

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU -27**

**B.A. (OPTIONAL ENGLISH)– IV SEMESTER**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2023**

**(Examination conducted in May 2023)**

**OE 422 – OPTIONAL ENGLISH**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time: 2 Hours Max Marks: 60**

**This paper contains TWO printed pages and THREE parts**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Please don’t exceed the suggested word limit.
2. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination

**I. Read the passage and answer any TWO of the questions that follow. (2X5=10 marks**)

Chastity had then, it has even now, a religious importance in a woman’s life, and has so wrapped itself round with nerves and instincts that to cut it free and bring it to the light of day demands courage of the rarest. To have lived a free life in London in the sixteenth century would have meant for a woman who was poet and playwright a nervous stress and dilemma which might well have killed her. Had she survived, whatever she had written would have been twisted and deformed, issuing from a strained and morbid imagination. And undoubtedly, I thought, looking at the shelf where there are no plays by women, her work would have gone unsigned. That refuge she would have sought certainly.

1. Identify the above passage. What does the author refer to by “then”? When was the above passage written? What is the significance of the timeline?
2. Why does the author say that to “have lived a free life in London in the sixteenth century would have meant for a woman who was poet and playwright a nervous stress and dilemma which might well have killed her.”
3. Why do you think the author says that plays by women would have gone “unsigned"? Why is that a refuge?

**II. Read the following extract and answer any ONE of the questions that follow. (5 marks)**

There she stands

As if alive. Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet

The company below, then. I repeat,

The Count your master’s known munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretense

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

Though his fair daughter’s self, as I avowed

At starting, is my object. Nay, we’ll go

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

1. Identify the form in which the poem is written? Elaborate on 3 key features of this form.
2. What do you think the last two lines signify?

**III. Answer any THREE of the following questions (3X15= 45)**

6.At the end of the short story "An Encounter" the young protagonist says: “How my heart beat as he came running across the field to me! He ran as if to bring me aid. And I was penitent; for in my heart I had always despised him a little.” Who is the protagonist referring to in this passage? Why do you think he was penitent to think that he “had always despised him a little”? What larger significance does this realization have for the modern man?

7. Read the following passage and answer:

“She who, in all probability, was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not conceive a greater abhorrence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation by being deserted by one of his own species.”

Who is ‘he’ in the above passage? Why do you think he would abhor a female form? Discuss how this passage brings out some of the glaring gender divides of the period.

8. Sarah Walters while talking about her novel *Fingersmith* says “Above all, it’s a novel that celebrates the pleasures of plot: of story-telling, story-reading and story-pinching. Like all my books, it looks to the past, but it is really, I hope, about the ways in which, by imagining alternative histories, we can, with courage and mischief, begin to rethink the present and the future.”

Do you agree with her assessment that “ it’s a novel that celebrates the pleasures of plot”? In what ways do you think a novel like this helps us to imagine “alternative histories”?

9. Discuss how a text like *The French Lieutenant's Woman* parodies the prudery and complexities of being a Victorian gentleman in a post Darwinian world.

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