

# ACTS ON THE STAGE

## PART A

### Act 1

- 1.What did Lear decide to do?
- 2.Why does Lear ask how much his daughters love him?
- 3.What will happen when he gives them the country?
- 4.What did he do in order to decide?
- 5.What did Goneril say in reply to his question?
- 6.How did Lear react toward her answer?
- 7.What did Regan say in response? / How much did Regan say she loves her father?
- 8.How did Lear feel? What did he give Regan and her husband?
- 9.What was Lear sure Cordelia would say?
- 10.Why didn't Cordelia say that she loves him more?
- 11.How was Cordelia's answer different from the answers her sisters give?
- 12.What did Cordelia say about her love to her father?
- 13.Why was Lear shocked of her answer?
- 14.What did he ask her to do after her surprising reply?
- 15.How did Lear feel after she said that? What did he say?
- 16.What does Lear do as a result of this answer; and why is his action so shocking?
- 17.What terrible mistake does Lear make as a result of Cordelia's words?
- 18.Who is the only person who advised Lear?
- 19.What did the Earl of Kent tell Lear about Cordelia?
- 20.Did Lear listen to Kent' advise? If not, what did he do?
- 21.Why did the Duke of Burgundy refuse to marry Cordelia?
- 22.From what did the sisters warn each other?
- 23.What was Edmund – the illegitimate son of Gloucester- planning to do?
- 24.What did Edmund show his father?
- 25.What was written in the letter Edmund showed to his father?
- 26.What did Edmund tell his half brother Edgar, What did he advise him to do?
- 27.How does Edmund turn his father against Edgar? And why?
- 28.How does Goneril ask her servant to treat Lear's men?
- 29.Why did Kent hit Goneril's servant?
- 30.By the end of Act 1 What does Lear realize about Goneril?

### Act 2

- 31.Why did Edmund tell Edgar to run away?
- 32.Why did Edgar pretend to be a mad homeless person?
- 33.Why did Edmund cut his arm?
- 34.On whom does Regan blame Edgar's evil plan to kill his father?
- 35.What is Edmund's evil plan?
- 36.Why did Lear send a letter to Regan? What did he tell her in that letter?
- 37.What did Goneril complain about in her letter to Regan?
- 38.Why did Regan order her men to make Kent a prisoner?
- 39.Why did Goneril come to Regan?
- 40.What did Regan tell ask father to do?
- 41.What did Lear remind Regan and Goneril of?

42. Why did Lear say Goneril loves him twice as much as Regan?
43. What did Lear come to realize?
44. Why did Lear go out in the storm? / Why didn't Lear accept his daughters offer of shelter?
45. Who went out in the storm with Lear?
46. Why does the Earl of Gloucester feel sorry for king Lear?

*Comment*

"O madam, my old heart is cracked, it's cracked"

47. Who said this? To whom?
48. What does the speaker mean / Why is the speaker's heart cracked?
49. Whom does the person spoken to blame? / How does the person spoken to respond?
50. Cracked means:

Act 3

51. What did Kent do when he found out that Cordelia and the king of France come to England?
52. Why was Cordelia and her husband coming to England? / What was their plan?
53. Why do you think Lear went mad?
54. Where did Kent and Lear take shelter? Who did they find there?
55. What did Lear feel for the first time?
56. What did Lear believe the reason for Tom's madness?
57. What did Gloucester tell Edmund about Albany and Cornwall?
58. Why did Gloucester feel upset and take Lear's side against Regan, Goneril and their husbands?
59. What did Gloucester do when he heard about Regan and Cornwall's plan to kill Lear?
60. Why did Gloucester warn Kent to take the king to Dover?
61. How does Edmund betray his father?
62. What happened when one of the servants attacked Cornwall?
63. Why did Cornwall blind the Earl of Gloucester?

64. What did Regan order to do with Gloucester after blinding him?

Quotation: Read the following quotation then answer the questions:

"Blow winds and crack your cheeks"

65. When did Lear say this?
66. Why did he go out in the storm?
67. Why does he say this?

Act 4

68. Why did Gloucester decide to jump off the cliff?
69. What news about Cornwall did the messenger bring?
70. Why did the Duke of Cornwall die?
71. Why was Goneril worried about the news of Cornwall's death?
72. Why didn't Lear go to see Cordelia in Dover?
73. How did Lear explain his own bad luck?
74. What was the first sign that Lear's madness was beginning to disappear?
75. Why did Goneril write a letter to Edmund? What did Goneril ask Edgar to do?
76. How does Lear's life change for the better in Act 4?

Comment

77. "You are not worth the dust which the rude wind blows in your face."

– Why did the Duke of Albany say this to his wife Goneril?

78. "He reminded me of my poor son Edgar"

– Who said this? When did he say that?

79. "How I wish I could hold him in my arms again"

1- Who is he talking to?

2- To whom does "him" refer

Who might have said or thought the following? Explain each situation in turn.

80. "I can't bear to see my poor father like this. How could anyone have hurt him like this and treated him so cruelly?"

81. "Am I finally going mad or am I just confused? How could I have fallen so far and still be alive?"

82. "I've got to think quickly. How am I going to stop her from getting him now that her husband is dead?"

83. "What? I don't believe this! It means that that terrible woman is trying to get my brother to kill her husband. This is really, really bad!"

84. "At last! My father! But has he really gone completely mad? I'll ask my doctor to give him some medicine that may perhaps help him."

#### Comment

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#### Act 5

90. Why were Goneril and Regan jealous of each other?

91. How did Albany know about Goneril's plan to kill him?

92. What did Edgar do revenge for his father?

93. Why and where did Edgar hide his father?

94. Who lead the English army? Who won the battle?

95. What happened to Lear and Cordelia after the battle?

96. What did Edmund order his soldiers to do with Cordelia and Lear in the letter?

97. Why did Albany ask Edmund to let him look after Lear and Cordelia?

98. What did the two sisters, Regan and Goneril, quarrel about?

99. Why did Regan collapse?

100. Why did Goneril poison Regan?

101. How did Gloucester die?

102. What makes Goneril desperate?

103. Why did Albany arrest Edmund?

104. Who offered to prove Edmund was a traitor and fight him?

105. What did Goneril do when she realized her husband knew about Edmund and her?
106. Why was Lear not afraid of imprisonment? What makes Lear happy to go to prison?
107. What do you think makes Edmund try to save the lives of Lear and Cordelia at the last minute?
108. How many of the main characters die by the end, and how does each one die?
109. How are we given hope of a happy ending towards the end of Act 5?
110. How is that hope destroyed at the end?
111. Who is Njango?
112. What is Wanjiro's attitude towards her mother?
113. Who is Asinjo?
114. What would Asinjo have done for her, according to Wanjiro?
115. Why does Njango dislike the relationship between Asinjo and Wanjiro?
116. What is Njango's attitude towards Asinjo?
117. What is the initial attitude of Njango towards the stranger?
118. What is Inspector Kiongo's announcement about?
119. Why, according to Kiongo, was Clean the City campaign launched?
120. What is Asinjo's opinion about Njango?
121. Where, according to the stranger, does the 'magic' lie?
122. Why does the policeman arrest the stranger?
123. What is the central theme of the play *This Time Tomorrow*?
124. What is the role of the journalist in *This Time Tomorrow*?
125. Discuss the relationship between Njango and her daughter Wanjiro?
126. What is the role of the three customers in the play *This Time Tomorrow*?
127. Discuss the role of the stranger in the play *This Time Tomorrow*.
128. What do we know about Njango's husband from what she reveals?
129. What is the tinsmith's story?
129. What is the shoemaker's story?
130. Evaluate Wanjiro as a daughter.
131. Attempt a character sketch of Njango.
132. What is the fate of the people's rebellion against Clean the City campaign?
133. Who is Yachan?
134. Who are Vella and Velli?
135. Who is Lakshmanan? How is he different from the other members of his tribe?
136. What is Nadugadhika?
137. Who is Tamburan?
138. What is the madman being arrested for and been arrested for the same crime?
139. Why is the madman very confident that he can never be convicted inspite of the several arrests?
140. On what count does the madman accuse Inspector Bertozzo of being semi-literate?
141. What was the profession of the anarchist, whose death is being inquired into? What count was he arrested on?
142. Give the celebrated definition of 'raptus' as introduced by the madman in the play *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist*.

## PART -B

143. List and discuss Edgar's reasons for playing the part of Poor Tom.
144. Compare the madness of Lear to the madness of Poor Tom.
145. What are the main themes in *King Lear* by William Shakespeare?
146. What does "The worst is not, So long as we can say 'This is the worst'" mean?
147. What does 'we will laugh at gilded butterflies' mean?
148. In *King Lear*, what does the Fool's prophecy in Act 3, scene 2, mean?
149. What is the significance of the opening scene in Shakespeare's *King Lear*?
150. What is the main conflict in *King Lear*?
151. What is the significance of the lines beginning "You do me wrong"?
152. What are some examples of similes in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Act 1 & Act 2?
153. How is the power of the realm realigned at the end of *King Lear*?
154. In *King Lear*, when does Lear recognize that his two older daughters are evil and that Cordelia was the one who really loved him?
155. "Howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones." How does this ending speak about *King Lear*'s idea of divine and human justice?
156. In Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, why does King Lear's plan to divide his kingdom appear sensible on one hand but foolish on the other?
157. The line "Nothing will come of nothing" is extremely significant. What is the meaning of this line in the context of the whole play, and what is the relationship between nothing and something in *King Lear*?
158. Why is *King Lear* a tragedy?
159. What literary device in *King Lear* is used in this line: "his ear abused, wisdom bids fear"?
160. Explain what Albany says at the end of *King Lear*.
161. How does the storm that *King Lear* endures on the outside mirror his emotional state?
162. In *King Lear*, what makes Edmund reveal the plan of killing Lear and Cordelia at the end of the play?
163. How did Cordelia learn of her father's condition?

164. How does the character and reign of King Lear in William Shakespeare's *King Lear* relate to Queen Elizabeth I and King James I?
165. Please explain Cordelia as a tragic figure in *King Lear*.
166. What does King Lear's speech to Cordelia in the final act mean?
167. How do Cornwall and Regan say Gloucester should respond to Lear's departure?
168. How can the world of *King Lear* be seen as pagan, rather than Christian?
169. What purpose does the character Curan serve in *King Lear*?
170. What is the attitude toward sex in *King Lear*?
171. How does *King Lear* explore the concept of love in relation to honesty?
172. What made the issue of a divided kingdom timely when Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*?
173. How do loyalty and disloyalty affect the fates of the major characters in *King Lear*?
174. How does Gloucester help lay the ground for his son Edmund's betrayal in *King Lear*?
175. Do the knights in *King Lear* do anything to merit Goneril and Regan's complaints about them?
176. In *King Lear*, how does the Earl of Kent show the value and dangers of loyalty?
177. What is the role of sibling rivalry in the stories of the downfalls of King Lear and Gloucester?
178. How does the character of Oswald in *King Lear* show that there can be loyalty without honour?
179. In Act 2, Scene 4 of *King Lear*, how does Lear's reaction to the sight of Kent in the stocks suggest his dilemma as a ruler who has stepped down?
180. Why is Act 3, Scene 1 of *King Lear* so short?
181. How do Edmund's and Edgar's leadership qualities compare and contrast in *King Lear*?
182. In Act 1, Scene 4 of *King Lear*, how does the Fool use insults to try to warn King Lear about the consequences of dividing his kingdom?
183. In Act 3, Scene 6 of *King Lear*, what does it mean that the maddened Lear first "tries" his daughters for crimes and then calls for them to be dissected?
184. What is the significance of Cornwall's servant attacking him while he's blinding Gloucester in Act 3, Scene 7 of *King Lear*?
185. In Act 3, Scene 6 of *King Lear*, what is the significance of Edgar's complaints about devils and fiends?
186. Why are there so many references to dogs in *King Lear*?
187. What evidence in *King Lear* shows that Lear was a respected leader before he divided his kingdom?
188. How do Gloucester's and Edmund's belief in fate's being determined by the stars compare in Act

I, Scene 2 of *King Lear*.

189. In *King Lear*, what is the effect of Goneril and Regan's respective marriages on the events of the play?
190. In *King Lear*, how are Goneril and Regan similar and different?
191. In *King Lear*, how are Edgar's and Kent's disguises and their reasons for disguising themselves similar?
192. In *King Lear*, how are madness and nakedness linked?
193. How is the theme of madness and foolishness explored in *King Lear* through the characters Lear, Edgar, and the Fool?
194. In *King Lear* how are aspects of time and distance manipulated to allow the drama to unfold?
195. How are the themes of order and family relations related in *King Lear*?
196. How are women portrayed in *King Lear*?
197. Does *King Lear* depict love as something that lasts?
198. In *King Lear*, how does the structure of the play come full circle?
199. In *King Lear*, what is the effect of having Regan and Goneril die offstage in Act 5, Scene 3?
200. How does the blind Gloucester's supposed jump off the cliffs of Dover in Act 4, Scene 6 deepen characterizations in *King Lear*?
201. What is the function of the brief scenes in Act 4, Scenes 3, 4, and 5 in *King Lear*?
202. In *King Lear*, how does Act 5, Scene 1 show that Regan does not deserve to rule?
203. In *King Lear*, how does Act 5, Scene 2 advance the plot on multiple levels?
204. According to *King Lear*, is deception always bad?
205. In *King Lear*, why doesn't Edgar show his face when he comes to challenge his brother, Edmund, as a traitor in Act 5, Scene 3?
206. In *King Lear*, why do both Regan and Goneril fall in love with Edmund?
207. Why does Lear kill the guard who hangs Cordelia in Act 5, Scene 3 of *King Lear*?
208. Why doesn't anyone listen to the Fool in *King Lear*?
209. How does the Duke of Albany disappoint Goneril in *King Lear*?
210. What conclusion can an audience draw about Cordelia's death in Act 5 of *King Lear*?
211. Who is the worst villain in *King Lear*?
212. Is there a hero in *King Lear*?
213. What does it mean when Kent asks Lear about his "servant Caius" in Act 5, Scene 3 of *King Lear*?

214. Why is Edmund jealous of his brother?
215. What is the Valliyoorkkavu system?
216. How does Tamburan justify his authority?
217. How do Karuppan's fellow slaves react to his attempt to escape from the bondage of slavery?
218. How does Tamburan react to the announcement of reward by the British to those who provide information about Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja?
219. What is Tamburan's attitude towards Gandhi and the freedom struggle?
220. What is the political stand of Tamburan in post-independent India?
221. How does Tamburan change his affiliation with the rise of the trade union movements?
222. Why is Gadhikakkaran being taken to trial?
223. What is the significance of Tamburan holding flags of all colours?
224. Who or what is the evil spirit that Gadhikakkaran is relieving the society of ?
225. What is Kambalam ritual?
226. What is the story of the first parents of the Adiyas, as described by Yachan?
227. Discuss the role of *Nadugadhika* as a ritual among the Adiyas.
228. Attempt a character sketch of Lakshmanan.
229. What is the role of Gadhikakkaran in the play *Nadugadhika*?
230. Attempt a character sketch of Yachan.
231. Explain the significance of the periodical shouting "Payikkinto" by Velli.
232. Explain the attitude of Tamburan to the British Raj in the pre-independence era.
233. What are the shifts in the political stand of Tamburan in the post-independence period?
236. How do the themes of hunger and exploitation figure in the play *Nadugadhika*?
238. What is the myth of mavalimanavatheyyam?
239. What were the questions of concern that Tamburan had to face at the end?
240. Does the play *Nadugadhika* end on a positive note? Explain.
241. "You can't fool me. You're not mad. You're saner than I am". Explain with reference to the context.
242. What, according to the madman, is the best of all professions and why?
243. What is the situation at the beginning of the play that leads to the madman impersonating the prosecution counsel in *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist*?
244. What was the police's version regarding the death of the anarchist? There is an English proverb...to make amends. Explain in the context of the play.

#### Part C

245. "Goneril and Regan are not evil; they are formidable women asserting themselves in an otherwise male-dominated world." Discuss.
246. "In *King Lear* the good characters are imaginative and the evil characters are coolly rational." Do you agree with this view?
247. To what extent is *King Lear* a play about sacrifice?
248. To what extent is it true that the only relationships which Lear values in the play are those he has



with his daughters?

249. “Chaos from conflict of authority is the very essence of the play.” How far do you agree with this view?

250. “The end of the play proves that the universe is unjust and that human suffering has no Meaning.” Evaluate this view of *King Lear*.

251. “*King Lear*’s tragedy stems from the fact that he has not taken enough care of his kingdom.” To what extent can you agree with this view?

252. ‘*King Lear* makes clear how fragile life is – how thinly divided happiness is from misery.’ To what extent is this the way you read the play?

253. “*King Lear* promotes patience in enduring life’s hardships rather than striving against one’s fate.” To what extent do you accept this view?

254. “Gloucester is no less a tragic figure than his king.” To what extent can you agree with this view?

255. By considering the dramatic effects of *King Lear*, evaluate the view that ‘despite the appalling suffering, the world of the play is not without hope’.

256. In which ways is *King Lear* timeless, yet clearly a play of its times?

257. Discuss Shakespeare’s exploration of the role of language, as portrayed through *King Lear*.

258. How justified are critics in regarding *King Lear* as a major tragedy?

259. Discuss the contribution to *King Lear* of the minor roles (such as Albany, Cornwall, Oswald, Kent, the Fool).

260. “A nihilistic vision of humankind which denies all hope.” How far is this true of *King Lear*?

261. How far and in what ways is Lear changed by suffering?

262. Write an imaginary version of the letter sent by Goneril to Regan in Act 1. It should include all the specific matters which Goneril wanted to communicate to her sister but enlarge it to encompass such other matters which you consider may have been preoccupying Goneril at this

stage.

263. Consider Act 3 Scene 4. Examine:

- 1.The presentation of Lear and Kent in this scene.
- 2.How your thoughts and feelings develop through – and are shaped by - the passage.
- 3.The significance of this scene to the play as a whole.

264. Discuss the claim that *King Lear* is too full of improbabilities to be believable.

265. Examine Act 1 Scene 2 from Gloucester: “These late eclipses ..’ to Edmund: ‘Fa, sol,la,mi.”

1. What impressions of Gloucester’s and Edmund’s state of mind and character are created here, and by what means?

Comment in detail on the language and movement of these two speeches.

267. ‘At the beginning of the play, Lear is a King, a father, a master and a man. As the action develops, the first three roles are stripped from him and he is forced to consider what the last of them means.’ Show how Lear is stripped of his roles and evaluate the truth and significance of the claim that Lear is forced to consider what it means to be a man.

268. Examine the specific ways that Lear contributes to his fall.

269. A tragic hero moves the reader to pity, since his misfortune is greater than he deserves, and he also creates fear, since his tragedy might easily befall one of us. To what extent does Lear fit the definition of a tragic hero?

270. Discuss either Lear or Gloucester's movement toward a greater knowledge of himself and his world?

271. *King Lear* raises important questions about divine justice. All those who are evil are dead, but so are several of the characters who represent good. Does God see to it that good people are rewarded and evildoers are punished? Write an essay that responds to the question of whether or not divine justice is served in this play.

272. Focus on the repetition of several words, such as nothing, bond, nature, and natural. Choose two of these words and discuss the ideas that their use suggests.

273. Design a character genealogy chart that demonstrates why Edgar will be king when Lear dies.

274. Construct a chart that compares the characteristics of a king. On one side, list the requirements that Machiavelli gives in *The Prince*. On the other side, list Lear's characteristics.

275. Discuss the Lear- Cordelia relationship in *King Lear*.
276. What are the conflicting passions at work in *King Lear* and how do they generate tragic experience?
277. Analyse the psyche of “illegitimate” Edmund with reference to the plot of *King Lear*.
278. Bring out the complexities in Shakespeare's presentation of the theme of madness in *King Lear*.
279. Comment on the theme of appearance and reality in *King Lear*.
280. Analyse the thematic opposition between natural and unnatural in *King Lear*. Answer with reference to the text.
281. Explain the similar falls between king Lear and Gloucester?
282. Edgar changed his shape and named himself as The poor Tom. Discuss.
283. Explain the symbolism of The Storm in *King Lear*?
284. Give the reason which makes King Lear give up his authority and divide the kingdom between his two daughters ?
285. Explain the relationship between Edmund and Edgar ?
286. Do you think that King Lear behaved the right way when he divided the kingdom between his two daughter and why?
289. The characters of the play *Nadugadhika* are not mere individuals, but representatives of a category of people in the community, Discuss.
290. Gadhiakkaran, though not a central character in the story, is the central character of the play as a representative of a culture and its rituals. Comment.
291. Discuss the themes of feudalism, slavery, pseudo democracy and all-pervading exploitation, as exposed in *Nadugadhika*.
292. The play *Nadugadhika* is an example of the artistic employment of the ritual of Nadugadhika to expose the exploitation of the tribals by the mainstream ruling class. Comment.
293. List how the events in the play build up as an illustration of counter-information that Dario Fo's play seeks to build.
294. Discuss the character of Inspector Pisani, the Superintendent and the constable as typifying the police state.
295. What are the degrees of torture that the police fraternity used on the anarchist according to their own admission and what does it say about the police state apparatus?
296. Give a character sketch of the madman. Elaborate on his fertile imagination which is what the whole play boils down to.
297. Discuss the theme of colonial legacy in administration in the play.
298. How does the play *This Time Tomorrow* bring out the theme of land alienation in postcolonial Africa?
299. How does *This Time Tomorrow* portray the plight of a group of slum dwellers in postcolonial Africa?
300. Njingo's final expression brings out everyone's sense of failure and helplessness. Discuss.
301. The stranger is initially a representative of hope but eventually becomes a leader abandoned by

- his followers. Evaluate the leadership of the stranger.
302. Is Njanga a strong or weak character? Evaluate on the basis of her role as a mother and as a rebellious slum dweller.
303. Discuss the theme of development and colonial legacy of administration and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's critique of it in *This Time Tomorrow*.
304. Discuss the theme of rebellion in the play *This Time Tomorrow*.
305. Provide a critical evaluation of the various stages of transition of Tamburan in *Nadugadhika*.
306. Discuss the condition of the Adiyas as expressed in the play *Nadugadhika*.
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