



**BRAINWARE UNIVERSITY**  
**Term End Examination 2023**  
**Programme – B.A.(Eng)-Hons-2020**  
**Course Name – Women's Writing**  
**Course Code - BELS601**  
**( Semester VI )**

**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) Produce the correct formulation of Calvinist thought which is treated ironically by Dickinson in many of her poems
- a) There were God's "elected" but they had to believe that they were elected by God
- b) Anyone could be redeemed, regardless of their mortal actions, if they repented
- c) One has to consciously reform him/herself to be a part of God's "elects"
- d) The first and essential step to becoming a part of God's "elected" is to enroll in the Church and study the Bible as the Word of God
- (ii) Explain why the Special Forces in Mahashweta Devi's text fail to capture Draupadi and Dulna in the initial part of the short story
- a) The tribals used to camouflage themselves in the forests while raiding camps and settlements
- b) The tribals could outrun the police and knew the land better
- c) The Mundas in particular had insiders in the police, and escaped these raids upon obtaining prior information of the same
- d) The darker skin complexion of the Munda tribal folk made it hard to distinguish one from the other
- (iii) Identify which of these instances of systemic caste violence led Dopdi and Dulna to take up arms against Surja Sahu in Devi's short story
- a) their children having been denied access to school education because they could not read and write in the same room with the upper caste children
- b) having had much of their arable land taken away from them to be sold off for government projects
- c) being denied access to wells and tubewells at a time of drought
- d) Options 1 and 3
- (iv) Observe which of these statements can be accurately made about the House of Poetry in "I Dwell in Possibility"
- a) The presence of abundant and spacious doors and windows in the House of Prose indicates that the ideal reader will dwell in both poetry and possibility
- b) The House of Poetry is selective in terms of who can come in, but the lucky entrants are given access to imaginative freedom.
- c) The House of Poetry
- d) With the sky serving as its roof, the possibilities of imagination are widened for the reader of poetry.

- (v) Select the option that accounts for the identity of the "soul" in "the Soul Selects its Own Society"
- a) The Soul is the undying part of a man's body that becomes one with God after bodily death
  - b) The Soul assumes the authority of God in talking to its Society
  - c) The Soul is used to refer to the secular self, but becomes a medium to challenge the authority of God
  - d) The Soul will finally reveal its true identity in the presence of God
- (vi) Recall which of the following poems by Anne Sexton was posited by critic Heather Cam as a possible companion text to Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy' which delivers a moving portrait of a woman struggling with the patriarchal ideal of her deceased father
- a) My Friend, My Friend
  - b) Sylvia's Death'
  - c) After Auschwitz'
  - d) Courage
- (vii) Recall which of the following instances is not a part of the several references in 'Bluebeard's Egg' to games and puzzles which is used by the author as a means of depicting the constant tension and compromises that frame the marriage between Sally and Ed
- a) Snakes and ladder which Sally often ends up deliberately losing in order to keep Ed happy
  - b) The narrator's conception of Ed as a puzzle where, "the house is made of ice. It's held together only by Sally, who sits in the middle of it, working on a puzzle. The puzzle is Ed"
  - c) Pick Up Sticks which Sally remembers playing with Ed's children where "if you moved one stick in the tangle, even slightly, everything else moved also"
  - d) Monopoly which is played by Sally and Ed
- (viii) Describe why the narrator in Amar Jiban frequently uses the motif of the caged bird in describing her place within society?
- a) She feels that her family is unusually strict and prevents her from exploring the world outside
  - b) She feels that after being coddled so much by her family she has lost all ambition and will in her life
  - c) She feels like there is so much to know about the world but the short and fragile lives of humans is not enough to explore the world
  - d) She feels as if the constraints of marriage and society which she has been socialised to take up has restricted her life and even though she is surrounded by luxury she is like a prisoner trapped in a cage made of gold from which there is no escape
- (ix) Describe which of the following is not accomplished by Rassundari Dasi's repeated reference to her innocence and acquiescent nature in Amar Jiban during her childhood years
- a) It delineates in retrospect how much she had to grow up and learn about the world as all sorts of responsibilities were thrust on to her as the head of the family
  - b) It is a way for her to avoid acknowledging the mistakes of her past by citing ignorance
  - c) Her innocence brings to light the sheer cruelty of the act of child marriage where even at such a tender age with very little knowledge of the world, she had to leave her mother and go to a stranger's house in order to abide by the norms of society
  - d) Her innocence sets the perfect ground for her mother to instruct her about spirituality and faith in God

- (x) Estimate why does the speaker in 'Daddy' claim that she had to kill her father
- a) She literally murdered her father since she could not withstand the abuse and trauma
- b) She wanted to kill him and make him suffer just as badly as he punished her simply for existing
- c) She wanted to destroy him so that no one would dare to control her ever again
- d) She had to figuratively kill her father in order to nullify the grasp of control he had over her, it is almost as if the speaker's existence was hinged on a symbolic destruction of the father, a release from patriarchal control
- (xi) Develop which of the following does not become apparent on reading Jitirendranath Tagore's foreword to Amar Jiban?
- a) Even while praising the literary merits of the work he castigates Rassundari Dasi for using religion as a flimsy excuse to learn how to read and write, saying that all of this was a blatant attempt on her part to wrench away power from her hapless husband
- b) Tagore establishes Rassundari Dasi as a quintessential Hindu woman, an 'ideal' woman who is just as competent in household work as she is devoted to religion. Thereby framing the narrative in between twin yokes of religion and the domestic space and positing both as the only proper places of a 'good' woman
- c) Tagore highlights the role of the mother in the proper upbringing of the child by referring to Rassundari Dasi's mother and the ways in which she gently directed her daughter towards the pursuit of God. This showcases the fact that women were supposed to be the vessels for inculcating children with cultural teachings
- d) Tagore's foreword focuses on the Vaishnavite leanings of Rassundari Devi's ardent love of God, as he describes how her understanding of God transcends the limits of mere idol worship or fanaticism and instead relies on the conception of God as an ever benevolent and merciful force.
- (xii) Recall how Celie discovers Mr. Alfonso when she goes back to visit Harpo and Sofia near the end of the novel
- a) He periodically goes away for a few days to lament the absence of his wife
- b) He has been impoverished for having squandered all of his savings in gambling, and now depends on Harpo for financial help
- c) He has taken to farming and stitching and begins to respect women.
- d) She finds that he cooks and cleans, and strikes up a conversation with him.
- (xiii) Determine which of the following statements most accurately captures what the narrator in "The Soul Selects its own Society" is trying to get at:
- a) The soul of the narrator aspires to the heights of refinement, which can only be achieved in a state of seclusion. Hence the narrator preaches that other people should seek solitude, like herself.
- b) The soul refutes all those things in society it finds coarse or not to its own liking.
- c) While the body or self must interact with others and is engaged with many people and their thoughts, the soul should be kept pure by shunning unnecessary influences.
- d) The soul chooses to select its people and companions on terms that are dictated by itself, and not by society. The soul thus finds itself in a state of relative solitude.
- (xiv) Establish the response given by Shug when Celie says that she will stop writing letters to God because He is inattentive
- a) Her faith in God must not waver since God will return in the form Celie remembers him in
- b) God is found through oneself, which is how Celie would be loved by God.
- c) Her belief and convictions in the white Christian God indirectly perpetuates her slavery.
- d) She must radically conceive of a Black God and inculcate the same belief in other black folk.

(xv) How would you most succinctly and adequately explain the depiction of Dopdi Mejhens body in Mahashweta Devi's "Draupadi"?

- a) Dopdi, despite being a representative of subaltern women, is not awakened to the way in which her body is targeted differently by the forces in a way that is different than how her husband's (male) body was targeted by the same. Thus, she fails to become a symbol of an empowered woman because of not being able to reclaim her bodily autonomy eventually.
- c) Dopdi Mejhens body is both the site of attraction as well as repulsion for all the men who came into her life, albeit for different reasons.

b) Dopdi's body can be understood as a powerful site of gendered resistance against the Special Forces, but she is uncertain about how her comrades perceived her as a physically capable fighter.

d) Dopdi's body starts off being marked as the site of patriarchal and authoritarian oppression but emerges as a site of gendered resistance

### Group-B

(Short Answer Type Questions)

3 x 5=15

2. Examine the use of the figuration of Death as a courtly lover in "Because I Could Not Stop for Death". (3)
3. Describe the idea of gaze and secularity and its reversal in 'Bluebeard's Egg' (3)
4. Infer the significance of the following lines from Dickinson: "Discarded of the Housewife —/ Quaint — or Broke —/ A newer Sevres pleases —" (3)
5. Analyse how the our reading of Rassundari Dasi autobiography is framed by the prefaces written by Jatirendranath Tagore and Dineshchandra Sen (3)
6. Recall the significance of the childhood memories in confessional poetry with reference to any text of your choice. (3)

OR

Briefly describe the religious ethos of Dickinson and how it is used to convey the lack of women's emancipation in this line: "" The Sexton keeps the Key to —/ Putting up/ Our Life — His Porcelain —/ Like a Cup —". (3)

### Group-C

(Long Answer Type Questions)

5 x 6=30

7. Observe the ways in which Dopdi Mejhens seems to adhere to as well as subvert the expectations and ways of her tribal comrades. (5)
8. Analyse the use of the trope of the 'Madwoman in the attic' and its links with Victorian society in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (5)
9. Explain the ways in which life in the rural South has been depicted as harsh for African-American women therein in *The Colour Purple*. Does the narrator posit any possibility of hopeful change for these women? (5)
10. Examine how "Because I could not stop for Death" fluctuates between a slow-moving pace and a sudden injection of sonic rapidity and progression to complicate the readers' understanding of time. (5)
11. Express how the fruition of (secular) love is deferred or contradicted by the fundamentals principles of Christianity as expounded in "I cannot live with You". (5)
12. Evaluate the symbolism of the egg with reference to the ending of 'Bluebeard's Egg' (5)

OR

Evaluate the concept of gender mimicry and self-fashioning involved in Rassundari Dasi's to conclude whether her writing could be considered along the lines of 'feminine writing' articulated by Elaine Showalter. (5)