

2014

ENGLISH

( Major )

Paper : 5.2

( Modern Drama—II )

Full Marks : 60

Time : 3 hours

The figures in the margin indicate full marks  
for the questions

SECTION—I

1. Fill in the blank or Answer the questions in  
1 sentence (any three) : 1×3=3
  - (a) The Theatre of the Absurd has renounced  
arguing about the absurdity of the human  
condition; it merely — it in being—that  
is in terms of concrete stage images.
  - (b) After forty-four years of no live perform-  
ance being staged at San Quentin, why  
was the play *Waiting for Godot* chosen for  
performing?
  - (c) Other than *Death of a Salesman*, name  
any two plays by Arthur Miller.
  - (d) What was the assumption on which  
Miller says that the plays in *The Collected  
Plays* were written?

2. Answer briefly any *three* of the following :  $2 \times 3 = 6$

(a) How does Ionesco define the term 'absurd'?

(b) "On 19 November 1957, a group of worried actors were preparing to face their audience." Who are the 'worried actors' and why are they worried?

(c) Why does Miller say that 'At first blush a new idea appears to be close to insanity'?

(d) List two influences which according to Miller create the style of a play.

3. According to Martin Esslin, what are the similarities and differences between the Poetic Avant-garde Theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd?

5

Or

Arthur Miller in his Introduction to *The Collected Plays* writes that while watching a play 'our individual criteria of truth are set to one side and we are no longer at the mercy of a performance alone, but of the surrounding reaction to it'. Explain referring to the incident of a man walking down a deserted street who is witness to a man beating a horse.

4. What is Esslin referring to when he talks of 'a good play' and 'plays written in this new convention'? What are the differences between these two kinds of plays?

10



Or

Discuss some of the reasons put forward by Miller in his Introduction to *The Collected Plays* which led to *Death of a Salesman* being regarded as a pseudo-tragedy. From your reading of the play, would you consider it to be a pseudo-tragedy?

SECTION—II

5. Answer each of the following questions in 1 sentence (any four) : 1×4=4

- (a) What Medieval image does Eliot use to suggest patience?
- (b) Who was the King of England in Beckett's time?
- (c) What object in Howard's office frightens Willy?
- (d) What does Pozzo's baldness signify?
- (e) What difference is there in the willow tree between Act 1 and Act 2 in *Waiting for Godot*?

6. What does the tree stand for in *Waiting for Godot* ? 2

Or

What causes the rift between Biff and Willy Loman?

7. Explain the following with reference to the context :

(a) We wait. We are bored. (He throws up his hand.) No don't protest, we are bored to death, there's no denying it. Good. A diversion comes along and what do we do? We let it go to waste .... In an instant all will vanish and we'll be alone once more in the midst of nothingness.

5

Or

Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! (Pause. Vehemently.) Let us do something while we have the chance! It is not everyday that we are needed. But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the best of it, before it is too late!

(b) Nothing's planted. I don't have a thing in the ground.

5

Or

I saw the things that I love in this world. The work and the food and the time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and I thought, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be ...when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am.



8. Answer any *two* of the following : 10×2=20

(a) Critically assess *Waiting for Godot* as an absurd play.

Or

(b) From your reading of *Waiting for Godot*, what can you gather about Beckett's views on human life and the world?

(c) Critically assess the role of the Interlude in *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Or

(d) Trace the influence of Greek tragedy on Eliot in writing *Murder in the Cathedral*.

(e) Write an essay on Miller's handling of tragedy in *Death of a Salesman*.

Or

(f) Draw a character sketch of Willy Loman as a symbol of the failing American dream.

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