

Register Number:

Date:

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

**BA - EJP - OPTIONAL ENGLISH - II SEMESTER**

**END-SEMESTER EXAMINATION - APRIL 2019**

**OE 218: OPTIONAL ENGLISH**

**Time: 21/2 hours Max. Marks: 70**

**Instructions:**

**1. You are allowed to use a dictionary.**

**2. This Question paper has THREE sections and FOUR printed sheets.**

**3. You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limits.**

1. **Read this excerpt from a story by China Mieville**

On an autumn evening in the earlyish years of the 21st Century, a fishing boat south-east of Halifax radioed an SOS, under attack – the transmission was unclear. Rescuers found two traumatised survivors in a wash of scattered debris. As they did, the cause of the catastrophe reached the coast. Authorities could not suppress civilian footage of what had come back.

It was the Rowan Gorilla I. That was the first. No Piper Alpha, no Deepwater Horizon; an undistinguished disaster. A tripod jack-up rig lost to storms and hull-fracture in 1988, on its way to the North Sea. Scattered surely by its capsizing and by 30 years below but there, back. Cramped-looking for all its enormity, latticed legs braced halfway through its platform, jutting above it and below into the sea. In the videos the three skyward leg-halves switch and lean creaking towards each other, sway away again like cranes triple-knitting, as it walks the muck on spudcap feet. It staggered like a crippled Martian out of the water and onto Canada.

It shook the coast with its steps. It walked through buildings, swatted trucks then tanks out of its way with ripped cables and pipes that flailed in inefficient deadly motion, like ill-trained snakes, like too-heavy feeding tentacles. It reached with corroded chains, wrenched obstacles from the earth. It dripped seawater, chemicals of industrial ruin and long-hoarded oil.

Ten miles inland, a line of artillery blew the thing apart.

**I. A. Answer the following in no more than five sentences each: (4 x 5 = 20)**

1. Is this science fiction? Why?
2. There is said to be a very thin line between science fiction and horror. What response can we make to this idea if we look at this excerpt?
3. Intertextuality is a term suggesting that stories never go away but keep making guest appearances in other stories. What guest appearances by other stories can you find in this excerpt?
4. Another technique used in this excerpt is Ekphrasis--the use of words to describe a picture the reader cannot see. What specific aspect of our networked world does come through as a result?
5. **Read this piece on the Sad Puppies controversy:**

The Hugo Awards have had a tumultuous year. This past year, the prestigious sci-fi/fantasy award’s usual activities were disrupted by a group calling itself the Sad Puppies.

In short, the Sad Puppies, a GamerGate-affiliated group of angry geeks, conspired to nominate authors from a pre-selected list of Puppy-approved names in order to stack the ballot only with writers they considered ideologically pure. That list included Theodore Beale (a.k.a. Vox Day), a libertarian blogger (and three-time Hugo Award nominee/loser) who believes that women’s suffrage was a mistake and that Caucasians are genetically superior to people of other races (I’m not exaggerating; he has actually espoused those beliefs).

The Sad Puppies weren’t successful in getting awards for their preferred writers, but their plan did keep other writers from being nominated and dominated the conversation among the awards ceremony attendees.

But why did the Puppies do this in the first place? If you ask them, they’ll tell you that their activities were intended to push back against what they see as an increasing tendency for sci-fi to become more and more political. The Hugo Awards were becoming overrun by multiculturalism and progressivism, they said. The Puppies claim they want pure, honest, good old-fashioned science fiction without any annoying political message.

There’s a very big problem with that: it’s impossible, because Science fiction is, has always been and will always be political. Trying to return to an era in which science fiction was apolitical is feeling “nostalgia for an age that never existed,” as Jello Biafra sang.

**II. A. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each: (2 x 10 = 20)**

1. Would China Mieville’s story above meet with approval from the Puppies? Why?
2. At what point in the piece does it become clear that the author doesn’t care too much for the Puppies? Provide two bits of compelling evidence. Which side of the debate would you take? Why?
3. **Read this excerpt:**

She listened, but it was all very still; cricket was over; the children were in their baths; there was only the sound of the sea. She stopped knitting; she held the long reddish-brown stocking dangling in her hands a moment. She saw the light again. With some irony in her interrogation, for when one woke at all, one’s relations changed, she looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call (she woke in the night and saw it bent across their bed, stroking the floor), but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotised, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough!

**III. A. Answer the following in about five sentences each: (4 x 5 = 20)**

1. What two punctuation marks dominate this extract? What does their use signify?
2. What is the source from which the it in the line "saw it bent across their bed, stroking the floor" is derived?
3. Who is the she in this extract? What are we witnessing here?
4. What domestic act is mentioned twice in this extract? Where? Why?
5. **Answer the following in about 200 words: (10 marks)**

Why are so many Modernist works tough to read? Explain.

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