

Bachelor of Arts Examination, 2022

First Year Second Semester

Department of English

Ability Enhancement Compulsory Course: English

Time: Two Hours

Full Marks: 50

Attempt *any two* questions from section A, and *both* questions from section B.

Do *NOT* attempt both alternatives of Q. 5, that is, 5A and 5B, by mistake.

SECTION A (Attempt *any two* questions)

1. *He however decided to keep the others overnight as a face-saving ploy for the army.*

After the couple left, he felt restless and wanted a smoke to calm his nerves. He began looking for the matchbox he had kept on the table, and which Imdongla had earlier appropriated. The captain was puzzled at first but suddenly remembered seeing the old woman smoking her pipe and concluded that she had stolen his matchbox and was freshly perturbed. The petty thievery which would have normally been ignored, once again reminded him how a coarse and illiterate village woman had managed to unsettle his military confidence by challenging the validity of his own presence in this alien terrain.

- i. Imdongla is not really a “coarse and illiterate village woman”. Elaborate. (3)
- ii. Mention two things that Imdongla said to the captain to “unsettle” him. (2)
- iii. Why does the captain feel he is on “alien terrain” where the “validity of his own presence” is questionable? (3)
- iv. Who left the camp with Imdongla? Who were to be kept overnight? (2)

2. *Javni opened the door and stepped in. She had a sheet in her hand, and, throwing it on the floor, she went straight into the byre where her food was usually kept. I could not bear that. Time and again I had quarrelled with my sister about it all. But she would not argue with me. ‘They are of the lower class, and you cannot ask them to sit and eat with you,’ she would say.*

‘Of course!’ I said. ‘After all, why not? Are they not like us, like any of us? Only the other day you said you loved her as if she were your elder sister or mother.’

‘Yes’ she grunted angrily. ‘But affection does not ask you to be irreligious’.

- i. What does this conversation tell you about the character of the first-person narrator? (2)

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- ii. What does Sita mean by “irreligious” in this conversation? (2)
 - iii. What is a “byre”? Explain Javni’s response to being given food at the byre. (2)
 - iv. Why is “Javni” more Gandhian than Ambedkarite in its approach to casteism? (4)
3. *You can do a lot of things
With your left hand.
Besides, fascist Dronacharyas warrant
Left-handed treatment.*
- i. Why is Dronacharya described as “fascist”? (2)
 - ii. What is meant by “left-handed treatment”? (1)
 - iii. Why is the left hand so important in this poem? What are the two things that Kandasamy tells Ekalaivan he can do with his left hand? (1+2)
 - iv. Who is Kandasamy really addressing when she addresses the mythological character of Ekalaivan? Why is this poem a “consolation” to such a person? (4)
4. *At last I'm taking off this coat,
this black coat of a country
that I swore for years was mine,
that I wore more out of habit
than design*
- i. What does the black coat symbolise? (1)
 - ii. Why is the coat something that is worn “more out of habit than design”? (1)
 - iii. What is the link between these lines and the diasporic condition of the writer? (2)
 - iv. Describe at least three other things that the poet strips off and explain what each of them symbolise. (3+3)
- 5 a. What events led the Amirs to plot the Sultan’s assassination at prayer? Who informed the Sultan about the Amirs’ conspiracy and how? (8+2)
- OR**
- 5b. “I have hopes of building a new future for India and I need your support for that. If you don't understand me, ask me to explain myself and I'll do it. If you don't understand my explanations, bear with me in patience until I can show you the results.” Do you think that the Sultan’s grand vision of a just, liberal, secular India degenerated into anarchy and an abject failure? Give reasons. (10)

SECTION B (Attempt both questions)

6. Write a short essay or story within 600 words on *any one* of the following topics: (20)
- i. Mental health and the pandemic
 - ii. Gender is a state of mind
 - iii. The end of the world, and the beginning of a new one
 - iv. All reality is virtual reality
7. There is an opening for a part-time summer job as a tour guide for Kolkata Heritage Pvt. Ltd., a company that specialises in taking tourists for cultural and educational walks in and around the city of Kolkata. Write out a CV (curriculum vitae) **and** an application letter in which you explain why you are ideally suited for this job. (10)