Critically examine Desire Under the Elms as modern tragedy.
 Q. 4. Examine Desire Under the Elms as a realistic play.
 Q. 5. Write a note on the importance of the title of the play 'Desire Under the Elms' by O'Neill.
 What is the importance of desire in the play?
 Examine the significance of the title 'Desire Under the Elms'.
 Comment on the optness of the title 'Desire Under the Elms'.

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- Q. 6. Examine the significance of Abbie in 'Desire Under the Elms'.
 Examine the character of Abbie.
 Q. 7. Trace the character of Eben as a hero of the tragedy 'Desire Under the Elms'.
 Examine the character of Eben in 'Desire Under the Elms'.
 Examine the ways in which the presence of the mother lovers over Eben's personality in 'Desire Under the Elms'.
 Q. 8. The major theme of 'Desire Under the Elms', is Oedipus Complex or Mother-Fixation. Elucidate.
 Critically evaluate the oedipus relationship in Desire Under the Elms.
 The Theme of the Play : Oedipus-complex or Mother-fixation What is Mother-fixation?

Unit III

(Murder in the Cathedral)

- Q. 9. Discuss whether or not Murder in the Cathedral is a tragedy?
 Q. 10. Discuss, in your own words, the role of the tempters as assigned by T. S. Eliot in his famous tragic play 'The Murder in the Cathedral'.
 Who are the tempters in this play 'The Murder in the Cathedral'? What is their part in the action of the play?
 Discuss the scene of temptation in Murder in the Cathedral.
 Q. 11. Discuss in your own words, the role of the four Knights.
 Is it true that the Knights proved as an instrument of Becket's martyrdom? Discuss it.
 Q. 12. Describe, in your own words, Thomas Becket as a great tragic hero or the character of Becket.
 Is it true that Thomas Becket had played his role like a great hero when he was working as a Chancellor?
 Q. 13. Attempt an essay on the imagery used by Eliot in 'The Murder in the Cathedral'.
 "Much of the colour and pictorial quality of " The Murder in the Cathedral' has been provided by the imagery employed by Eliot in it." Discuss.

Unit IV

(The Birthday Party)

- Q. 14. What is meant by the Absurd Drama? What are its major Characteristics.
 Q. 15. What are the salient features of the character of Goldberg?
 Examine the character of Goldberg in 'The Birthday Party'.
 How far do you think the character of McCann significant in 'The Birthday Party'?
 Examine the character of McCann in The Birthday Party.

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Q. 16. Write a short note on chorus in the play Murder in the Cathedral.
 Q. 17. Murder in Cathedral displays the theme of morality and spirituality. Explain.

Q. 18. Discuss the structure and technique of 'The Birthday Party'.
 Discuss the structure of 'The Birthday Party'.

Q. 19. Examine the character of Stanley in 'The Birthday Party'.

Q. 20. Bring out the comic element in 'The Birthday Party'.

Q. 21. Is 'The Birthday Party' a comedy or tragedy? Give a reasoned answer.

Q. 22. Examine critically the significance of the title of 'The Birthday Party'.

Unit V

(Hayavadana)

Q. 23. Discuss at length Hayavadana's quest for completeness.

Q. 24. How far is Hayavadana a suitable title for the play?

Q. 25. Discuss Hayavadana as a Comedy.

Q. 26. Sketch the character of Padmini.

Write a note on the portrayal of Padmini in 'Hayavadana'.

Q. 27. Comment on the relationship between Padmini and Devadatta in 'Hayavadana'.

Q. 28. Critically evaluate The Birthday Party as an absurdist play.

Q. 29. Discuss Stanley and Meg's relationship.

Q. 30. Comment on the use of dolls in Hayavadana.

Unit-I

Q. 1. Explain with reference to the context any four of the following passages, adding critical notes where necessary :-

(Murder in the Cathedral)

(A) "Man's life is a cheat and a disappointment;

All things are unreal,

Unreal or disappointing :

The Catherine wheel, the pantomime cat,

The prize given at the children's party,

The prizes awarded for the English Essay,

The scholar's degree, the statesman's decoration.

All things become less real, man passes

From unreality to unreality."

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of the four Tempters from the play, 'Murder in the Cathedral' Written by T. S. Eliot.

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Prior to their speech, the Chorus had made it clear that they had not found any rest in the house or in the street because of having the restless movement. Both the air and the sky were thick along with sick smell.

Explanation-The speech of the four Tempters gave Thomas an advice when he was feeling much puzzled at that time. Its reason was that he had not decided what action he should take, so the four Tempters offered him another temptation.

They made it clear to him that a man's life is only deception and despair because all the worldly things are both unreal and disappointing. They gave some examples showing that everything in this world is unreal. There is the moving fire-work in which children take much pleasure. There is also the pantomime cat which is only a toy of deception to give joy to the viewers. The prizes are given to the children at the party and the writer of the English Essay is also given a prize. In the same way, the degree of the scholar and the decoration of the statesman are fully unreal. In this way, all men pass from one unreality to another unreality. All such prizes give only temporary pleasure and all persons suffer from a number of unreality.

(B) "Is there no way, in my soul's sickness,

Does not lead to damnation in pride?

I well know that these temptations

Mean present vanity and future torment.

Can sinful pride be driven out

Only by more sinful? Can I neither act nor suffer

Without perdition?"

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of Thomas from the play, 'Murder in the Cathedral' written by T. S. Eliot. The Fourth Tempter had put Thomas in a confused state of mind by his offer. He could not understand how he should act under his suggestion. He did not like to commit the sin of pride to suffer more and more.

Explanation-If Thomas had accepted the offer of the Fourth Tempter, he would be bowing to the sin of pride, so he did not like to do so. Secondly, if he desired to achieve the high position of martyrdom with the purpose of getting personal glory by getting a high position in heaven and such desire was also related to pride. He knew well that all such temptations would take him to a high sense of pride as well as for future sufferings.

For example, Lucifer was guilty of the same sin of pride because he had an ambition to get the highest position in heaven. If Thomas Becket surrendered to the strong desire of personal glory, he would again commit the sin of pride and it would lead him to damnation. With this reason, he could not understand what he should do under the situation of dilemma.

- (C) "Endurance of friendship does not depend
Upon ourselves, but upon circumstance.
But circumstance is not undetermined.
Unreal friendship may turn to real
But real friendship, once ended, cannot be mended.
Sooner shall enmity turn to alliance.
The enmity that never knew friendship
Can sooner know accord."

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of the Third Tempter talking to Thomas from the play, 'Murder in the Cathedral' written by T. S. Eliot. Thomas had asked the Tempter that he should inform him about the purpose of his visit in a direct manner.

Explanation-Eliot describes the reply of the Third Tempter to Thomas about his visit to him. He added that the purpose of his visit to him is quite clear. The continuance of friendship does not depend upon ourselves but it depends upon the prevailing circumstances. He added that the circumstances cannot be separated from the deeds of a man but they are always related to those deeds which a man does.

The Third Tempter further said that false friendship can change into true friendship but true friendship which is broken once cannot be revived again to its previous position with its good quality. Enemies can become friends again. Those who are enemies to one another without having been friends in the past can reach mutual understanding and they can also work peacefully and with good terms. On the contrary, that true friendship which has changed into enmity cannot return to real condition once again.

(D) Ye mustn't mind him. He's an old man. I don't want t' pretend playing' Maw t' ye Eben. Ye're too big an' too strong fur that. I wan t' be fren's with ye. Mebbe with me fur a fren' ye'd find ye'd like livin' here better. I kin make it easy fur ye with him, mebbe. I cal'late I kin git him t' do most anything' fur me.

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of the 'Desire Under the Elms' written by 'Eugene O' Neil'. In these lines Abbie says to Eben. It is conversation by Act F scene-III.

Explanation-Abbie has come to Cabot's house as his wife. Cabot's son, Eben is revengeful because she has taken the place of her mother. Softening his attitude, she tells Eben that he must not mind the old man. He is an old man. She does not want to pretend playing mother to him (Eben). He (Eben) is too big and too strong for that. She wants to be friendly with him. Perhaps, by being friendly with her he would find living on the farm quite interesting and attractive. She can make it easy with him, perhaps. She calculates she can get him to do almost anything for her. (This is how she seduces him.)

- (E) We do not wish anything to happen,
Seven years we have lived quietly.
Succeeded in avoiding notice,
Living and partly living.

Reference to the Context-These are the words of poor women forming the chorus of T. S. Eliot's poetic drama 'Murder in the Cathedral'. In these lines the writer says the poor women are deprived on two counts.

Explanation-The women, though great admirers of Thomas Becket, their Archbishop has fearful foreboding regarding his return. They are not a happy lot but they sort of fitted themselves in their daily grind with its ups and downs. They have not been living, life to the full, but midway between 'living' and 'part living' and they are not want to lose even that when the return of Thomas would create such a commotion that it will seriously upset the hitherto even tenor of their life.

Note-Living and partly living-the poor women (Chorus) are deprived on two counts-material and spiritual. Materially, their living is subsistence level, and spiritually, as they were leaderless in the absence of their Archbishop they lack moral courage and try to avoid being noticed in any way as that may mean trouble.

- (F) The same things happen again and again.
Men learn little from others' experience.
But in the life of one man, never
The same time returns. Sever
The cord, shed the scale. Only
The fool, fixed in his folly, may think
He can turn the wheel on which he turns.

Reference to the Context-This is said in reply to the First Tempter by Thomas Becket in the play 'Murder in the Cathedral' by T. S. Eliot.

Explanation-Eliot, as often as not, juxtaposes metaphysical ideas on man's relation with Time, Eternity and God. This passage is not exception. The image of a wheel is recurrent image in the play and illuminates the central meanings. Thomas, here, seems to say that future is not very different from the past it is more or less a repetition of the past with same cycles of seasons year after year, the same human situations cropping up every time. Only if we surrender ourselves to the will of God and cut the worldly ties and renew ourselves ('Shed the Scale') so as to be in tune with God's design can we evade the meaningless repetitions of the cycles of time. We should unite our wills to the will of God at the centre of the wheel and become a significant part of God's pattern. The Incarnation of Christ has renewed the hopes of mankind wallowing in the fury and mire of worldly lures.

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- (G) For good or ill let the wheel turn.
The wheel has been still, these seven years, and no good.
For ill or good, let the wheel turn.
For who knows the end of good or evil?

Reference-These lines have been taken from the play 'Murder in the Cathedral' written by T.S. Eliot.

Context-This statement is of third priest.

Explanation-The third priest says that no one can tell what shall be the fate of the Archbishop. The incidents are now beyond human control. Only fate will decide the course of events. Nothing can be said about the good or evil consequences of Thomas's return to England. It is Destiny which will decide everything shortly. Daughters of music the chorus women.

- (H) "Seven years and the summer is over,
Seven years since the Archbishop left us,
He who was always kind to his people.
But it would not be well if he should return.
King rules or barons rule;
We have suffered various oppression,
But mostly we are left to our own devices,
And we are content if we are left alone."

Or King rules or.....are left alone.

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of the Chorus (Part One) from the play 'Murder in the Cathedral' written by T. S. Eliot. The agricultural worker returns home in the evening after doing his day's work. The New Year is about to come and destined event will soon take place. Meantime he remembers all the saints and martyrs who have made their sacrifice in the memory of Jesus Christ.

Explanation-According to the writer, the period of seven years has passed since the Archbishop had left them and even the summer season has come to an end. He has gone to France from England and the common people have suffered much during his absence. The Archbishop had been very kind to his people, or to his followers.

The women of the Chorus felt much worried about the Archbishop if he returned to England because his life was not safe. There was serious danger to his life because the followers of King Henry were bent upon taking his life. They added that it would not be well if he should return to his country. It was not significant for them whether King Henry or the barons (land-lords) ruled over the country and the people.

The members of the Chorus added that they had suffered different kinds of cruelties from King Henry and the barons. Then they had been left alone to manage their own affairs. They further said that they were fully satisfied for being left alone to manage their own affairs without any kind of interference in their lives. In that way, they tried their best to keep their house-holds perfect order.

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- (I) "This is the creature that crawled upon the King; swollen
With blood and swollen with pride.
Creeping out of the London dirt,
Crawling up like a louse on your shirt,
The man who cheated, swindled, lied; broke his oath and
betrayed his King."

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of the Three Knights from the play 'Murder in the Cathedral' written by T.S. Eliot. Three Knights charged the Archbishop for being in revolt against King Henry and the law of the land. Thus, he had become faithless to the King in spite of his low birth.

Explanation-The Three Knights charged the Archbishop for being in revolt against King Henry. In the beginning, he was only a low-born creature and he used to attend to the King in the most humble manner like a parasite. They added that soon after that he had become very proud with a sense of his own importance, pride and arrogance.

The Three Knights added that soon after that he had forgotten that he had come out of the London dirty surroundings, crept like an insect and crawled up like a louse on a shirt. They added that Thomas had cheated, deceived and told many lies to King Henry. They further said that he had broken his oath and obedience to the King. In that way, he had proved himself faithless and a traitor to betray the King in the most proud and disobedient manner.

- (J) "Martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr."

Reference to the Context-These lines are an extract from the speech of the Archbishop which he was making in the Cathedral before the gathering of the masses on the Christmas morning in 1170 from the play 'Murder in the Cathedral' written by T. S. Eliot. A Christian martyr is never by an accident, for saints are immortal like God.

Explanation-During his wise speech to the masses, Thomas made it clear that a man may become a ruler by means of his will-power as well as by his efforts and clever means but a Christian can never become a martyr by his own desires and designs. His martyrdom always takes place under the wish and blessings of God. When he becomes a martyr under the plan of God, he is to show his love for all human beings. He also gives them clear warning against sinfulness. Then he guides all the persons to follow the right path to become the followers of the path of goodness.

Thomas Becket further speaks that a Christian martyr is never the result of a man's design because the true martyr comes to serve as an instrument of God because he had united his will with the will of God. Thus, he does not desire anything for himself, nor even the honour and fame of becoming a martyr.

(K) "Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as
type of the common man,
Of the men and women who shut the door and sit by
the Fire;

Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the
night of God, the surrender required, the
deprivation inflicted;

Who fear the injustice of men less than the justice of God."

Reference to the Context—These lines are an extract from the speech of the Chorus from the play *'Murder in the Cathedral'* written by T. S. Eliot. The Chorus asserted that the earth shall be a holy place where, like Christ, the Archbishop had lived and died as a martyr.

Explanation—The Chorus addressed Jesus Christ as their supreme master to forgive them for their indifference to the Archbishop. Thomas Becket who had been murdered by the Four Knights. They added that they admitted themselves like ordinary and humble persons. They represented themselves as the common men and women who shut the doors of their houses and sit near the fire to get the warmth.

The Chorus members further said that they were afraid of the blessing of God as well as the loneliness of the night related to God. That period of night is for them and for the human soul to make its journey to become united with God. They were afraid of the needed surrender as well as of the losses suffered by them. They admitted the fear from the injustice of men less than the justice of God.

(L) "We have fought the beast

And have conquered. We have only to conquer

Now, by suffering. This is the easier victory.

Now is the triumph of the Cross, now

Open the door! I command it. OPEN THE DOOR!"

Reference to the Context—These lines are an extract from the speech of Thomas from the play *'Murder in the Cathedral'* written by T. S. Eliot. Thomas told the priests that they regarded him careless, desperate and mad but he did not agree with them. He added that every life and every act is the blending to the priests.

Explanation—Thomas replied to the priests that he was ready to die as a sacrifice to the divine law which he regarded superior to the man-made laws. He asked them to open the door of the Church because he did not like any fighting against beasts because they had already fought against them and they had won a victory over that beast which is within them.

Thomas further said that they should win a victory over the evil which would be an easy victory through their suffering. He added that it would be the victory like that of Jesus Christ who had died by climbing up the Cross.

At last he ordered the priests to open the door in a real manner so that his killers and other persons might enter the room without any obstacle. He did not fear even his death which comes to all persons under the command of God.

(Desire Under the Elms)

(M) I'm not the wust in the wor'd—an' yew an me've got a lot in common.
I kin tell that by lookin' at ye. Waal—I've had a hard life, too—oceans o'
trouble an' nutin, but wuk fur reward. I was a orphan early an' had t' wuk fur
others in others folk's hums.

Reference to the Context—These lines occur in the tragic play 'Desire Under the Elms' by O'Neill.

In these lines Abbie says to Eben. It is conversation by Act I Scene IV.

Explanation—This is the speech of Abbie to Eben. Since the play deals with incest, Abbie, Eben's stepmother is seducing Eben who in the beginning hates her and wants to avenge upon her. She tells him that by looking at his face she can know that there are some similarities between the two. She is not the worst in the world. Well, she too had a hard life, she too had oceans of trouble and nothing but work for reward. She became an orphan early in her life and had to work for others in others's homes until she decided that she must work in her own house and marry someone.

(N) Why don't ye dance, damn ye? I axed ye here t' dance, -t' eat, drink
an' be merry.

Reference—As above.

Explanation—Old Cabot had invited all the neighbouring farmers to celebrate the birth of his new son. But the farmers had a shrewd suspicion as to who the real father was; and their wives were actually talking about it.

So Cabot rudely intervenes to prove his superiority. He asks the guests why they were not dancing and why they were huddling together like hens and talking among themselves. He had invited them to eat, drink and dance.

This also shows how rude and domineering Cabot could be.

(O) Even the music can't drive it out-somethin'. Ye kin feel it droppin' off
the elums climbin' up the roof, sneakin' down the chimney, pokin' in the
corners.

Reference—As above.

Explanation—Eben is getting impatient that nothing was happening Cabot feels that something eerie was moving the house and he could not bear it. Even the music could not drive that something out. You can feel it dropping from the elms climbing up the roof and silently coming into the house down the chimney. It lurks and pokes in the corners of the house.

Was this something the spirit of Eben's mother? And was it trying to take revenge on old Cabot? The symbolism of the elms is also sinisterly worked out here.

(P) But I'll git my vengeance, too! I'll pray Maw t' come back t' help me-t'
put her cuss on yew an' him.

Reference—As above.

Explanation-After his interview with Cabot, Eben had started hating Abbie. He believed that Abbie had seduced him to have a son who should inherit the property.

So he tells Abbie that he is going to pray to his mother's spirit to come and take revenge on her and Cabot. He would ask her to put a curse on Abbie and him. This shows his one-track mind which takes a hasty decision.

(Q) *Ye've no right! She wa'n't yewr Maw! It was her farm! Didn't he steal it from her? She's dead. It's my farm.*

Reference-These lines have been extracted from the play 'Desire Under the Elms' written by the great American dramatist Eugene O'Neill.

Context-On the farm of Cabot, the three brothers, his sons, Simeon, Peter and Eben are talking. They are tired because their father has made them do overwork. So the two elder brothers Simeon and Peter have decided to go to California. But at the same time, they are not prepared to leave their share on the farm and claim that two thirds of the farm is theirs because they have also worked very hard on it.

Explanation-The youngest brother Eben does not agree and reacts saying that they have no right on the farm and he is the sole owner. He is under the impression that the farm actually belonged to his mother and now when she is dead, it has naturally come to him. He blames his father that his father had forcibly snatched it from her mother who was its real owner. Cabot, the father married his mother and got hold of it. So he declares that his brothers cannot claim any share.

The dialogue shows that Eben is fully confident that the farm belongs to him but actually Cabot and then his three sons had developed it into fertile land while originally it was nothing but simply a ground stone.

(R) *It's spring an' I'm feelin' damned. 'he says, 'Damned like an old bare hickory tree fit on'y fur burnin'. 'he says; An' then I calc'late I must've looked a mite hopeful, fur he adds real spry and vicious. 'But don't git no fool idee I'm dead. I've sworn t' live a hundred an' I'll do it, if on'y t' spite yer sinful greed! An' now I'm ridin' out t' learn God's message t' me in the spring, like the prophets done.*

Reference-As above.

Context-As above. Simeon is relating how the father went and what did he say. He was going in his carriage and when Simeon asked him, he replied in a very angry and hateful tone.

Explanation-Simeon says that perhaps the father had known about their plans to go to California. He was looking strange but at the same time a little dejected. He told him that it was spring and he was feeling lonely and miserable. He had no interest in his home. He angrily rebuked Simeon that he should

not fool himself to think that now their father would die and would never come back. He has, on the other hand, decided to live a hundred years and thus all their hopes will be destroyed and they cannot take the possession of the farm. He feels that he has got a message of God within him and he is going to follow it. Then he ordered him strongly to go to the fields and work. Cabot is still stronger than his sons and is going out with an idea to get married the third time but he has not disclosed his plan to his sons. God's message is an internal urge to have a wife for him.

(S) *What if I does kiss her? She's like t'night, she's soft'n' wa'm, her eyes kin wink like a star, her mouth's wa'm, her arms're wa'm, she smells like a wa'm plowed field she's purty.....Ay -eh! By God A'-mighty she's purty.....an' I don't give a damn how many sins she's sinned afore mine or who she's sinned' 'em with.*

Reference-As above.

Context-Eben is tired of thinking and discussing about the father and is sad to feel that the old man had killed his mother by making her do hard work. He now plans to go to the village and enjoy with Minie who is just like a prostitute. His brothers laugh at him that she has been the mistress of their father and then they have enjoyed her. But Eben does not care for such things and in spite of the ridicule and hatred of his brothers, he is determined to go.

Explanation-Eben is thinking about Minie and his relations with her and it is like a soliloquy. He is happy to think of the pleasure he would get from Minie, though so many before him have enjoyed her. He would be happy to kiss her. She is still beautiful and delicate and warm like night and can give him all the pleasures. Her eyes are bright and twinkle like the stars in the sky. Her mouth and her arms are charming and they invite everybody. She gives out sweet smell like the fields that have been freshly ploughed. She is thoroughly pretty and he does not care if she had many lovers and had slept with them. He has decided that he will also enjoy her beauty and would definitely go to her.

(T) *They hated me cause I was hard. I hated them' cause they was soft. They coveted the farm without knowin' what is meant. It made me bitter n wormwood.*

It aged me—them coveting what I'd made fur mine. Then this spring the call come—the voice o' God cryin in my wilderness, in my lonesomeness—t' go out an seek an find!

Reference to the Context-These lines occur in the tragic play 'Desire Under the Elms' by Eugene O'Neill.

In these lines Ephraim Cabot and his wife Abbie are talking to each other. Cabot tells her his life story. It is story of Act II Scene II.

Explanation—In their bed-room, Ephraim Cabot and his wife Abbie are talking to each other. Cabot tells her his life history : how at the age of twenty, fifty years ago, he came to that farm which was all full of stones and barren and how with hard work and dedication he changed it into a fertile land. His neighbours laughed at him. But now they are all dead or have left for West. Thus he grew hard, and had two wives, from the first wife he had two sons—Simeon and Peter and from the second Eben.

Then Cabot tells his wife Abbie that his sons hated him because he was hard and he hated them because they were soft. They were greedy; they coveted the farm without what it meant. Being in the farm was like being in Church or near God. It made Cabot bitter in that warm farmhouse and forest. It aged him—they coveting what he had made for his own. Then this spring came, giving him the call he heard the voice of God crying in his wilderness, in his lonesomeness that he should go and seek for himself another wife. And he (Cabot) married her (Abbie) she is his rose and her eyes are like doves.

(U) *I'm ridin' out t' learn God's message t' me in the spring like the prophets done', he says. I'll bet right then an' thar he knew plumb well he was goin' whorin, the stinkin' old hypocrite!*

Reference to the Context—These lines have been taken from the tragic play 'Desire Under the Elms' by O'Neill.

These lines spoken by Simeon in Act I Scene III.

Explanation—In his father's voice, Simeon mocking at the marriage of his father with Abbie says that his father while leaving the farm had told them that he was riding out to learn God's message to him in the spring like the prophets have done. But instead he married. He was just fooling us then. Simeon further says, "I can be right now and say that he know very well that he was going to get married to, somewhere, the hateful old hypocrite."

(V) *But I'll take vengeance now! I'll git the Sheriff? I'll tell him everythin'! Then I'll sing. I'm off to Californi—a! an' go—gold-Golden Gate—gold sun—fields o' gold in the west!*

Reference to the Context—These lines have been taken from the tragic play 'Desire Under the Elms' by Eugene O'Neill.

In these lines Abbie killed the newly born son out of the incestuous union between herself and her step-sons Eben for the real true love for even. It is story of Part III, Scene IV.

Explanation—Abbie killed the newly born out of the incestuous union between herself and her step-son Eben for the real true love for Eben. She thought that the child was an obstacle between their love. But this act of hers further complicated the situation. Eben further misunderstood her. He thought

that she killed the baby because he looked like him and she was bent up to finish the last remains of his. All this has driven him almost insane. He makes a rush past her for the door—then turns—shaking both fists at her, violently and tells her : "But I will take vengeance now. I will get the sheriff. I will tell him every thing, and get you arrested for your crime. Ten I will sing, I'm going off to California" and gold-Golden Gate—gold sun—fields of gold in the West. I am going for the Sheriff to come and get you. I want you to be taken away, locked up from me. I can't stand to look at you. Murderer and thief not you still tempt me, I will give you up to the sheriff."

(Hayavadana)

(W) *They forgot themselves and took off their bodies. And she took the laughing heads, and held them high so the pouring blood bathed her, coloured her red. Then she danced around and sang.*

Reference—These lines occur from the drama 'Hayavadana' by Girish Karnad.

Context—Bhagavat sings to continue the song of the Female chorus, in which it is said that love is bound to spread from trunk to all the flowers of the tree. Bhagavata adds that two friends did not care for their lives in their passion of love. They killed each other for their love of Padmini as also for the love of each other.

Explanation—In a strange love-triangle, the two friends decide not to live in rivalry, but to die for love. They decide to end their lives. But Padmini, who had love and admiration for both of them, held aloft the laughing heads of both the friends bathed in their blood, indicating that she desired to mingle the virtues of the two friends in one stream to fulfil her dream of a complete man. As she thinks that she has achieved her aim, she dances and sings.

(X) *Magicians, Mendicants, Maharishis, Fakris, Saints and Sadhus—Sadhus with short hair, Sadhus with beards—Sadhus in saffron, Sadhus in the altogether—hanging, singing, roating, gyrating, on the spkes, in the air, under water, under the ground.....*

I've covered them all. And what did I get out of all this?

Reference to the Context—These lines have been taken from the drama 'Hayavadana' by Girish Karnad.

It is conversation between Actor and Hayavadana.

Explanation—Hayavadana says to Actor that I have been not only to Banaras, Rameshwar, Gaya, Kedarnath, but also to the Durga of Khwaja Yusuf Baba also. I have also met Magicians Mendicants, Maharishis, Fakirs, Saints and Sadhus of all sorts—Sadhus with short hair, Sadhus with beards, Sadhus in saffron robes, Sadhus dressed in altogether, and Sadhus living in every imaginable posture hanging, surging, rotating gyrating and in every imaginable place on the spikes in the air under water, under the ground. I met all these Saints and Sadhus of all hues and characters.

(Y) I have become a complete horse-but not a complete being! This human voice-this cursed human voice-it's still there! How can I call myself complete? If I only could. What should I do, Bhagavata Sir? How can I get rid of this human voice?

Reference to the context:- These lines have been extracted from the play *Hayavadana* by Girish Karnad

Context—In this speech Hayavadana tells how he got rid of the human body to become a complete horse. Hayavadana had a horse's face on human body which made him incongruous. He wanted to be a complete man, but when the goddess appeared before him he asked only for completeness. The goddess turned him into a complete horse.

Explanation—But now he has no grouse since he will have the society of horses. Earlier he used to cover his face because he was not able to associate himself with either men or horses. Moreover, he is not to feel ashamed of any incongruity. But he still retains the human voice which is also a deformity. He wishes to get rid of the human voice also to become a complete horse. He asks Bhagavata to tell him what he should do to get rid of the human voice.

Remark—The writer wants to say that desire for completeness is inherent in everybody. But the process of evolution takes place in slow degrees. Hayavadana first gets rid of human body and of human voice thereafter. But the process will continue unceasingly.

(Z) "Why should love stick to the sap of a single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many-petalled, many-flowered lantana, why should it be tied down to the relation of a single flower?"

Reference to the Context—These lines are an extract from the song of the female chorus from Act I of the play, *'Hayavadana'* written by Girish Karnad. It is a reference by Bhagavata about the two fast and most intimate friends. Devadatta and Kapila, who were 'One Mind, One Heart'. As soon as they saw a young and beautiful girl they were so much wonder-struck by her matchless beauty and attraction that they forgot they also could not understand the meaning of that song which she was singing.

Explanation—The writer reproduced the comment of the female chorus who asserted that it is necessary for love to touch the heart of each and every person who comes within its magnetic sphere. She goes to prove it that if the trunk of a lantana tree has the feelings of love in its veins it must reach every part of that tree and it cannot remain limited to only one flower.

The female chorus further says that love cannot be the monopoly of any one person, so it cannot be tied into chains of any tradition. According to her love is like a free flowing stream which wakes up the spirit of love in other persons from its hidden situation.

Note : The writer shows that Kapila was the fast and intimate friend of Devadatta and he went out in search of the beautiful girl to get her married to his friend. As he saw her matchless beauty, he himself fell in love with her.

(AA) No woman could resist him and what does it matter that she's married? What a fool I've been. All these days I only saw that pleading in his eyes stretching out its arms, begging for a favour. But never looked in her eyes. And when I did took the whites of her eyes for their real depth.

Reference—As above.

Context—This is a soliloquy by Devadatta. Devadatta finally understood that Padmini fell in love with Kapila.

Explanation—This is a soliloquy of Devadatta. Now Devadatta is sure that Padmini is in love with Kapila. He notices that Padmini also becomes cheerful when she is in the company of Kapila. She keeps chattering in his presence. But now he thinks that Kapila's strong body, his manly muscles can fascinate any woman, even if she is a married one. He thinks that he has been a fool because he had only seen solicitations in the eyes of Kapila but had failed to observe love seated deeply in the eyes of Padmini. He had so far observed the whites of her eyes but now he sees flames of passion rising from the real depths of her eyes. Devadatta is shocked to see that it is not Kapila alone that begs favour of her love but Padmini is also in love with Kapila.

(AB) How could I-in your condition? I went only because you insisted, you wanted to keep your word. But I'm glad I went. A very funny thing happened—there was a wrestling pit and a wrestler from Gandhara was challenging people to fight him.

Reference—As above.

Context—In this speech Bhagavata reveals the mind of Padmini. When Padmini comes with her son to meet Kapila in the forest, Kapila asks her why she has come to him. Padmini knows that she had a craving for him, but she could not speak it out frankly. The dramatist thinks that it is necessary to reveal her feelings for Kapila.

Explanation—Therefore Bhagavata says on behalf of Padmini that it is very difficult to make Kapila understand her purpose of coming to him. If Devadatta had become his original self soon after taking her with him she would have perhaps forgotten Kapila. But Devadatta loses Kapila's strength bit by bit, inch by inch. Padmini had become enamored of Kapila's body so much that she could not help coming to Kapila when Devadatta did not have Kapila's strength left with him any more. Devadatta lost the strength in a slow process, just as the sand trickles from one glass to the other in a sand-glass. She left it very much. She can further tell him that she would not have gone to Devadatta in this way if the rishi had given her to Kapila.

(AC) Be quiet, stupid. Your body bathed in a river, swim and danced in it. Shouldn't your head know what river it was, what swim? Your head too must submerge in that river the flow must rumple your hair, run its tongue in your ears and press your head to its bosom. Until that's done, you'll continue to be incomplete.

Reference—As above.

Context—Kapil wants to know why she has come to him at all. Her touch has revived old memories. The body of Devadatta which he now has had felt and enjoyed the touch of her body.

Explanation—Therefore the body is happy in the memories of the past, but his brain had never felt and enjoyed the touch of her body. Therefore the body is happy but his mind is sore on being deprived of this joy. And it is no joy if the mind is not in harmony with the body.

Padmini says that he is a foolish fellow. When the body gets the pleasure of bathing in a river, the head must also submerge in that river for full and complete happiness. The flow of the river must be felt in the hair, in the ears, in the head for the real enjoyment. She wants to say that mere physical pleasure is not a pleasure. The complete self must get the feel of pleasure. She wants him to let his mind also enjoy the touch of her body.

(AD) Hayavadana, what's written on our foreheads cannot be altered.

Reference—As above.

Explanation—Hayavadana tells the Story to Bhagavata how he came to get a horse's head on human Hayavadana tells the story to body. He tells him that his mother married a stallion, which fifteen years after his marriage turned into a Gandharva, and went back to his Heavenly abode. His mother was also turned into a mare due to the curse of his father. Thus he came to inherit a horse's head.

The writer wants to say that more often, one is not responsible for one's weaknesses since they are inherited, not of his own doing. Hayavadana had not committed any sin. He had never annoyed or insulted any pativerata or incurred the displeasure of any rishi, as insinuated by the Bhagavata. It is misfortune which had come down to him from his father. Bhagavata then is convinced that one is helpless before Fate. It is to be accepted. Therefore he consoles Hayavadana by telling him that one cannot alter one's fate and what cannot be cured is to be endured.

(AE) Devadatta, my friend, I confess to you I'm feeling uneasy.

You are a gentle soul. You cannot a bitter word or an evil thought. But this one is fast as lightning and as sharp. She is not far the likes of you. What she needs is a man of steel. But what can one do? You'll never listen to me. And I can't withdraw now. I'll have to talk to her family.

Reference—As above.

Context—It is a speech of Kapila made after his interview with Padmini. He is convinced that Padmini is not the run-of-the-mill girl. She shows in her conversation that she is too witty and intelligent for a man like him, as she could 'decimate' him in no time. He is also convinced that she is not meant even for Devadatta.

Explanation—He therefore says to himself that he does not feel comfortable in thinking of marriage of Devadatta and Padmini. He thinks that Devadatta is a gentleman, free from all evils and bitterness of the world. But Padmini, he thinks, is sharp and quick like lightning. Therefore he thinks that she is not meant for a man like Devadatta who has delicate feelings and emotions. She needs a man of steel that can keep pace with Padmini's fast and revolutionary ideas. But he is helpless since Devadatta will not accept his advice, he cannot withdraw at this stage.

(AF) And have you understood me? No, you haven't. Or you wouldn't get angry like this. Don't you know I would do anything for you? Jump into a well or walk into fire. Even my parents aren't as close to me as you are. I would leave them this minute if you asked me to.

Reference—These lines have been extracted from the play 'Hayavadana' written by Girish Karnad.

Context—Here the writer has presented a speech made by Kapila. Because of mis understanding. Kapila thought that Devadatta was loving another girl, so he takes him for a ride. Devadatta gets angry with him as he is loving Padmini seriously.

Explanation—Here Kapila says that Devadatta has not been able to understand him. He is quite ignorant of the fact that Kapila is his sincere and faithful friend and that he is always prepared to do anything for him. If Devadatta wishes, he can even leave his parents for him. If Devadatta orders, he can gladly even jump into the well or walk on the fire, i.e. he can do anything for him without any hesitation.

Note—In fact, this speech reveals Kapila's character. He always keeps his heart opened for his friend. He loves him more than anything in the world.

(The Birthday Party)

(AG) I've got a small private income, you see. I think, I'll give it up. Don't like being away from home. I used to live very quietly—played records, that's about all. Everything delivered to the door. Then I started a little private business, in a small way, and it compelled me to come down here—kept me longer than I expected. You never get used to living in someone else's house. Don't you agree? I lived so quietly. You can only appreciate what you've had when things change.

Reference—These lines occur in the drama 'The Birthday Party' by Harold Pinter.

Context—Stanley and McCann are talking about their life at present.

Stanley asks him if he is sure that he has visited here only for a short stay and will not stay long and McCann tells him that his guess about him is quite right. He does not intend to stay there for a long time. Stanley says that he would find his stay there very pleasing because of the excellent climate but he himself does not like it.

Explanation—McCann wants to know if Stanley is engaged in some business to which he replies that he has got a small private income but now he is thinking seriously to give it up. It is keeping him away from his home so he does not want to continue it. He cannot live away from his home for a long time. He remembers his home where he used to live quietly and played and enjoyed music on his gramophone. He was happy that everything was delivered to him at his doors and he need not go anywhere. Then he started a small private business and in connection with it, he was compelled to come here and stay at this guest house. Often people do not like to live in the house of other people and he also feels the same. He has been living quite peacefully and when things change, one can only appreciate his past life.

(AH) You know one thing Uncle Barney taught me? Uncle Barney taught me that the word of a gentleman is enough. That's why, when I had to go away on business, I never carried any money. One of my sons used to come with me. He used to carry a few coppers. For a paper, perhaps to see how the M. C. C. was getting on overseas. Otherwise my name was good. Besides, I was a very busy man.

Reference—As above.

Context—Goldberg advises McCann to take a holiday and relax, otherwise he will not be able to shine in his profession. McCann tells Goldberg that though he tries to relax, it is not possible for him to do so. Now, to show himself wiser, Goldberg begins to lecture him about how one can keep a good health. In this reference, he refers to his days of his early training under the care of his Uncle Barney. Good wealth and the good upkeep of the body by regular breathing exercises will go a long way in one's life and success.

Explanation—Goldberg further details his experience with his uncle and says that along with the exercise of breathing, his Uncle Barney had given him one useful advice more. He tells how this uncle had taught him that the word of a gentleman is enough and he should always keep it. It is for this reason according to his advice. When he had to go away for business, he never carried any money with him. His sons used to accompany him and he also had very little money, enough to buy only the newspapers on cash. He bought the papers to see the condition of cricket club, M.C.C., was getting on overseas. Otherwise, he had full faith in his credit in the market and his good name. He was popular for his credit worthiness. He tells that he has always been a very busy man.

(AD) The main issue is a singular issue and quite distinct from your previous work. Certain elements, however, might well approximate in points of procedure to some of your activities. All is dependent on the attitude of our subject. At all events, McCann, I can assure you that the assignment will be carried out and the mission accomplished with no excessive aggravation to you or myself. Satisfied?

Reference—As above.

Context—Goldberg is angry with his friend because he seems to be nervous and sad all the time and asks him if he does not trust him anymore. He asks why he is so cool while doing a job but consoles him that he is certainly a capable man. He tells that he himself becomes perfectly confident when he knows what exactly he is doing. Goldberg is very conscious of his superiority and position. He chides his friend that he has not yet got over his nervousness.

Explanation—Goldberg explains things to his friend and tries to silence his confusion and nervousness. He tells that the main job is important though it may be slightly different from what they have done yet. He talks to him in an evasive manner. This job may be different only in details and they might complete their mission without much aggravation. It is mostly similar to the previous jobs in its procedure. The whole thing, success or failure, actually depends on our attitude towards that particular job in hand. Goldberg assures that the job will be certainly completed in a satisfactory way without much complication or difficulty and so he should be satisfied. This shows the extreme self confidence of Goldberg in accomplishing any work and he is always certain of his success.

(AJ) His father gave him champagne. But then they locked to place up and he couldn't get out. The caretaker had gone home. So he had to wait until the morning before he could get out.

Reference to the Context—These lines occur in the drama 'The Birthday Party' by Harold Pinter.

It is conversation between Meg and Goldberg.

Explanation—Here Goldberg and Meg are talking about McCann. Meg says that his father was so happy with his performance that he offered his champagne. But then they locked the place up and he could not come out of the concert hall. The caretaker was at large. Driven to the wall, he had to wait until the next morning before he could get out. They were very grateful to him, and they all wanted to give him a tip the gratuity and so he was obliged to accept the trip.

(AK) My father said to me, Benny Benny, he said come here. He was dying. I knelt down. By him day and night. Who else was there? Forgive Benny, he said, and let live. Yes Dad. Go home to your wife.

Reference to the Context—These lines occur in Harold Pinter's 'The Birthday Party'. These lines occur in Act III of Scene III. These lines express the dialogue held between Goldberg and McCann.

Explanation—Goldberg asks McCann to sit down from where he can look at him. He says that his father said to him Benny, Benny come here. He was dying. He knelt down by his side day and night. Because what else was there? He asks Benny to forgive him and let him live. He accepts this and asks his back to go to his wife. He asks to keep the eyes opened.

(AL) **My little room was pink. I had a pink carpet and pink curtains, and I had musical boxes all over the room. And they played me to sleep. And my father was very big doctor. That's why I never had any complaints.**

Reference to the Context—These lines have been taken from the drama 'The Birthday Party' by Harold Pinter.

These lines are a conversation between Meg and McCann.

Explanation—Meg says to McCann that my room was dittered pink and pink were also its carpet and curtains. The room contained many musical boxes, put all over it and I slept lulled by music. My father was a famous doctor and that is why I had never had any disease.

(AM) **Look, why don't you get this place cleared up! It's a pigsty. And another thing, what about my room? It needs sweeping. It needs papering. I need a new room.**

Reference—This dialogue has been taken from 'The Birthday Party' a very popular play of the Theatre of Absurd by Harold Pinter.

Context—Stanley is staying in the guest house kept by Meg. He expresses his disgust at the way of Meg in keeping the guest house because her manners are not fine and there is dirtiness all around. He calls her succulent and does not like her company. Meg does not believe him all at once and says that perhaps he is saying such things only to please her.

Explanation—This remark of Meg angers Stanley suddenly and he flies into great rage. Unable to control his anger and his hatred for the ways of Meg, he bursts out that there is great dirtiness all around in his room also. He shouts at her for not clearing up the living room which is in a way, not habitable. Instead of a living room, it looks more like a pigsty, not proper for any man. Along with all this, there is dirt and filth everywhere. In fact the room needs careful sweeping and proper papering of the walls all around. He is so much disgusted that he does not want to live there anymore and proposes that now he wants a new room for himself.

(AN) **She wasn't a Sunday school teacher for nothing. Anyway, I'd leave her with a little kiss on the cheek—I never took liberties—we weren't like the young men these days in those days. We were the meaning of respect. So I'd give her a peck and I'd bowl back home. Humming away I'd be, past the children playground. I'd tip my hat to the toddlers, I'd give a helping hand to a couple of stray dogs, everything came natural.**

Reference—As above.

Context—Stanley and McCann are talking and Stanley asks him to leave him alone. They suddenly stop talking when they hear some voices from the back door approaching them. They see that Goldberg enters there followed by Petey who introduces Stanley to Goldberg. Petey tells him that they were enjoying fresh air in the garden. Goldberg was telling Petey about his mother.

Explanation—She was an old woman but was so noble that she can be considered one in a million. When he was a young child, he used to go for a walk down the canal with a beautiful girl who had the voice as sweet as that of a nightingale. She lived down the road. She was not careless like a school teacher on Sunday but was always true to herself. When he left her, he had a sweet little kiss on her cheeks but he never forgot his limitations and never took liberties in loving her. He compares himself with the other young men of those days and says that he was not misbehaving or crossed his limits like them rather had complete control. Both of them knew very well that it is very necessary to respect each other to maintain good relations. As he passed the playground humming a tune, he would cheerfully wave his hat to the young children playing there. He would also help the stray dogs on his way home. All this he did not do consciously but he performed these acts naturally and it was his habit to do so.

(AO) **I'll be all right when I get back..... but what I mean is, the way some people look at me. You'd think I was a different person. I suppose I have changed, but I'm still the same man that I always was. I mean, you wouldn't think, to look at me, really..... I mean, not really, that I was the sort of bloke to cause any trouble, would you? (Act II)**

Reference—As above.

Context—Stanley remembers his past life at his home when he was quite peaceful and happily enjoyed music. He lights his cigarette and Goldberg has also arrived there. He tells that people will not easily believe what he is telling about his life at home.

Explanation—He throws light on his present life and tells that he has developed wrinkles on his face but there is nothing to worry much about them because they will not stay long. They are the result of his excessive drinking in the guest house of Meg. He is now intending to go back home and as soon as he reaches there, they will soon be cured. He tells that people, seeing him in this condition, suppose that now he is a completely changed person and not as he was before. But this idea is quite wrong because he has actually not changed in the least. He does not like to create troubles and difficulties for any one and so he is quite the same person. The reality is that he is the unchanged man and this is how the people should recognize him. He requests them to look at him as before and not the changed man. This shows that Stanley considers himself to be a man of peaceful and silent nature without causing any obstacle in the way of other people.

Unit II

(Desire Under the Elms)

Q. 2. Desire Under the Elms : Symbolism

Ans. Symbolism : Its Nature and Function-Symbolism may be defined as the use of any part of a play-character, incident, setting, etc.-to suggest an idea not obviously necessary for the surface story. It is by the use of symbolism that a writer conveys much more than can be ordinarily conveyed. In this way he imparts depth and richness and universalises in his theme. Symbolism is a technique of communication by which complex psychological truths, inner tensions, strains and conflicts can be conveyed to readers and audience. It is in this way that the abstract is made concrete and the dark is illumined.

The Symbolic Elms-O'Neill has made extensive use of symbolism in 'Desire Under the Elms'. The setting is symbolic. We are told, "Two enormous elms are on each side of the house. They bend their trailing branches down over the roof-they appear to protect and at the same time subdue; there is a sinister maternity in their aspect' a crushing, jealous absorption. When the wind does not keep them astir, they develop from their intimate contact with the life of man in the house an appalling humanness. They brood oppressively over the house, and they are like exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands and hair on its roof, and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and rot on the shingles." But it is not merely nature and a particular stony farmland that is thus symbolised; the maternal trees represent also the secret dominance of the female in the action : the dead second wife of Ephraim Cabot, worked to exhaustion by her husband, is yet powerful in the life of her son Eben; Ephraim's third wife Abbie is strong enough to destroy Ephraim and Eben and the child that is born to Eben and herself. Thus the elms symbolise the mother-image whose presence is felt throughout the play. They symbolise Eben's mother-fixation and the role of the mother-mistress which Abbie has to play towards Eben.

The Farm : Its Symbolic Significance-The farm and the farm-house are symbolic of emotional and material security which is desired by all. In the play, all the characters require security and stability in their lives, and so all desire to possess it. Old Cabot has himself worked hard, and has also made his sons and wives work hard so that the farm may prosper, and he may acquire security and prestige as its possessor. Abbie desires it, as it would give her security against want and drudgery which have been her lot in life. Eben desires it, for by possessing it he would not only enjoy security, but would also avenge his mother. The farm also symbolises the life-denying sterility of the Puritan ideals, for it warps and twists the lives of those who are slaves to it. Abbie and Eben enjoy the grandeur and dignity of true love only when they are able to shake off their selfish greed for the farm and free

themselves from its inhibiting influence. Old Cabot is not able to shake off this influence, and hence is condemned to be its slave for life and live lonely on it.

The Symbolic Characters-The characters, too, are equally symbolic. Old Ephraim Cabot, for example, symbolises the patriarch who ruled the primal hordes with an iron hand. The conflict between him and his three grown-up sons is symbolic of the father-son conflict in primitive societies. In those early days, the growing sons were banished by the father as they grew jealous and rebellious and craved for the rights and privileges enjoyed by him. Often they wanted to possess the women of their father. In the play, this is symbolised by the fact that Peter, Simeon and Eben have relations with Min, the mistress of their father, and later on Eben enjoys intimate relations with Abbie. Equally symbolic is their desire to be the heir of their father in every thing and the departure of Simeon and Peter for California is symbolic of the exile of the sons from the primal horde.

The Wall : Its Symbolic Significance-In Part II, Scene ii we see both the bedroom of Abbie and Ephraim and the bedroom of Eben. The wall between the two bedrooms is symbolic of the wall of self hood which separatens and, therefore, it is in the fitness of things that it should begin to crumble, dissolve and become paper-thin as Abbie and Eben begin to yearn passionately for each other and begin to come closer to each other. The melting away of the wall is symbolic of the merging and fusion of their two selves which is now taking place. In this way their separatens, as well as their close association is well symbolised.

Biblical and Mythological Significance-Edgar F. Racey traces the Biblical and mythological symbolism in the play. Peter, in the play, represents the nature of the rock and he is the first who picks up a rock to cast it at his father's house. "Simeon also symbolizes cruelty and stands for the proverb, 'an eye for an eye' and in revenge on his tyrannical father, he threatens to rape his new wife. One recalls Jacob's 'Blessing' of his sons. In the play, he remarks: "shut gates, an' open gates, an' all gates by thunder."

Ephraim Cabot is harshness incarnate and he symbolises the rocky nature and the spirit of retaliation. "He is Ephraim, progenitor of the Tribes of Israel, the archetypal patriarch (and for O'Neill, the father figure). His name ("the fruitful") may be an underlying source of irony by the end of the play, and it is significant that his 'fruitfulness' is the greatest source of his hubris." He is isolated figure 'godlike', hard like God. Eben is "Ebenezer"- "store of hope". He hopes to possess the farm and avenge the wrongs done to his mother. He is hopeful that some day he would have his revenge and the spirit of his mother would rest in peace in her grave. Thus by this Biblical symbolism O'Neill has deepened his meaning and universalised his theme.

A similar depth and generality has been imparted by the symbolic use of the Hippolytus-Phaedra-Theseus myth. In the Greek story, the father returns with his new wife, who is immediately attracted by her step-son. In the play, Old Cabot is the father, Abbie is the new wife, and she is sexually attracted by Eben, her step-son. Like the step-son in the Greek story, Eben, too, responds to the advances of his step-mother. Like Phaedra in the Greek story, Abbie conceals her growing passion for Eben with the mask of scorn. Like Phaedra, she asks that the son be banished for the same reason, plus the fact that Eben is a potential rival for the farm. Like Phaedra, Abbie makes advances but with more success than her dramatic ancestor. Like Hippolytus, Eben muses constantly on his mother, who was "foreign". Thus by using the Greek myth as symbol, the dramatist has imparted a broad and universal significance to the play. In this way, the incest-motive has been given a mythological background, and sexual-relationship considered abhorrent by society has been shown to be a powerful and perennial urge.

Q. 3. Critically examine *Desire Under the Elms* as modern tragedy.

Ans. A Great Tragedy-*Desire Under the Elms* is a great tragedy one to which we can return again and again with a sense of satisfaction. In this play O'Neill has achieved great tragedy by the use of semi-articulate figures to whom words do not come fluently, who rely on gesture and truncated utterance for communication.

Is It a Domestic Tragedy? *Desire Under the Elms* has generally been dismissed as a domestic tragedy. In a domestic tragedy the characters are ordinary human beings, generally taken from the middle-class, and the tragedy is brought about by the transgression, usually sexual, of either the wife or the husband. In the present tragedy also the characters all belong to the middle class of life. There is nothing exceptional about them. They are neither kings nor prince, nor they are eminent in any other way. They are ordinary middle class rustics, living on a remote New England farm. The domestic felicity is ruined and family life disrupted because of the moral transgression of Abbie, the step-mother. She has sexual relations with her stepson Eben, and retribution and punishment for this sin swiftly follow. Both Abbie and Eben are taken off by the Sheriff to languish in jail or to hang on the gallows, for the crime of child-murder. Ephraim Cabot also suffers and is condemned to a lonely life on the farm.

Its Tragic Intensity : Psychological Conflicts-However, a close study of the play shows that it is much more intense, passionate and cathartic in its effect than a commonplace domestic tragedy. No doubt the characters are simple, ordinary rustics and its setting is an humble farm house, but within this humble setting the dramatist has achieved a tragedy of Sophoclean grandeur and intensity. The psychological conflicts are tensions which tear the different

characters into pieces have been fully brought home to the readers. It is this rendering of psychological conflicts which raises the play to the height of great tragedy, despite the strong melodramatic note, as infanticide, incest, fight between father and sons, etc.

The Source of Tragedy : Puritanic Ideals-The real seeds of tragedy are sown by the life-denying hardness of old Cabot's puritanic ideals. He overworked his wife, Eben's 'Maw', and his three sons, with the result that his gentle and yielding wife died, and his sons revolt against him. The two elder sons, Simeon and Peter, go off to California teasing and insulting their father, and Eben yearns for revenge for the wrongs done to his mother. His relationship with Abbie is motivated by this desire for revenge and after his nights of love with her he feels that henceforth his 'maw' would rest in peace in her grave.

Sense of Doom-A pervasive sense of doom, as in a Greek tragedy, hangs over the play. The parlour is 'a grim, repressed room, like a tomb in which the family has been interned alive'. The spirit of Eben's dead 'maw' is like a supernatural agent, Fate or god, deriving the characters to their doom. The intensity of Abbie and Eben's passion is clearly brought home by the scenes in the two bedrooms in Part II, Scene ii of the play, and Eben's self-sacrifice at the end ennobles and exalts it. Abbie's child-murder is similarly exalted and ennobled by the intensity of her passion and the purity of her motive. As the curtain falls, the two go off with the police to atone for their crime. Old Cabot must also atone for his sins, and so he is condemned to a lonely even more lonesome than ever before-sterile life on the farm. He has lost his three sons and his wife and must live a hard and lonely old age, till death sets the grand old patriarch free from his doom. Thus it is as much a tragedy of Old Cabot as of Abbie and Eben.

Universality and Sublimity-Repression, inhibition, revenge, intense passions, love and hate, motivate the characters and result in tragedy. The incestuous relationship of Abbie and Eben, abhorrent in all societies, finds a mythological background in the Hippolytus-Phaedra-Theseus myth and is thus uplifted to the level of a universal human urge. It is thus suggested that there is a recurrent pattern in human relationships. Dignity and generality are further imparted by the use of close Biblical parallels in names and in particular episodes and situations.

Conclusion-To conclude with the words of **Edger F. Racey Jr.** "That the play is a tragedy few will dispute (although early critics tended to see it as a mere shoddy domestic tragedy). It combines a traditional tragic theme (the Oedipus legend) with a dramatic reconciliation in the interests of a higher virtue (Justice). Abbie and Eben, as they are reconciled to their fate (which they will), assume a dignity which approaches tragic stature. As they acknowledge their guilt and enter into the process of expiation, their characters tend to become generalized, and O'Neill manages to suggest something approaching the idea of universal justice."

Q. 4. Examine *Desire Under the Elms* as a realistic play.

Ans. *Desire Under the Elms* is a clear departure from O'Neill's earlier plays which were mostly theatrical, melodramatic and purely conventional, a survival of the prosaic realism of John Galsworthy and other pre-World War I dramatists. Gradually O'Neill achieves purer and higher realism which may be called psychological realism. He uses expressionistic techniques to lay bare the soul of his protagonists. There is a deeper and deeper probing into the subconscious, and the soul or psyche of his characters, the inner springs of action are revealed.

Desire Under the Elms reveals to us the working of the mind of the protagonists as O'Neill closely analyses human nature and human motives, and thus reveals the psychological make-up of Ephraim Cabot, Eben and Abbie. Even in the case of the relatively unimportant characters of Simeon and Peter, their motives are clearly revealed. Ephraim Cabot is the primal father, and his two sons Simeon and Peter represent the primal father-son conflict for supremacy and possession of the female. Eben Cabot suffers from Oedipus Complex, and Abbie externalises for him the infantile wish to return to his mother. Abbie's possessive struggle for the farm and for Eben and her telling Ephraim, her husband, that Eben had tried to seduce her are instances of "the classic Phaedra mechanism of projection". Psychological realism is this the keynote of the play.

Not a Superficial Play—We are made fully aware of the reasons for the mutual hatred of Eben and his father as we read the play. Eben's desire for revenge of the old man, Abbie's motives in marrying old Cabot, and her desire to have son and her motive in killing the child after it is born, the motives behind Cabot's successive marriages and his desire to have a son in his old age, the Puritanical tradition and background that has made Cabot what he is, all these are clearly brought out so that we have the feeling that we have entered into the minds of Eben, Abbie and Ephraim Cabot as the action unfolds itself. Above all, there is the role played in the narrative by the ancient Greek legend of Oedipus and Phaedra and the Freudian theory of Oedipus Complex. O'Neill here shows his grasp not only of the underlying significance ancient myths but also of the modern psychological discoveries. *Desire Under the Elms* is thus not a superficial play at all.

Eben's Hatred for His Father—Eben hates his father for stealing his mother's farm and making her slave to death. He is convinced that the farm rightfully belongs to him. His grouse against his stepbrothers is that they did not intervene when his "Maw" was being ill-treated by their father even when they themselves acknowledge that she was a "rare stepmother" and was kind and gentle to them. It is his dominant desire to possess the farm that makes him

steal his father's lifetime savings and hand them over to Simeon and Peter so that he can buy them off. A third motive in Eben's hatred for his father is when the old man arrives home with his third wife, who will now undoubtedly stake her claim to the farm.

Eben's Mother-Fixation—Eben's mother-fixation is emphasized a number of times. He tells Simeon and Peter that he often gets the feeling that his mother's spirit is hovering round him when he is working in the kitchen:

She still comes back—stands by the stove thar in the evenin'—she can't find it nateral sleepin 'n' restin' in peace. She can't git used t' bein' free—even in her grave.

She feels sorry that her son has to perform the same drudgery she used to perform in her lifetime.

Afterwards, Eben speaks about his mother to Abbie, how kind and good she was, how she used to sing to him, that the farm and the house originally belonged to her, that his father had married her to steal the farm and the farmhouse that his father had "murdered" her with his "hardness". He warns her not to open the parlour because his mother's dead body was laid there before burial and it hasn't been opened since her death. Abbie also tells him that she has felt some invisible presence in the parlour. Eben is certain that it is his dead mother's spirit who is prompting him to respond to Abbie's advances and he succumbs to the temptation.

The Revenge Motive—Eben's visit to the village prostitute Minnie and his making love to Abbie later are both motivated, besides the call of his nature, by his desire to take revenge on his father. His lust for Minnie is unconsciously motivated by the fact that she was once his father's mistress. But in the case of Abbie, there is a strong and conscious motive. He is convinced by Abbie's plea that his mother wants him to make love to her because his "Maw" knows that Abbie loves him truly.

Oedipus Complex—Eben's making love to the prostitute Minnie and afterwards having a torrid love affair with his stepmother Abbie are both incestuous in nature because Minnie has once been his father's mistress and Abbie is now his father's wife. Both these incestuous relationships may be explained in terms of the Freudian Oedipus Complex. According to an ancient myth dealt with by Sophocles in his play *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus killed his father and married his mother. But according to the myth, Oedipus did both these things unknowingly. Freud, however, interpreted this myth in his own way. According to him, the preference which a son has for his mother has essentially a sexual basis. This is what he calls the Oedipus Complex. (A daughter has a similar preference for her father which also, according to Freud, has a sexual basis. It is called the Electra Complex, and O'Neill has dealt with it in *Mourning Becomes Electra*.)

Q. 5. Write a note on the importance of the title of the play 'Desire Under the Elms' by O'Neill.

What is the importance of desire in the play?

Examine the significance of the title 'Desire Under the Elms'.

Comment on the aptness of the title 'Desire Under the Elms'.

Ans. Essentials of a Good Title-The title of a play should be apt and suggestive. Like the signboard of a shop, it should indicate the substance of the play. It should give an idea of its theme. From the title itself one should be able to guess what the play is about. The title of the present play is apt and appropriate, for it suggests its theme.

The Significance of 'Desire'-The theme of the play is variations of the first word of the title 'Desire'. Every character in the play desires something or the other. As the play opens we are introduced to the three sons of Ephraim Cabot, the owner of the Cabot farm and farmhouse. The two elder sons, Simeon and Peter, are fed up with their life on the stony-farm. Their father has made them over-work, and now they desire freedom from drudgery on their father's farm. They yearn for the west, for California, where they would have freedom from work, and where they would be able to earn enough gold quite easily. Their 'desire' is for gold and freedom, and they leave the farm and go off to the west as soon as their father returns home with his third wife, Abbie Putnam.

Eben, the youngest son of Ephraim, passionately 'desires' to possess the farm, for he believes that the farm belongs to his dead mother, and his father had unlawfully stolen it from her. Therefore, he desires the farm more than anything else in the world. It is to get the farm that he steals the concealed money of his father, and purchases with it the shares of his two brothers as they go off to California. Besides the farm, he desires 'to have revenge on his father for the wrongs he has done to his dead 'maw'. He overworked her, stole the farm which rightfully belonged to her, and killed her by his callous unsympathetic behaviour. Eben, therefore, yearns for revenge and feels that his mother's spirit would get no peace till her wrongs are avenged for. He, therefore, seduces and makes love to Abbie Putnam, and when a son is born to him he is exultant, for now the farm would belong to his and his mother has been suitably avenged. Meeting his father outside the farmhouse he insults and teases him.

Eben 'desires' the farm, he 'desires' revenge, and soon he desires Abbie too, passionately and truly. Soon he is passionately in love with her, and cannot live without her. Therefore he confesses to the police his part in her crime, and so goes to the gallows with her.

Abbie Putnam, the young wife of Ephraim Cabot, desires a home and security. She has led a hard life and has always worked in homes of others. Her

one yearning in life has been to have a home of her own, and to work in her own home. It was to get a home of her own that she married Ephraim. She married him not out of any love for him, but because she 'desired' the home and the security which the marriage would enable her to enjoy. She covets the farm, and 'desires' that it should be her farm. She 'desires' that old Cabot should leave it to her. She also 'desires' Eben from the very beginning, and casts lustful glances on him even when they meet for the first time. As old Cabot would leave the farm not to her, but to one of his own blood, she proceeds cold-bloodedly to seduce Eben. She would have a son by him and thus kill two birds with one stone. She would thus get the farm, and also enjoy the youth and manhood of her step-son. However, soon she is really in love with him, and 'desires' him and him alone. Life without him is intolerable, unbearable for her. She 'desires' him passionately, intensely, and her 'desire' for him far outweighs her 'desire' for the farm. It is in order to possess him that she murders her child and is content to go to the gallows with him.

For old Ephraim, too, the farm is a symbol of security and stability. It was a stony, rocky, barren piece of land, considered uncultivable by other people. But Ephraim, hard as a rock himself, achieved the impossible in cultivating it and turned it into a prosperous farm. For the sake of the firm, he overworked his sons, his wives and himself. He nursed it with his life-blood. He 'desires' the farm so much that, he would take it with himself to the other world, if he could. Since he cannot do so, he desires to leave it to one of his own blood, and not to Abbie, who is his wife but not of his blood. Therefore, he 'desires' a son who may inherit the farm and then the farm would really belong to him after his death. He says to Abbie, "A son in me-my blood mine. Mine ought t' git mine. An then it's still mine-even though I be six foot under. D'ye see?" He prays to God for a son with religious intensity. Pray t' the Lord again, Abbie! It's the Sabbath! I'll jine ye! Two prayers air better than one, 'An' God hearkened unto Rachel an she conceived an bore a son. 'An' God hearkened unto Abbie! Pray! Abbie! Pray for Him to hearken! (He bows his head, mumbling. She pretends to do likewise, but gives him a side glance of scorn and triumph.)

The Significance of 'Elms'-The other word 'elms' in the title is equally apt and suggestive. This drama of action and interaction of passionate desire takes place in a house over which grow two elms: "Two enormous elms are on each side of the house. They bend their trailing branches down over the roof-they appear to protect and at the same time subdue; there is a sinister maternity in their aspect, a crushing, jealous absorption. When the wind does not keep them astir, they develop from their intimate contact with the life of man in the house an appalling humaneness. They brood oppressively over the house, they are like exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands and hair on its roof, and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and rot

on the shingles.' But it is not merely nature and a particular stony farmland that is thus symbolised; the maternal trees represent also the secret dominance of the female in the action: the dead second wife of Ephraim Cabot, worked to exhaustion by her husband, is yet powerful in the life of her son Eben; Ephraim's third wife Abbie is strong enough to destroy Ephraim and Eben and the child that is born to Eben and herself. At the end, the elms still stoop in their maternal embrace of the farm, but there is no woman there to give them a human and tolerable significance. Old Cabot had desired warmth and company, but now it is going to be more 'lonesome' still for him on the farm, without his sons and without his woman.

Q. 6. Examine the significance of Abbie in 'Desire Under the Elms'. Or

Examine the character of Abbie.

Ans. 1. **Physical Appearance**-Abbie Putnam, the third wife of Ephraim Cabot, is "thirty-five, buxom, full of vitality. Her round face is pretty, but marred by its rather gross sensuality. There is strength and obstinacy in her jaw, a hard determination in her eyes, and about her whole personality the same unsettled, untamed desperate quality which is so apparent in Eben".

2. **Ambitious**-"The most striking quality in the character of Abbie lies in the complexity of her inner life in the tree stranded web of desire that seizes her. She wishes to establish good relations with Eben, for she wants to dominate the household and not to risk losing the farm when Ephraim dies but soon she has a further motive for attempting to cure Eben of his resentment that she has taken his mother's place. Ephraim will leave the farm to her, only if she gives him a son. So she determines to have a son, and Eben must be its father.

3. **Affectionate**-But the pursuit of Eben that she engages in is not simply caused by her desire for security. She has strong sexual feelings, and the young Eben arouses them! And she is ten years older than Eben, she has taken his mother's place in the house: there is in her attitude to him a manifestation of the maternal element in her which was thwarted when her child died. This three-stranded web of desire is further complicated by the slow development in her of a "normal" love of a woman for a man. Slowly she breaks down Eben's resistance and they become lovers in the parlour which was Eben's mother's special room and which has not been used since her death. In this setting Eben thinks of and sorrows for, his mother. Abbie asserts that his mother blesses their union, and this is no pretence: in his mother's room, this "new Maw" can identify herself with the dead woman, can love this lost son as a mother would, can love him too as a lover."

4. **Self-Sacrificing**-For the sake of her love for Eben, Abbie is prepared to sacrifice her child and this action of her shocks our susceptibilities but in the

play, it has its own importance. In this way the knot is untied, all secrecy is vanished and all comfort goes. Abbie's complex character is suddenly resolved into that of a woman who loves Eben. In her love, Abbie forgets to be a mother, forgets her wish for a secure mistress-ship of the farmhouse and sacrifices everything she possesses for her love. Such sacrifice ennobles and exalts her love, which would otherwise have been mere lust.

Conclusion-Abbie is one of those rounded figures who grow under the stress of circumstances. As the action proceeds, her character undergoes a profound change. She began with lust, greed and intrigue. Even though we knew that she has suffered a lot in life and that the desire for a home and security is natural for her, we are inclined to condemn her as lustful, greedy and intriguing. But there is gradually a change in her character. By the end of the play, the grosser elements have been purged away and she emerges as a woman in love who would sacrifice anything to gain her love. The grandeur and intensity of her passion exalts and uplifts her, even though she is guilty of the crime of child-murder.

Q. 7. Trace the character of Eben as a hero of the tragedy 'Desire Under the Elms'. Or

Examine the character of Eben in 'Desire Under the Elms'. Or

Examine the ways in which the presence of the mother lovers over Eben's personality in 'Desire Under the Elms'.

Ans. 1. **Physical Appearance**-Eben Cabot is a youngman of twenty-five, tall and sinewy. "His face is well formed, good-looking, but its expression is resentful and defensive. His defiant dark eyes remind one of a wild animal in captivity. Each day is a cage in which he finds himself trapped, but inwardly unsubdued. There is a fierce repressed vitality about him. He has black hair, moustache, a thin curly trace of beard. He is dressed in rough farm clothes." He thinks that he takes after his dead mother, that he is every inch of her. But his brothers Simeon and Peter are of the view that he is, "dead spitting image" of his father, that he is ruthless and relentless like him and, therefore, they think 'dog will eat dog', they will destroy each other. Old Cabot thinks that he is 'soft', stupid like his mother, but there is ample evidence in the play to show that he is sufficiently shrewd to hold his own.

2. **Ambitious or Greedy**-Desire for the farm which he thinks lawfully belonged to his mother, and now belongs to him as her heir, and desire for revenge are the two factors which determine his character. He has a grudge against his father, because he knows that he over-worked his mother like a slave and thus sent her to death. He gave her no time for rest, no respite from work. He did not realise this as long as his mother lived, but since her death, he has done her work in the home and on the farm and has come to realise the cruel

drudgery which was her lot in life and which killed her. He therefore, would like to avenge her wrongs. He would very much like to possess the farm which he thinks lawfully as his own. In order to possess the farm, he steals the money hidden by his father and purchases the shares of his two brothers as they go off to California. This he feels is a step towards his revenge and towards the possession of the farm, an action which would bring peace to the troubled soul of his dead mother. He constantly feels her spirit hovering restlessly over the house and watching over him.

3. Mother Fixation-This mother fixation or mother-love determines his reaction to the advances of Abbie Putnam, his step-mother. He is sexually attracted towards her from the very beginning, but repulses her advances and regards her with hostility, for she has come between him and the farm. Ultimately he yields to her seductions only because he realises that, that would be a suitable revenge for the wrongs done to her mother. He feels that his acceptance of the love of Abbie has pleased his mother and her soul would henceforth rest in peace in her grave. After their first night of love in the parlour, sacred to his dead mother, he meets his father just outside the house, and exultantly jokes with him and makes fun of him.

Conclusion-A son is born to them and he is exultant for his revenge is now complete. But when Cabot tells him that Abbie has used him merely to get a heir and thus cheat him of the farm, he is mad with rage. He has been befooled in a very cunning manner. He refuses to listen to the entreaties and prayers of Abbie, and is convinced of the genuineness of her love only when the child is killed. Then he owns up his own share in the crime and thus is arrested along with her. He is also a rounded figure, one who changes and grows under the stress of circumstance. His sacrifice ennoble, uplifts and dignifies him. It brings out the inherent nobility of his soul. We feel that the would has been well lost for love.

Q. 8. The major theme of 'Desire Under the Elms', is Oedipus Complex or Mother-Fixation. Elucidate.

Or

Critically evaluate the oedipus relationship in Desire Under the Elms.

Or

The Theme of the Play : Oedipus-complex or Mother-fixation What is Mother-fixation?

Ans. Desire Under the Elms reveals the influence of a number of psycho-analytical theories of Freud, Jung and other contemporary psychologists. Or such theory is Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex. It is a thorough study of the "damaging influence of a mother's love upon the life of the son" Mother-fixation is one of its themes.

The name Oedipus has been borrowed from the classical story of Kings Oedipus of Thebes and Jocasta, who unknowingly married his own mother,

and has children by her. The psychologists, Freud and others, use the term Oedipus Complex for, "a manifestation of infantile sexuality in the relations of a child to its parents. It is a state in which a person shows excessive affection for the parent opposite in sex to him or her, and a corresponding distaste for his other parent."

Eben's Mother-Fixation-The damaging influence of mother-fixation or excessive love for the parent of the opposite sex is seen in the life and character of Eben. Eben's mother is dead, but he cannot forget her. The mother-image is constantly present before his mind's eye. He desires to possess the farm, for he knows that it lawfully belonged to his mother, and after her death it should belong to him as he is her heir. He thinks that his father stole it from her, and consequently, he hates his father. He is of the view that his father over-worked his mother and thus killed her by inches. He wants to take revenge upon his father for all the wrongs he did to his mother. He feels that his mother's spirit is ever restless, ever hovering round the house, ever watching over him, and that he would never be at rest till her wrongs are avenged. He is, therefore, hostile to his father and in the very beginning of the play we find him praying for his death. It is to spite him, that he visits Min and thus possesses his woman. It is also for this reason he steals the £ 600 so carefully concealed by him and with the amount purchases the shares in the farm of his two elder brothers. Thus mother fixation spoils his relations with his father. He fails to achieve satisfactory and harmonious relationship with his parent of the opposite-sex.

Its Damaging Influence-Indeed, mother-love becomes an obsession with him and comes in the way of his establishing satisfactory sex-relationship. Thus in the beginning he spurns the advances of Abbie, though he is sexually attracted towards her. He hates her, for she has usurped the place which rightfully belonged to his mother. He is torn between his desire for, and his resentment of, Abbie, but she finally leads him to the parlour that hadn't been opened since his mother died. Eben strongly feels the presence of his mother in the room and talks to her. He thinks that his mother would approve of his union with Abbie-as a way of revenging herself on Cabot. Acting the role of Eben's mother-image, Abbie externalizes for him his infantile wish to return to his mother. Their kisses are but momentarily pure, however, and then surge into fierce passion. After their night of love, Eben is bold, confident and at peace with himself, his Oedipal feelings purged; now his mother can sleep in her grave. He does not respond to the love of Abbie as a young healthy man would do; rather he is glad that he has avenged the wrongs of his mother. It is not an act of love that has taken place in the parlour; rather it is an act of vengeance for the wrongs of the mother.

Eben's Hostility to His Father-After their night together in the parlour, Eben is in an exultant mood, for he has performed the sacred duty of revenge. Coming out of the house, he encounters his father and mocks and jeers at him.

EBEN [suddenly jovial again]. Good fur the cows ! Waal-ye better go to work.

CABOT [grimly amused]. Air yew bossin' me, ye calf?

EBEN [beginning to laugh]. Ay-eh ! I'm bossin' yew ! Ha-ha-ha ! See how ye like it ! Ha-ha-ha ! I'm the prize rooster o' this roost.

Ha-ha-ha ! [He goes off toward the barn laughing.]

Later in the play, he grapples with his own father, though, of course Cabot, despite his old age, proves too much for him. When he comes to know that he has been very cunningly befooled, that Abbie has used him as a tool for getting a son, and thus also the farm, he is mad with rage. He thinks of his mother and says, "I wish ye was dead ! I wish I was dead along with ye afore this came! (Ragingly) But I'll git my vengeance, too ! I'll pray Maw t' come back t' help me-t' put her cuss on yew an' him !" He tells Abbie that he would tell Cabot the truth about his son, and then would go off to California. Then he would not know a moment's rest, for his mother would come out of the grave at night and they would be troubled by her presence. When Abbie has murdered the child, then Eben asks his mother's spirit, "Oh, God A' mighty Almighty God ! Maw, whar was ye, why didn't ye stav her?" We feel that Eben's mother really has her revenge when Eben and Abbie are taken away by the Sheriff, and Old Cabot is left alone on the farm, 'more lonesome' than ever before.

Conclusion- Thus the play depicts the harmful effects of Oedipus complex or mother-fixation. It is the mother-image which comes in the way of harmonious relationships in the Cabot-household and wrecks the family. To a very large extent, the damaging influence of the mother-fixation is responsible for the tragic end of Eben and Abbie.

Unit III

(Murder in the Cathedral)

Q. 9. Discuss whether or not Murder in the Cathedral is a tragedy?

Ans. If we take Greek tragedy as our model (say, for example, Sophocles' Oedipus) classical tragedy may be defined as a spectacle of suffering taking its root from self-consuming pride or over-confidence (hubris' in Greek) of the hero. 'Hamartia' or the tragic flaw as mentioned above set him against the moral order that governs the universe-the Olympian gods, consequently bringing out his downfall. The punishment meted out, however, is disproportionate to his sin, the excess of which attracts our sympathy. In some cases prolonged sufferings result in a kind of wisdom dawning upon the hero, who gets an insight into the workings of the Divine Power; he is at peace with the set up because of this enlightenment, As a result of this universal order which was

disturbed due to the hero's action is annulled and order is restored again. Shakespeare's tragedies also follow this model in the main. The law of Heaven and the Christian God are the moral standards by which the action of the protagonist is judged.

The medieval tragedy is conceived as the turning of the Wheel of Fortune with its ups and downs rotating according to the will of God. The mystery surrounding this is to be attributed to the inscrutable ways of God. The only succour is in the passive surrender before God's will ensuring peace here and Salvation hereafter. Modern tragedy is another matter, not giving precedence to anything outside the palpable world. Applying these standards to 'Murder in the Cathedral' we cannot class it under the head 'tragedy'. The hero, Thomas, is killed not for any wrong doing or opposing the will of Divine Power. Suffering is there but not because of any divine retribution but espoused willingly by Thomas, or to be more precise. Thomas submitting to the will, the 'pattern' of God. There is disorder as we learn from the Chorus, but that is due to the misdeeds perpetrated by the Knights. The universe is cleansed of its pollution by the blood-letting of the martyr (Thomas) and order is restored. The suffering of Thomas in this world will be amply rewarded in heaven. Like Christmas when the birth and the death of Christ both are celebrated remembering God's mercy in sending his Son to absolve the sins of Man through the Crucifixion-similarly, after the martyrdom of Thomas everyone rejoice and celebrate. Had it been a tragedy this rejoicing would have been out of place.

The play in Part I is mainly concerned with the preparation of Thomas, his conquering of doubts and temptations. The stand taken by Thomas and ipso facto Eliot is laid down in the sermon in the **Interlude**. The murder is summarily dealt with in half a sentence, as Eliot is concerned more about the martyrdom. The religious and spiritual personality and not the traits of his personal secular character is emphasized. The personal details are hurriedly passed over till we come to Thomas's distinct vision of the path he is to take ('Now is my way clear' etc.) The conflict forming a necessary part of the tragic hero's psyche is absent, making him one with God, "the still centre of the wheel", there is no sense of waste either. The play glorifies his death which has enabled the world to live again. The play may be called divine comedy instead of tragedy. The world is delivered from sin, while Thomas attains a kind of immortality through his martyrdom. In mundane terms the church is strengthened and the king cute to size.

Lastly, Becket far from being a tragic hero in the conventional sense of the term "is less a man than an embodied attitude" and the play goes much beyond tragedy in underlining the positive aspect of Christian martyrdom comprising paraoxically grief-in joy and joy in grief.

Q. 10. Discuss, in your own words, the role of the tempters as assigned by T. S. Eliot in his famous tragic play 'The Murder in the Cathedral'.

Who are the tempters in this play 'The Murder in the Cathedral'?
What is their part in the action of the play?

Discuss the scene of temptation in Murder in the Cathedral.

Ans. Introduction-It is necessary to mention that Eliot has given importance to the tempters by including them as important characters in this play 'Murder in the Cathedral'. He had developed them in the style of the 'Morality Plays'. Thus, they are the announcers of certain virtues on the stage with their clear assertions. In the present play they came out to inform the Archbishop, Thomas Becket to behave and act under their advice or suggestion but the Archbishop did not agree to their suggestion.

The Identity of the Tempters-It is necessary to explain the identity of the tempters who are included in the story of the play. They are the personified characters of actors who help in the development of the plot of the play. They also help in the development of different characters included in the story. In this way, the form of the dramas is also improved because the writer follows the middle path between the old drama and the morality plays.

"They know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer."

They know and do not know, that action is suffering

And suffering is action."

The First Speech of Thomas Becket-In the first speech in the story of the play, 'Murder in the Cathedral'. Thomas Becket described the role and function of the Chorus. The Fourth Tempter replied to him in the same words as we see in the same style. It is stressed in the play to go on suffering more and more with the sole aim of getting glory in the end. The Fourth Tempter also tried much to get glory by the martyrdom of Thomas Becket. Thus, he would get the high and holy position of a saint and martyr.

The Important Role of the Tempters-The important role played by all the four tempters is briefly described respectively.

The First Tempter reminded Thomas Becket of his friendship and relationship with King Henry when he was also working as the Chancellor of Canterbury. Then he had promised to be loyal to the King and he also gave him a warning of serious consequences if he did not act with loyalty to the King.

"your Lordship is too Proud!"

Be easy, man!

The easy man lives to eat the best dinners.

Take a friend's advice."

The Archbishop, Thomas Becket flatly rejected his advice which he called unnecessary to accept.

The Second Tempter appeared on the stage with his advice to the Archbishop. Thomas Becket. He advised him to improve his action. He also reminded him about his meetings with him in the past at different places. He asked him to resign from the post of the Archbishop in order to continue to work as the Chancellor. Thomas did not agree to his advice and he refused to act as he had advised him.

The Third Tempter appeared on the stage and he gave his own advice to him. He advised him that he should join his hands with the barons and the Church to fight together for the freedom of the people. He added that both the Church and the blessings of the Pope would help him in their protection. Thomas Becket rejected his advice also.

In the end **The Fourth Tempter** appeared on the stage to give him his advice but he told him that he had expected only the three visitors, not the fourth visitor. He said to Thomas.

"Seek the way of martyrdom, make yourself the lowest
On earth, to be high in heaven."

Then Thomas Becket spoke out the following words of wisdom to that Tempter.

"Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain.
Temptation shall not come in this kind again."

Q. 11. Discuss in your own words, the role of the four Knights. Or
Is it true that the Knights proved as an instrument of Becket's martyrdom? Discuss it.

Ans. Introduction-The arrival of the four Knights at the Canterbury Cathedral shows an important part of the main action towards the murder of the Archbishop, Thomas Becket. They were determined to carry out his murder with their evil intentions. Together enough courage they drank heavily so that they could kill Thomas in a cruel and successful manner. In this way they were the agents of evil against Thomas and the Christian Church. The writer has mentioned in the course of the story their names to give greater importance to their evil and cruel action.

The Knights' charges against Thomas Becket-The four Knights suddenly appeared at the Canterbury Cathedral and asked other priests that they wanted to meet the Archbishop immediately. They rejected the invitation of the priests for dinner and they insisted to call the Archbishop.

When the Archbishop, Thomas Becket came in front of them, they charged him for having revolted against King Henry as well as against the law of the land. They added that the King had appointed him to serve him in a faithful manner. He had received all his honours from the King when he was the son of an ordinary merchant. He was born in Cheapside (in London) and they also compared him to a louse. They did not accept anything which Thomas Becket

had said in his defence. They continued to charge him for his ambitions and rebellious character. On the other hand they called themselves as the loyal servants of King Henry. They further said that he had run away from England but he was not exiled by the King. He had also created disorder in the King's French dominions and so he degraded the King's reputation in the eyes of the King of France and the Pope of Rome.

The four Knights carried out the Murder of the Archbishop, Thomas Becket-The Chorus saw a very serious danger to the life and safety of the Archbishop. They felt sure that then nothing could save him and his life. Its reason was that they had, "smelt the death-bringers". They felt sorry not to do anything to help the Archbishop in any way. With this reason the members of the Chorus felt a serious sense of guilt and remorse. They requested the Archbishop to forgive them and to pray for them. Soon after the four Knights returned armed with their swords. Then the Archbishop had ordered the priests to open all the doors which they had shut not to permit the Knights to enter his room. Soon they killed him.

The four Knights proved as an instrument of the Martyrdom of the Archbishop, Thomas Becket-By murdering the Archbishop, the four Knights contributed much to the martyrdom of Thomas Becket. Its reason is that his murder is the central and the most important event in the story of the play. They had made a long speech in defence of their fatal act of murder. Before his murder, the Archbishop had rejected the plea of the tempters, so he had won a victory over them. On the other hand, he had become ready to accept the verdict of God. He had united his will to the will of God. He had also given up all his desires as well as his personal glory of becoming a martyr. He had become ready to die under the will of God, so he had asked the priests to open the doors of his room. He told them that he was giving his life under the law of God which is above the law of man. He had told the Knights that he was ready to offer his blood like Jesus Christ. It is clear that, in that way, the four Knights had become an instrument of Thomas Becket's martyrdom. The third priest had said that the Church had become stronger by his martyrdom. The members of the Chorus also had a feeling of optimism, so they admired the glory of God.

The Arguments of the Knights in their Self-defence-All the four Knights expressed their arguments in their self-defence. The First Knight had not much to say except a few cliches. He added that Englishmen believed in fair play and their sympathies were always with the under-dogs and they did not judge anybody without hearing both the sides of the case. The Third Knight speaking next said that he had much admiration for the Archbishop but they were compelled to murder Thomas Becket in the interest of the country which they regarded most important. The Third Knight said that they had got nothing for themselves from that murder because they were totally disinterested in the whole action. The Second Knight repeated the same cliches used by the First

Knight. He added that if Thomas had been faithful to the King, England would have become an ideal country by the union of spiritual and temporal rule. He further said that Thomas had become more priestly than other priests and he also declared a higher power than that of the King. Thomas had to be killed to make the Church subordinate to the King. At last the Fourth Knight said that Thomas Becket had become very proud as the Archbishop with his sole purpose to get martyrdom. He was not killed but he had committed suicide like a mad man.

The Dangers of the Audience in supporting the role of the Knights-The audience had been misled by the logic of the Knights but they felt a great danger to support the attitude of the Knights. The Knights had tried to mislead the audience in their favour and they should return home under the idea that the crime of Becket's murder was not so serious as they had thought.

The speeches of the Second and the Fourth Knights put that fatal situation in such a way that the audience might support them. It is necessary to mention that the priests and the women of the Chorus were deadly against the murder of the Archbishop by the cruel and wicked Knights. After making their speeches, the four Knights made their departure saying that they were going to an unknown place to live their life in loneliness and despair. Then the priests admired God and the Archbishop. Thomas Becket for his glorious martyrdom. The audience had also departed from there with a heavy heart at the murder of their Archbishop.

Q. 12. Describe, in your own words, Thomas Becket as a great tragic hero or the character of Becket.

Or
Is it true that Thomas Becket had played his role like a great hero when he was working as a Chancellor?

Ans. The Meaning of a Great Tragic Hero-According to the Greek rules, the tragic hero must be a man in high position, either a King, or a prince of great importance. The main purpose of a tragedy should be to produce pity or fear. According to Aristotle a tragic hero is a "man who is not eminently good, or just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice, or depravity but by some error of frailty." The tragic hero must have some noble qualities but he should also have some flaw in his character. T. S. Eliot had the traditional concept about the tragic hero. For example, Thomas Becket is flawless and without any frailty. He had the quality as a hero when it was needed. He was bold, fearless and courageous, so he tried to undo the personality of a great King Henry. Thus, he was greater than princes and kings. In short he became a true martyr when he was murdered by the four Knights.

Thomas Becket was a man of many parts, yet he was proud of his high position-Though Thomas Becket was a man of many parts, yet he was also a

proud man. He thought about the past days of his worldly prosperity as well as of temporal power which he used to have during his Chancellorship. Then he also thought of beating Henry at his political power with the united power with the barons. In the later part of his life, he gave up his pride and love for power. Then he felt to be united with God after giving up all his desires. Then he said in the sermon *"the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desired anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr."* In this way he tried to show himself as a great mystic. He declared that the spiritual power is better than the physical power.

Thomas Becket found out the reality of the divine love-It is necessary to mention that Thomas Becket, at last found out the reality of the divine love. He found out the power of the ultimate law of the spirit after uniting himself with Christ by joining his will to the will of God. When the priests told him to stay under the closed door, he asked them to open the door saying that he was not afraid of death. It is his perfection with the will of God. The following lines support his conception:

**"Death will come only when I am worthy,
And if I am worthy, there is no danger".**

This is the reason that under such a spirit, Thomas Becket had given up his life and he accepted his death willingly and gladly. He did so under the 'Law of God.'

His role as a real and great hero under his post as a Chancellor-It is necessary to mention that Thomas Becket had played his role as a great hero when he was working as a Chancellor under King Henry. Then he imposed the King's law in England and he also fought war with him against Toulouse. Then he beat the barons in their clever game. Then he started to hate that man who had regarded him most contemptible. Then he was loyal to King Henry and he never wished to serve as the servant of God. It is necessary to mention that his discovery, martyrdom or spiritualism were under a slow process because it was neither sudden, nor it was accidental.

Thomas Becket as a true Catholic with his deep faith in God and Religion-It is true that Thomas Becket was a true Catholic. He had deep faith in God and religion. As a true Catholic, he believed that the safety of man is always in the hands of God. This is the reason that he did not bow before any temporal power but he could bow only before God. It is well expressed in the following lines from the text:

"I give my life

To the Law of God above the Law of Man."

Then he was fully ready to die under the law of God. His aim was that the Church might have peace and liberty. The Knights charged him of treachery

against the King and they charged him as a traitor. He replied as a true servant of God and Christian religion in the following words:

"I am here,

No traitor to the King. I am a Priest.

A Christian, saved by the blood of Christ.

My death for his death."

His Qualities of Great Courage and Fearlessness-After reading the story of this play *"Murder in the Cathedral"* we know that the Archbishop, Thomas Becket possessed the qualities of a great courage as well as of fearlessness Like Jesus Christ, he embraced the tragic lot of religious faith. When he was killed by the Knights, he had the following words of prayer on his lips:

"Now to Almighty God, to the Blessed Mary Virgin to the Blessed John, the Baptist. The holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, to the blessed martyr, Denge and to all the saints. I commend my course and that of the Church."

It is necessary to mention that the Archbishop, Thomas Becket has been presented in this play as an ideal tragic hero. He may be called the mouthpiece of T. S. Eliot because he created the tragic impression in the story of the play from the beginning upto its end. Thomas is related to the tragic irony as well as to the tragic event of the highest pitch. As he was the spiritual hero of the play, he was also an ideal tragic hero. Thomas Becket had served the main purpose of the writer by becoming the martyr after he had been killed by the four Knights. In this way, he acted as an instrument of the divine purpose with his matchless qualities of courage and fearlessness. He had attained martyrdom as a great martyr and saint by virtue of his goodness and supreme sacrifice. He had done so after giving up his pride and all ambitions.

Q. 13. Attempt an essay on the imagery used by Eliot in 'The Murder in the Cathedral.'

"Much of the colour and pictorial quality of 'The Murder in the Cathedral' has been provided by the imagery employed by Eliot in it." Discuss.

Ans-Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral* was first performed in the chapter house at Canterbury. Hence, there was little scope of realistic scenery at that place. He depended upon imagery to provide much of its colour and pictorial quality. Eliot once expressed his views about dramatic verse that it, "Must be simply relevant to the action which is going forward; but it should also have death which can only be penetrated by the reader who studies it again and again." This is true of the imagery in *Murder in the Cathedral*. In the opening chorus, for instance, the women of Canterbury use images of the passing

seasons, of ordinary domestic life, of light and darkness, and of growth and decay. The natural images help to draw us, by their familiarity, into the web of the play. The images of passing time and the cycle of nature suggest us the continuity of time which links us by a common bond with the women folk at Canterbury in 1170. Images of ploughing the land and doing the ordinary household work show that the speakers are ordinary people, concerned with their own domestic lives. They provide an imagery of light striving and failing to break in on a pattern of ominous darkness.

Becket is a genius. In him are combined many qualities. He is a statesman, lawyer and cleric. His images are drawn from a wide area. Hawking, jousting, and theology all colour the way he thinks and speaks :

**For a little time the hungry hawk
Will only soar and hover, circling lower....
In the tilt-year I made many yield.....**

One of the most moving aspects of his character is his sympathy with the chorus. This expresses itself in the imagery as well as in the attitudes he adopts. When he wants to console them he employs their own domestic language so that they may understand what he says :

**You shall forget these things toiling in the household
You shall remember them drowsing by the fire
When age and forgetfulness sweeten memory
Only a dream that has been told.**

The language and world of the Bible are always at his command :

They shall find the shepherd here, the flock shall be spared. The imagery of the Tempters is in accordance with their function. The First Tempter evokes the physical comforts of Becket's days as Chancellor and court favourite : 'viols in the hall, singing at nightfall, whispering in chambers'. He reminds him of goose for dinner, love making in the orchard, and music in summer meadows-an undeniable pleasant life. But his imagery under cuts itself, as in :

**Fires devouring the winter season,
Eating up the darkness, with wit and wine and wisdom!**

"The suggestion", says Tony Bareham, "of over indulgence, of hell fire, 'eating up' the indulgent man, of wine blotting out wisdom, lurk behind the seductive surface of the images, offering a stern warning that thus is a temptation to a false paradise."

The Second Tempter in the manner of a politician, is more abstract. He talks of ruling 'richly', combining job satisfaction with personal profit, and 'dressing' state dignity with decorum, as though dignity were some shameful thing which needed clothing before it might be respectable.

On the other side the Third Tempter poses himself as a 'rough straightforward Englishman's and while he certainly does not use rich or graphic images,

there is devious subtlety in his rhetoric which takes their place. His images lack, something chilling about his insistence upon avoiding colourful or everyday correlatives. He is full of abstracts-'sovereignty', 'advantage', 'liberty', 'tyrannous jurisdiction', these empty words make him neither tend attractiveness to him nor do make him less dangerous.

The Fourth Tempter uses subtle and complex imagery. His main theme is that beyond world pleasure and political power lie another force which has bidding power. Thus, the idea of binding of locking something up, of holding fast, is revealed in many of his speeches :

**You would wait for trap to snap
Having served your turn, broken and crushed....**

You hold the keys of heaven and hell....

**You hold the skein, wind, Thomas, wind
The thread of eternal life and death.....**

His imagery can establish the supremacy of spiritual power and sounds dangerously attractive :

**Think Thomas, think of enemies dismayed.
Creeping in penance, frightened of a shade....**

The imagery employed in Murder in the Cathedral is of a different type as the verse which is used in it. It ranges from delightful images of courtly dignity through graphic pictures of everyday life, to high religious abstractions. The imagery has been carefully suited to the individual speakers and provides a key to the audience's appreciation of the message behind the dramatic spectacle.

Unit IV (The Birthday Party)

Q. 14. What is meant by the Absurd Drama? What are its major Characteristics.

Ans.

The Theatre of the Absurd

The theatre of the absurd constitutes a triumvirate of modern drama. The other two triumvirs being, the Revival of poetic drama in Ireland pioneered by W.B. Yeats and the Revival of verse drama inaugurated by T.S. Eliot in England. We agree with Martin Esslin that the theatre of the Absurd is nothing. We agree with Martin Esslin that the theatre of the Absurd is nothing but an intellectual shorthand for a complex pattern of similarities in approach, in mode, of group of plays that have common set of philosophical premises.

Salient Features of the Absurd Drama

According to Irving Warrille, the salient features of an Absurd Drama are as follows:

(1) **Static rather than Dynamic:** An absurd drama presents a static situation that has no dynamism in it. It does not progress at all, but ends where it started-It only expands and swells but hardly moves an inch ahead of its starting point. Like a caged beast it whirs, yells or even roars but only in vain.

(2) **Substitution of an Inner Landscape for the Outer World:** Another important feature of the absurd drama is the substitution of an inner landscape for the outer world. An absurd drama endeavours to carry the onlookers into the psychological realism of the characters rather than to present the outer spectacle of the World. Before the audience or onlookers, the mental recesses of the protagonists are unfolded, parading the fear and meance.

(3) **Want of Boundary Line Between Fantasy and Fact:** In an absurd play there is no border line between fantasy and fact. Both of these elements inter-mingle and merge together. The want of a clear-cut line of demarcation helps create perplexity, confusion, absurdity.

(4) **Plasticity of Time:** Again, the plasticity of time limit makes an absurd play either contractible or retractable as the need might be there. There is hardly any mention of the time limits in an absurd play, offering the playwright an option to prolong it either, or to shorten it, as the case might require.

(5) **A Fluid Environment:** Another important characteristic feature of an absurd play lies in its fluid and amoeboid environment that admits of transformation of one mental condition into another form through visual metaphors. The suggestive and generally monosyllabic or even tacit dialogues help a lot to create this amoeboid milieu in an absurd play.

(6) **Obsession of the Protagonist:** In an absurd play, the protagonists are obsessed with defeat, despair, fear and death, which render the atmosphere of the play gruesome and menacing, the presumption of some inimical and hostile intruder haunts the minds of the protagonists recurringly till it becomes an obsession for them, pricking their minds and souls always and anon.

(7) **An Iron Precision of Language and Construction:** An iron precision of language and construction is a must and a characteristic feature of an absurd play as it is the writer's only defence against the chaos of living experience.

(8) **A Total Rejection of all Rationality :** Dramatists of the Absurd believed that the human life was not rational, it did not follow any laws or logical pattern. Dramatists of the absurd, therefore, rejected all rationality in plot, characterisation and dialogue and also in the projection of a vision of the world in which man is out of harmony with the universe. Their plays often have no plot as such, make nonsense of chronology and contain obscure or unexplained incidents. Plays of the Absurd were first performed. They obeyed none of the laws of conventional drama, and because absurdity is amusing, the plays were frequently very

comic. Nor were these plays 'about' something, in the sense of having a specific point or moral to them. Instead, they were capable of widely differing interpretations. Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' has been seen as a play about religion, as a criticism of capitalism, and a play about German-occupied France in the second world war, to name but a few views. The similarities between this type of drama and such of Pinter's plays as, 'The Birthday Party' and 'The Caretaker' are clear; the latter are comic, leave audiences confused about the origins of characters, show a behaviour that appears absurd and are open to widely differing interpretations. The differences are also there in that Pinter's plays are more tightly constructed, psychologically more probing and outwardly closer to real life in what they portray.

**Q. 15. What are the salient features of the character of Goldberg? Or
Examine the character of Goldberg in 'The Birthday Party'. Or
How far do you think the character of McCann significant in 'The
Birthday Party'? Or
Examine the character of McCann in The Birthday Party.**

Ans. Their Mysterious Origin : Both Goldberg and McCann's origin is wrapped in mystery. We are not told anything about who they are or whence they have come or ever what is their purpose. They may be gangsters : they are.....undoubtedly violent and they belong to some organization. Stanley tells them, 'There's nothing here for you from any angle, any angle and you're nothing but a dirty joke. Now such sentences only suggest that the two men are criminals. McCann is Irish and so suggestive of having links with IRA and his words further strengthen the suggestion because he speaks the language of civil disturbance in Ireland such as, that's Black and Tan fact and 'Remember Drogheda' in his dialogue with Stanley, but Ira having a reputation of being an antisemitic organization, might not have Goldberg as a member of IRA assassination squad, whatever the truth. At least this much is certain that Golderg is the leader of the team while McCann is only the lieutenant. This also seems certain that they have come to destroy Stanley and succeed in doing just this by a process of interrogation that drives Stanley out of himself and shatters his dream world to pieces. Goldberg also deflowers Lulu and perhaps this deed of Goldberg accounts for his feeling insecure and knocked out in the final act. McCann also feels insecure and at one point refuses to go up again to Stanley's room. This feature of their feeling themselves insecure, is really frightening element in the play as if suggesting that in the world of The Birthday Party even the prosecutors are not immune to outside attack and they too are victims of a feeling of insecurity.

Symbols of Violent and Meancing World : The feeling of insecurity in Goldberg and McCann however, intensifies the feeling of menace in the play,

as their roles seem to act as symbols of violent and menacing world that exists outside the walls of Meg's boarding house. Goldberg is a hypocrite and succeeds in concealing his real nature under the guise of his seeming innocent physical charm, by dint of which he deceives both Meg and Lulu and they cannot know his hidden reality. His jolly behaviour at the party and his often paraded nostalgia make others mistake him for an innocent man who loves home and homely security. He is really a violent and menacing figure not only because he destroys the individuality of Stanley, but precisely because he is a 'laughing villain' whose resemblance belies his reality of heart.

In his case, the apparent and real are just opposites; he does not seem to be what he really is and what he really is, he does not seem to be apparently. This suggests to the audience that it is very hard to know a person by his appearance. It seems to tell them that one may smile and be a villain; that all that glitters is not gold.

Ever Ready to Reminisce about Childhood: Goldberg is always ready to reminisce with warmth of brightness, about his childhood and youthful days and even McCann sings songs that show his acute desire to return to Ireland.

After lunch on Shabbuss we'd go and sit in a couple of deck chairs-you know, the ones with canopies-we'd have a little paddle, we'd watch the tide coming in, going out, the sun coming down-golden days, believe me, McCann.

Goldberg's Reminiscences—An Escapist Device: Goldberg's nostalgic reminiscences are an escapist's device to go away from harsh realities of life. His memories serve as a sort of retreat for him from the naked realities of the world which is too harsh and hostile to face. In order to escape them, Goldberg has visualised a wistful golden world in the past when life knew no complications and the folks used to be gentlemen and there was happiness all around him. Towards these childhood memories Goldberg has grown quite jealous and does not let anyone touch them. So when McCann calls him by the name Simey his childhood name. Goldberg boils with anger and cries, NEVER CALL ME THAT! The word Simey belongs to his dream world of memory, and to use it in the real world means to banish it from mind and if this is allowed, it will be destroyed, something which Goldberg cannot afford. Goldberg's dreamworld exists only in his mind and perhaps not outside.

The Significance of Goldberg and McCann's Nostalgia: Goldberg and McCann's nostalgia is significant in as much as it shows how memory is undependable. It also shows how people try to believe what they want to believe or need to believe happened, not what actually happened, so also McCann seems to believe in himself as an Irish patriot. Perhaps that is why he does not want to go upstairs to face Stanley in such a horrible plight.

Goldberg and McCann as Agents of Death: Some critics suggest that Goldberg and McCann are agents of death and that the play. The Birthday Party only presents in abstract form the phenomenon of death. Thus Goldberg

and McCann are the messengers of death: sent to fetch Stanley to another world, and that their feeling of insecurity is a recognition of the fact that death comes to all its messengers not excluding. But the only demerit with the theory is that either Goldberg or Stanley does not say anything about death and they do not link themselves with death by any statement.

Goldberg and McCann—As Agents of Society: Another theory is propounded by some critics that Goldberg and McCann are agents of society and they have been sent to mould Stanley into an acceptable form to society and reduce his individuality. His present form of individuality being such as cannot be tolerated by society. It may also be possible that Stanley represents the artist, the free thinking and creative individual and Goldberg and McCann the type of conventional thinking persons that cannot allow for the singularity of the artist, the fact that in third act Stanley comes out as donned in a black suit and white collar and speechless, gives weight to this theory and Goldberg and McCann appear to offer him all the decorations of worldly success after his destruction.

Goldberg: You'll be integrated.

McCann: You'll give orders.

Goldberg: You'll make decisions.

McCann: You'll be a magnate.

Goldberg: A statesman.

McCann: You'll own Yachts.

It is as if they cannot allow to live as he wishes to, but must make him succeed only on the terms accepted by society.

The Role of Goldberg and McCann: The role of Goldberg and McCann in the play is to bring on to the surface of the play that violence and menace that underlies so much of it. No endeavour to propound the themes of The Birthday Party can and should overlook the contribution of the role of Goldberg and McCann. 'Animals' is probably the best term to describe them and this term has been given by themselves.

Q. 16. Write a short note on chorus in the play Murder in the Cathedral.

Ans. The idea of "chorus" in Eliot's play is taken from the Greek drama. Before speaking of the chorus in Eliot's "Murder in the cathedral", I would like to give you a short overview on Greek drama, comparing in the same time the chorus in the Greek drama to the chorus in Eliot's drama.

The history of western drama begins with the ancient Greeks, about two and a half thousand years ago. By then, drama was more sophisticated than the mere representation of the death and resurrection of a god, but still had its beginnings in crude village ceremonies. The word "tragedy" comes from "tragos", the Greek word for goat, and the first tragedies may well have been mere dances around sacrificial goats, or songs from a chorus dressed as goats. "Comedy"

comes from "komos", meaning a revel, a rough country party honouring the god Dionysus, the Greek god of vegetation – a suffering god who dies and comes to life again, particularly as a god of wine who loosens care.

The Greek tragic dramatists wrote religious dramas concerned with the moral relation between gods and men, and usually had an instructive moral purpose. Performances were less an entertainment than a religious ceremony. At first, those not actively taking part in such plays were grouped about the performers in such a way as to retain empathetic yet vicarious sensual contact with them. By the time of the Classical period in the 5th century BC, the time of the great tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, all action performed by chorus and actors took place within the orchestral circle.

The actors would wear masks and perform symbolic movements and gestures; a chorus would occasionally cut in on the story and point the moral. Interestingly enough, the stage was at that time a wooden barrier behind which the actors and chorus went to change mask and costume. The chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral* is composed of ordinary women of Canterbury who are neither saints like Thomas Becket nor sinners like the Knights. They are, like the audience, onlookers who witness the drama and comment on it without intervening.

At first, the chorus delivers a sense of foreshadowing. As they approach the cathedral, they note that danger awaits, but not for them. They state, "There is not danger for us, and there is no safety in the cathedral." The chorus serves to warn the audience that danger is coming, and then, they provide an encapsulation of the past. They explain to the audience that the archbishop, Thomas Becket, has been away for seven years and is now returning to Canterbury. After Thomas returns, the women of the chorus fear for his safety and beg him to leave Canterbury. When it becomes apparent that he is to die, they become resigned to his fate. After he is killed, they suffer intense guilt and state that "We did not wish anything to happen." In the end, they offer praise to God. Their cycle of foreboding, fear, regret, and faith mirrors the feelings that an everyday person would have in reaction to Thomas's death, and, by reflecting the emotions of the audience, the chorus invites the audience to become one with them.

Q. 17. Murder in Cathedral displays the theme of morality and spirituality. Explain.

Ans. As a play based on the actual historical conflict between the Archbishop Thomas Becket of Canterbury and the English King Henry II, *Murder in the Cathedral* explores the relationship between two forms of power: worldly and spiritual. Worldly power refers to any power that is wielded over the everyday world of human affairs, particularly political power. The play refers to this power as "temporal," highlighting its fleeting nature and the fact that it is completely subject to the passage of time. Worldly power is therefore open to change, and the effectiveness of its laws is never guaranteed.

In contrast, spiritual power in the play refers to a code of laws that spring from God, are eternal, and to a significant degree are beyond human comprehension. From the beginning to the end, *Murder in the Cathedral* explores how people would navigate between these two powers, through Becket's interactions with the four tempters, the four knights, and in Becket's own evolving understanding of his martyrdom—his willingness to die for God.

The four tempters' dialogues with Becket may be interpreted as attempts to persuade him to adopt certain conceptions of how temporal and spiritual power should be balanced. The first tempter treats spirituality as a kind of decoration in worldly power—as something that can inspire joy and merriment by bringing happiness to the state and, in the process, fix Becket's conflicted relationship with the king. The second tempter, however, sees spiritual power as utterly ineffectual, and argues that to truly effect change Becket should focus less on religion and return to his former political role as Chancellor. The third tempter sees spiritual power as basically just another form of worldly power—or something that can be put to work to achieve worldly ends that have no spiritual grounding. He argues that Becket should use his role as Archbishop to help empower the lower class of country lords to overthrow the king. The fourth tempter has the opposite opinion of the second: he argues that Becket should devote himself solely to the realm of spiritual power, and shirk the temporal, through martyrdom. Thus, the four tempters all argue for certain ways of how the two forms of power should be thought together or apart.

In the second part of the play, the four knights—representatives of the king and therefore of the king's worldly power—confront Becket. The knights' conception of the relationship between worldly and temporal power leads them to call Becket a traitor: they think he's betrayed the worldly authority of the English crown through an overzealous loyalty to the spiritual authority of the Pope (who has condemned the king). The knights therefore see worldly and temporal power as separate entities that exist in a kind of natural opposition, an opposition where both powers to some extent restrict one another. The knights (and, by extension, the king) believe that Becket has pushed too far in supporting the Pope's condemnation of the English king; they thus believe he has become a traitor.

Becket's own view about the relationship between the two powers is revealed by his reply to the knights. He responds by declaring that there is a higher order responsible for the king's condemnation: "It is not Becket who pronounces doom, / But the Law of Christ's Church, the judgment of Rome." This Law, applied by the Pope, is believed by Becket to stem wholly from God (the Pope was believed to be God's mouthpiece). Becket therefore appeals to the realm of spiritual power as if it had absolute priority over the dimension of worldly authority. To Becket, worldly power is a puny, false conception of power; real power stems from a higher source, beyond human comprehension, and based in God.

Q. 18. Discuss the structure and technique of 'The Birthday Party'.

Or

Discuss the structure of 'The Birthday Party'.

Ans.—Making Headway Against the Resistance of well-established European tradition.

Pinter's work in general and the structure of *'The Birthday Party'* in particular makes a headway against the resistance of well-established European tradition of drama and dramatic art. The European galaxy of playwrights includes writers like Dostoevski and James Joyce, as well as Kafka and Beckett. In as much as these writers deliberately flouted traditional ideas of logic, both in terms of plot and in terms of language in their plays, they resemble the plays of Pinter. But the difference lies in the use to which their stylistic devices were put. Many of them in their plays have little sense of danger, of being threatened or even involved. It is true indeed that they shared many characteristics with any Pinterian play, but it is misleading to assume that they wrote the same kind of play.

The Realistic Setting—Unlike Beckett whose characters seem to live in a stark, unspecific landscape, Pinter places the figures in recognizable surroundings and his characters are stamped by the fashions of contemporary periods. Thus, the setting for *'The Birthday Party'* is essentially realistic, and was probably based on a real boarding house where Pinter might have stayed.

A Well-built Conventional Plot Structure—*'The Birthday Party'* has a well-built, almost conventional structure of the plot. In other words, it has a recognizable beginning, a middle and an end. Act I contains the exposition or the rising action, introducing the characters, revealing their relationships to each other, and announcing the event, the party itself, which will move the plot forward. Act-II builds quickly to the dramatic climax, the moment of explicit crisis and conflict when Stanley desperately attacks the intruders and is deliberately attacked by them and after which nothing will ever be quite the same. Act III shows the after effects of that event and the audience finds that the characters have all been changed by the experience. Stanley is past action; the crisis for him has been put an end to. There is no longer any suspense, but, on the other hand, the satisfaction of having seen the pattern completed.

The Plot Conventionally Observes three Unities—Conventionally the drama works within specific limits—the unities of time, place and action. In other words, there is one plot line, the action does not shift from city to city, and exists within a time limit of about twenty-four hours. Not only does the observation of these three unities give the drama the concentration and clarity

which is so essential for its continuous impact, but it can also be intellectually and aesthetically satisfying to the audience because it does not strain its tolerance and imaginative plasticity. Also traditionally no bloodshed occurred within sight of the audience, although the language could be violent, and the effects of the bloodshed could be vividly conveyed to them.

'The Birthday Party' can also be seen to function within these scheduled conventions: the action has a single line of the development of its story and is limited to the walls of Meg's boarding houses between one morning and the next; there is also no bloodshed on stage—though the sense of impending catastrophe is conveyed through the language and through certain ritualistic actions (the game of blindman's buff, for instance).

Q. 19. Examine the character of Stanley in *The Birthday Party*.

Ans. **His habit and habitat**—Stanley could be any age between twenty-five and forty. He is dirty, untended and untidy looking, usually unshaven. He wears glasses and when the audience first sees him he still has on his pyjama jacket. He is idle and loiters in bed as long as he can in the morning. He never goes out of the boarding house, and seems to have been putting up quite for some considerable time. He likes pinpricking Meg and poking fun at her simplicity who always desires to please him, and while he sometimes encourages her to mother him, there is also an undercurrent of eroticism in their relationship and also some tension. Occasionally, nevertheless, Stanley is violent.

Hero of the Play—Stanley is the hero of the play. It is the presence of Stanley which brings into limelight the more disturbing and complicated features of the others. He is the cause of the arrival of Goldberg and McCann at Meg's guest house. It is he who brings them together, setting up tension and differences between them as they carry out this distasteful assignment, 'the job'. McCann feels so sad about and which, for a moment makes Goldberg lose his self-confidence. Thus, from beginning to the end of the play, Stanley is present on the stage and all incidents of the play converge on him. So, it is certain, that he is the hero of the play, *'The Birthday Party'*.

Stanley's past—His past-whatever the truth of it—may contain the key to the events of the play itself. It is he, who first of all sounds the note of alarm, cutting through the apparently trivial talk of Meg. From the beginning he is aware of the susceptibility of his retreat and knows that the retreat is quite vulnerable to the outsiders hunting for him. He knows that one day the threat is most likely to knock at the doors of the boarding house, and he communicates this fear to the audience. The sudden change of tone when he hears of the two strangers who are about to violate his sanctuary, his retreat in the face of direct questions, his willingness to surrender to the sticky caresses of Meg, who is twice his age and with half his intelligence, all combine to create sus-

pense and to make the audience ready to accept the idea of his guilt for some still unknown wrong deed in the past.

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His inconsistent references to his own life—When questioned, Stanley is inconsistent in his references to his own life, assuming different identities as he tries to exit. To impress Meg he fabricates a life spent with varying success as a painist; to befriend McCann he talks of a life begun and continued in Maidenhead which was full of teashops and libraries, where he did a little private business, but, when he is really frightened, he admits to years spent in Basingstoke during which he 'never stepped outside the door', under interrogation he wildly talks about washing cups in a Lyons Corner House in London.

The significance of this account of past life as a pianist—When Meg tells him two unknown visitors, he is frightened and terrified and takes his revenge on Meg for bringing him this news by frightening her with a tale of men coming for her with a wheelbarrow. It appears that he must have been once a pianist, but piano he no longer plays. Then Meg happens to ask him, 'when are you going to play it again?' He, at once, boasts to Meg about a job of pianist that has only recently been offered to him by a round-the-world touring club, but it seems as if this boasting of his is baseless.

He tells a lie to Lulu and McCann—Stanley presumably tells a lie to Lulu when he claims, 'I was in the sea at half past six.' But she gives an accurate description of Stanley when she says, 'you've a bit of a wash out, aren't you?' When Lulu proposes to him to go out for a walk in the fresh air, he rejects it outright and remains in the room. Similarly, it may be his birthday, but he denies this. He tells McCann that he spent some time in Maidenhead, and that he had a private income.

His longing for family security—One of Stanley's speeches to McCann has obvious links with the theme of family, security and even personality. Stanley is longing to go home and get security, fostering strongly the belief that his self has not changed at all.

Q. 20. Bring out the comic element in 'The Birthday Party'.

Ans. Audience's Laughter as a smoke-screen: Pinter's plays require brave spectators who are ready to face the vacuum of their own intelligence, the failure of their own understanding and judgement, the brutality of their own emotions. Pinter's world is tough on both sides of the limelight, and the often criticized laughter of a bemused audience during the performance of his plays acts as a simple defence mechanism, a Freudian resistance not so much against the text as against their reaction to the text. Pinter has described the embarrassed laughter of his audience as a mode of precaution, a smoke-screen, a refusal to accept what is happening as recognizable.

Comedy Oozing out of Irony: In Pinter Irony is one way in which the relationship between an appearance of normality and a feeling of impending catastrophe operates: the audience laughs at the character's ignorance of the real significance of a word or phrase or action. Pinter uses this tactic repeatedly in *The Birthday Party*. Whatever Pinter says is never to be taken entirely seriously; because irony—the radical doubt about the very words that he uses to communicate—invariably accompanies his every statement. To miss the irony in the text is tantamount to missing the text itself. It is irony that creates the distance between 'Puzzling Pinter' and ourselves and demarcates a fine zone between the author and his characters, or between each of the mutually non-comprehending characters themselves.

Ironies Conveyed Through the Change in Meaning: Pun's Ironies conveyed through the change in meaning within a single phrase or word are equally comic and require no fore knowledge of the plot. For instance, when Meg tries to give Goldberg and McCann an account of Stanley's past triumphs, she tries to echo Stanley's words but unfortunately changes the words and the result is comic giggles of the audience.

Meg's rose-tinted distorted version of Stanley's story is absurd: the audience can laugh at her sentimental foolishness. There is also fun in noting Pinter's exploitation of the critical difference in meaning between the phrases take a tip and give a tip. Although puns are part of long-standing conventions of English humour, here there is also the more serious recognition that this is merely one instance of how language renders truthful communication difficult, tending rather to emphasise a character's isolation. Stanley has tried to word a nightmarish experience full of horror and bitterness for him. Meg has heard it, anxious to share Stanley's memories as a way of rivetting him to her, yet has failed to understand his language, listening only what she wanted or desired to listen.

Comedy from the Commonplace Talk: Comedy in Pinter also sometimes springs from a commonplace conversation which has to fill the empty space

between characters whose lives are emotionally or intellectually poor. Extracts from newspaper gossip columns give Meg great delight in hearing from others.

One More Example of Comedy Emanating from Abrupt Decline from the Sublime to the Trivial: There are a number of examples in *The Birthday Party* to show how Pinter rescends abruptly from the sublime to the banal or commonplace, to create fun, laughter and comedy. Stanley recollects about a concert which he claims to have given. It was a good one, too. They were all there that night Every single one of them. It was a great success. Yes, a concert.

Now such a concert should take place in a concert hall of repute, in the heart of London's cultural premises. But no! Stanley adds in the same breath 'It was a great success. Yes. A concert. At lower Edmonton: This lower stresses the suburban ordinariness of Edmonton, sudden change from what is sublime to what is unimportant, is both comic and an important peep into Stanley's Character.

Q. 21. Is 'The Birthday Party' a comedy or tragedy? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. The Distinction between Tragedy and Comedy-If we take a common view of the distinction between tragedy and comedy, we generally think that tragedy presents a crisis or conflict to which there is no happy solution and the destruction of protagonists seems ultimately inevitable. However, a comedy presents a crisis or confusion to which the audience is always confident, there is happy solution. If seen in the light of this generally held view, *The Birthday Party* still appears as a tragedy. Even though Stanley does not seem to choose the path of tragic punishment deliberately, to trigger a sequence of events culminating in his destruction as, for example, Shakespeare's tragic hero does, nevertheless his suffering is not accidental; he suffers because he is what he is, caught in a situation which he cannot escape.

The Built-In Tension-*The Birthday Party* has the built-in tension of a hunting story. In Act-I can be seen, the retreat running away from Justice, gone to the ground, uneasily and anxiously awaiting his discovery. No sooner do both parties come face to face, than the excitement for the audience lies not any kind of espionage, but in the thrill of the chase itself. As no point is there any real chance for Stanley to escape the danger, in Act-II he can be seen making hectic efforts to beguile them and somehow evade his capture, then just like an animal at bay, he turns on his pursuers in violent but futile desperation. In Act-III can be seen the hunters departing with their hunt neatly packed up to be presented to the mysterious Monty.

It's Conventional Tragic Structure-*The Birthday Party* has an almost conventional tragic structure. It has a clear-cut organic plot, with a beginning, a middle and an end, Act-I the exposition, introduces characters, shows their

mutual relationship and lets us know of the chief event the party itself. Act-II presents quickly growing structure to climax, the hour of open crisis and conflict when Stanley attacks McCann and is attacked by him and after which nothing will ever be redeemed. Act-III presents the aftermath of that event by which all characters have been changed considerably and irredeemably. Stanley is past all action. The crisis for him has definitely been resolved. There is no more suspense, but rather the satisfaction of having seen the play completed.

The Tragic Hero and His Sense of Guilt-Although the play opens on a scene of normality, it is troubled only by Stanley, the tragic hero who is nervous and overwhelmed with a sense that all is not as it appears to be. He knows well that he is hunted and that his retreat is quite vulnerable. When the intruders come, Stanley stealthily eyes them from the kitchen and goes out by the back door. When he returns he asks Meg not only about the identity of two men but also about the purpose of their visit. Because in Pinter the manner of language is always more important than the matter, and the manner of Stanley's asking clearly shows that he has some hidden fear in his heart, some feeling of guilt that makes him apprehend the two new comers. His beating of the drum savagely some time later also points in the same direction of his hidden sense of guilt.

Tragic Climax-In *The Birthday Party*, there is a relentless progress towards the tragic climax. Despite his frantic denials, Stanley appears to confess his guilt for some untold crime and very soon accepts the futility of struggling against what might be seen as the forces of punishment, the furies of Greek plays here being replaced by Goldberg and McCann, who have the power to destroy his mind, if not to kill him bodily.

The Tragic Hero and the Cause of Tragedy-In Pinter, character is not destiny as in Shakespeare nor is destiny the character as in Hardy. His hamartia or flaw of character lies not in his character but certainly out of it, in the situation, Stanley does not knowingly choose the path to tragic catastrophe as, say, Shakespeare's Macbeth does, nevertheless his suffering is not accidental. He suffers because he is who he is, caught in a situation which he cannot escape. What happens to him, therefore, has a particular significance. It happens for a reason, not in a zig-zag, casual way. Although conventionally speaking, Stanley is wanting in a stature befitting a tragic hero: there is no spectacle of a great man's fall that might sound loudly of a tragedy. But believing with Arthur Miller about the nature of tragic hero that the social status of a tragic hero matters little in itself and that the hero is raised to tragic stature by the unusual intensity of his feelings and by his inability to walk away from the danger and pain inherent in his situation. We can see that Stanley does not simply run away when Goldberg and McCann arrive, although he has

golden opportunity to slip out of the back door and could therefore, run away from trouble. Obviously, he is somehow forced to return to complete the tragic action, to suffer a kind of death, greatman's fall that might sound loudly of a tragedy. But believing with Arthur Miller about the nature of tragic hero that the social status of a tragic hero matters little in itself and that the hero is raised to tragic stature by the 'Unusual intensity of his feelings and by his inability to walk away from the danger and pain inherent in his situation, we can see that Stanley does not simply run away when Goldberg and McCann arrive, although he has the golden opportunity to slip out of the back door and could, therefore, run away from trouble. Obviously he is somehow forced to return to complete the tragic action, to suffer a kind of death. The intensity of his feelings is exposed partly through his frenzied drum beating, partly through his collapse under interrogation and partly through his sudden, desperate bursts of violence. His inability to speak or to act in the final scene is perhaps more eloquent than the eloquence itself.

Q. 22. Examine critically the significance of the title of 'The Birthday Party'.

Ans. A Great Ironist-Pinter is a great ironist. Whatever he says is never to be taken entirely seriously; for irony—that radical doubt about the very words that he uses to communicate—invariably accompanies his every statement—the title not excluding. To miss the irony in the text is tantamount to miss the text itself. It is irony that creates the distance between 'Puzzling Pinter' and the audience, and demarcates a fine zone between the author and his characters, or between each of the mutually non-comprehending characters themselves.

Whose Birthday-It is Meg who, obviously succumbing to Goldberg's Strategic move, tells him that it is Stan's birthday, the day on which both Goldberg and McCann set their foot in the boarding house, but Stanley, first denies it to McCann and in the next sentence says that he intends to solemnize his birthday outside in seclusion. However a birthday implies not the anniversary of one's birth alone but, it means precisely the day of one's birth. Seen in this light we can deduce the conclusion that Goldberg and McCann metamorphose Stanley into a new man and his previous identity is totally dissolved. Through the interrogative process of brainwash, he is definitely reborn and transformed into an entirely different individual.

The Birthday Party Held at the Connivance of Goldberg—The Birthday Party held to solemnize Stan's birthday is connived at by Goldberg—the arch persecutor—to 'bring Stanley out of himself'. Meg being a little less intelligent succumbs to his honey-tongued hypocrisy and cannot understand how drastically will Goldberg bring Stanley out of himself. The pun on the phrase beguiles her and she is too stupid to read between the lines. So, the birthday

party takes place even without the consent of Stanley. Nor is it held to honour Stanley but with an eye, by Goldberg to gauge the depth of Meg's affection to Stanley and by Meg to take Stanley out of 'dumps' in which she has found him lately.

Goldberg's Strategy Behind the Party—The coming of Goldberg and McCann at the boarding house, their preliminary exchange between themselves about the job, their searching mode of askance about Stanley to Credulous Meg and the Codes they exchange with each other—all these things make the audience doubt their intentions and so when Goldberg proposes to Meg for a birthday party to honour Stanley, the audience becomes ready for some untoward incident. In fact the birthday party is only a veil, a cover beneath which Goldberg and McCann want to execute the 'job' for which they have come to the boarding house. He orders McCann to procure the paraphernalia of the party, i.e., drinks etc. However, Stanley has been paralysed, stunned and dumbfounded to hear of the arrival of Goldberg and McCann. So the coming events of the party have amply been foreshadowed to the audience.

Prior to the Party, Stan Subjected to 'Rhetorical Mode of Interrogation'—Prior to the party, Stanley is subjected by Goldberg and McCann to rhetorical mode of interrogation which involves two or more interrogators (Goldberg and McCann, the two henchmen) and a mute listener (Stanley) and hostile sequence of questioning. The aim of this rhetorical mode of questioning is for one or more interrogators to address a series of absurd questions and commands to an opponent. In this rhetorical mode of interrogation, the hostilities open before the interrogation begins, as each player tries to force his opponent to sit down so that the interrogating party can assert its physical dominance and establish itself as master of the game. In The Birthday Party too there is seen the tense exchange between Stanley and his interrogators about who is going to sit down. (Act-II).

After a long verbal battle, in which Stanley puts up considerable resistance, they manage to make him sit down. Then Goldberg and McCann begin a fierce, brainwashing interrogation of Stanley, in which they hurl a wild sequence of accusations, questions, and insults at him, in quick succession and without giving him time to answer. At the climax of the interrogation, Stanley screams, and kicks Goldberg in the belly. McCann and Stanley seize chairs and they circle each other threateningly. Stanley can only produce strangled, incoherent grunting sound.

At Last The Party Begins—With Meg's entry in the room, donned in her party dress, the party begins. Petey could not participate in the party as he has had already been appointed in a chess game at the club and there are only Goldberg, McCann, Stanley, Meg and Lulu as participants. Stanley only speaks to ask for his glasses. The lights are switched out, a torch is shone on Stanley and Meg delivers a motherly speech in his honour. Lulu enters and Goldberg

again reminisces about the good olden days. Speaking in admiring terms, Meg expresses her devotion to Stanley. Lulu sits on Goldberg's knee and McCann sings a song about Ireland. They play blind man's buff, a children's game and when silent Stanley is blindfolded, McCann removes his glasses. Stanley walks into and breaks the drum, and then tries to strangle Meg : the lights go out. There is confusion and much movement, but when a torch is eventually found out, it reveals Stanley, standing over Lulu who is lying spreadeagled on the table. Goldberg and McCann converge on Stanley threateningly.

Aftermath of the Party-When the party is finished, Stanley is transported upstairs by the prosecutors and presumably subjected to great torture. He has been taken out of himself, metamorphosed and transformed into a tidy, well-suited (in black with white collars) gentleman, though at the cost of his individuality and his power of expression. Afterwards he donned in black suit and white collar is taken to a mysterious Monty.

Different Themes of the Birthday Party-Some critics think that The Birthday Party is actually a day of rebirth for Stanley, an artist who had severed his ties from his Establishment and Goldberg and McCann being the agents of that Establishment who bring him back to it and ask him to succeed according to its norms and values, but not as a free thinking artist.

According to another view of the title, The Birthday Party presents the contradiction between apparent and real and the party symbolises the absurdity of human condition. Stanley, symbolising mankind, is insecure and uncertain in his World. His brutal interrogation on his birthday consisting of serious as well as trivial accusations is also suggestive of the absurd human life.

Title Justified-The Birthday Party being a comedy of menace conceals the hideous horror and violence under the smoke screen of laughter. So the title of the play is apt and justified. Stanley is taken back to his childhood sans speech, sans freedom by giving him a rebirth by Goldberg and McCann on his birthday. The Theme of Womb also justifies the title. Stanley who is sticking to Meg and her room or to the mother and her womb is delivered out of it by Goldberg and McCann and brought to the outside world. Monty Stanley symbolises foetus in a womb, quite unwilling to go out. Now, because a birth entails pain and change of milieu, Stanley too feels pain and change of atmosphere. Thus, the title of the play can be justified ironically, symbolically and metaphorically.

Unit V

(Hayavadana)

Q. 23. Discuss at length Hayavadana's quest for completeness.

Ans. Hayavadana is sobbing when introduced on the stage. He is so much pained with his physical appearance that he puts his head between his legs and cries. The Bhagavata and company take it to be some gimmick played by

him on stage and they freely chide him for that. The Bhagavata along with an actor even tries to pull his horse head off thinking it to be some mask and Hayavadana endures to pain in the hope that what others could not do to remedy his problem, the Bhagavata's hands might. The present punishment to Hayavadana is not the result of his past action. He is born with it. The Bhagavata muses that Hayavadana must have offended some sage or desecrated some holy place and so he was under a curse. But that is not the case. Hayavadana though believes that it was his fate is still not quite reconciled to it, hence his uneasiness. He woefully narrates to the Bhagavata that his personal life had been blameless and so he took interest in the social life of the nation-civics, politics, patriotism, nationalism, Indianization-he has tried everything. But where was his society? Which place does he belong to? He entreats the Bhagavata to help him become a complete man. So much is the trauma with the alien head that he has to cover up his face wherever he went with the result that the mane which he got from his father's genes and which he was very fond of began to thin away. After suggesting a few places the Bhagavata refers him to goddess Kali on Mt. Chitrakoot. Hayavadana jumps with excitement and prepares to leave immediately.

Hayavadana is a victim of fate. He is an abandoned child. Hayavadana highlights with willful neglect and indifference of parents towards their children. He is an abandoned child of the princess of Karnataka who irrationally fell in love with a gandharva who was at that time in the form of a horse. The gandharva under a curse had to stay on earth as a horse and during this period he was wedded to Hayavadana's mother. After the said period he came into his celestial form and prepared to go to heaven with his wife but she was happy with his former form and refused to accompany him. The Gandharva got agitated and cursed her to be a mare and left her to her lot. Hayavadana's mother on her part happily ran to the family of horses leaving behind her son. Hayavadana's anguish is quite moving when he says that only he the child of their marriage was left behind. The position of Hayavadana is quite piquant. His father left him behind with his mother. Mother left him to seek her own pleasure. With the head of a horse he could neither accompany his father nor mother nor the human beings. He suffers from a sense of incompleteness and hence identity crisis. He seeks the place of his belonging but such is his case that he finds none. He has been wandering from place to place visiting great number of sages, temples and other places but has not been able to convert himself to a complete human being.

As a result he shies away from the human company and lives in isolation and angst. Actor I happens to spot him on his way to the stage and becomes mortally scared of him for his strange form. He finds it quite difficult to look into his eyes and so does Bhagavata and actor II when Hayavadana comes

stage. Their collective dismay is, "A horse ! And talking ! This sums up Hayavadana's anguish on a routine basis with people at large when he interacted with them. He must be facing the staring eyes and fixed gazes and must have found quite difficult to adjust, to share and live a normal life.

However, his quest for completeness remains unfulfilled. Kali grants his wish but the fruition has rather complication. He wanted to become a complete human but he became a horse instead. This has several implications. And, as if, it is not enough, the human voice remains with him. Earlier it was the animal head that bothered him now it the human voice. Hayavadana might have considered his former self better. The mind body dichotomy pushes him for its union but it rather proved costly. Once again the play comes up with the theme that there is no such thing as perfection. it is only a state of mind. It is only through good deeds that one can get satisfaction or a sense of completeness as happens in case of Hayavadana also. He brings the smile back to Padmini's child and while doing so attains perfection as well. The human voice that bothered him so much got converted into the neigh of the horse suiting well to his new incarnation.

Q. 24. How far is Hayavadana a suitable title for the play?

Ans. The title of any literary piece of writing ought to be apt, suggestive and preferably catchy. Just as the glossy and catchy cover of the book creates a good feeling and suggests good work inside and prompts one to go for the purchase, similarly the apt title gives an idea about the inside story, creates interest about the plot and prods one to make surmises.

Hayavadana's story assumes importance in the sub plot but this is brought before the actual play begins and thus it acts as a sort of a preamble to the main story. The main problem of the play is extension and elaboration of Hayavadana's problem. Hayavadana is an intelligent character and leaves a lingering memory by his talks, character and performance in the play. He is long remembered after the play is over. The play's problem can be better understood in the light of Hayavadana. Their problems are identical.

Hayavadana gives a prelude to the play and his story forms the genesis of the play. The problem of the play is the problem of Hayavadana's story. The events of the play bear semblance and reflect Hayavadana's setback. Padmini's son too is placed in identical situation. The mind body dichotomy or the problem of alienation is suffered not only by Hayavadana but also by Padmini, Devadatta and Kapila. Hayavadana forms a prologue to it. There is a striking similarity and pattern between Hayavadana's story and the plot of the play. They run on parallel lines. Hayavadana appears on the stage in the beginning of the play and strikes the keynote of the play. He disappears for some time and the main story begins. But by this time the audience has already got a notion of

what he has to see and understand. The mazy pattern of the relationships between them and the complications are better understood with Hayavadana in the background.

A few things of the play also become clear because of the head body dualism of Hayavadana. He finally becomes a complete horse though he had been striving to become a human. Animal every or animal birth is perhaps better than that of a human's. That is why perhaps Hayavadana's mother opted for a horse as her mate. Animals also do not suffer from mind body dualism. Their problems are far fewer. The Dionysian ego is also understood on this plane and with that Padmini's character is equally well understood.

Hayavadana also becomes crucial to bring the smile back to Padmini's child and undo to an extent the damage done to him. He becomes instrumental in bringing the play to a happy end. It also underlines the fact that it is only by help and service to others and more importantly giving joy and smile to the fellow people that one can accomplish one's aims or acquire perfection to talk in terms of play's language. Hayavadana becomes complete, loses his human voice, and acquires a complete neigh and gallops jauntily with Padmini's son.

Hayavadana also becomes instrumental in getting across some of the themes of the play. The attainment of perfection will ever remain a dream at least for a long time to come. One has to seek happiness within one's means and parameters rather than outside. It also becomes pertinent to note that though complacency is undesirable for development and progress satisfaction is not. In order to avoid the tragic situations one has to shun what is not right.

Hayavadana also forms a mythical base to the play, which abounds in myths and legends. He is the son of a gandharva who appears on this earth probably under some curse in the form of a bonny horse, marries a human, stays for fifteen years and then goes back to his heavenly abode. The appearance of Hayavadana is also mythical; body of man and head of a horse.

Hayavadana's becomes the mouthpiece of the playwright to get across the point that gods and celestial beings often delight in giving pains to humans and; visit to holy places, temples, gods and goddesses for the fulfillment of wishes can be futile.

Hayavadana's significant questions throw light on the profundity of his thoughts and awareness. He took interest in social and topical problems, was a staunch nationalist and a patriot.

Hayavadana complements one of the basic notions of the play that head is supreme amongst all bodily limbs. The saying of the sage that as kalpavrakasha is supreme amongst all the trees so in the head in humans and that is why perhaps Hayavadana becomes a horse instead of a complete human. Goddess Kali can be rated as benevolent in this aspect.

Q. 25. Discuss Hayavadana as a Comedy.

Ans. Hayavadana is a comic to learn that Hayavadana's mother got herself married to a stallion in preference to the best of princes that had come to sue for marriage. The prince that riding on the stallion died on the shock that the horse was preferred to him. Hayavadana, born of a horse and a princess, thus came to have a horse's head over human body.

In the play we find his irresistible urge for completeness is the driving force that fascinates every onward looking man. No body should accept the dictates of fate lying down. It is the glory of man that he wants to transcend the physical limits for the liberation of soul. Here in lies the root of the struggle which continues till the end, and it is purely a spiritual struggle. That is why Bhagavate advises him to go on the pilgrimage for emancipation and salvation. It is the temple on the top of mount Chitrakoot. There the goddess is famous for being ever awake to the call of the devotees. Thousands used to flock to her temple once.

Hayavadana goes on the spiritual journey and becomes as complete horse instead of becoming a complete man. He says and dances in the end as it was completeness that he aspired for.

As the happy finale of the drama of life it was a joy to celebrate the two friends-'one mind, one heart' turned against each other after Devadatta's marriage with Padmini. Since Padmini had been making amorous overtures to Kapila, which tormented her husband who notices-'No woman could resist him and what does it matter that she married? What a fool I have been. All these days I only saw that pleading in his eyes stretching out its arms begging for a favour. Both of them cut off their heads, but Kali revives them to give them a chance to live. They were two bodies and one soul till now but their heads are interchanged, not in a freak act of Padmini but as a part of the larger plan of nature to produce an amalgam of the two best persons of their field. Devadatta is the best of the scholar and Kapila is the best of iron Smiths of his time. The minds and souls of the two have been in unison to produce the real blend. The rivalry between the two friends makes it impossible to be in harmony. They fail to have a common Droupadi between them. So they decided to put an end to their lines instead of living anger and jealousy.

In this way both the friends make an end of their lives fighting with each other. Padmini Succeeded in conceiving from the head of Devadatta and body of Kapila to impart her child the characteristics of her two lovers with the noble aim to give to this world a man having the best of mind and that best of body, and to ensure that her plan does not come a cropper

before they die. She exhorts Bhagvata to take her child "to the hunters who live in this forest and tell them it is Kapila's son. They will bring the child up because they loved Kapila. Let the child grow in the forest with rivers and the trees.

It is a comedy only to give amusement. If it is a tragedy it brings end to the noble characters of the play to arouse pity and sympathy. To see Hayavadana a man with a horse's head it is romantic. He aspires for completeness. The play presents the romance of life, which is truthful.

Q. 26 Sketch the character of Padmini.

Or

Write a note on the portrayal of Padmini in 'Hayavadana'.

Ans. Padmini may not be the heroine of the play, because in a play in which Fate is the dominating force, the characters become merely puppets, yet Padmini remains the most important character in as much as she fights with Fate to the end and determines the behaviour of her two lovers.

Padmini-Devadatta-Kapila episode, which forms the main plot of the play, beings with the introduction of Devadatta and Kapila, as if they were the main characters. These two male characters are bosom friends-"One mind, one heart." Devadatta is a scholar of the highest order- "Knows Vedas backward. Writes the grandest poetry ever." And Kapila is "a wizard in his smithy, in his farm, in his field." But Padmini is head and shoulders above the two friends who are best in their fields. She has bewitched and enslaved both of them. Devadatta says, "She became my guru in the poetry of love...What is the use of these hands and this head if I'm not to have her? My poetry won't live without her...I swear, Kapila, with you as my witness I swear, if I ever get her as my wife, I'll sacrifice my two arms to the goddess Kali, I'll sacrifice my head to Lord Rudra." And the state of the other friend, Kapila, is no better. She was Medusa to him. Kapila muses upon her and says : "I give up, Devadatta. I surrender to your judgment. I hadn't thought anyone could be more beautiful than the wench Ragini who acts Rambha in our village troupe. But this one ! you are right-she is Lakshmi, Shakuntala, Urvashi, Indumati-all rolled into one...I am finished-decimated-powdered to dust....powdered into tiny specks of flour." So much for the power of her beauty.

By way of a formal introduction, Padmini is the daughter of a leading merchant in Dharmapura, "In her house, the very floor is swept by the Goddess of wealth." And she got married to Devadatta in whose house. "They've the Goddess of learning for a maid." Naturally, it was a marriage of learning with beauty and wealth, a very are combination. But Padmini is not to be satisfied with the fruit of learning, or of the physical prowess. She dreams of a man who is a blend of both-power of learning and power of muscle, Devadatta and Kapila. She has already got two lovers in thrall, one of whom possesses knowl-

edge and the other possesses physical strenght. Padmini is married to Devadatta but Kapila is her lover.

In a freak incident, she joins head of Devadatta with the body of Kapila and vice versa to get the desired amalgam of the two. She is happy for some time since Devadatta can perform the physical feats of Kapila and can also excel the best of scholars-"A Very funny thing happened-there was a wrestling pit and a wrestler from Gandhara was challenging people to fight him. I don't know what got into me. Before I'd even realised it, I had stripped, put on the parts given by his assistant and jumped into the pit...within a couple of minutes, I had pinned him to the ground." But it is a temporary phase. After some time Devadatta loses his interest in sports, etc. He becomes his original self and Kapila also becomes a hunter sort a man, living in forest. Padmini again becomes rare and dejected with Devadatta she asks, "what's happened to you these days? You sit at home all day. Never go out. You've forgotten all your swimming and sports...."

On being defeated by nature and Fate, she decides to take upon herself to mother a man of her dreams. She takes her child to Kapila in the forest to tell him that the child in born of his body and Devadatta's mind. In a strange turn of situation, Devadatta and Kapila come of fight with each other since they have failed to make a compromise to live like Pandavas with one Draupadi. And Padmini is also not willing to live without realising her dreams of producing a man gifted with the power of intellect as well as physique. The two friends kill each other and Padmini performs Sati. She knows full well that it is sometimes impossible to achieve ideals in one's life time. One can at best make a beginning and leave it to the future to embellish this world with better class of beings. She leaves her child in the care of Bhagavata, with specific instruction to let the child live with the hunters in the forest for the first five years of his life in order to infuse the spirit of sports, symbolized by Kapila, and then send the child to his scholar grandfather, Vidyasagar to get learning from him, to become a scholar like Devadatta.

She has to fulfill her dream of completeness of man. It is she alone that has a dream to realise. The dramatist seems to be of the view that a woman has a vital role in evolution of man. In fact it is the mother that wishes to groom her child into a perfect man or woman. Padmini is the ideal of a mother and woman who wants her child to become a man of the future.

Devadatta and Kapila die in dejection and disappointment, throwing ties of friendship to the four winds. The two persons, who were once "One mind, one heart," Come to kill each other. This much they do for future posterity, and so much do they grow in mind and heart. But Padmini, who was once the reigning queen, comes down to the ground of relity to fulfill her dream. She is

not a glamorous woman. She is a glorious one of thinking of completeness of man and willing to make the highest sacrifice ever. In the end of the play, the child rides on the back of Hayavadana, who symbolizes the aspiration for completeness. The child, in a way, rides on the wave of completeness which he is destined to embody and that is greatest tribute to the personality of Padmini. Mankind is madly Pursuing the ambition of Padmini as attempt are afoot to transplant genes to create the best of man. Hey, Padmini ! we salute to your spirit.

Q. 27. Comment on the relationship between Padmini and Devadatta in 'Hayavadana'.

Ans. It is necessary to mention that Padmini was the daughter of a rich and famous merchant of Dharmapura. It is said that "In her house, the very floor is swept by the goddess of wealth" and she was married to Devadatta in whose house "they've the goddess of learning for a maid." In this way, it turned into a marriage of the learning of Devadatta with the beauty and wealth of Padmini, so it was a rare union.

Devadatta's strong love for Padmini and his ambition to marry her: In the interlude of the story both Devadatta and Kapila again appeared. Kapila came to know that Devadatta had fallen in love with a highly beautiful young girl. He was very serious about his love-affair with her and he had also a strong desire to marry her at the earliest. Kapila noted the want of confidence in Devadatta to get what he wanted. He saw rosy dreams about her and composed poetry with her inspiration. Though he had deep love for her and a strong desire to marry her, yet he had not proper means to get her. Then Kapila offered himself to him to act as his messenger to take his message of love to her. In this way, Kapila had faith that he would succeed to win her for his dear friend. At last he succeeded in his efforts and soon both Devadatta and Padmini united in their marriage bond to live a happy married life.

Devadatta and Padmini made a plan to go on a trip to Ujjain: The friendship between Devadatta and Kapila ran usual without any problem. Padmini liked Kapila so Devadatta felt isolated because of an intrusion upon his privacy. The problem arose when Devadatta and Padmini made a plan to go on a trip to Ujjain. As Devadatta became serious about the journey, so both of them agreed to postpone that trip. His dream to be in the company of Padmini vanished. Padmini was equally disturbed to find out Kapila's mental tensions. Padmini then became ready to go on that trip. Then Devadatta found himself in a dilemma between his love for his friend and for his wife. All the three started together. Padmini admired Kapila for his fast driving and Devadatta felt angry and isolated. He felt unhappy when Padmini asked Kapila to bring her a lady fortune flower and Kapila ran fast to bring it.

Padmini's blunder in joining their heads in a wrong manner: When Devadatta had gone to the temple of the goddess Kali, Padmini and Kapila became much worried when he did not return in time. Kapila went out in search for him. He cut off his head when he found the head of Devadatta cut off from his body. Soon after Padmini reached that place and she stumbled upon their bodies. She also picked up the sword to kill herself. The goddess Kali appeared and she granted her the boon for the return of the life of the two friends. Padmini in her haste and excitement joined their heads in a wrong manner. As a result of this, Devadatta's head was joined to the body of Kapila and Kapila's head was joined to the body of Devadatta. All the three laughed and danced with great joy.

The problem became more serious when Kapila claimed Padmini as his wife because then he was the possessor of that body with which Padmini had been married. On the other hand, Devadatta and Padmini preferred Devadatta's head as the guiding factor to be husband and wife. Finally all the three went to a famous sage for his judgement with which they would definitely agree. That sage declared that Devadatta must be the rightful husband of Padmini by virtue of his real head. Both Devadatta and Padmini began to dance with great joy as a happy couple. Ultimately Kapila made his way to the forest. Then Padmini cried with great joy, "fabulous body, fabulous mind-fabulous Devadatta."

Devadatta and Padmini enjoyed happy married life: After this incident Devadatta and Padmini began to pass a happy married life. Devadatta maintained that his new body by taking part in sports and going to gymnasium. He also took part in wrestling matches where he defeated his opponent in a few seconds. It did not continue for a long time, so Devadatta felt an urge for reading and writing the holy texts in which spent more time. As a result of this his body began to become soft and weak. Kapila also felt the same feelings.

Q. 28. Critically evaluate *The Birthday Party* as an absurdist play.

Ans: *The Birthday Party* is full of disjointed information that has defied efforts to distinguish between reality and illusion. For example, despite the presentation of personal information on Stanley and his two persecutors, who or what they really are remains a mystery. Goldberg, in particular, has provided all sorts of information about his background, but he has offered only oblique clues as to why he has intruded upon Stanley's life. Stanley has been leading a life of aloofness from society. He is a disappointed and frustrated artist who has taken refuge in seaside resort of Meg. He has felt that society has not treated him well. What has Stanley done to deserve persecution? The facts of his past are so unclear that his claim to be a pianist may even be false. He feels disgusted with the prevailing customs and conventions of society. He finds it impossible to continue to live amidst such society. He prefers an isolated existence. He is brutally and inhumanly tortured by the intruders McCann and

Goldberg who represent society at large. The society treats such an individualistic artist like Stanley as a danger and pulls him back from his isolation. Those who have chosen to be alienated, thus, cannot have such right. Stanley's quest is for respectful identity as an artist which he sought to establish. His endeavour to establish a healthy social relationship is futile. The Birthday Party has influenced the audience to doubt anything with certainty, which as it does in Kafka's work, intensifies the dreadful angst experienced by the protagonist. This effect is achieved through truncated dialogue, by Pinter's deliberate failure to provide conclusive or consistent information, and by his use of ambiguity and nonsense.

Confusion and Chaos

One of the key elements of "the absurdist theatre" is its focus on confusion and chaos. In *The Birthday Party*, confusion and chaos manifest constantly, especially through its characters. The primary ways in which the themes manifest are through the ambiguities of lives and pasts. Stanley has some sort of mysterious past that has deserved a violent reckoning, but nobody really provides its details. When Stanley describes his past to Meg in Act I, there is even the sense that he himself is confused about its particulars. Goldberg's name and past seem shrouded in mystery and delusion, and Meg has convinced herself to believe things about her life that are clearly not true. Further, because of these types of confusions, the situation devolves into total chaos. From the moment Goldberg and McCann arrive, the audience can sense that the simplicity of the boarding house is about to be compromised, and indeed, the chaos at the end of Act II has confirmed it. The only truth of *The Birthday Party* is that there is no truth, only chaos and confusion.

Complacency

The most pessimistic aspect of *The Birthday Party* is that the only alternative Pinter gives to chaos and confusion is a life of apathy and complacency. The play's opening scene sets this up - Petey and Meg have revealed a comfortable but bland life in which they talk in pleasantries and ignore anything of substance. Stanley is more aggressive than they are, but he too has clearly chosen the safety of complacency, as he has made no effort to change his life. His lethargic lifestyle has reflected the attraction, comfort for him. When Goldberg and McCann arrive, they challenge this complacent lifestyle until the whole place falls into chaos. Ultimately, Petey chooses to reconfirm the complacency of the boarding house over bravely fighting for Stanley; neither choice is truly attractive.

Sexual Tension

Sexual tension is present throughout the entire play, and it has resulted in tragic consequences. Meg and Stanley have a strange, possible sexual relationship that frees him to treat her very cruelly. The ugliness of his behaviour is echoed when Goldberg has called him a "mother defiler" and "a lecher." In fact, Goldberg has suggested that Stanley's unnamed sin involves his poor treatment of a woman. Lulu seems interested in Stanley as well, but is quickly

attracted to Goldberg in Act II. Her innocence makes her prey to men's sexuality. Her openness leads to two consecutive sexual assaults, and yet she is nevertheless upset to learn that Goldberg is leaving. moreover, it is a strange, perverse undercurrent throughout the play. Sex is acknowledged as a fact of life, and yet has not ever revealed positive aspects of the characters.

Harold Pinter's play *The Birthday Party* reflects the futility of human endeavour in a variety of facets.

The Theatre of the Absurd represents a deeper level of the audience's mind. It has focused more sharply on the fight for existence. Industrialization, urbanization, and the World Wars, development of scientific temper and technology have led man to frustration and hopelessness in life. All these reasons have culminated into the birth of the Theatre of the Absurd. This theatre has seemed to be a reaction to the loss of the spiritual dimensions of life. It is attempted to make man aware of the ultimate realities of his situation. The modern man's attitude towards life is sheer negative. Pinter has chosen characters from ordinary life speaking everyday language. Their joys and sorrows, laughter and tears are very simple but the characters are not without their singularities. The uniqueness of the play lies in his peculiar way of using common man's language. The existential dilemma of his characters is the threat to their autonomy. The characters are involved in an existential struggle to defend themselves from what they perceive. Despite of achieving almost all material progress and luxuries, the life of man has become purposeless and aimless. This is apt for the Western society living especially in the post World Wars world. The characters used by Harold Pinter are similar to the modern men's psychology. He has tried to become as close as to the life of disturb modern life.

Q. 29. Discuss Stanley and Meg's relationship.

Ans: Stanley and Meg's relationship is complicated and ambiguous, but clearly shows how depressed they both are. In the most obvious way, they are boarder and boardinghouse owner. However, there is also a mother/son dynamic at work. Meg mothers Stanley, fussing over his breakfast and kidding with him at the table. Most strange is their sexual dynamic. She also flirts with him by invading his room, tickling him, and affectionately touching his arm. She demands kisses in return for good behavior. Stanley responds to all her affronts with disgust, but this arguably comes from feeling trapped within her house. He makes no effort to change his life, and so must see his acceptance of her as the cost of living anonymously. Likewise, she sees in him an escape from the drudgery of her banal life with Petey. No matter what the truth of their relationship is, it is clear they accept it to fill in deeper fears and insecurities.

The futility of endeavors to establish relationship may be attributed to relationship of Meg and Stanley. Meg is deeply attached to Stanley. She

takes pleasure in taking his care. His comfort and well-being are her constant concern. She looks after him with all the considerations of a mother. When Stanley says that he might leave the place to accept a job, she expresses her reaction by saying "Don't you go away again, Stan. You stay here. You'll be better off. You stay with your old Meg" [Pinter 1987, 33]. Meg speaks to him partly with a motherly affection and partly in a flirtatious manner, while Stanley speaks to her in a contemptuous and even insulting manner. Stanley's remarks show his utter unresponsiveness to Meg's excessively affectionate manner towards him.

Stanley, like a child, is immediately scared when he hears that Meg is expecting visitors. He then takes his revenge upon her by scaring her. He speaks of some people who, he says, will come in a van and will bring a wheelbarrow with them in order to take away a person from this household. Evidently, what he implies is that some strangers will come and take away Meg's dead body from here. This dialogue between Meg and Stanley contains many indications of Stanley's immaturity. He tolerates her fussy mothering, which even goes to the extreme of asking him if he had gone to the lavatory in the morning and whether had a motion.

Meg presents toy-drum to Stanley on his birthday. This present has several different kinds of symbolic significance. It sums up the old woman's attitude to the substitute son who cannot bear her but who has not got the strength to escape from her. Meg's fussy attentiveness shows the wish to give attention and to receive attention; and this attitude is combined with an insulting reduction of the grown man to the status of a little boy. Ronald Hayman's interpretation in this regard is apt: "The present of a toy is an ingenuous attempt to give to the failed musician something that will make up for his not having a piano" [1973, 35]. In giving this present to him, she, in all simplicity, asks for a kiss. Stanley gives her a kiss but in a most 177 grudging and reluctant manner. In order to please her, he puts the drum round his neck and beats it, walking round the table. But soon he loses control and starts banging it frantically. We feel sorry to think of how grieved she would feel on knowing that Stanley has been taken away. Without Stanley she would find her life dull and meaningless. Stanley's departure had shattered the sense of security which was her chief source of strength and of her joy in life. With Stanley's departure, Meg's endeavour to establish a motherly relationship with Stanley proves futile.

Thus, futility of human endeavours to establish intimate family as well as social relationships seems to be the major concern of *The Birthday Party*. Stanley, while attempting to achieve a proper and successful place as an artist in the society, is caught in existential dilemma. Despite of being a sensible artist, he has to lead a life of aloofness and frustration. He is unable to decide whether to involve in society or to remain aloof. This leads to his existential dilemma.

Q. 30. Comment on the use of dolls in *Hayavadana*.

Ans. There are two dolls in *Hayavadana*. Karnad has used these dolls to show important developments in different characters. First of all it is Devadatta about whom the dolls express their feelings. They do not like his indelicate behaviour. Devadatta has brought them from the Ujjain fair for his son. Dolls do not like Devadatta's son also. After his arrival they are neglected more and more.

There are two important things about Devadatta and Padmini we are told about by the dolls. These is gradual change in Devadatta. His body is coming back to his earlier position. He is losing the characteristic of Kapila's body. Now his touch is soft and silky. There is a change in Devadatta's attitude also. He is concentrating on his old traits of a Brahmin-reading and writing. With this change in Devadatta we are informed of changes in Padmini also. Once again she pines for Kapila's body. The dolls find Padmini dreaming about Kapila. He comes in her dream every now and then. Till now Padmini has sense of completeness. But the change in Devadatta makes her strive again for the completeness. She says Devadatta about the death of Kapila's mother which he does not like. Doll's argument over Padmini's dream symbolise her conflict and desire to be completed.

The use of dolls to throw light on the thought processes and the mental agony of the characters in the prominent feature of the play. Such a device was in vogue in prose writing but Karnad has used it effectively in his play. The dolls of Karnad possess a special insight and reveal very effectively to the audience what goes on in the mind of Padmini as they see the metamorphosis of Devadatta's body into his original form and her dreams and proclivity for Kapila's strong body. The dolls give a lucid and a fluent description of what is going on in the psyche of Padmini. They tell us the origin of her dream about her man who is not her husband who climbs a tree and dives into a river, a real tough and stout man that is rough. And then all of a sudden it begins to fade. Devadatta's transfiguration is also communicated through the dolls. When he touches doll I, it feels the change and says, 'His palms ! They were so rough when he first brought her here-like a laborer's. But now they are soft, silky soft-like a young girl.' Doll II also notices that his muscular stomach had now become loose.

This strategy of employing dolls has a dramatic purpose. It helps in the development of the plot. After her dreams about that unknown, rough and tough man Padmini asks her husband to go to Ujjain and get new dolls and seeks an opportunity to meet Kapila.

38 वर्षों से छात्रों में सर्वाधिक लोकप्रिय, विश्वसनीय एवं प्रतिष्ठित

- वर्ष 2023 की परीक्षाओं के नवीनतम पाठ्यक्रमानुसार
- परीक्षा की तैयारी के लिए महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्नों का संकलन
- बी०ए० प्रथम, द्वितीय एवं तृतीय वर्ष के छात्रों के लिए प्रकाशित
- 38 वर्षों से निरन्तर प्रकाशित परीक्षोपयोगी प्रश्न एवं उत्तर का सर्वश्रेष्ठ संकलन

नोट :- पुस्तक विक्रेता से आग्रह करके ओरिजिनल डी०कुमारस सीरीज ही खरीदें।



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