

Midterm Take-Home Essays
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Section-A

Answer to the Question No-01

Women have always been victims of patriarchy, oppression and discrimination in different aspects of life from ancient times. A well known play “Antigone” by Sophocles and “Punishment” written by Rabindranath Tagore are examples of it. Moreover, “Punishment” written by Rabindranath Tagore also shows us how women stand for their own beliefs and opinions and so does Antigone.

The main character of Sophocles' play "Antigone," Antigone, is recognized as an oppressed citizen in a number of ways. Antigone refused to obey Creon's command and bury her brother Polynices as she feels bound to do so and wants to respect the gods' rules rather than man-made laws. However, she is arrested and given a death sentence since she violated Creon's command. Antigone is oppressed by the state in this way not just because of her gender but also because of her links to her family and her choice to disobey the authority. She is a woman first and foremost in an extremely patriarchal culture like ancient Greece, when women were seen as low lives. Women were strictly confined to the home environment and regarded as little more than

tools for extending the human race when Antigone was written. There were no political rights for Greek women. Hence, the status of being a woman restricts talking about state-related political issues. Moreover, there are some permanent laws and regulations that are predicated on how women would need to behave and were applied by males at almost every phase in their lives. Moreover, women in Athens' society are only objects with no liberty. Antigone is immediately at a disadvantage in terms of her social and political standing since she is a woman. In the play "Antigone" written by Sophocles, Ismene states that "we are only women" who "cannot fight with men". The play's one of the main topics is the oppression of Antigone as a state servant as she battles the patriarchal and autocratic forces attempting to rule her life and restrict her autonomy. She has the strength and endurance to oppose Creon's order, which is a significant act of resistance against injustice. And when it comes to the punishment she received, gender is a big fact here. If she were a man, she would never get that punishment. In fact, her whole consequence would be different.

Chandra questions patriarchal dominance in Rabindranath Tagore's short story "Punishment" by rejecting typical gender stereotypes and displaying a strong autonomy that she possesses. She takes control of her own destiny by confessing to a murder she did not commit in defiance of the patriarchal convention that women are weak and docile. Chandra's willingness is to accept punishment for her brother-in-law's misdeeds. Even if it means sacrificing herself. This act indicates the patriarchal ideal that women should put their own security, opinion and well-being first. Basically, Chandra is a victim of the patriarchal authority of the then Indian governance. To add on this, in part- 1 of the story "Punishment" written by Rabindranath Tagore, Chidam says, "If I lose my wife, I can always get another one, but if my brother hangs I cannot get another

brother.” This statement clearly describes the patriarchy in the home of the then Indian society as well. Where women were not being able to get respect as they are. It also shows how women are getting dominated by the patriarchy in both their home and outside the home and in terms of State laws. Besides this, Chandra's actions reveal a thorough comprehension of the patriarchal power structures that exist in Indian culture. She chooses to accept the blame for his crime in order to spare her brother-in-law from tougher sentences because her husband's unjustified command to her. By doing this, she confronts patriarchal conventions that let males get away with breaking the law. Chandra's decision to confess to a crime she didn't commit shows how much she values herself. To illustrate, In "Punishment," Chandra fights patriarchal authority by breaking gender norms and displaying a strong sense of autonomy. Her choice to confess to a crime she did not commit is a reflection of her sense of awareness of the patriarchal power systems in Indian culture. In addition, by doing this, she challenges the patriarchal authority very bravely.

As the story named “Punishment” progresses, Chidam, the husband of Chandara understood his fault and felt regret for what he did to her wife, when it came to the terms of hanging her. But it was too late then. In perspective of Chandara, feeling disgusted and betrayed she decides that she would prefer to be sentenced by the court for her supposed murder which she did not commit than go back to her husband. But Chandara is a very tough lady who rejects her regretful husband. This confession of committing the murder that she did do just because her husband's order, Chandara was very shocked at this. She felt shocked, hurt. But out of

touchiness,ego,self-esteem were gained and gathered by her to stick on her own word till the end of the court's hearing.On the other hand,Chidam repents of his blunder and attempts to save Chandora from the death penalty by explaining what actually happened. Even Dukhiram admits to murdering Radha in an effort to save Chandora. The judge, however, is of the opinion that they are only attempting to spare Chandora from receiving a death sentence. In the end, Chandara prefers for death over marriage, renouncing the family ties in the most spectacular and last way possible.Chandara is eventually put to death by hanging after "finally admitting" to murdering Radha.Thus Chandara admits her consequence and wrote her own fate which led by absolute self-respect. This is how self respect is working behind the decision of taking blame for committing the murder Chandara did not commit in reality.

Both Antigone and Chandara are victims of situation, oppression, discrimination.But the self-respect of them and their rebellious attitude make them exceptional.Chandara from "Punishment" and Antigone share some similarities in their act of showing self-esteem, their feeling, their beliefs and also in breaking the typical stereotype of the patriarchal state laws and authority. In fact,they both battle against the state's typical attitude, which is rooted in patriarchal beliefs. Both Chandara and Antigone are female characters that break social rules and relevant laws in order to defend their moral principles.

At first, The lead character of Sophocles' play "Antigone," Antigone, is a bold woman who challenges the state's normal behavior that is based on patriarchal beliefs. She has a strong sense of responsibility, unwavering devotion to her family, and a passionate desire to stand up for what

she thinks is right, no matter the cost. In the opening scene, in which Antigone chooses to bury her brother Polynices despite the state's restriction, shows her battle against the norm attitude of the state. She asserts that religious law is superior to human law and that, despite the dangers, she must honor her brother's legacy. Similarly, Chandara-the main protagonist of the short story named "Punishment" by Rabindranath Tagore is also very determined to her decision of not changing her alibi of the murder. The main reason behind this is her immense self-esteem. Again, Chandara also challenges the patriarchal society's stereotypes. When she accepted the blame, it is not because of her duty towards her family or her loyalty to her husband, rather it is because she takes her fate in her own. She finds it better to be hanged than going back to her husband's house. Here she breaks the normative, typical attitude of the then woman's behavior. This is the point where Antigone resembles Chandara very much.

To conclude, in my perspective, Greek literature and mythology have a complicated and multifaceted figure named Antigone who is renowned for her courage and rebelliousness. She is frequently viewed as a symbol of rebellion towards authority and a defender of autonomy and own beliefs. The basis of Antigone's character is her persistent devotion to justice and morality, which propels her to defy the king's commands and give her brother a proper funeral, even at the cost of her own life. She rejects the unfair rules and customs of her society and, despite the consequence, she chooses to act according to her morality. And Chandara, the lead role of the story name "Punishment" resembles much with Antigone in such aspects. Chandara also bravely fights the patriarchal authorities in order to defend her own self-respect, pride, dignity, and

viewpoint by sticking to her own verdict of murdering her sister-in-law which she did not commit.

Therefore, both Chandara and Antigone are mostly bold,recalcitrant in nature, different from typical women of the then societies.

References :

- 1 . Sophocles. (441 BC). Antigone.
2. Tagore. (18930. Punishment

Section-B

Answer to the Question No-2

As per Socrates' philosophy, finding eudaimonia, or happiness, is the supreme purpose of life. But so far he thought that the only way to real happiness was the pursuit of morality. For Socrates, virtue was not just doing good things and upholding moral standards, but also knowing reality and reaching to the truth. "Laches" by Plato is actually a discussion that highlights the value of courage. Renowned generals, Nicias and Laches, respectively attempt to explain what courage is throughout the discussion, with Socrates operating as a middleman and giving opinions. At the conclusion of the dialogue, Socrates had rejected each of the generals' arguments and shown them that they lacked the knowledge required to explain the traits of courage. Despite Socrates, Nicias, and Laches being all notable examples of courageous men, none of the men are able to define courage.

Socrates states that interacting with people was one of the best methods to practice and know about virtue. People may question their assumptions and views, learn new things, and get a greater knowledge of themselves and the world through having intellectual conversations. A satisfying and meaningful existence requires this process of reflecting on oneself. So, according to Socrates, a man should not lead an unquestioning life since such a life is not worthwhile. People run the danger of leading lives that are out of alignment with their actual nature and

aspirations if they don't challenge their ideas and ideals. Instead, Socrates encouraged people to regularly analyze their lives, beliefs, and actions in order to make improvements to themselves. To be more specific, the greatest advantage for a man, according to Socrates, is to talk about virtue every day. People can form a culture of rational thought and logical inquiry by frequently participating in philosophical debates. They will be better able to make wise judgments, handle the challenges of life, and stay free of the risks of bias and ignorance owing to this practice.

Socrates analyzes the many arguments for the virtue of courage presented by the characters in the dialogue in Plato's *Laches* through using elenchus or Socratic method. In order to gain a deeper knowledge of the truth, the Socratic method includes asking a number of inquiries to pull out any conflicts or inconsistencies in a person's beliefs. Here, Nicias and Laches, two Athenian generals who claim to be authorities on courage, are refuted by Socrates using the elenchus. He questions them repeatedly to reveal their contradictions and flaws, ultimately demonstrating that neither of them has a good grasp on what courage is or the way it is generated. Additionally, it is a practice of day to day life.

Here are two real life examples on Socratic method :

- **In psychotherapy:** Therapists can use the Socratic technique to assist clients analyze their beliefs and behaviors. Therapists can help clients in developing more logical and responsive ways of thinking by inquiring that highlight conflicts or flaws in their thoughts. In other words, the client may be encouraged to reflect on their experiences and develop understanding of their behaviors and feelings by the therapist's open-ended inquiries.
- **In academic discussions:** To develop critical thinking and a deeper awareness of a concept, an instructor may use the Socratic Method in the classroom. The teacher may use words that put stress on students' assumptions, compel them to consider a topic in great detail, and encourage discussion and debate.

From these real life examples, a detailed interpretation can be given on the Socratic method-

The form of inquiry and teaching used by Socrates, as represented in Plato's dialogues, in which he asks a series of questions to get a precise and logical statement about something that all rational creatures are supposed to know clearly is called the Socratic method.

In Plato's conversation "Laches," Nicias and Laches propose conflicting views of what courage is. Laches argues that courage is the ability to face and suffer danger, while Nicias says that courage is a product of wisdom and skill, or the ability to determine when to act and when to stop. Both of these ideas of courage are rejected by Socrates' questioning of Nicias and Laches.

Socrates questions Laches' description by asking if it is fair to be courageous while going through something terrible but pointless. Laches cannot give an answer, which shows the limitations of his term. Socrates also questions Nicias' concept, asking if someone who acts boldly but is ignorant can be said to be courageous. Nicias is also lacking in an answer, which shows that his concept is equally weak.

- Laches' first definition: “to be brave is to stand and fight” [190e–192b]
- Laches' second definition: “bravery is endurance” [192b–193d]
- Nicias' definition: “bravery is a special kind of knowledge” [194d–196c]
- Nicias' another definition: “courage is the knowledge of what inspires fear or confidence in war, or anything (195a).”

By seeing the above definitions from Laches and Nicias, when Socrates started inquiring about them, they lacked information, knowledge about the context of courage properly, thus they both failed to find or state the proper definition of courage. Furthermore, Socrates' strategy for managing the issue shows that, rather than accepting Nicias' and Laches' perspectives, he is more focused on finding a general concept of courage. He contends that having bravery is a virtue that is inherent in everyone and does not depend on specific circumstances. Compared to Laches and Nicias' definitions, which put the emphasis on specific acts of courage, this viewpoint. In conclusion, neither Laches' nor Nicias' interpretations of courage are supported by Socrates' interrogation. Instead of a limited term that only includes some examples of courage, Socrates' inquiry process inspires him to suggest a more broad concept of courage as a virtue that

embraces all conditions. Therefore, Socrates' interrogation clearly goes against the terms given by Laches and Nicias.

As they argue on what defines courage, Laches and Nicias' ideas of courage get stopped. In fact they were unable to come to an absolute definition of courage. And when this halt happened, the situation of “Aporia” arose. Aporia, in its basic form, is a philosophical dilemma or an apparently insolvable impasse in a question, sometimes resulting from extremely convincing but conflicting principles. Aporia typically develops in a philosophical argument when the members are unable to solve their argument and reach a proper outcome. So, The persons who are arguing in that topic may be inspired to think and talk more to define their thoughts and get an understanding correctly of the current issue, which may be a beneficial time. To add on to this, as it encourages analytical thinking and belief, aporia may also be considered as a technique of inquiry. By helping us in understanding the limitations of our understanding and knowledge, aporia may result in challenging philosophical questions.

The “Unity of Virtues”, which says that all virtues are linked to one another and that having one virtue means having them all— is believed by Socrates, the great philosopher. Socrates says in Plato's dialogues that virtues are not separate traits but instead one quality that presents itself in a variety of ways according to the situation. The unity of qualities is what is meant by this. So, according to Socrates, all qualities are connected and cannot be detached from one another (Penner, 1973). In fact, according to Socrates, the main determinant of courage is when a

person can make a decision that is dangerous and needs a sacrifice. This indicates that as courage is linked with other virtues, it cannot be stated in a limited or simple way.

At the end, it can be said that, according to Socrates' philosophy, the ultimate goal of life is to find eudaimonia, or pleasure. For Socrates, virtue meant more than just acting morally and defending moral principles; it also included being aware of reality and seeking the truth. In reality, Plato's "Laches" is a conversation that emphasizes the importance of courage. During the argument, renowned generals Nicias and Laches both make an effort to define what courage is, with Socrates who was acting as a referee and giving his ideas. At the end of the argument, Socrates had rejected each of the generals' beliefs and shown to them their lack of the ideas needed for defining the traits of courage.

References:

1. Plato. (n.d.). Laches
2. Penner, T. (1973). The Unity of Virtue. *The Philosophical Review*, 82(1), 35–68.
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