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## BRAINWARE UNIVERSITY

Term End Examination 2024-2025

Programme – B.A.(Eng)-Hons-2020/B.A.(Eng)-Hons-2021/B.A.(Eng)-Hons-2022

Course Name – American Literature

Course Code - BELS501

( Semester V )

Full Marks : 60

Time : 2:30 Hours

[The figure in the margin indicates full marks. Candidates are required to give their answers in their own words as far as practicable.]

### Group-A

(Multiple Choice Type Question)

1 x 15=15

1. Choose the correct alternative from the following :

- (i) State the name of the person who drafted the First Declaration of Independence.
  - a) Benjamin Disraeli
  - b) Thomas Jefferson
  - c) George Washington
  - d) A.C. Krappe
- (ii) "The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won". Cite the figure of speech in the quoted line.
  - a) Personification
  - b) Metaphor
  - c) Hyperbole
  - d) Simile
- (iii) Discuss in what historical context, the poem 'O Captain! My Captain!' is written.
  - a) The poem was written during the American Revolution, reflecting the loss of General George Washington and the struggle for independence.
  - b) The poem was written in the aftermath of the Civil War, mourning the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and the end of the conflict.
  - c) The poem was written during the War of 1812, commemorating the victories of American naval forces and the valor of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry.
  - d) The poem was written during the Spanish-American War, celebrating the victories of American troops and the expansion of the United States.
- (iv) Go through the following statements and examine which one of them is true in the context of the poem 'Caged Bird' by Maya Angelou.
  - a) The poem describes the opposing experiences between two birds: one bird is able to live in nature as it pleases, while a different caged bird suffers in captivity.
  - b) Angelou paints a critical portrait of oppression in which she illuminates the privilege and entitlement of the un-oppressed, and conveys the simultaneous experience of suffering and emotional resilience of the oppressed.

- c) only 2  
(v) Read the line from 'The Great Gatsby'--"I hope she'll be a fool - that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool" -- and state which of the following is true.
- a) Daisy speaks these words in Chapter 1 as she describes to Nick and Jordan her hopes for her infant daughter  
b) Daisy is not a fool herself but is the product of a social environment that, to a great extent, does not value intelligence in women.  
c) Both 1 and 2 are right  
d) Neither 1 nor 2 is right
- (vi) From your reading of the play 'Death of a Salesman', state which of the following is a valid inference.
- a) Willy compares Biff and Happy to the mythic Greek figures Adonis and Hercules because he believes that his sons are pinnacles of 'personal attractiveness' and power through 'well liked-ness; to him, they seem the very incarnation of the American Dream.  
b) Neither Biff nor Happy ends up leading an ideal, godlike life; while Happy does believe in the American Dream, it seems likely that he will end up no better off than the decidedly ungodlike Willy.  
c) Willy's mythologizing proves quite nearsighted.  
d) All of these.
- (vii) Explain the significance of Madeline's premature burial.
- a) It symbolizes the decay of the Usher family.  
b) It highlights the theme of morbidity and death.  
c) It emphasizes Roderick's mental instability.  
d) All of these.
- (viii) Illustrate the narrator's initial impression of the House of Usher.
- a) It is opulent and grandiose  
b) It is eerily quiet and unsettling  
c) It is surrounded by lush gardens  
d) It is modern and innovative
- (ix) Infer how the narrator reacts to Madeline's death and Roderick's subsequent behaviour.
- a) With disbelief and denial  
b) With relief and gratitude  
c) With indifference and detachment  
d) With shock and horror
- (x) Explain in what way Walker uses the metaphor of the "garden" to describe the creativity of women of colour.
- a) As a symbol of confinement and limitation  
b) As a place of solitude and isolation  
c) As a source of beauty, growth, and sustenance  
d) As a representation of chaos and disorder
- (xi) Explain why, according to Walker, it is important for women of colour to reclaim their creative heritage.
- a) To gain fame and recognition in the art world  
b) To empower themselves and challenge oppressive narratives  
c) To compete with male artists  
d) To conform to societal expectations
- (xii) Discuss how, according to Alice Walker, the creativity of black women in the past often manifested itself.
- a) Through traditional painting and sculpture  
b) Through quilting, cooking, and other domestic arts  
c) Through participation in mainstream art movements  
d) Through academic pursuits and formal education
- (xiii) Define the term "protest literature" in the context of the essay "In Search of our Mother's Garden".
- a) Literature that directly challenges oppressive systems and ideologies  
b) Literature that is focused solely on political protests  
c) Literature that supports the status quo  
d) Literature that is unrelated to social issues

- (xiv) Articulate how Walker uses the example of Phillis Wheatley to illustrate the challenges faced by early African American women writers.
- a) Wheatley's work was never published.
  - b) Wheatley was forced to write in secret.
  - c) Wheatley's poetry was used to justify slavery.
  - d) Wheatley was celebrated and widely recognized during her lifetime.
- (xv) Enumerate Alice Walker's concept of "the Great Artist" in the essay 'In Search of Her Mother's Garden'.
- a) She argues that great artists are exclusively male.
  - b) She suggests that great artists are born with innate talent.
  - c) She challenges the idea that only a select few can be considered great artists.
  - d) She dismisses the notion of greatness in art.

**Group-B**

(Short Answer Type Questions)  
(Answer any Five from the following)

3 x 5=15

2. Discuss the significance of The Valley of Ashes in 'The Great Gatsby'. (3)
3. Examine to what extent is 'The Great Gatsby' a critique of materialism and excess. (3)
4. State in what ways the caged bird in the poem 'Caged Bird' serve as a metaphor for the historical and contemporary experiences of African Americans. (3)
5. Observe how the recurring image of the bird singing in Angelou's poem 'Caged Bird', despite its captivity, reflect themes of hope, resistance, and the enduring human spirit. (3)
6. Compare and contrast Gatsby and Tom. (3)

**OR**

Analyze the portrayal of women in 'The Great Gatsby'. (3)

**Group-C**

(Long Answer Type Questions)  
(Answer any Six from the following)

5 x 6=30

7. Explain how Manifest Destiny, Frontier Thesis and the myth of American Exceptionalism were instrumental in the making of the artificial nation of America at the expense of indiscriminate killing of the native Americans. (5)
8. Describe the relationship between the narrator and Roderick Usher in "The Fall of the House of Usher." (5)
9. Argue whether the narrator in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" can be deemed as a reliable narrator. (5)
10. Justify if Alice Walker criticizes or appreciates and connects with Virginia Woolf's philosophy as enunciated in her 'A Room of One's Own' in her essay 'In Search of our Mothers' Gardens'. (5)
11. Express your opinion of Maya Angelou as a poet in historicizing the obscured Black history, culture, achievement and journey in her poems. (5)
12. Evaluate in what ways does 'The Great Gatsby' reflect the moral and ethical decay of American society in the 1920s. (5)

**OR**

Evaluate how the setting of 'Death of a Salesman' contributes to the overall atmosphere and themes of the play. (5)

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