

DL
26.6.19

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH
Admission Test 2019

Time Two hours

Full marks 100

1. Read the following poem, then answer the questions that follow. **3 x 10 = 30 marks**

Possible Activities

You could sit on your chair and pick over the language
as it were a bowl of peas.

A lot of people do that.

You don't even need the chair,
you could juggle plates of air.

You could poke sticks through the chain-link fence
at your brain, which you keep locked up in there,
which crouches and sulks like an old tortoise,
and glares at you, sluggish and eyeless.

You could tease it that way,
make it blunder and think,
and emit a croaking sound
you could call truth.

A harmless activity,
sort of like knitting,
until you go too far with it
and they bring out the nooses and matches.

Or you could do something else.

Something more sociable.

More group-oriented.

A lot of people do that too.

They like the crowds and the screaming,
they like the adrenaline.

Hunker down. Get a blackout curtain.

Pretend you're not home.

Pretend you're deaf and dumb.

Look: pitchforks and torches!

Judging from old pictures,
things could get worse.

a. What do you think is the activity suggested in the second stanza? What are the dangers of such activity?

[Turn over

- b. How does the activity suggested in the third stanza differ from that in the second stanza? Would you regard it as an alternative, or as an improvement, on the previous activity? Give reasons for your answer.
- c. How do you think 'things could get worse' after all the activities described in the poem?

2. Read the following passage, then answer the questions that follow. **3 x 10 = 30 marks.**

Rita began her presentation. 'My study explores how agricultural labourers are forced to leave the land during particular seasons of the year so that they can get work in the cities when their services are not required for sowing or harvesting.'

'Excuse me, said Bivash, 'I don't agree with your use of the word "forced". It is the urge to build a better life that drives people to the cities. Advertising, especially during sports events, gives people a hunger for consumer goods. They come to the cities to feed that hunger.'

'That may be true for some,' said Rita. 'But how then do you explain that fact that the cycles of nature affect the supply of contractual labour?'

'Easy. When there's no work and profit in the countryside, they come to the cities to get cash income. Poor people are more willing to work than rich people. I mean, that's obvious, right? So they're kind of like people with a regular day job who earn extra money selling slimming pills door to door. The city work they do buys them shoes, microwaves, movie tickets, while the rural work feeds and houses the family.'

'That's a very cosy interpretation of rural poverty,' said Rita.

Bivash smiled at her. 'Really? Do you have any hard evidence to say I'm wrong?'

a. Based on the evidence of the above conversation and your own general knowledge, give reasons why you think either Rita or Bivash would be more likely to agree with the idea that it is primarily people's choices and not their environment that determines their lives?

b. Can you find an example of sarcasm in the above exchange? Give your reasons for picking that example and explain what is sarcastic about it.

c. 'Poor people are more willing to work than rich people.' Do you agree that this fact is 'obvious', as Bivash says? Give reasons for your answer.

3. Write an essay on any *one* of the following topics:

40 marks

- a. 'Now, more than ever, the world needs stories.' Argue for or against.
- b. 'One person's insanity is another person's reality'. Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion.
- c. 'The more we automate the world, the more we give power to the few over the many.' Discuss.
- d. How is 'Young Adult' literature different from children's literature? Are these categories useful? Answer with suitable examples.
- e. Are older people being left behind by a rapidly changing world?
- f. 'The idea of us saving the planet is human arrogance. It is the planet that must save us.' Do you agree? Analyse the reasons for your opinion.