

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU - 27  
END SEMESTER EXAMINATION: MAY 2023  
VI SEMESTER BA (EJP A & B, TEP)  
OE 6122: OPTIONAL ENGLISH**

**Time: 2 ½ hours Max marks: 70**

**INSTRUCTIONS**1. This question paper has **four** printed pages.   
2. Please stick to the suggested word limit.  
3. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.  
4. You will lose marks for copying from the question paper. Please avoid doing so.

**I. A. Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in 150–200 words:   
 (10 marks)**

1. Read the following nonsense poem “I Saw a Peacock” by anon:

I Saw a Peacock, with a fiery tail,

I saw a Blazing Comet, drop down hail,

I saw a Cloud, with Ivy circled round,

I saw a sturdy Oak, creep on the ground,

I saw a Pismire, swallow up a Whale,

I saw a raging Sea, brim full of Ale …

The charm of the poem lies not just in its nonsensicality, but also in how it challenges the standard mode of linear reading of the English script. Do you agree? Explain.  
(Note that the word “pismire” means “ant”)

2. Write a note on how we derive sense from the following utterances through implicatures:

Fabian: Do you want to go to the dance tomorrow?  
Fiona: But I don't have any pretty dresses!  
Fabian: I’ll ask Jenna, then.

**B. Read the following excerpt from Fredrik Backman’s novel *A Man Called Ove*, and answer the following question in 200–250 words: (15 marks)**

“So this is one of those O-Pads, is it?” he demands.

The assistant, a young man with a single-digit body mass index, looks ill at ease. He visibly struggles to control his urge to snatch the box out of Ove’s hands.

“Yes, exactly. An iPad. Do you think you could stop shaking it like that . . . ?”

Ove gives the box a skeptical glance, as if it’s a highly dubious sort of box, a box that rides a scooter and wears tracksuit pants and just called Ove “my friend” before offering to sell him a watch.

“I see. So it’s a computer, yes?”

The sales assistant nods. Then hesitates and quickly shakes his head.

“Yes . . . or, what I mean is, it’s an iPad. Some people call it a ‘tablet’ and others call it a ‘surfing device.’ There are different ways of looking at it. . . .”

Ove looks at the sales assistant as if he has just spoken backwards, before shaking the box again.

“But is it good, this thing?”

The assistant nods confusedly. “Yes. Or . . . How do you mean?”

Ove sighs and starts talking slowly, articulating his words as if the only problem here is his adversary’s impaired hearing.

“Is. It. Goooood? Is it a good computer?”

The assistant scratches his chin.

“I mean . . . yeah . . . it’s really good . . . but it depends what sort of computer you want.”

Ove glares at him.

“I want a computer! A normal bloody computer!”

“Well . . . it isn’t really a normal computer. Maybe you’d rather have a . . .”

The assistant stops and seems to be looking for a word that falls within the bounds of comprehension of the man facing him. Then he clears his throat again and says:

“. . . a laptop?”

Ove shakes his head wildly and leans menacingly over the counter.

“No, I don’t want a ‘laptop.’ I want a computer .”

The assistant nods pedagogically.

“A laptop is a computer.”

Ove, insulted, glares at him and stabs his forefinger at the counter.

“You think I don’t know that!”

3. i. Does Ove possess the necessary schema required to hold a confident conversation with the assistant? Explain.

ii. The sales assistant hedges a few times in this conversation with Ove. Is his hedging a result of a lack of confidence regarding computers, or something else?

Argue your stance.

**II. Answer ANY THREE of the following questions in 150–200 lines each: (3x10= 30 marks)**

4. In the movie *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1981), Sarah Woodruff says:

It is my shame that has kept me alive...my knowing that I am truly not like other women. I... I shall never, like them, have children and a husband and the pleasures of a home. Sometimes I pity them. I have a freedom they cannot understand. No insult, no blame, can touch me. I have set myself beyond the pale. I am nothing.

How does Sarah Woodruff seem different from the other women in the movie? What kind of freedom does she refer to in this extract?

5. Read the opening lines of GM Hopkins’ “As Kingfishers Catch Fire”:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme;

As tumbled over rim in roundy wells

Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's

Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name.

Observe the ending lines:

Chríst — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,

Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his

To the Father through the features of men's faces.

What kind of transition do you see from the opening lines (and the octave) to the ending lines (the sestet)?

6. Comment on the use of repetition, pause, and body movement in the following excerpt from Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot:*

VLADIMIR: Suppose we repented.

ESTRAGON: Repented what? VLADIMIR: Oh . . . (He reflects.) We wouldn't have to go into the details.

ESTRAGON: Our being born?

Vladimir breaks into a hearty laugh which he immediately stifles, his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted.

VLADIMIR: One daren't even laugh any more.

ESTRAGON: Dreadful privation.

VLADIMIR: Merely smile. (He smiles suddenly from ear to ear, keeps smiling, ceases as suddenly.) It's not the same thing. Nothing to be done. (Pause.) Gogo.

7. Read the following lines from James Joyce’s “An Encounter”:

After an interval, the man spoke to me. He said that my friend was a very rough boy and asked did he get whipped often at school. I was going to reply indignantly that we were not National School boys to be whipped, as he called it; but I remained silent. He began to speak on the subject of chastising boys.

What do you notice about silence and speech in this excerpt? What does your observation tell you about the narrator and the man?

**III. Read the following excerpt from JRR Tolkien’s “Of Fairy Stories”:**

I propose to speak about fairy-stories, though I am aware that this is a rash adventure. Faerie is a perilous land, and in it are pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold. And overbold I may be accounted, for though I have been a lover of fairy-stories since I learned to read, and have at times thought about them, I have not studied them professionally. I have been hardly more than a wandering explorer (or trespasser) in the land, full of wonder but not of information.

The realm of fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords. In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveller who would report them. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates should be shut and the keys be lost.

What is a fairy-story? In this case you will turn to the Oxford English Dictionary in vain. It contains no reference to the combination fairy-story, and is unhelpful on the subject of fairies generally. In the Supplement, fairy-tale is recorded since the year 1750, and its leading sense is said to be (a) a tale about fairies, or generally a fairy legend; with developed senses, (b) an unreal or incredible story, and (c) a falsehood.

The last two senses would obviously make my topic hopelessly vast. But the first sense is too narrow. Not too narrow for an essay; it is wide enough for many books, but too narrow to cover actual usage. Especially so, if we accept the lexicographer's definition of fairies: "supernatural beings of diminutive size, in popular belief supposed to possess magical powers and to have great influence for good or evil over the affairs of man'.

Supernatural is a dangerous and difficult word in any of its senses, looser or stricter. But to fairies it can hardly be applied, unless super is taken merely as a superlative prefix. For it is man who is, in contrast to fairies, supernatural (and often of diminutive stature); whereas they are natural, far more natural than he.

**A. Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in 200–250 words each:**

**(15x1= 15 marks)**

8. JRR Tolkien talks about Faerie as a land filled with beautiful, but dangerous treasures and excesses. How does Christina Rossetti use this idea in her poem “Goblin Market”?

9. Does JRR Tolkien’s use of the word “fairy” seem different from the usage we are more familiar with? How so?

Do Tolkien’s descriptions of fairies fit your understanding of fairies in Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” and Charles Kingsley’s *The Water-Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby*? Explain.

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