



UNIT 8: PLAYING WITH THE TEXTS

17. A. HANSEL AND GRETEL

- Grimm Brothers

Summary and Central Idea:

A poor woodcutter used to live with his second wife and two children called Hansel and Gretel. Once, when the country was in famine father was really in trouble to maintain the family. His wife wasn't even a little worried about the children. She rather insisted her husband desert them into the dense forest. The woodcutter didn't like the idea but he had to accept his wife's proposal. The children overheard their parents and Hansel collected a jacket full of shiny pebbles. The next morning, he dropped the pebbles on the way while going to the forest. When they reached the middle of the forest, the parents collected firewood, kindled fire and they left the children promising to return soon with firewood. The children soon fell asleep. When they woke up, it was already dark. Gretel began to cry and Hansel consoled her. As the moon shone in the sky, they saw the pebbles shining brightly. Following the trail of pebbles they finally reached their home. After a few months, the country was again affected by famine and the children overheard their parents' plan to leave them in the forest again. As the door was bolted from outside, Hansel couldn't go outside to get pebbles this time. In the morning, when they were taken to the forest, he scrambled the bread and dropped the pieces on the way. The parents left them in the forest promising them to come back soon. When the children woke in the evening, they couldn't find the pieces of bread as they had been eaten away by birds. They were lost in the forest. They wandered for three days trying to find out the way to get out of the forest. Finally, they came to a little house made of sugar and bread in the middle of the forest where a witch used to live. When the hungry children started eating the door and window of the house, the witch took them in. She offered them food and rest. The witch wanted Hansel to become fat so that she could eat his meat. Even after four weeks, when Hansel didn't become fat, she decided to eat him. When she asked Gretel to check the readiness of the oven, Gretel requested her to demonstrate how to check it. When the witch entered into the oven, Gretel pushed the witch and locked her from outside. When the witch died, Gretel freed Hansel and they escaped away after collecting the jewels from the witch's room. Finally, when they come back home, they found that their step mother had already been dead. So, they lived happily with their father.

Short Answer Questions

1. 2076 Set B Q. No. 2b

Why does Hansel drop shiny pebbles on the way to the forest? [3]

- Hansel is son of a wood-cutter. Once, when the country was in famine, father was really in trouble to maintain the family. His wife wasn't even worried a little about the children. She rather insisted her husband to desert them into the dense forest. The woodcutter didn't like the idea but he had to accept his wife's proposal. The children overheard their parents and Hansel collected jacket full of shiny pebbles with purpose. The next morning, he dropped the pebbles on the way while going to the forest. He dropped the shiny pebbles on the way so that they could find the way home following the pebbles. But the step mother blamed him that he was looking back to see the sun shining on the chimney. As expected, after the moon shone in the sky, they saw the pebbles Shine brightly. Following the trail of pebbles they reached their home.

2. 2076 Set C Q. No. 2b

What role does Gretel play in the story? How does she freed her brother? [3]

- Gretel of Grimm Brothers' "Hansel and Gretel" plays a great role to save the life of her brother and herself. Actually they were at a difficult mode of their life in forest at the house of the witch. Witch unfolds her decision of killing of them one by one. Panicked Gretel however, saves herself and her brother, Hansel from this risk. She uses her ingenuity at the right time in this way. After weeks of their life at the witch's house, the witch grows impatient and decides to eat Hansel. The witch prepares the oven for Hansel, but says she is hungry enough to eat Gretel, too. She coaxes Gretel to open the oven and prods her to lean over in front of it to see if the fire is hot enough. Gretel, sensing the witch's intent, pretends she does not understand what she means. Infuriated, the witch demonstrates and Gretel instantly shoves the witch into the oven and slams and bolts the door shut, leaving "The ungodly witch to be burned to ashes", with the witch screaming in pain until she dies. Gretel frees Hansel from the cage and the pair discovers a vase full of treasure and precious stones. Gretel freed her brother and herself from the trap of the witch. The witch wanted Hansel to become fat so that she could eat his meat. Even elapsing four weeks, when Hansel didn't become fat she

decided to eat him. When she asked Gretel to check the readiness of the oven. Gretel requested her to demonstrate how to check it. When the witch entered into the oven, Gretel pushed the witch and locked her from outside. When the witch died, Gretel freed Hansel and they escaped away after collecting the jewels from the witch's room. This incident of killing the evil witch proves Gretel's maturity and masculinity. Up to the time she came across a great difficulty in the cottage of witch, Gretel was so weak and immature. She used to weep and get Hansel's soothing and caring. This time she became mature and masculine. The way she traps the witch shows that Gretel has grown out of the difficulty. Thus, after they collect the jewelry, they cross the pond one by one and display that they are mature and they can't do anything unless they depend on one another.

3. 2076 Partial D Q. No. 2e

What role does Gretel have in the story? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 Set C Q. No. 26**

4. 2076 Partial E Q. No. 2a

How did Hansel and Gretel free themselves from the witch? (Hansel and Gretel) [3]

- Hansel and Gretel were the captives in the witch's house but managed to free themselves at the end. They succeeded to release themselves from her entrapment by their unity. They had good coordination. Though Gretel was horrified, Hansel remained strong and non-hesitant. In the beginning Hansel taking advantage of the witch's poor eyesight displayed her bones instead of fingers which the old woman was looking for. Thinking that he would grow thinner, she decided to take action. This helped them to free themselves from her early. When the witch thought of killing Hansel, Gretel on the other hand suffered. But her suffering and fear taught her to act. She managed to push the witch to death with tact. Gretel helped herself and her brother. Thus, this is all because of their intelligence, cooperation and unity, they succeeded to free themselves from the witch.

5. 2075 Partial D Q. No. 2e

How did the witch receive the two children in their first night at the witch's house? [3]

- The witch received the two children, Hansel and Gretel, on the first night at her house, warmly. Witch was so crooked that she used to appear kind and loving at the first glance but would display her crookedness when someone really became her prey. When two hungry children started nibbling the

house, she appeared to welcome them. She took them by the hand and led them into her house. She set before them a meal of milk and pancakes, sugar, apples, and nuts. Then, she made a clean white bed for them. This was simply her pretension. At heart she was a wicked witch and had made the house only to entice the children like them. Innocent little children never could gauge her evil intention, thus slept a heavy sleep thinking that they were in heaven.

6. 2074 Supp Q. No. 2a

How did Hansel and Gretel manage to come back to their home the first time provided that they were lost in the forest the second time? [3]

- The shiny pebbles help the children, Hansel and Gretel, to find their way back. These pebbles help them to return to their home after they were left in the forest by their mother. Because there was a famine in a country, the step mother thought of leaving the children in the forest. The father yielded to the wish of wife, as she was pigheaded. Knowing the intention of the parents, Hansel had collected pebbles and stuffed his pocket with them. As they left their home, the boy dropped pebbles on the way. After walking for some duration, they reached a spot where the stepmother asked the children to wait till they returned back though it was only a trick to leave the children in the forest. At midnight, when they got up, the boy thought of returning to the house. He could return successfully with the assistance of pebbles he had dropped. They directed the children to their home. By following the shiny pebbles they succeeded to return home.

7. 2074 Set A Q. No. 2a

What role does the witch have in the story? What does she symbolize? [3]

- The witch has an antagonistic role in the story of "Hansel and Gretel". She represents the evil of the society who suppresses and dominates the weaker ones. She has a role to trap the heavenly children in the forest and kill them. She appears beguiling and gullible. The witch in the story appears both loving and cruel at the same time. The children get afraid in the beginning by seeing her but get convinced by her seductive words without knowing her intention. She symbolizes the aristocracy and feudalism in the story. She is a representative of thousands of those who accumulate power and money by dominating and exploiting the poor people in the society. The story, therefore, shows a gap between haves and have nots who undergo a perpetual chain of conflict. The killing of the witch in the story symbolizes the downfall or defeat of the aristocracy and victory of the working class of people.

8. 2074 Set B Q. No. 2a

How does Hansel show his boldness, wisdom, determination and vigour in the beginning of the story? [3]

- Hansel shows his boldness, courage, determination and vigor in the beginning of the story. When he knows about the plan of his parents, he collects pebbles, drops them on the way and returns back home with his sister. He also gives her courage and confidence with his wit. Next time too, he drops the bread crumbs on the way with a view to find out the way to their home. When Gretel weeps in the forest, he tells her not to weep and shows his elderly attitudes. Thus, by showing the way to home and soothing his weeping sister, Hansel, a small child, shows his courage and confidence in the beginning of the story.

9. 2073 Set C Q.No. 2a

How did Gretel free her brother and herself from the trap of the witch and prove her maturity and masculinity? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 Set C Q. No. 2b**

10. 2073 Partial A Q. No. 2b

Why did Gretel kill the witch? (Hansel and Gretel) [3]

- Gretel in the story of "Hansel and Gretel" killed the witch because the witch was the great obstacle on her journey of struggle and success. Witch had chained Hansel, her brother, in order to fatten and then kill him. As she realized that the boy would never become fat, she decided to end the consequence. Early in the morning, she ordered Gretel to fetch water. She had prepared the oven to finish off the brother and sister. As Gretel arrived there, she asked her to be in. Gretel showed ignorance to the way of entering and asked her to demonstrate. No sooner had the witch tried to enter her head, than she pushed her into the oven and closed it. By not finding any help, Gretel displayed her maturity and tact. Symbolically killing of which refers to the defeat of evil forces and the victory of good.

11. 2073 Partial W Q. No. 2a

How does Gretel save her brother and herself from the witch? [3]

- Gretel saves her brother Hansel and herself from the witch by using her mind properly. The witch wanted Hansel to become fat so that she could eat his meat. Even after four weeks, when Hansel didn't become fat, she decided to eat him. When she asked Gretel to check the readiness of the oven, Gretel requested her to demonstrate how to check it. When the witch entered into the oven, Gretel pushed the witch and locked her from outside. When the witch died, Gretel freed Hansel and they escaped after collecting the jewels from the witch's room.

12. 2072 Set C Q. No. 2b

How did the witch tempt the children in the gingerbread house? What had she planned at last? [3]

- The witch is the greatest evil in the story, "Hansel and Gretel". She knows well to apply her tricks against the heavenly children. In the story when there was another famine in the country, the mother brought the previous idea of leaving them in the forest back again. This time, the parents took them deep into the forest. The children were left there. They wished that their parents would come, which didn't happen as they had thought. The children couldn't return back to their house as the bread crumbs had been eaten by birds. They, at last, reached a house made of bread and cakes. This was the trick of the witch to tempt the children towards her. As they nibbled from a voice sweetly told them to continue. This voice was again the pretension. She appeared to be afraid of children. But she tempted them with her sweet voice and served them delicious food and cozy beds. But the witch was crooked and had planned a killing. It was a witch, who used to eat children whoever came in handy. The witch, on the next day, imprisoned the brother and compelled the sister to do laborious deeds. Every day, the witch went there and checked how fat he had become. In one early morning, she ordered Gretel to fetch water. She had prepared the oven to finish off the brother and sister. However, this plan of the witch took her own life.

13. 2072 Set D Q. No. 2b

How did the lost children find the witch's house? [3]

- The lost children of the story "Hansel and Gretel" found the house of a witch in the forest. As all the breadcrumbs were eaten up by the birds and animals of the forest, they couldn't return back the second time. They went deeper and deeper into the forest. The place appeared unfamiliar to them. They knew they had lost their way. But they were still hopeful. They survived on the berries and other fruits. In one early morning they saw a white bird on the tree. They flew and they followed the

bird.' It took them to the house of the witch. This is how they found the house of the witch in the forest.

14. 2072 Partial Set A Q. NO. 2b

What did the birds have in the story Hansel Gretel? [3]

- "Hansel and Gretel" written by Grimm Brothers fairy tale and birds play a great role in the story. Though the birds appears many times in the story have crucial role played in two different difficult mode of the story. First is when Hansel and Gretel were spending a miserable life in the forest. They were hungry for days. Once, when they were really tired and hungry, they saw a lovely snow-white bird sitting on a branch. It sang to them and led them to a little house in the forest. The house was made up of bread, cake and sugar. Hungry children filled their stomachs up. Thus, the bird here played a great role in saving the children dying from hunger; however, they had a great trial to escape the witch. Next, the bird appears when the two children come across the pond. The white ducks on the pond gave them the ride by which they succeeded to reach their home safely. So, birds played a great role in saving children from death. They indeed symbolize God. All the birds that help the children are white which symbolizes sacredness, holiness and the God, The God has manifested in the form of the birds. But one might question that the children are led to the house of a witch who used to eat the passerby in the forest. Had the birds been God, he would not have led the children to such a disaster. God, but, had done it willingly. He wanted to teach them the meaning of life by saying that success is not an easy thing to achieve. When they learned the meaning, God helped Gretel to kill the witch and give them a safe ride on the pond.

15. 2072 Partial Set B Q. No. 2b

How did the shiny stones help Hansel and Gretel return home the first time? [3]

- Please refer to **2074 Supp Q. No. 2a**

16. 2071 Set C Q. No. 2 b

What role does Gretel play to save her brother and herself from the witch? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 Set C Q. No. 2b**

17. 2070 Set C Q. No. 2 a

What role do the birds have in the story 'Hansel and Gretel'? What do they symbolize? [3]

- Please refer to **2072 Partial Set A Q. No. 2b**

18. 2070 Set D Q. No 12 e

Describe the character of Hansel. [3]

- Hansel is the protagonist of the story fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel". The story revolves around Hansel and Gretel. Though small, he is a divine child. Every reader praises his courage and confidence. The son of a poor woodcutter, Hansel grows from his situation and over powers it. A character of hope, we learn from him the meaning of living a life. He admires the challenges and every challenge is small in front of his courage. Hansel, thus, inspires every reader by his act of will. Since quite faithful to God, God too favors him. He thinks God will never leave him. Though Hansel is the character of a fairy tale, his every activity shows the realistic, struggling and hopeful child from our society. An immature Hansel develops a lot in the story, and by the time the story end he is able to stand on his feet. He is a character of communal feelings. He succeeds with this spirit of community that he shows whether in the forest or while crossing the pond with Gretel. He doesn't even develop hatred towards his step-mother who leaves him in the forest. Thus, Hansel is the main character in the story who is fully seen, developed and praised.

19. 2060 Q. No. 10 a

How did Hansel and Gretel free themselves from witch? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 Partial E Q. No. 2a**

20. 2059 Q. No. 27

How did the witch receive the two children in their First night at the witch's house? [3]

- Please refer to **2075 Partial D Q. No. 2e**

21. 2057 Q. No. 2 d

What do the bird and the expanses of water symbolize in the fairy tale 'Hansel and Gretel'? [3]

- Please refer to **2072 Partial Set A Q. No. 2d**

Long Answer Questions

22. 2075 Partial E Q. No. 13b

Grimm Brothers' "Hansel and Gretel " reflects the social problems of the eighteenth century. Explain the statement on the basis of Jack Zipes interpretation of the story. [10]

- Hansel and Gretel By Jack Zipes

Hansel and Gretel By Jack Zipes interprets the Grimm Brothers' story " Hansel and Gretel". He explains the fairy tale of the Grimm Brothers from a social perspective. He shows the social problems as depicted by the fairy tale in his interpretation Jack Zipes believes that the children are not against their stepmother and father. They understand that the social problems are responsible for their plight. Therefore, they don't regard their parents as their enemies. They consider social forces as their enemies. Another point is that the women died young due to frequent child bearing and unhealthy conditions. Thus, stepmothers were common in households. The entrance of step mothers in the house created difficulties with the children of former wives. So the relation between step mothers and children is seen to have worsened which is a social reality. The class conflict portrayed in the story used to be common in the eighteenth century. The working classes of people are always seen in conflict with the rulers. In the story the witch represents the oppressors and feudalism whereas the children represent the oppressed and working class of the people. The fairy tales generally expose these social realities of the eighteenth century. The killing of the witch represents a social reality of how we might survive

in an unjust society. Thus, Jack Zipes makes it clear in his interpretation that Grimm Brothers' "Hansel and Gretel" reflects the social problems of eighteenth century.

23. 2073 Set D Q. No. 3a

Summarise the story 'Hansel and Gretel' in about 200 words. [10]

- Grimm Brothers' fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel", shows that evil forces suffer. In the story, two delicate children emerge victorious by defeating many evils that come across their way. Hansel and Gretel are young children whose father is a woodcutter. When a great famine settles over the land, the woodcutter's abusive second wife decides to take the children into the woods and leave them there to be by themselves, so that she and her husband will not starve to death because the children eat too much. The woodcutter opposes the plan but finally and reluctantly submits to his wife's scheme. They are unaware that in the children's bedroom, Hansel and Gretel have overheard them. After the parents have gone to bed, Hansel sneaks out of the house and gathers as many white pebbles as he can, then returns to his room, reassuring Gretel that God will not forsake them. The next day, the family walks deep into the woods and Hansel lays a trail of white pebbles. After their parents abandon them, the children wait for the moon to rise and then they follow the pebbles back home. They return home safely, much to their stepmother's horror. Once again provisions become scarce and the stepmother angrily orders her husband to take the children farther into the woods and leave them there to die. Hansel and Gretel attempt to gather more pebbles, but find the doors locked and find it impossible to escape from their house. The following morning, the family treks into the woods. Hansel takes a slice of bread and leaves a trail of breadcrumbs to follow home. However, after they are once again abandoned, the children find that birds have eaten the crumbs and they are lost in the woods. After days of wandering, they follow a beautiful white bird to a clearing in the woods and discover a large cottage built of gingerbread and cakes, with window panes of clear sugar. Hungry and tired, the children begin to eat the rooftop of the candy house, when the door opens and a "very old woman" emerges and lures them inside, with the promise of soft beds and delicious food. They comply, unaware that their host is a wicked witch who waylays children to cook and eat them. The next morning, the witch locks Hansel in an iron cage in the garden and forces Gretel into becoming a slave. The witch feeds Hansel regularly to fatten him up, but Hansel cleverly offers a bone he found in the cage (presumably a bone from the witch's previous captive) and the witch feels it, thinking it is his finger. Due to her blindness, she is fooled thinking that Hansel is still too thin to eat. After weeks of this, the witch grows impatient and decides to eat Hansel "be he fat or lean." The witch prepares the oven for Hansel, but decides hungry enough to eat Gretel, too. She coaxes Gretel to open the oven and prods her to lean over in front of it to see if the fire is hot enough. Gretel, sensing the witch's intent, pretends she does not understand what she means. Infuriated, the witch demonstrates and

Gretel instantly shoves the witch into the oven and slams and bolts the door shut, leaving "The ungodly witch to be burned to ashes", with the witch screaming in pain until she dies. Gretel fees Hansel from the cage and the pair discovers a vase full of treasure and precious stones. Putting the jewels into their clothing, the children set off to A swan ferries them across an expanse of water and at home they find only their father; his wife died of unknown causes. Their father had spent all his time lamenting the loss of his children and was delighted to see them safe and sound. With the witch's wealth they all live happily ever after.

24. 2073 Supp Q. No. 3a

Retell the story 'Hansel and Gretel'. [10]

- Please refer to **2073 Set D Q. No. 3a**

24. 2072 Supp Q. No.3b

Retell the story 'Hansel and Gretel'. [10]

- Please refer to **2073 Set D Q. No. 3a**

25. 2066 Q. No. 13 b

Narrate the story of Hansel and Gretel. [10]

- Please refer **2073 Set D Q. No. 3a**

26. 2062 Q. No. 13 b

Briefly narrate the story of "Hansel and Gretel" [10]

- Please refer **2073 Set D Q. No. 3a**

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