

**ST JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU -2**7

**SEMESTER IV- BSC/BA/BCOM/BBA/BCA/BSW/BVC**

**END SEMESTER EXAMINATION: April 2024**

**(Examination conducted in May / June 2024)**

**GE 422 – GENERAL ENGLISH- SPECIAL**

**(CONSUMING THE CITY)**

**(For students who opted for SPECIAL COURSE only)**

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

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

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. **You will lose marks for exceeding the prescribed word limits.**
2. **You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.**
3. **Read the following excerpt from the article titled “Everything beautiful has been destroyed: Palestinians mourn a city in tatters” by Kaamil Ahmed.**

More than 200 buildings of cultural and historical significance have been reduced to rubble in Gaza, including mosques, cemeteries and museums.

Its walls collapsed and its minaret cut short, Gaza’s Omari mosque remains standing but vastly diminished. Around it, the historic old city is also in tatters. The 7th-century mosque, also known as the Great Mosque of Gaza, was Gaza’s most famous and its surroundings a focal point of the Palestinian enclave’s history and culture, but the damage done to its heritage over more than 100 days of Israeli bombardment spreads across the city. For the few Palestinians who remain, and the far greater number displaced and hoping to return, the culture and history has been reduced to memories.

“The city is a ghost town, people walk around with pale faces and their spirits are tired after having gone through this war. If you walk to the old city of [Gaza](https://www.theguardian.com/world/gaza), you will only remember the memories and feel sickened and saddened by the amount of destruction of cultural and religious sites,” said Bader Alzaharna, who lives in Gaza City despite the intensity of Israel’s ground operation in the area. “The old city of Gaza, which used to be full of cultural sites, is grey and overcast. Walking in Gaza feels like we are in a movie, in a fictional story, in a fantasy. The scene is apocalyptic.” Unesco, the UN agency responsible for protecting culture, says it has verified damage to at least 22 sites, including mosques, churches, historical homes, universities, archives and the archeological site of [Anthedon Harbour](https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5719/), Gaza’s first known seaport. The agency said it had received reports of damage to other sites but had not been able to verify them through the means available, mainly satellite imagery, because of the conflict.

The damage has also included an ancient Roman cemetery and the Commonwealth war cemetery, where more than 3,000 British and commonwealth soldiers are buried after dying in battles during the first and second world wars. Unesco has warned that more sites are at risk of damage, including one of the region’s oldest Christian monasteries, the Saint Hilarion complex, which it said had not been damaged yet but was in an area of intense fighting.

“Unesco is deeply concerned about damage of cultural and historical sites in Gaza. While humanitarian emergencies are a legitimate priority, the protection of cultural heritage in all its forms – as well as the protection of educational infrastructures and journalists – must also be ensured, in accordance with international law, which stipulates that cultural property is civilian infrastructure,” the agency said.

Nassar, who now lives in Canada, said he remembers visiting the old city, including the now-destroyed Turkish baths, both as a photographer and in his personal life. He said the damage to Christian sites, such as the Saint Porphyrius Orthodox church complex, near the Omari mosque, also damaged Gaza’s diversity. “As a photographer I will carry sadness throughout my life because these historical buildings are difficult to restore, and their loss is irreplaceable. I will remember them in every moment, as we have thousands of memories within these places. However, the greater sorrow will be felt when I look at the pictures I took inside these archaeological sites. Unfortunately, Israel destroyed everything beautiful in Gaza. Israel aimed to destroy not only people but also stones, infrastructure and historical buildings, wanting to eradicate human life and cultural heritage.” [South Africa’s case](https://www.icj-cij.org/index.php/node/203394) at the international court of justice in the Hague accusing Israel of genocide, which led to the court to order Israel to prevent its troops carrying out acts that could amount to genocide, included claims that Israel had targeted Palestinian culture. It also accused Israel of destroying modern museums and cultural centres and threatening Gaza’s “cultural potential” through damage to schools, as well as the killing of journalists, teachers and intellectuals.

Isber Sabrine, head of the [Heritage](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/heritage) for Peace NGO, said the damage done to Gaza’s heritage would be lasting and reached far beyond physical buildings. That done to religious sites, he said, would affect the social life of both Muslims and Christians and would take a long time to rehabilitate. “The destruction of heritage in Gaza is also the destruction of traditions, it’s also the destruction of their habits, of their culture,” said Sabrine. “It’s a huge destruction of heritage to intentionally disconnect the people of Gaza from their land. It’s important to preserve and restore. When the war stops there will be a need to evaluate what is destroyed.”

**PART A**

**I. Answer ALL the following questions in about 5 to 8 sentences each: (4X5=20)**

1. Do you think the destruction of cultural and historical sites during the war must be discussed while thousands of people die and suffer?
2. ‘Unfortunately, Israel destroyed everything beautiful in Gaza.’ Does this line refer to more than built structures? Explain.
3. Explain what you understand from the phrase ‘cultural potentia’l.
4. Does Israel benefit from destroying Gaza’s ‘cultural potential’?

**PART-B**

**Now read this short passage from the website run by the Tate Gallery, UK:**

How do different places make us feel and behave? The term psychogeography was invented by the Marxist theorist Guy Debord in 1955 in order to explore this. Inspired by the French nineteenth century poet and writer Charles Baudelaire’s concept of the flâneur – an urban wanderer – Debord suggested playful and inventive ways of navigating the urban environment in order to examine its architecture and spaces.

As a founding member of the avant-garde movement [Situationist International](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/situationist-international), an international movement of artists, writers and poets who aimed to break down the barriers between culture and everyday life, Debord wanted a revolutionary approach to architecture that was less functional and more open to exploration.

The reimagining of the city proposed by psychogeography has its roots in [dadaism](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/d/dada) and [surrealism](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/surrealism), art movements which explored ways of unleashing the subconscious imagination. Tristam Hillier’s paintings such as [*La Route des Alpes*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hillier-la-route-des-alpes-n05447) 1937 could be described as an early example of the concept.

Psychogeography gained popularity in the 1990s when artists, writers and filmmakers such as Iain Sinclair and Patrick Keiller began using the idea to create works based on exploring locations by walking

**II. Answer ANY TWO questions in about 150 words each: (2X10=20)**

5.. The idea of psychogeography implies that cityscapes become an extension of our inner mental landscapes.Does this idea also help us see how acts of violence or war can have effects beyond immediate material destruction?

6. The city is not just a place, it's a people. Considering the perspectives shared about Gaza, would it be fair to see Israel’s actions as amounting to cultural genocide?

7. While the war has destroyed existing historical sites and monuments, do ideas such as psychogeography hold out any promise or hope of resilience and recovery for people in Gaza? What are you able to say after examining both passages?

**PART-C**

**III. Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in about 150 words:(1X20=20)**

8. Gaza could be seen as an extreme example of what is perhaps true of many cities–that they are sites of competition between different groups aiming for supremacy. Have you come across such instances of competition or violence in your city? Would you say that there are natural mechanisms of recovery that counter such violence? Explain.

9. Is Bangalore a city that is friendly to the act of walking? Does walking in a city have the same meaning across genders? Which city, in your experience, seems to tick the boxes for both questions–being friendly to walking, and offering safe open spaces to all genders?