

Bhavan's Sheth R A College of Arts and Commerce, Ahmedabad

BA Semester VI - Core English

314 (EB) - World Classics in Translation

University Paper Style (total 4 questions, 70 marks, 2.30 hours)

Topics	Units and Questions	Marks
<p><b>Unit - I</b></p> <p><i>Medea</i> - Euripides</p>	<p>Unit - 1</p> <p>Que. 1 General question (1/2) (answer in 850-900 words) Or Gen. question or two short notes</p>	(17)
<p><b>Unit - II</b></p> <p><i>Urubhangam</i> - Bhasa</p>	<p>Unit - 2</p> <p>Que. 2 General question (1/2) (answer in 850-900 words) Or Gen. question or two short notes</p>	(17)
<p><b>Unit - III</b></p> <p><i>The Idiot</i> - Dostoevsky</p>	<p>Unit - 3</p> <p>Que. 3 General question (1/2) (answer in 850-900 words) Or Gen. question or two short notes</p>	(17)
<p><b>Unit - IV</b></p> <p><u>Detailed acquaintances:</u> <i>Odyssey, Antigone, Metamorphoses</i> (Ovid), <i>Faust</i> (Goethe), <i>Aeneid, The Divine Comedy,</i> <i>The Outsider</i> (Camus), <i>Dead Souls,</i> <i>Vikramovarshiyam</i> (Kalidasa), <i>Karnabharam</i> (Bhasa)</p>	<p>Unit - 4</p> <p>Que. 4 (a) Short Notes (2/4) (from UNIT - IV) (b) MCQs (9/9) (from Units I, II and III)</p>	(10) (09)

Summary of *The Idiot* - Fyodor Dostoevsky

**PART - I**

From Switzerland to St. Petersburg

Prince Lyov Myshkin has spent four years at Dr. Schneider's sanatorium in Switzerland. There he was treated for epilepsy and 'idiocy.' He had no money. The expenses of the treatment were borne by one Mr. Pavlishchev and by the doctor himself.

Myshkin was the last male descendant of an ancient Russian noble family. One of his distant relatives, Madame (Lizaveta) Epanchin lived in St. Petersburg. Myshkin wrote her letters before coming to see her but never got any reply.

On his way to St. Petersburg, Myshkin met Parfyon Rogozhin on the train. Finding Myshkin a patient and trustworthy listener, Rogozhin revealed his passion for Nastasya Filippovna Barashkov.

### Myshkin's first impression at the Epanchin household

Gavril (Ganya) Ivolgin works as a business assistant to General Epanchin. Myshkin encounters Ganya first and tells him he wants to see Madame Epanchin. Myshkin is wearing ordinary clothes and is carrying his possessions in a small bundle. His speech or behaviour does not reflect any sense of dignity. He creates a very poor first impression - an idiot. Myshkin openly discusses his problems - idiocy and epilepsy. Nobody takes him seriously.

### Myshkin happens to look at Nastasya's portrait

General Epanchin and Ganya Ivolgin talk about the party that Nastasya has organized that evening to celebrate her twenty-fifth birthday. They don't mind discussing the matter in the presence of Myshkin whom they take as an idiot. At this party, she will announce whether she will marry Ganya or not. Afanassy Totsky has offered 75,000 roubles to Ganya for marrying Nastasya. By chance, Myshkin happens to look at Nastasya's portrait and is struck by her beauty. He also finds much suffering in her face. He has already heard about Nastasya from Rogozhin on the train.

### Myshkin is presented before Madame Epanchin

General Epanchin presents Myshkin before Madame Epanchin. He is also introduced to the three Epanchin girls: Alexandra, Adelaida and Aglaia. They are all cultured and intelligent. Aglaia is the most beautiful of the three. Myshkin talks to them about his experiences abroad. He appears simpleton but talks very interestingly. Myshkin tells them about a man who is condemned to die but is pardoned just before his execution.

Myshkin claims to read faces. He comments that Aglaia is almost as beautiful as Nastasya. Madame Epanchin demands to see Nastasya's portrait. Along with the portrait, Ganya sends a secret note to Aglaia. In the note, he promises to cancel his engagement with Nastasya if Aglaia asks him to do so. Aglaia returns the note without any comment.

General Epanchin lends 25 roubles to Myshkin for his present needs and offers to find him a job.

### The Ivolgin family

Ganya lives with his family (parents, brother Kolya and sister Varya) in a big apartment. His father General Ivolgin is a retired military officer fallen on bad days. Earlier he moved in a good society. The family now rents rooms to lodgers for extra income. Myshkin rents a room at Ganya's apartment. Mr. Ferdyschenko is one of their tenants. Renting rooms to lodgers hurts Ganya's sense of dignity.

Old General Ivolgin tries to live beyond his means. He has kept the widow of Captain Terentyev as his mistress. His biggest weakness is the habit of telling lies.

Ganya's family is against his plans to marry Nastasya. They consider her a fallen woman.

### Nastasya's background

In her childhood, Nastasya lost her parents in an accident. She was brought up by the rich businessman Totsky. When Nastasya grew up, he kept her as a mistress for a few years.

For the last five years, Nastasya has been living in St. Petersburg independently from Totsky but all her expenses are borne by him. She comes to Ganya's house to invite his

family to her birthday party that evening. Myshkin opens the door for her. She takes him to be a servant. She feels sorry when she realizes her mistake and is pleased with Myshkin's behaviour.

Tonight she will decide if she can marry Ganya or not. The Ivolgin family and Nastasya have no mutual respect. They try to insult each other but Myshkin controls the situation.

Rogozhin comes there with his ruffians. He offers Nastasya 100,000 roubles if she married him. Nastasya leaves with Rogozhin.

#### Nastasya's declaration at the party

Nastasya had not invited Myshkin to the party. However Myshkin determined to go there. He wanted to prevent Nastasya from marrying Rogozhin. He had a feeling that Rogozhin would murder her after the marriage.

General Ivolgin promised to take Myshkin to Nastasya's. He borrowed 25 roubles from Myshkin and gave the money to Madame Terentyev. Then he took Myshkin to the wine bar. Ultimately, Kolya took the Prince to Nastasya's. He was welcome there. Nastasya realized that she had forgotten to invite Myshkin to the party.

Rogozhin comes to the party with the promised sum of 100,000 roubles. Nastasya reveals publicly how Totsky seduced her and how she hates him for it. She says that nobody would marry her after this declaration. Ferdyschenko suggests that Myshkin would accept her. The Prince says that she does not deserve all the blame for what has happened with her. He proposes to her. Moreover, he announces that he has just received the news of a large inheritance and would be able to support her.

Nastasya, however, rejects the offer. She says the Prince deserves to marry a more respectable woman, someone like Aglaia Epanchin. She has dreamt of someone like Myshkin but she can't marry him for fear of ruining his life.

#### Ganya's humiliation

Ganya wouldn't get 75,000 roubles if Nastasya does not marry him. She says she will compensate him for the loss. Rogozhin had brought 100,000 roubles wrapped in a bundle. She threw the bundle into the fire and asked Ganya to recover the money with his hands. If he could pull out the money it would be his. Ganya's pride did not allow him to recover the money. He fainted. Nastasya then took out the money. The wrappings had been damaged but the notes were intact. She left the money for Ganya and went away with Rogozhin.

## **PART - II**

#### Six months after Nastasya's birthday party

Two days after the party, Myshkin left for Moscow to claim his inheritance. There were rumours in St Petersburg that Myshkin's inheritance was smaller than that had been expected. Moreover, a number of people surfaced to demand a share from his inheritance.

There were also rumours about Nastasya. It was reported that she stayed for a time in Moscow with Rogozhin. And then she left him to return to Myshkin who was already there to settle the business of his inheritance. Nastasya, however, was not willing to marry Myshkin because she was afraid of ruining his life. Rogozhin found Nastasya. She promised

to marry him but ran off just before the wedding. Rogozhin returned alone to St. Petersburg.

Prince S became engaged to marry Adelaida. Totsky wanted to marry Alexandra but the match could not be finalized.

Ganya's sister married the money lender, Ptistyn.

Gen Ivolgin was put in debtors' prison. The family moved to live at the house of Ptistyn.

#### Rogozhin attempts to kill Myshkin

Sometime after Rogozhin, Myshkin too returned to St. Petersburg. Rogozhin was jealous of Myshkin because Nastasya loved the Prince though she did not marry him. On his part, the Prince had sympathy and pity for Nastasya.

One day, Myshkin visited Rogozhin at his home. It was as dark as Rogozhin's lifestyle. Myshkin told Rogozhin that his passion for Nastasya was very close to hatred and that their marriage would end in mutual destruction. The Prince was still ready to marry her if she wanted him to. But he promised Rogozhin that he would never seek to meet Nastasya on his own. Rogozhin did not trust the Prince and followed him to keep a watch.

#### Myshkin leaves for Pavlovsk

An epileptic fit was approaching. Myshkin began to lose control of his mind. In spite of his promise to Rogozhin, he began a search for Nastasya. When the search failed, he was returning to his hotel. Rogozhin was still following the Prince, angry with him for trying to contact Nastasya in spite of his promise. It was slightly dark as Myshkin reached his hotel.

Rogozhin was about to attack with a knife when the Prince had an epileptic fit. Rogozhin fled without hurting Myshkin. When Kolya came there, he found the Prince unconscious. A doctor was called. After three days' rest, the Prince and Kolya left for Pavlovsk.

#### The summer retreat in Pavlovsk

Pavlovsk was a summer town near St. Petersburg. The Epanchins, the Ivolgins and the Lebedeyevs were all in Pavlovsk for the summer. The Prince rented rooms at Lebedeyev's summer cottage in the town.

#### Aglaia does not declare her love for Myshkin, the Poor Knight

When Madame Epanchin heard of Myshkin's illness, she came to visit him accompanied by her daughters. Aglaia recited a poem by Alexander Pushkin - *The Poor Knight* - before the audience. The Knight suffered for his ideals. Aglaia was hinting that Myshkin was suffering for his compassion for Nastasya. In fact, Aglaia was attracted to the Prince but she was too proud to declare her love for him.

#### Myshkin's kindness to Burdovsky

A young man named Burdovsky is presented before Myshkin as the illegitimate son of Mr. Pavlishchev, the Prince's benefactor. Burdovsky demanded 10,000 roubles from the Prince. The demand was made on fraudulent grounds. Ganya proved that Burdovsky was mistaken in thinking himself to be Mr. Pavlishchev's son. In fact, he was the son of the sister of the woman whom Mr. Pavlishchev loved. In spite of Burdovsky's rude behaviour and false claims, Myshkin treated him as a friend and offered to help him.

### Nastasya tries to arrange a match between the Prince and Aglaia

Nastasya, though she did not marry Myshkin, has been trying to arrange a match between Aglaia and Myshkin. She goes out of her way to prevent any possibility of a match between Aglaia and Yevgeny Radomsky, a friend of Prince S (Adelaida's suitor).

## **PART - III**

### Aglaia and Prince Myshkin

Aglaia offers the Prince her friendship but tells him that she is in love with Ganya and is going to marry him. The Prince easily proves that what she is saying is only a white lie. Aglaia praises the Prince for the nobility of his mind and says that only few could understand him.

Aglaia gives Myshkin the letters that Nastasya has been writing to her. Nastasya wanted first to see Myshkin married to Aglaia and then she would marry Rogozhin.

Radomsky proposed to Aglaia but she refused him. Nastasya came with Rogozhin to meet Myshkin and told him that it was their last meeting.

### General Ivolgin dies

General Ivolgin stole 400 roubles from Lebedyev's coat. He helped Lebedyev in his search for the money. Later his guilt was found out. He lost his mind and died.

## **PART - IV**

### Aglaia and Prince Myshkin

Everyone in the Epanchin household believes that Aglaia is in love with the Prince. Aglaia's sisters even hint at the possibility of their engagement. Madame Epanchin does not want her daughter to marry the "sickly idiot." Aglaia asks Myshkin if he desires to marry her. He replies that he loves her very much and proposes to her. She then asks him about his fortune and his career plans. The sisters laugh at the question. Myshkin thinks they are all making fun of him. Aglaia runs out of the room and cries. For several days afterwards, she often insults the Prince and then asks for his forgiveness.

### A dinner party to determine Myshkin's suitability as a match for Aglaia

A dinner party is arranged by the Epanchins to find out if important people in St. Petersburg consider Myshkin a suitable match for Aglaia.

The Prince will be presented before the upper-class society and his engagement to Aglaia depends upon the impression he might make at the party. The Prince also understands the purpose of the party and becomes very nervous.

### Myshkin proves a poor match for Aglaia

The dinner party is Myshkin's first formal introduction to high society after his return from Switzerland. The Prince has a habit of getting involved in long debates and discussions without the consideration of time and place. Aglaia has specifically asked Myshkin to keep silent at the party. Myshkin too makes up his mind to remain silent. But when there is a discussion on religion, he begins to express his views elaborately and excitedly. He has a

mild attack of epilepsy and accidentally breaks a beautiful Chinese vase. The guests suggest that the Prince is not a proper match for Aglaia.

#### The showdown between Aglaia and Nastasya

Next evening, Aglaia arranges a meeting with Nastasya. Myshkin accompanies Aglaia to Nastasya's lodgings. The two women look at one another like rivals and both express mutual hatred. Aglaia accuses Nastasya to be a dishonourable woman. Aglaia says that Nastasya had no right to intervene in her affairs by writing the letters suggesting the match between her and the Prince. On her part, Nastasya says that she was wrong in thinking so highly of Aglaia. She claims that if she asked the Prince he would absolutely forget Aglaia.

#### Myshkin's dilemma

Myshkin is now in dilemma. Both women look at him for his response. He hesitates for a moment. Aglaia is hurt and runs out. Myshkin follows her but Nastasya stops him near the door and faints in his arms. The Prince stays for some time to take care of Nastasya. Several days later Myshkin and Nastasya's wedding is arranged. On the wedding day, Nastasya runs away with Rogozhin to St. Petersburg.

#### Nastasya's murder

Next morning Myshkin leaves for St. Petersburg in search for Nastasya and Rogozhin. He finds the windows and doors of Rogozhin's house closed and covered by curtains. The servants say the master is not home. In the evening, Rogozhin comes to Myshkin's hotel and takes the Prince to his house.

Myshkin learns that Rogozhin killed Nastasya the previous night. The dead body is covered in a white sheet. Rogozhin falls into a delirious state. Myshkin tries to comfort him as they keep vigil during the night.

#### Myshkin returns to the sanatorium

Rogozhin is arrested and sentenced to 15 years of hard labour in Siberia. Aglaia runs off with a Polish count who turns out to be a liar without a fortune or a position. Moreover, she is abandoned by him. Myshkin is sent to Dr. Schneider's clinic from where he came at the beginning of the novel. The sanatorium, not St. Petersburg, is the right place for the Prince.

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### Questions on *The Idiot*

*The Idiot* portrays the corruption and moral decay of the contemporary Russian upper classes which make it impossible for a positively good man to survive in the society. Elaborate in the light of the tragedy of Prince Myshkin.

Or

*The Idiot* is a realistic portrayal of the nineteenth century Russian society - an indictment of the materialism of the governing classes that attempt to emulate the modern values of the Western Europe.

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) is one of the great masters - along with Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev and Leo Tolstoy - of the nineteenth century Russian literature. *The Idiot* was first published serially between 1868 and 1869. Dostoevsky wrote the novel at a

time when Russia was getting increasingly modernized and westernized. Through the character of Prince Myshkin, Dostoevsky presents a realistic picture of the contemporary Russian high society which was obsessed with money, power and status. It was impossible for a good man to survive in this society. Dostoevsky wrote to a friend about his intention in writing the **Idiot**:

The idea is to portray a positively beautiful man. In my opinion nothing can be more difficult than this, especially in our day ...

The hero of the **Idiot**, Prince Lyov Myshkin, is the idiot of the title. He was the last male descendant of an ancient Russian noble family. When the novel opens, Myshkin had already spent four years at a Swiss sanatorium for the treatment of epilepsy and 'idiocy.' He came to St. Petersburg as a poor man. His clothes were ordinary. He was carrying all his possessions in a small bundle. One of his distant relatives, Madame Epanchin, lived in the city. When Myshkin is presented before Madame Epanchin, he is described by the novelist in the following words:

...this Prince Myshkin, the last of the family, of whom she (Madame Epanchin) had heard something already, was no better than a poor idiot, was almost a beggar, and was ready to accept charity.

The high society of St. Petersburg was full of sinners - usurers, drunks, liars, rogues, frauds, debauchees, seducers etc. All the events during the next six months in St. Petersburg shattered Myshkin's already fragile mind. At the end of the **Idiot**, he was sent back to the same sanatorium in Switzerland.

Prince Myshkin was an idealistic and innocent man, often ridiculed for his simplicity. He was really an intelligent and a perceptive man but many characters abused him by calling him an idiot for his child-like trustfulness and openness. Money is the most important consideration for the upper class society. Gavril Ivolgin was willing to marry Nastasya (the fallen woman) for 75000 roubles offered by Afanassy Totsky. Parfyon Rogozhin had no worth except wealth. General Ivolgin was not regarded highly in society because he had no money. Prince Myshkin was taken seriously only after he was understood to have gained a large inheritance. Nastasya comments on people's obsession with money:

Everyone is possessed with such greed nowadays, they are all so overwhelmed by the idea of money that they seem to have gone mad.

At Rogozhin's house, Myshkin saw Hans Holbein's painting of Jesus Christ after his body had been taken from the cross. Myshkin's physical appearance is intended to remind us of Jesus Christ. He is different from all the other characters in the **Idiot**. Myshkin's humility, love and selflessness make him a Christ-like figure in St. Petersburg. But the St. Petersburg society is so corrupt and decayed that Myshkin's goodness proves counterproductive - for himself and for those around him. Edward Wasiolek comments:

The failure of Myshkin's compassion to save those about whom he cares most, especially Nastasya Filippovna, drives him to insanity.

The **Idiot** is a realistic novel. It was written at a time of great political and social upheaval in Russia. Dostoevsky discusses in the novel many political, religious and philosophical issues of topical interests. At the centre of the story is Myshkin's love for two girls - the bold Nastasya Barashkov and the proud Aglaia Epanchine. Both are beautiful. Both Nastasya and Aglaia are attracted to the personal qualities of Prince Myshkin.

Nastasya did not marry Myshkin for the fear of ruining his life. Aglaia did not marry him because she suspected that Myshkin was more attached to Nastasya than to her. Nastasya married Rogozhin who killed her. Aglaia married a man who claimed to be a Polish count. The man proved to be a liar and abandoned her. Aglaia called Myshkin a 'Poor Knight' who suffered for his own ideals. She said of Myshkin:

You are more honourable than any of them; nobler, better, kinder, cleverer than any of them.

Thus *the Idiot* portrays the moral decay and corruption of the contemporary upper classes in the nineteenth century Russian society. The novel is an indictment of the materialism of the governing classes. Myshkin returned to Russia after a gap of four years. But the contact with the corrupt people destroys his mind. Dostoevsky considered the *Idiot* his most favourite work. Jane Gleeson-White comments:

*The Idiot* is remarkable for Dostoevsky's profound and unnerving understanding of the human soul.

### The character of Prince Myshkin

Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin is the hero of Dostoevsky's novel the *Idiot*. He is twenty-six years old. When the novel opens, the Prince is returning to Russia from Switzerland. Prince Myshkin is the idiot of the novel's title. He was the last male descendent of an ancient Russian noble family. His parents died when he was a child. Myshkin spent his childhood in the Russian countryside. The Prince has already spent four years at a Swiss sanatorium for the treatment of epilepsy. He had no money. Mr. Pavlishchev and Dr. Schneider paid for his treatment. Myshkin's appearance and speech did not reflect his noble origins. Through his character, Dostoevsky wants to create the figure of an ideal Christian - kind, compassionate, selfless, simple and innocent. Sidney Monas comments:

His (Myshkin's) physical description resembles that of Christ.

After undergoing a prolonged treatment of epilepsy, Myshkin came to St. Petersburg. He hoped to start a new life with the help of one of his distant relatives. The name of the relative was Madame Lizaveta Epanchin. She was the wife of General Epanchin and lived in St. Petersburg. When Myshkin is presented before Madame Epanchin, he is described by the novelist in the following words:

...this Prince Myshkin, the last of the family, of whom she (Madame Epanchin) had heard something already, was no better than a poor idiot, was almost a beggar, and was ready to accept charity.

Myshkin looked simple and naïve. In St. Petersburg, he created the impression of an idiot, at least at the time of the first encounter. But Myshkin had a profound understanding of the human mind. He studied people looking at their faces, pictures and handwritings. Myshkin was the only person to observe a great suffering in the beautiful face of Nastasya Filippovna.

Myshkin was a misfit in St. Petersburg society. He understood the greed and selfishness of people around him. But he always remained open and frank in his behaviour. He wanted to be good to one and all. He did not realize that one cannot be good all the time to all the people. Myshkin foresaw that Rogozhin would kill Nastasya and therefore he tried

to prevent their marriage. But Rogozhin was jealous of Myshkin and thought of him only as a rival. He killed Nastasya because she had a greater affection for the innocent Myshkin.

Thus it was Myshkin's obsession to save Nastasya that led indirectly to her murder. Aglaia Epanchin loved Myshkin but she did not marry him because she suspected that Myshkin was more attached to Nastasya than to her. There was no place for a simple and innocent man like Myshkin in the hypocritical Russian society of the time. It is the irony and paradox of the modern society extremely good men cannot survive in it. Myshkin was sent back to the sanatorium at the end of the novel. Ronald Hingly comments:

Dostoevsky indicts the Russian ruling class of his day who have created a world which cannot accommodate the goodness of this idiot (Myshkin).

### The character of Nastasya Filippovna

Prince Lyov Myshkin is the hero of Dostoevsky's novel **Idiot**. At the centre of the story is his love for two girls - Nastasya Filippovna and Aglaia Epanchin. Both Nastasya and Aglaia attract and are attracted to Prince Myshkin. They admire him for his personal qualities. But the Prince could not marry either of the two. Sidney Monas comments:

The plot concerns Myshkin's relations with two beautiful women - Nastasya Filippovna and Aglaia Epanchin. The former is - or acts out the part of - a "fallen woman". The latter rebels against the role of pure young daughter of the bourgeoisie.

Nastasya is twenty-five years old. She is extraordinarily beautiful and highly passionate. While coming to St. Petersburg by train, Prince Myshkin first heard of Nastasya from Parfyon Rogozhin. Then he saw her portrait at the house of General Epanchin. There was a look of pride and contempt in her face. But, at the same time, there was also something simple-hearted in that face. Myshkin kissed the portrait. Her eyes reflected suffering. Myshkin considered her an "unhappy woman."

Nastasya became orphan at the age of six when her parents died in an accident. Afanassy Totsky raised and educated her. But he seduced her in her young Nastasya age. This event affected the rest of her life. She did not know what to do with her life. Looking at her portrait, commented:

In that face ... there is so much suffering.

Everybody had a low opinion about Nastasya's character. People treated her like a "fallen woman" and she intentionally tried to prove them right. Only Myshkin had genuine feelings for her and sympathised with her. Ganya (Gavril) Ivolgin was ready to marry Nastasya for 75,000 roubles offered by Totsky. When Myshkin offered to marry Nastasya, she refused. She understood his compassionate love for her. But she feared that she would ruin the innocent Prince's life. She thought Aglaia was the best choice for Myshkin and therefore she tried to arrange a marriage between them. But Aglaia misunderstood Nastasya's intentions. There was a bitter argument between the two girls over Myshkin. As Myshkin had always feared, Rogozhin killed Nastasya. She was vain and arrogant but she was a victim of her circumstances. She had a pathetic life and death. Once Myshkin told Aglaia about Nastasya:

She has tortured herself too much from the consciousness of her undeserved shame! And my God, she's not to blame!

## The character of Aglaia Epanchin

Prince Lyov Myshkin is the hero of Dostoevsky's novel *Idiot*. He is attracted to and also attracted by Nastasya Filippovna and Aglaia Epanchin. Both these girls admire him for his personal qualities. But the Prince could not marry either of the two. Nastasya and Aglaia are intelligent and proud but they differ from each other greatly. Sidney Monas comments:

The plot concerns Myshkin's relations with two beautiful women - Nastasya Filippovna and Aglaia Epanchin. The former is - or acts out the part of - a "fallen woman". The latter rebels against the role of pure young daughter of the bourgeoisie.

Aglaia is twenty years old. She is the youngest and the most beautiful of the three Epanchin girls. She is highly intelligent, emotional and cultured. But she is also vain and proud. She falls in love with Prince Myshkin for his compassion and intellect. But she fails to express her love for him. Aglaia despised Myshkin for being so meek and unassertive. She taunts him so that he may change but Myshkin is so simple that Aglaia's efforts fail. She tries to make Myshkin feel jealous by telling him that she is going to marry Ganya but he detects her lies at once. Aglaia compares Myshkin to Alexander Pushkin's "poor knight" who suffered for his ideals. She recites the poem in his presence:

Lived a knight once, poor and simple,  
Pale of face with glance austere,

Aglaia rejects Yevgeny Radomsky's offer for marriage. A party is organized to present Myshkin before the high society of St. Petersburg. As Myshkin creates a poor impression at the party, he is not approved of as a proper match for Aglaia. For some time, Nastasya has been writing letters to Aglaia to persuade her to marry Myshkin. Finally, Aglaia takes Myshkin to Nastasya's house. The two girls argue bitterly over the Prince. Nastasya insults Aglaia. Myshkin hesitates for a moment to make a choice between the two.

Aglaia finds this more insulting. She leaves Myshkin and her hopes for a happy married life end there. Aglaia then marries a Polish count against the wishes of her parents. The man proves to be a fraudster and later abandons her. Madame Epanchin always feared that her daughter might destroy her own life. She only proved her mother's fears true. Madame Epanchin described Aglaia as:

... a headstrong girl, a fantastic girl, a crazy girl ...

### Points for MCQs (the *Idiot*)

1. The *Idiot* was published serially between 1868 and 1869. The novel is divided into four parts and there is an epilogue at the end.
2. The *Idiot* is set in St. Petersburg in 1860s.
3. Pavlovsk is a summer town near St. Petersburg. Part of the action takes place there.
4. Prince Myshkin is torn between romantic love for Aglaia Epanchin and compassionate love for Nastasya Filippovna.
5. Myshkin represents "a positively good man", an ideal Christian, a Christ-like figure in a society where goodness cannot survive. Myshkin is the idiot of the novel's title.

6. Myshkin is the last male descendant of an ancient Russian noble family. Madame Epanchin is his distant relative.
7. Before he came to St. Petersburg, Myshkin spent four years at a sanatorium in Switzerland for the treatment of epilepsy. He met Rogozhin and Lebedyev on the train.
8. Parfyon Rogozhin had a passion for Nastasya Filippovna and his passion had a potential for violence. Finally he stabbed her to death.
9. Nastasya Filippovna lost her parents in childhood. She was reared and educated by Afanassy Totsky who seduced her when she grew up. Totsky offered Ganya Ivolgin 75000 roubles if he married Nastasya.
10. The Epanchins and the Ivolgins consider Nastasya a "fallen woman."
11. Lebedyev was a civil servant and he could do anything for money.
12. Hippolite Terentyev was the seventeen year old son of Madame Terentyev, General Ivolgin's mistress. Hippolite was an existentialist and rejected religion and God. He died of consumption.
13. General Ivolgin has fallen on bad days. He borrows money and squanders it on drinks. He is in habit of telling lies. He steals 400 roubles from Lebedyev's coat to give the money to Madame Terentyev. But he replaces the stolen money because of the moral regrets. He dies not long after that incident.
14. Lizaveta Epanchin and General Ivan Epanchin have three daughters - Alexandra, Adelaida and Aglaia.
15. Mr. Pavlishchev was Myshkin's benefactor who paid for two years for his treatment for epilepsy before his (Pavlishchev's) death. Later Burdovsky falsely claimed to be Mr. Pavlishchev's (illegitimate) son and demanded 10,000 roubles from Myshkin's inheritance.

**314 (EB) - World Classics in Translation  
Model Question Paper**

1. Evaluate *Medea* as a tragedy. (17)  
Or  
Medea, a female protagonist, emerges as a champion of women's predicament. Enumerate.
2. Discuss *Urubhangam* as a tragedy in the Indian tradition. (17)  
Or  
Draw a character sketch of Duryodhana as a tragic hero in the light of *Urubhangam*.
3. *The Idiot* is an indictment of the materialism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian governing classes that attempt to emulate the modern values of the Western Europe. Elaborate. (17)  
Or  
Attempt the following short notes:  
(a) Nastasy Filippovna (b) Aglaia Epanchin
4. (a) Show your acquaintance with the following (any two): (10)

(i) *Odyssey* (ii) *Faust* (iii) *Dead Souls* (iv) *The Divine Comedy*

(b) Attempt the following:

(09)

i. *Medea* opens with \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) the nurse's plea (b) a wedding scene (c) a choral ode (d) a murder

ii. \_\_\_\_\_ gave Jason a fame as an adventurer.

(a) The Hydra (b) Troy (c) Aphrodite (d) The Golden Fleece

iii. *The Divine Comedy* is divided into \_\_\_\_\_ parts.

(a) two (b) three (c) four (d) five

iv. Creon sentenced *Medea* to banishment from \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) Colchis (b) Sparta (c) Corinth (d) Athens

v. The character of Duryodhana in *Urubhangam* is presented from the perspective of \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) Krishna (b) Arjuna (c) Bheema (d) Karna

vi. The title of Bhasa's *Karnabharam* refers to Karna's \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) strength (b) status (c) anguish (d) weight

vii. Sophocles' *Antigone* deals with one of the \_\_\_\_\_ legends.

(a) Minoan (b) Roman (c) Theban (d) Persian

viii. The character of Prince Myshkin has been presented to resemble the figure of \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) Chronos (b) Caesar (c) Czar (d) Christ

ix. Rogozhin's passion for Nastasya had a potential for \_\_\_\_\_.

(a) violence (b) romance (c) sacrifice (d) insanity