

ISC Paper 2019

English Literature

Maximum Marks: 100

Time allowed: Three hours

(Candidates are allowed additional 15 minutes for only reading the paper. They must NOT start writing during this time).

Answer one question from Section A and four questions from Section B.

In Section B choose questions on at least three textbooks which may include EITHER Shakespeare's *The Tempest* OR Bernard Shaw's *Candida*

Note: You are required to select questions on one play only, EITHER *The Tempest* OR *Candida* in Sections A and B

The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

Section-A

(Answer one question)

THE TEMPEST – Shakespeare

Question 1.

Choose two of the passages (a) to (c) and answer briefly the questions that follow :

(a) Prospero: Ariel, thy charge

Exactly is perform'd; but there's more work.

What is the time o' th' day?

Ariel: Past the mid-season.

Prospero: At least two glasses. The time' twixt six and now

Must by us both be spent most preciously.

Ariel: Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,

Let me remember thee what thou hast promised

Which is not yet performed me.

(i) Where are Ariel and Prospero? Where had Prospero sent Ariel? [1]

(ii) What account of his task does Ariel give Prospero? [2]

(iii) What had Ariel done with Alonso and his companions? [2]

(v) Which promise does Ariel remind Prospero about? What does this tell you about Ariel? [2]

(v) Why does Ariel think that he deserves what has been promised to him? What effect do his words have on Prospero? [2]

(vi) Give the meanings of the following words in the context of the passage:

- (a) twixt.
- (b) remember [1]

Answer:

(i) Ariel and Prospero are on an island in front of Prospero's cell. Prospero had sent Ariel to cause a storm in the sea and to bring his enemies, Alonso, Antonio and others on the island.

(ii) Ariel tells Prospero how he caused a storm on the sea and frightened the persons on the ship. All except the sailors deserted the ship and plunged into the sea. Now Ferdinand was sitting in one part of the island while the others were in another part. They knew nothing of what had happened to one another.

(iii) Ariel had so arranged everything by his supernatural powers that Alonso and others had been scattered on the island in small groups. While Ferdinand was sitting in one part of the island, thinking that others had drowned, others were in different groups thinking that their companions had died in the storm.

(iv) Ariel reminds Prospero that he had promised to set him free if he performed the task given to him efficiently. It tells us that although Ariel possesses all the qualities of air, it is a spirit under the control of Prospero. It has always longed for its freedom.

(v) Ariel has carried out Prospero's instructions with regard to the ship and its passengers. He has caused a storm on the sea and brought the passengers and the ship safely on the island. That is why, he thinks that he deserves his freedom promised to him by Prospero. Prospero gets enraged at the words of Ariel and reminds him of his hard past when he was in the captivity of the witch Sycorax.

- (vi)
- (a) between
- (b) remind

(b)

Antonio: Then let us both be sudden.

Gonzalo : (Waking) Now, good angels Preserve the king

Alonso: Whç how now? Ho! Awake?

Why are you drawn?

Wherefore this ghastly looking?

Gonzalo: 'What's the matter?

- (i) Where are the speakers? Briefly explain how they were at this place. [i]
- (ii) What does Antonio mean by "Then let us both be sudden"? What does he convince

Sebastian to do? [2]

(iii) What makes Gonzalo and Alonso wake up suddenly? [2]

(iv) What reason do Sebastian and Antonio give for their strange behavior? [2]

(v) Which sounds had Gonzalo heard? What did the king's party decide to do at the end of the scene? [2]

(vi) Give the meanings of the following words as they are used in the context of the passage: [1]

(a) sudden

(b) drawn

Answer:

(i) The speakers are in one part of the island where Ariel had left them. They had reached here after their miraculous escape from the storm in the sea which was caused by Ariel. They had jumped into the sea to escape because the ship was about to sink.

(ii) Persuaded by Antonio, Sebastian had agreed to murder his brother Alonso and Gonzalo so that he was able to succeed to Alonso's throne. While Alonso and Gonzalo were sleeping, they had decided to execute their plan of murder. In this regard Antonio had suggested to Sebastian that they should act with promptness. Antonio had convinced Sebastian that once Alonso was killed, his daughter Claribel would not come to claim the throne. Sebastian was sure to become the king of Naples.

(iii) Seeing that Gonzalo's life is in danger, Ariel sings a song in his ear. In this song he tells Gonzalo that while he is sleeping, the conspirator is ready to avail himself of the opportunity. So he should wake up. Gonzalo wakes up and seeing Antonio and Sebastian with swords drawn awakens Alonso also.

(iv) Questioned by Gonzalo and Alonso as to why they have drawn their swords, Antonio and Sebastian tell them that they had heard a deep and distant growl like that of bulls or lions. This had awakened them and they had drawn their swords.

(v) Gonzalo had heard a low murmuring sound which had awakened him. Actually, it was Ariel's voice buzzing in his ear to wake him up. At the end of this scene, Alonso and his companions decide to go on in search of Ferdinand. The king and Gonzalo were sure that he must be somewhere in the island.

(vi)

(a) speedy, prompt

(b) with swords drawn, ready to attack

(c) Stephano: Put off that gown, Trinculo [Reaches for it]. By this hand, I have that gown.

Trinculo: Thy grace shall have it.

Caliban: dropsy drown this fool! What do you mean

To dote thus on such luggage? Let's alone,

And do the murder first. If he awake,

From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches

Make us strange stuff.

(i) Where are Trinculo and Stephano? What has distracted Trinculo? [1]

(ii) Which murder is Caliban referring to? Why does he want this? [2]

(iii) What temptations does he offer to make them carry out the plan? [2]

(iv) What would the two have to do first to ensure the success of the plan? [2]

(v) What does Caliban fear would happen if they fail? [2]

(vi) Give the meaning of the following words as they are used in the context of the passage:

(a) dropsy (b) crown. [1]

Answer:

(i) Trinculo and Stephano are quite near Prospero's cell. Glistening dresses hanging on the lime tree have distracted Trinculo's attention.

(ii) Caliban is referring to the plan of murder of Prospero which they have made. He wants this because he is unhappy with Prospero. He feels that this island belongs to him and Prospero has snatched it with the power of his magic.

(iii) Caliban assures Stephano and Trinculo that once Prospero is killed he (Stephano) would become the king of the island. Prospero's beautiful daughter Miranda would be his wife. Trinculo, too, as Stephano says would be his viceroy. Caliban himself would be his servile bondsman.

(iv) To ensure the success of their plan Stephano and Trinculo would have to seize Prospero's books of magic. Once his books are seized he will have no spirit at his command. It will then be easy for them to kill Prospero.

(v) Caliban is afraid lest Prospero should wake up. If he wakes up, Caliban fears, Prospero would fill their bodies with pinches from head to foot and turn them into a strange state.

(vi)

(a) a kind of disease in which the body retains fluids

(b) be attacked with

Candida – George Bernard Shaw

Question 2.

Choose two of the passages (a) to (c) and answer briefly the questions which follow

(a) Morell: (snapping his fingers) Thats nothing. Have you raised the wages ?

Burgess : (triumphantly) Yes.

Morell: What!

Burgess : (unctuously) Ive turned a model employer. I dont employ no women now: they're all sacked; and the work is done by machinery. Not a man, as less than sixpence a hour; and the skilled ands gits the Trade Union rate. (Proudly) What are you to say to me now ?

- (i) Where are Morell and Burgess ? What does Morell refer to as 'nothing'? [1]
- (ii) What does Morell say about the previous meeting between Morell and Burgess? [2]
- (iii) Why is Morell shocked to hear that Burgess has raised the wages? [2]
- (iv) What does Burgess say to prove that he has become a model employer? [2]
- (v) How does Morell react to Burgess' words? [2]
- (vi) Why has Burgess made these changes? [1]

(b) Morell: What have I done – or not done – my love ?

Candida : (With serious vexation) my own particular pet scrubbing brush has been used for blackleading. (A heartbreaking wail bursts from Marchbanks. Burgess looks round amazed. Candida hurries to the sofa) Whats the matter? Are you ill Eugene?

Marchbank: No; not ill. Only horror! horror! horror! (He bows his head on his hands).

- (i) What has Marchbanks told Candida just before the quoted lines? [1]
- (ii) Why does Morell ask what he had done or not done? [2]
- (iii) Why does Marchbanks break into a wail of horror? [2]
- (iv) How does Candida explain Marchbanks' words of horror to Burgess? What does she go on to ask Marchbanks to give her? [2]
- (v) What would Marchbanks like to give her ? [2]
- (vi) How do his words affect Morell? [1]

(c) Morell: (With proud humility) I have nothing to offer you but my strength for your defense, my honesty for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity. That is all it becomes a man to offer to a woman.

Candida : (quiet quietly) And you Eugene? What do you offer?

- (i) Where are the speakers in this scene? Describe the atmosphere among them. [1]
- (ii) Why does Morell want Candida to choose between the two of them? [2]
- (iii) What does Marchbanks offer Candida? [2]
- (iv) What does Candida say after hearing Marchbanks' offer? [2]
- (v) What is the reaction of the two men as they wait for Candida to make her choice? [2]
- (vi) What does Candida say ultimately? [1]

Answer:

(a)

(i) Morell and Burgess are present in the drawing-room of James Morell. Morell is angry with Burgess for paying low wages to his workers. When Burgess says that he has owned he was wrong. Morell is not satisfied. He says that it is nothing. He questions him if he has raised his wages or not.

(ii) Morell tells us that three years ago when Burgess met him. he called Morell a big fool. Burgess confesses that he did call Morell a fool.

(iii) Morell is shocked because he can't believe that Burgess who did not pay even living wages to workers could become a model employer.

(iv) To prove that he has become a model employer Burgess says that now he does not employ women. He has dismissed them. The whole work is now done by machinery. Moreover, no worker is paid less than sixpence an hour.

(v) Morell is overjoyed to hear this. He says that if one sinner repents there is more joy in heaven than thousands who are just and God-fearing.

(vi) Burgess has made these changes because the county council that helped him to get his contract accepted, compelled him to do so.

(b)

(i) Just before these lines Marchbanks has told Candida that he will stay with them if she hands over all the rough work to him.

(ii) Morell asks this angrily because Candida has just said to him that he has not been looking after the house properly.

(iii) Marchbanks breaks into a wail of horror when he hears from Candida that her favourite brush used for cleaning utensils has been used for black leading.

(iv) Trying to explain away Marchbank's abnormal behaviour Candida tells Burgess that his heart breaking cry was due to poetic horror. It should not be taken seriously. She asks Marchbanks to give her a new brush with an ivory back decorated with pearls.

(v) Marchbanks would like to give Candida a boat, a tiny shallop to sail away far from the world.

(vi) Morell does not like the idealistic words spoken by Marchbanks. He angrily retorts that is the utopian world visualized by Marchbanks there would be nothing to do except to be idle, selfish and useless.

(c)

(i) The speakers are in the drawing room of Morell. Morell and Eugene have agreed to ask Candida to choose either of them – Morell or Eugene. When this is conveyed to

Candida she is furious at the suggestion.

(ii) Morell is so much mentally tortured by Eugene that he begins to believe that Candida has a very soft corner for Eugene. That is why he asks Candida to choose any one between the two of them.

(iii) Marchbanks offers Candida his weakness, his desolation and his heart's need.

(iv) After hearing Marchbank's offer Candida declares that she would give herself over to the weaker of the two – Morell and Eugene.

(v) As they wait for Candida to make her choice. Morell becomes so much frightened that he loses the power of concealing his anxiety. Eugene too becomes so much tense that he does not move a muscle.

(vi) Candida says that she will give herself to one who is the weaker of the two – Morell and Marchbanks.

Section – B

(Answer four questions on at least three textbooks which may include Either The Tempest or Candida)

THE TEMPEST – Shakespeare

Question 3.

Referring closely to the conversation between Prospero and Miranda in Act 1 Scene ii, answer the following:

(a) Narrate what Prospero tells Miranda about his past and the circumstances which brought him to the island. [8]

(b) How does Miranda react to this tale? What is Prospero's purpose in telling her this tale?[6]

(c) What do you conclude about Prospero from this conversation? [6]

Answer:

(a) Prospero tells Miranda that he has a specific purpose in raising the storm, and that is to bring his enemies to him so that he may take his revenge. Then he tells Miranda the account of his past life. Twelve years ago he was the Duke of Milan. He became interested in the studies of magic. So he left the management of state affairs to his brother Antonio. Antonio became hungry for power. He entered into an agreement with Alonso that if he helps him oust his brother (Prospero) from dukedom he will pay him an annual tribute of money and be a subordinate to him. So one night Antonio and his men, with the help of Alonso, put Prospero and his little daughter (Miranda) into a broken boat in the hope that they would be drowned. But luck favoured them and they reached this island safely.

Prospero tells Miranda that all his enemies are in the ship. He assures her that he would not want to take their lives. He only intends to make them realize what a sinful act they had done to him.

(b) After listening to the tale of her past, Miranda is intensely moved. She feels sorry to think that she must have caused enough trouble to her father Prospero in bringing her up. She feels that her heart bleeds to think of this hard life that Prospero lived on the island. She begins to weep. She asks her father why the conspirator, her uncle, did not destroy them. Prospero tells her that he could not dare to kill them because the people of Milan loved him very much. Antonio did not want to take the risk of shedding their blood.

Prospero's purpose in telling all this to Miranda was to acquaint her with her real identity. He knew that Miranda was likely to be attracted to Ferdinand and as he had planned, she was likely to be Ferdinand's wife. He was thus preparing her for the coming events. His purpose was that Miranda must know her royal parentage.

(c) From Prospero's conversation with Miranda we conclude that Prospero is basically a large hearted man. He was mentally hurt by his brother Antonio and his companions.

They ousted him treacherously twelve years ago and tried to end his life. When his enemies in a ship come near his island, he plans to take a revenge on them.

But he is not really revengeful. Had he been so he could have killed them all. He let them land on the island so that he might teach them a lesson.

He is basically kind-hearted. He assures Miranda that no harm will come to the passengers aboard of the ship. He is, of course, short-tempered. His behavior with Ariel is quite stem. He snubs him for demanding freedom as he is yet to do many things for him. He assures him that he will be freed once he accomplishes all his tasks.

Question 4.

Miranda is a perfect blend of innocence and determination. Discuss her role in the play with close reference to the text. [20]

Answer:

Miranda is a perfect blend of innocence and determination. She is a worthy daughter of Prospero, simple and charming. She is so beautiful and heavenly that Ferdinand and even his father Alonso consider her to be the goddess of the island.

Miranda is straightforward and natural in her behaviour. She has a sweet loving nature. She is deeply moved by the miserable plight of the passengers on the ship facing the fury of the storm. She feels so sympathetic towards the passengers that she asks her father, Prospero, to end the storm:

" If by your art, my dearest father, you have Put the wild waters in this roar, ally them."

She identifies with the passengers aboard the ship and is worried about their well-being. She reveals the nobility in her character when she remarks :

“ . . . O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer...”

In a sense, Miranda is just a child who looks at the unusual sights and sounds on the island with wonder. She is so innocent and ignorant that she does not know that there are other men and women in the world, besides Prospero and herself. She is not aware of the existence of evil on the island. Moreover, she is incapable of coping with evil and intrigue. She is safe because she lives under the protection of his powerful father. Her spontaneous love for Ferdinand shows her trusting nature, full of generous impulses.

Miranda loves Ferdinand sincerely and affectionately. When she sees Ferdinand, she falls in love with him at first sight. She is so straightforward that she offers her hand to Ferdinand in marriage who accepts her offer. Miranda and Ferdinand provide an element of idyllic love between two simple lovers. Miranda's love for Ferdinand is so intense that she cannot bear to see him piling logs of wood under Prospero's command. She offers to share his hard labour. She is so tender and loving that she appeals to her father not to be so harsh to him. When Ferdinand flatters her by describing her beauty in glowing terms, she simply shows her deep attachment to him. She remarks with firm determination that she does not desire any companion other than he. She remarks :

“I am your wife if you will marry me
If not, I'll die your maid, to be your fellow
You may deny me ; but I'll be your servant,
Whether you will or not.

She is candid and straightforward and determined in expressing her love for Ferdinand.

In short, Miranda's very presence in the play endows it with a rare charm. She is an integral part of the idyllic world of Prospero's island. She is a rare specimen of simplicity, beauty and kindness.

Candida – George Bernard Shaw

Question 5.

Referring closely to the second act of the play 'Candida', answer the following :

(a) Give an account of the conversation between Marchbanks, Proserpine and Burgess.

[8]

(b) What opinion do Marchbanks and Burgess have of Morell? [6]

(c) What does the conversation reveal about Proserpine and Burgess? [6]

Answer:

(a) Finding himself all alone in the room, Marchbanks begins to meddle with the typewriter of Proserpine just out of curiosity. When Proserpine returns to work at it, she finds that it is out of order. She at once realizes that Marchbanks has done something to it.

So she rebukes Marchbanks for the fault in the machine and asks if he wanted to type a love letter.

In turn, he asks if she writes love letters she must be in love. Proserpine get angry at his remarks. Marchbanks says that she is shy like him. People, he says, crave for love but fail to express it because of their shyness. He further elaborates the point. Only wicked people overcome their shyness and ask for love because they have none to give. The good who have love and long to mingle it with love of others fail to utter a word. Proserpine does not respond. She becomes indignant and asks him to stop talking or leave.

At this point Burgess comes and says that Eugene must be feeling bored with no one else but the typist to talk to. This infuriates Proserpine who retorts that Eugene would have the benefit of his polished conversation. When Burgess says he has not addressed his remarks to her, she loses self-control and calls him "a silly old fathead". Burgess threatens to report this to Morell. Proserpine goes out. Left alone with Eugene, Burgess shares his belief about Morell with him. He says that his son-in-law is completely mad as in the morning he called him a scoundrel and asked him to call him a fool.

He adds that a man who could talk to him in this manner is certainly out of his head. At this stage Morell's voice is heard calling for Proserpine. This puts an end to their conversation.

(b) When Proserpine goes out Burgess and Marchbanks are left alone. Burgess asks Marchbanks if he has noticed anything strange in Morell. Marchbanks plainly tells him that he has not noticed any oddity in Morell. Then Burgess throws a hint that Morell has gone mad. Marchbanks is shocked to hear this. Burgess then adds that Morell is as mad as a here in the month of March. With uneasiness Marchbanks says that Morell can be said to be so due to his opinions which are different. Burgess, slightly encouraged, tells him that that day Morell called him a scoundrel and then he shook hands with him. Still unbelieving Marchbanks asks him what Morell said to him. Burgess now tells him that Morell called himself a fool and Burgess a scoundrel. He asks Marchbanks if a sane man can talk in this manner. Before Marchbanks answers, Morell's voice is heard from outside, calling for Proserpine. This puts an end to their conversation.

(c) When Marchbanks and Proserpine are busy talking to each other Burgess comes in. As soon as he comes he says that Marchbanks must be feeling bored with none else to talk to except the typist. This remark infuriates Proserpine who does not relish this remark. She retorts immediately. She says that now Eugene would have the benefit of his polished conversation. The words are spoken satirically because Burgess is a vulgar, coarse and guzzling man. Angrily Burgess says to her that he has not addressed his remarks to her. Proserpine now loses self-control. She has a sharp tongue and ready wit. She calls Burgess "a silly old fathead". Burgess, as it is clear at many points, looks down upon, the poor working people. He refuses to talk to Proserpine because she belongs to lower strata of life. He threatens Proserpine to report the matter to Morell. Unable to bear this Proserpine goes out of the room.

Question 6.

Miss Proserpine Garrett is a true representative of the middle class who inspires pity as well as admiration. Give your views with reference to the play. [20]

Answer:

Miss Proserpine is a woman of about thirty with a sharp tongue and ready wit. She is the true representative of the middle class who inspires pity as well as admiration. She is Morell's typist and we later learn that she is in love with him. Like all women of lower, middle class she is efficient, industrious and very sensitive to self-respect.

Proserpine is romantic and ambitious. Like any other woman who is easily attracted by handsome men, she gets attracted by handsome Morell. Her love for Morell is derisively described as "Proserpine's complaint". It is from Candida that we learn how much she is sacrificing to be near to her object of love. She is serving Morell on a much lower salary than what she was getting elsewhere. She even does menial work in his home. Morell himself is unaware of her love for him. Even Marchbanks fails to recognize her love as he believes that no woman can love a 'windbag' like Morell.

She is full of jealousy, too. She does not like Morell's praising his wife. She tells Lexy Mill that Morell should not always talk of Candida. She is of the opinion that a man should be able to love his wife without making a fool of himself about her. She angrily remarks :

Candida here, and Candida there, and Candida everywhere. It's enough to drive anyone of their senses to hear a woman raved about in that absurd manner merely because she's got good hair and a tolerable figure.

She is intelligent and quick-witted. She is fully aware that Lexy Mill has no mind of his own. She points out to him that he is only imitative. She says that he tries to imitate Morell in whatever he says and does. In her encounters with Burgess she proves to be

quick-witted. She does not tolerate the insulting behaviour of Burgess and calls him “a silly old fathead”.

There is no doubt that she works hard and does her best to satisfy Morell. She works without any complaint. As she belongs to the lower middle class, it is seldom that she gets a chance to enjoy good things of life. So, at the supper hosted by Burgess, she takes champagne forgetting her oath never to touch wine. It is so because a person of her class cannot afford to drink champagne. As ‘ she drinks too much, she is intoxicated and makes a fool of herself by talking incoherently, stumbling and striking the door.

In short, Proserpine is a minor character and yet she plays crucial role in exposing some characters. She is primarily used by Shaw to air his views on the prevalent, defective system of education.

Note: Questions 7, 8 and 9 not in the syllabus

Contemplations

Question 10.

Referring closely to the essay Voice of Humanity, answer the following :

- (a) Describe the poet Rabindranath Tagore’s first visit to Europe. [8]
- (b) What creative activities did the poet indulge in upon his return to India? What did he do in addition? [6]
- (c) What are the poet’s thoughts about humanity? [6]

Answer:

(a) Tagore’s present visit is not his first visit. In 1878 when he was only seventeen years old, his brother brought him to Europe. Though at that time his knowledge of English was not sufficient, he had heard of great poets, heroes and European literature. Italy was Tagore’s first introduction to Europe. He reached Brindisi through a steamer. He was deeply impressed by the beautiful and mysterious scenery of Brindisi, which was a small and quiet town at that time. Tagore, at that small age of seventeen, was fascinated by the ambience of Italy, i He wanted to enjoy the beauty of Italy more but his brother was worried about his studies in England. He calls England a great country but at that time he could not appreciate it. He was left alone to face the winter of England where the birds were silent and sunlight was rare. The people stared at him.

(b) Tagore returned to India after a few months. He did not like formal style of education, rather he dreamt, wrote poems, stories, plays and lived a life of seclusion on the banks of the Ganga. When Tagore was in the middle of his creative work, he was impelled to come out of his seclusion and seek life in the crowd of the people. He,

therefore, invited children, in order to give them relief from the bondage of the Educational Department. He wanted to give them much-needed freedom and sympathy.

Tagore was busy doing service to the children when suddenly he was possessed of an idea of pilgrimage. He received a call, "Have you been to the sacred shrine where Divinity reveals itself in the thoughts and dreams and deeds of man?" He thought that this shrine was in Europe. His study of man reminded him that he agreed with the great poet Wordsworth that man has made the life of man miserable. Man, according to him, is the sworn enemy of man. No doubt, he was full of dejection but at the same time he was hopeful of finding the shrine where the immortal spirit of man dwelt.

(c) Tagore has a deep and great faith in humanity. This faith in humanity can be clouded but it can never be extinguished.

It is a hard fact that though human races have come closer to each other as never before yet the "baser elements" seem to be predominant. The people who are powerful, are delighted that they have a large number of their victims. They put forward strange ideology to justify their right to rule others. But such bullies cry of the past that has already disappeared. But only those races will prosper who try to strike a balance between spiritual magnanimity of mind and heart. Tagore has the faith that the spirit of the age will lead to complete human truth. Joining of all the human races will really be translated into the unity of man.

Question 11.

Referring closely to the essay, On-Going Out for a Walk, relate the writer's belief and views on walking for "walking's sake". [20]

Answer:

Beerbohm in a confessional tone says that he had never gone out for a walk, though he was taken out for walks. He gives a jolt to the traditional mindset of the people who think that there is something inherently noble and virtuous in the desire to go for a walk. There are some people who have the misconception that they must impress upon others to go for a walk. He calls such people "walk-mongers". The author has solid reasons to justify his point of view :

"People seem to think there is something inherently noble and virtuous in the desire to go for a walk. Anyone thus desirous feels that he has a right to impose his will on whomever he sees comfortably settled in an arm-chair, reading."

The main irritant for the essayist is the belief of "walking for walking's sake". Such a walk hampers the working of the brain. Many writers and intellectuals face a lot of diversion when they are forced to leave their concentration on their creative art and are

urged to go on a walk. He makes an attack on these walk-mongers when he asks an overwhelming question, "The ideas that came so thick and fast to him in any room, where are they now?... gone is the light from his fine eyes." The situation deteriorates when an intelligent and thinking person is accompanied by a talkative companion. The companion will indulge in extolling the person. Many times he would waste time on useless talks. A sensible man would never tolerate such a companion, especially in a walk. The poor man will definitely become mentally a wreck. After such a bitter lesson in the morning that person will never dare to think of another walk.

A man, says Beerbohm, with his reasoning faculties, would never go for a walk. Such a walk would give birth to a clash between the soul and the body. Body would push the man to march ahead but the brain would pull the body with solid reasons. The brain would ask the relevance of such an activity. The body would do it because it is a noble and grand act to go for a walk, but the brain would call it "tomfoolery".

The author concludes the essay by saying that strenuous physical efforts are no longer required. The brain would give preference to other vehicles of exercise. Extremism in this field is not going to pay dividends. The author endorses moderation in this field of activity. Whatever the people may say, the author is not going to be swayed by them. He says,

"Even if you go to some definite place, for some definite purpose, the brain would rather you took a vehicle; but it does not make a point of this; it will serve you well enough unless you are going for a walk."

Question 12.

Referring closely to the essay On the Choice of a Profession, discuss the factors one must keep in mind while choosing a profession. [20]

Answer:

Stevenson addresses the youngster who has sought his advice on the choice of a profession. It is not unusual for the youngsters to seek such advice. The choice of a profession is one of the "most momentous epochs in a young man's life." It is really an appreciable gesture on behalf of a young person to seek counsel. He says categorically that wisdom has nothing to do with the choice of a profession. The wise, in these circumstances, act upon no principle whatever. Usually the people give foolish ideas in this respect. Such people have readymade answers for career-counseling. He says :

"The world being more or less beset with Anxious Enquirers of the Socratic persuasion, it is the object of a Liberal Education to equip people with a proper number of these answers by way of passport; so they can pass swimmingly to and fro on their affairs without the trouble of thinking."

The modern dilemma is that mostly people, in their hectic schedule, have no leisure to know where they are going. Stevenson gives the example of a banker who does not know why he has joined a banking profession. Now the overwhelming question is, "Is a man's business his duty? Or perhaps should not his duty be his business?" The sorry state of affairs is that modern man is trapped by many institutions and organizations, such as educational institutions, marriage, office etc. "Man, turned loose into this roaring world, herded by robustious guardians..."

"Bethink yourself and bestir yourself as a man. This is the time..." recommends Stevenson to the youngsters. Money has its own importance. No young man can be at peace till he stands on his own feet. A choice is almost more of a negative than a positive. When a person chooses one profession, he has to reject a thousand. The youngsters must bear it in mind they cannot excel in other professions. The youngsters have to be very clear in their preferences. In his parting advice to the youth, he rightly says:

"Most men are happy, and most men dishonest. Their mind sinks to the proper level; their honour easily accepts the custom of the trade. I wish you may find degeneration no more painful than your neighbors, soon sink into apathy, and belong spared in a state of respectable somnambulism, from the grave to which we haste."

Thus, the essay focuses on the idea that the choice of a profession is a subjective matter. No one can or should guide anyone as to what he should become. Young people should know their preference and follow it.

Echoes

Question 13.

Referring closely to the short story 'To Build a Fire', answer the following.

- (a) Describe the man's repeated attempts to keep himself warm. [8]
- (b) Contrast the attitudes of the Man and his Dog towards the weather. [6]
- (c) What does the man finally learn from his experience? [6]

Answer:

(a) The man and his dog depart from the main Yukon trail to reach the Henderson camp. It is very cold. The temperature is about seventy-five degree below zero. After covering a good distance the man stops for lunch, builds a fire and warms himself. The dog also sits beside the fire and feels good. Then he resumes the journey. After a while he falls into a concealed spring and wets himself up to his shins. His fingers become numb. It becomes imperative to build the fire again. He unties the moccasins. He gathers wood and builds the fire. But with his shaking the tree for twigs, the snow on the boughs falls down and blots the fire.

He decides to build the fire again. He gathers dry grasses and twigs. Then he reaches in his pocket for a piece of birch bark. He fails to catch hold of it as his fingers are numb. His hands have stopped working. He catches the match in his teeth and scratches it on his leg. As it flames he holds it with his teeth to the birch bark. But the smoke causes him to cough. When he coughs the match falls into the snow and goes out. Then he catches the whole bunch of matches between the heels of his hands and lights them simultaneously. His hands get burnt. With numb hands he tries to protect the fire but in so doing he puts out the fire.

(b) The story 'To Build a Fire' records the struggle of a determined man for his very survival on an extremely cold day when the temperature is 75° below zero. Trailed by his dog he continues his journey. Man and his dog face tough weather but their reaction is quite different. If the man in the story represents intellect, the dog represents pure instinct. The story highlights these two contrasting traits.

On the metaphorical level, it contrasts instinctive knowledge with intellectuality. Jack London's main aim in writing this story is to make us aware of the value of instincts in life, particularly in extreme situations. Instincts are the best guide for survival in the harsh Yukon. Ironically, it is the dog who instinctively knows that cold conditions in which they – the man and the dog – are traveling are dangerous, while the man doesn't, simply because of his faith in his intellect. So in spite of many advantages – thermometers, woollen clothes, maps, matches and a thinking brain – the man perishes, whereas the dog with only its protective fur and a keen sense of smell survives.

(c) The protagonist of the story is determined and persistent. He remains undeterred by many handicaps, both physical and mental. He is overconfident of his stamina. He is indifferent to the fact that man can live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold. He is really fearless and courageous.

He does not give up easily. When he realizes that he will die, he starts running. Exhausted, he falls down, but rises again and starts running. He falls down again. Ultimately, he decides not to be foolish. He cannot escape from death. He will have to accept the inevitable. He has only been running around "like a chicken with its head cut-off". So he stops his struggle for life. He decides to meet death with dignity. He lies down on the snow and sleeps off to death. This shows his moral victory even in his defeat. He does not give in easily. This freedom from fear of death in the last stage makes him a sort of hero in the Greek mould.

Question 14.

With close reference to the short story The Singing Lesson, describe how the lesson as it progresses, becomes an echo of Miss Meadows' feelings. [20]

Answer:

"The Singing Lesson" reveals how the lesson as it progresses becomes an echo of Miss Meadows' feelings. The story explains how the change in our moods affects our work. Miss Meadows is a music teacher in a school. She is in love with Basil. As she is past normal marriage age she is satisfied that now she will be able to lead a normal happy life like others of her colleagues. But she is rudely shaken by a letter from her lover expressing his inability to marry her. She is in despair and anguish, mixed with anger. She is naturally agitated.

Clad in her usual academic attire, Miss Meadows is going to teach her first singing lesson of the day. She is carrying the burden of the contents of the letter recently received from her fiance Basil, calling off the wedding. So she moves to the class "with despair – cold, sharp despair" through the cold corridors leading to the music hall. She feels confused, bitterly lonely and unloved.

The students are making a noise. They are lively, full of fun and excitement when Miss Meadows arrives. She brings apprehension with her. Mary Beazley, her favorite student, "was turning the music stool". That turn symbolizes the turn of the world, which stops. It is as if Miss Meadows had power to rule nature and to change the course of things.

She ignores the greetings, even the ritual by Mary Beazley of preserving the Chrysanthemum and asks the students to start singing 'A Lament' instead of the already chalked out lesson. The students are instructed to sing the song without expression. They sing with "mournful voices". The lyric of the music is like that moment of life the character was passing :

"Fast! Ah, too Fast Fade the Ro-o-ses of Pleasure;
Soon Autumn yields unto Wi-i-nter Drear.
Fleetly! Ah, Fleetly Mu-u-sic's Gay Measure
Passes away from the Listening Ear."

The students are asked to sing without expression and the result is indeed tragic. Tension is mounting. "Every note was a sob, a groan of awful mournfulness." While she is creating such an external disorder, Miss Meadows, undergoing internal chaos, wonders what could have happened to Basil as he had that attitude. She muses that Basil's last letter had made her feel happy. It means that Miss Meadows is dependent on external events and on her relationship with her fiance.

As the girls sing the lament, the nature to Miss Meadows also seems to echo her sadness. "The willow trees, outside the high, narrow windows, waved in the wind." The willow tree, as we know, is associated with the feelings of sadness and the idea of death. "They had lost half their lives. The tiny ones that clung wriggled like fishes caught

on a line." It looks as if all the leaves wanted to fall. The narrow windows, suffocating, cause anguish, as the singing lament.

The 'Lament' is like a funeral march. Miss Meadows gets a dark aspect – of waning moon – darkening the environment as well. She asks the girls "Make that 'Drear' sound as if a cold wind were blowing through it." She utters 'Drear' so awfully that Mary Beazley 'wriggled her spine'. The atmosphere is already surcharged when Miss Meadows says, "You must begin to die... to fade ... until the Listening Ear is nothing more than a faint whisper." It appears as if Miss Meadows wanted to express all the misery she was feeling. Such is the effect of the tension so created that some of the girls are 'crimson'. One of them starts to cry. "Big spots of rain blew against the windows, and one could hear the willows whispering."

But the situation is the opposite when Miss Meadows receives the happy telegram from Basil. She feels transformed, her mood is joyous. "On wings of hope, of love, of joy." Miss Meadows goes back to the music hall, picks up the Chrysanthemum and raps with her baton. She turns to another page of the songbook :

We come here To-day with Flowers overladen, '
With Baskets of Fruit and Ribbons to boot,
To-oo Congratulate

It is spring now. Everything has to regain its agility, becoming eager. Beaming at the girls, she asks the girls to use their imaginations. Now the sun is shining inside her. The air, the voices, the sound and all the rest become light. The girls are manipulated, influenced by the teacher, who tries to touch them with joy. It is the end of the nightmare: "Don't look so doleful. It ought to sound warm, joyful, eager."

Miss Meadows seems to be filled with instinctive, impulsive, spontaneous infatuation. She recovers motion, passion, fervour, moved by her satisfied desire. Now her voice sounds over all the other voices – full, deep, glowing with expression. She recovers her full aspect, her lost energy is restored.

Question 15.

Referring closely to the short story The Story of the Hour, give an account of the thoughts and conflicts which go through Mrs. Mallard's mind when she hears about the untimely and sudden death of her husband. Comment on the ending of the story. [20]

Answer:

The events in 'The Story of an Hour' happen so quickly that one is amazed at the turns and twists. When Mrs Mallard, a heart patient, is told gently the news of the death of her husband, her reaction is instant, unlike those of many other women. She weeps at once,

in complete abandonment, in her sister's arms. Then she goes to her room to be by herself.

In the loneliness, she looks out of the window at a world that seems alive and fresh. She sobs occasionally and then muses over the event. Then suddenly a feeling of freedom seizes her. She dreads it at first. She stops feeling bad about it. She is excited about her free body and free soul. She has a vision of a life which she will live for herself. She will not be accountable to anyone. Her vision is suddenly broken by the voice of her sister.

Accompanied by her sister she comes down, and suddenly she finds herself face to face with her 'dead' husband. Richards, her husband's friend, quickly tries to screen Mr Mallard from the view of his wife, but he is too late. Mrs Mallard dies instantly. The doctors who are summoned proclaim that she "died of heart disease – of joy that kills."

Though the ending of the story is a bit melodramatic, yet it seems to be quite satisfying. Any other way of ending it would only diminish its charm. Supposing Mrs Mallard does not die and shows her happiness on seeing her husband alive, her earlier feelings of freedom, her dream of a free, independent life, become totally meaningless.

We feel that the ending is quite appropriate in the context. It clearly underlines the importance of time in our life. In less than an hour Mrs Mallard has an idea of a whole different future, different from her 'unhappy' past with her husband. Her excitement about her free life is justified if we take into consideration various cues in the text about her unhappy married life. Her dream gets shattered and the blow proves to be too much. Her weak heart sinks not out of 'joy' on seeing the face of her 'dead' husband but out of the sudden realization of the death of her dream.

Thus, the ending of the story is meaningful and justified. No other change can be more apt in the context.

Reverie

Question 16.

Referring closely to the poem The Darkling Thrush, answer the following:

- (a) Describe the bleak picture of the day as described by the poet. [8]
- (b) How does the atmosphere suddenly change? [6]
- (c) What are the poet's feelings at the end of the poem? [6]

Answer:

(a) Thomas Hardy beautifully describes the scene in nature in his poem 'The Darkling Thrush'. In order to make it sensuous, he employs concrete imagery. The poet, in a sad mood, is leaning upon a wooden gate. He is all alone as there is no one else visible at

this time of the hour on a very cold, wintry evening. It is evening time. The light of the sun is fading fast. The thick, tangled stems of the climbing plants that line the sky seem to the poet to be like broken, useless lyres. Frost and winter, it seems, have made everyone, except the poet, go inside to seek warmth and protection.

It is important to note the use of the image of clouds hanging in the sky' which seem to form a canopy. This dark canopy from above reminds the poet of the death of the century' (19th century).

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind its death-lament.

Seeing the clouds in the sky, the poet feels that the clouds would serve as a tomb for the dead body of the present century.

The scene in nature, thus, is totally gloomy. The mood in nature corresponds to the poet's mood. There is sadness and hopelessness within and without. Perhaps it is the poet who projects his feelings of sadness on to the scene. But the poet suddenly hears the shrill note of an aged thrush. The happy note of the thrush is surprising. It indicates that nature cannot be totally gloomy. The music of nature never dies.

(b) It is important to keep in mind the mood of the poet. The poet is in a gloomy, hopeless mood. He is thinking of the death of the nineteenth century and is perhaps worried about the new century that is going to take birth soon. In the nineteenth century all old values and beliefs had come to be disrupted and undermined by the new scientific and technological discoveries. The people were unsure of the next century. They had no hope for something positive in life. When the poet is lost in these thoughts he suddenly hears a shrill happy note of an old thrush. The aged bird whose plumes have been battered by the storm is about to die, yet it chooses to pour out its heart in a forceful manner. It reveals that the music of nature never dies. It is heard in some way in every situation. Though the poet seems to be confused as to why the bird has sounded a discordant note, we feel that there is a veiled hint that there is yet some hope and the new century (20th century) will come with some good to mankind.

(c) Nature, in whatever form it is conceived in 'The Darkling Thrush', seems to reflect the mood of the poet. At first, it seems there is a correspondence between the mood of Nature and that of the poet. There is utter gloom in Nature. The light of the sun is fading. Frost appears like a ghost. The clouds in the sky seem to form a canopy. The wind blowing seems to be lamenting over the death of the century.

What the poet hears suddenly and unexpectedly reveals that Nature wants to convey that nothing is permanent. The music of nature never dies. The happy shrill note of the thrush in the utter gloom reminds us that there is no real communication between man and nature. Both are perhaps indifferent to each other. If Nature seems to be gloomy it is only the projection of the gloom within the poet's mind. The poet has failed to interpret Nature properly.

Question 17.

Describe the interaction between the Spider and the Fly in the poem The Spider and the Fly. [20]

Answer:

'The Spider and the Fly' by Mary Howitt tells a simple, tragic story in a straightforward manner. The spider and the fly are personified. They act and behave like humans, and are, in fact, metaphors for some kinds of people in real life.

The spider is wily and evil-minded. It wants to eat the fly that happens to come high up near his web. The spider invites the fly to come to his drawing-room, the prettiest that she has ever seen. He says that there are beautiful curtains round the room. The bed in the room has fine and delicate sheets. The fly declines the invitation saying that she knows that whoever sleeps upon his bed never wakes up.

The spider does not give up. He gives the fly a temptation to have a nice feast in his room. Says he :

"I have within my pantry, good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you 're very welcome; will you please take a slice? "

The fly in her wisdom declines the invitation once again emphatically. She says that she knows what he has in his store, and she does not have any desire to see what he has.

The spider, then, resorts to plain flattery. He addresses her as 'Sweet creature' and praises her for being witty and wise. He exclaims that her gauzy wings are very pretty and her eyes are very bright. He asks her to come to his drawing-room to have a glimpse of her beauty in a small looking-glass placed on a shelf there. The fly thanks the spider for what he says and then bids him farewell, saying that she will come some other day.

The spider goes into his dark cell, and is confident that the foolish fly will soon return. He weaves a web and sets a table in his room 'to dine upon' the fly. Then he comes out and begins to sing praising the beauty of her wings, her colours, her crest on her head,

and her eyes. The foolish fly, does come back, enchanted by the flattering words, gets caught and eaten by the spider.

The end of the fly is, no doubt, tragic. But she is herself responsible for her end. She throws all cautions to the wind and is taken in by the cunning spider. Flattery proves to be fatal in her case. She knows well that it is dangerous to enter the spider's web. Even then she comes very close to the web, so overpowered is she by the flattering words of the spider. The spider cannot be held responsible for what he does. It is the fly who proves to be foolish enough to be tricked by the wily spider. Had she not forgotten what she had heard about the spider's 'den' she would not have met her doom. We all need to learn a lesson from her fate.

Question 18.

The poem Crossing the Bar is a poem of affirmation and faith. Give your views. [20]

Answer :

In the Victorian Age, new scientific discoveries had shattered people's faith in religion and God. Many people lost faith in life beyond death. They began to agree with those who believed that death is the end of life. Such thoughts were highly upsetting to men of faith like Tennyson. For some time Tennyson remained wavering. His faith was rudely shaken, but then he was finally able to overcome all his doubts. He was able to regain his faith in the immortality of the human soul and the existence of God.

'Crossing the Bar' is one of Tennyson's prominent poems. It was written when the poet was eighty-one years old after his serious illness. It may be considered his testament as well as his epitaph.

'Crossing the Bar' imbibes his faith in life beyond death. He takes the traditional, religious image and symbol of the journey of the soul from, and to, its real home, that is, heaven, and makes it the central metaphor in this poem. He anticipates his death and believes that his passage from this life to the next will be smooth, like a ship which easily clears the sand-bar and comes into the open sea. He wants to be calm and quiet at the time of death, free from all cares and anxieties. This is what all religions teach. Death is inevitable and inescapable. It should be accepted in a calm and cheerful mood. We should not conceive it as something bad and cruel.

The second stanza of the poem clearly visualizes the journey of the soul. It will be easy and smooth if the mind is at peace. The poet is ready for death. He wants to see no sad scenes of parting :

And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

The last stanza embodies a fundamental Biblical belief in the immortality of the soul and meeting God face to face:

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

We should remember that Jesus is regarded as the Pilot of the Church and guides the Christian's life. The image of 'crossing' has obvious Christian connotations. Crossing refers to 'crossing over' into the next world. It also refers to the act of "crossing" oneself as a gesture of religious faith and devotion. Thus, the poem built upon the image of 'crossing' is essentially a poem of faith.

Though the philosophical or ethical ideas of the poem are edifying, yet what appeals to us about the poem is its metaphorical structure. The central metaphor is worked out quite effectively. The images are both relevant and effective. The images of the sunset, the evening star, the twilight, the evening bell are highly suggestive. They convey the idea of old age and the end of life effectively and help build the atmosphere and the mood in a proper way. The idea of God as Pilot is quite striking. The faithful among us accept it readily.