

Third Semester M.A. Degree Examination
English Language and Literature
(from 2022 admission onwards)
Model Question Paper
EL.533 EUROPEAN DRAMA

Time: 3 Hrs

Max Marks: 75

I. Answer any five of the following questions in about 50 words.

1. Define the key aesthetic principle that governed dramaturgy in Europe.
2. What is the prophecy that haunts Oedipus throughout the play?
3. What event triggers the Italian nobleman to believe that he is King Henry IV of Germany?
4. Define the concept of "imitation" as highlighted in Aristotle's "Poetics."
5. What is the central conflict in *Hedda Gabler*?
6. What is the significance of the Fire Chief in *The Bald Soprano*?
7. What is the primary purpose of Dionysus' journey in *The Frogs*?
8. What tragic fate befell Andromache's family during the fall of Troy?

(5x 2
=10)

II. Answer any five of the following questions in about 100 words

9. How does the theme of fate versus free will manifest in Oedipus's character and actions in the play?
10. Analyse the social commentary present in Pirandello's *Henry IV*.
11. Discuss the significance of the Chorus of Frogs in Aristophanes' play.
12. Analyse the character of Orgon in *Tartuffe*.
13. How does Ionesco use language and dialogue to illustrate the absurdity of human interaction?
14. How does Aristotle differentiate between tragedy and comedy in terms of their representation of men and their actions?
15. How does Nietzsche view Epicureanism in relation to pessimism?
16. "In what ways does *Hedda Gabler* reflect the societal constraints and limitations faced by women in the late 19th century?"

(5 x 5
=25)

III. Answer any two of the following questions in about 300 words choosing one from each

group.

Group A

17. Discuss the representation of theatrical competition and the portrayal of famous playwrights in *The Frogs*. How does Aristophanes use these elements to make broader statements about art and culture in ancient Athens?
18. Analyse the significance of the symbolism of blindness and sight in *Oedipus Rex*. How does it contribute to the play's themes and character development?
19. Analyse the portrayal of women and their roles in ancient Greek society as depicted in *Andromache*.

Group B

20. Analyse *The Bald Soprano* as Ionesco's commentary on conformity and societal conventions.
21. Explore Henrik Ibsen's use of dramatic techniques in *Hedda Gabler*.
22. How does Pirandello explore the theatrical nature of existence in *Henry IV*?

(15 x 2 =
30)

IV. Critically analyse and answer any one of the following questions in about 150 words.

23. How has the evolution from archetypal, morally didactic characters of classical drama to the psychologically complex, morally ambiguous figures of modern drama influenced audience engagement and interpretation of theatrical narratives? Explain with reference to the prescribed plays.
24. How does the use of drama, history, and mythology in courtly settings, particularly under Louis XIV, reflect intentional manipulation of cultural narratives to consolidate and project power?

OR

25. Read the passage given below and answer the following questions.

Sometimes in journalistic criticism one reads that a certain play has a "real literary value." The phrase causes surprise and the reader immediately wonders whether the play will succeed. He is inclined to bestow silent praise upon the manager for undertaking the dangerous attempt to present a drama of so-called literary value to the modern public; and a few weeks later, when the play is taken off, he indulges in a threnody or a philippic in regard to the decline of dramatic taste, or he may content himself with a satisfied "I told you so!" The opinion seems to prevail that a play no longer succeeds because of its literary value, but in spite of it. If a manager suspects that a play sacrifices one iota of the action to literary or poetic beauty, he will hardly take the trouble to read it; and he doubts the success of any play which attempts to reach the audience mostly through the lines. Of course, one can assume and many people do assume that the modern manager is a creature endowed with the sole faculty of making money. One can indulge in futile, high-browed talk about the degeneration of the drama. One can put the blame on that precious and long suffering scapegoat called the public that vague, intangible mass of bad taste which the individual makes the cause of all that is wrong and of which the individual never considers himself a part. There are many ways for the modern literary Pharisee to look down upon those who believe that modern drama is a legitimate form of art. Yet in what relation does dramatic art stand to literature? In a classification of the arts ought modern drama to stand as a sub head under literature, or ought it to stand as an independent head?

1. How does the perception of "literary value" in plays contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding the commercial success of modern drama versus its artistic integrity?
2. In what ways does the dismissal of plays solely for their literary or poetic beauty reflect a broader societal trend towards prioritizing action over introspection and thought-provoking content?
3. To what extent does the contemporary focus on profit-driven theatrical productions diminish the potential for innovative and intellectually stimulating works to reach the public?
4. Is the distinction drawn between "literary Pharisees" and proponents of modern drama indicative of a larger conflict between traditional artistic norms and evolving artistic expressions?
5. Can the aversion to plays emphasizing literary or poetic beauty be seen as a reflection of a society's decreasing patience or appreciation for intellectual and philosophical inquiry within artistic expressions?

(10 x
1=10)

