

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH
ADMISSION TEST 2022

Time: Two hours

Full marks: 100

1. Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow:

10 x 3 =30

‘A Treatise on Poetry’

First, plain speech in the mother tongue.
Hearing it, you should be able to see
Apple trees, a river, the bend of a road,
As if in a flash of summer lightning.

And it should contain more than images.
It has been lured by singsong,
A daydream, melody. Defenceless,
It was bypassed by the sharp, dry world.

You often ask yourself why you feel shame
Whenever you look through a book of poetry.
As if the author, for reasons unclear to you,
Addressed the worse side of your nature,
Pushing aside thought, cheating thought.

Seasoned with jokes, clowning, satire,
Poetry still knows how to please.
Then its excellence is much admired.
But the grave combats where life is at stake
Are fought in prose. It was not always so.

And our regret has remained unconfessed.
Novels and essays serve but will not last.
One clear stanza can take more weight
Than a whole wagon of elaborate prose.

- a. What, according to the poet, is the relationship between hearing and seeing?
- b. Does the poet find prose superior to poetry?
- c. ‘It was not always so’: can you give an example of poetry fighting ‘grave combats’?

Attempt any *one* of the following:

40

- i. Suggest an alternative ending to a novel or story whose ending you did not like.
- ii. If you had a chance, which five things would you change about your last school?

[Turn over

- iii. 'Fantasy is an exercise bicycle for the mind. It might not take you anywhere, but it tones up the muscles that can.' Discuss.
- iv. Write a letter to Plato quarrelling with his view that poets should be banished from the ideal state.
- v. Write a letter from Apu (in *Pather Panchali*) to his mother about his first day of college in Calcutta.
- vi. Write a letter from Snowy to his creator Hergé complaining that the series should rather be called 'The Adventures of Snowy'.

3. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:

10 x 3 = 30

'This whole pronoun thing is stupid,' said Raunak. 'How can you be a "they/them" when there's just one of you?'

'Why not?' asked Priya. 'Did you know that "you" is actually a plural pronoun? The singular used to be "thou" but of course no one has used it for centuries.'

'Yes,' said Lilly, 'Languages change because people use them, not the other way round. Not everyone is comfortable being a "he" or a "she" in this world, so "they" should have the option to be neither.'

'It's only a problem for English and other languages that have gendered pronouns,' said Priya. 'So it's not actually that big a deal.'

'That doesn't make sense, does it, Sahil?' Raunak muttered. 'Gender is something you're born with. Guy or girl, you're one or the other, and no amount of fancy words will change it, right?'

Sahil looked up absently from the book he was reading. 'Not quite true,' he said mildly. 'Medical science is now pretty sure there are actually seven biological sexes, depending on different physical and genetic factors. The idea that there should be just two genders is a myth.'

'Nonsense! We've had two genders for thousands of years and no one complained till now. Didn't you study grammar in high school? Why have dictionaries if we're just going to make up whatever we want?' Raunak grumbled. 'Surely learning correct English is the whole reason why we get an education in the first place.'

'Depends on how you define "correct", and who's doing the definition,' said Lilly softly. 'As in, what is their political standpoint towards gender.'

'Must you politicise everything?' Raunak frowned. 'Come on Sahil, say something. Don't leave me to do all the fighting by myself.'

Sahil smiled. 'I wasn't aware that it was a fight.'

- a. Is this a fight? Give reasons for your answer.
- b. Which of the four friends do you think is best informed about the facts of the subject of the discussion? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?
- c. Does education politicise everything? Should it? What do you think?