

8/5/15

# JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

## MA (ENGLISH) ADMISSION TEST 2015

Time: 2 hours 30 minutes (for both parts)

Answer both parts. Part 2 will be examined only if you qualify in Part 1.

### Part 1 (Qualifying)

Read the passage below and answer all the questions that follow: (30)

Some falling stonework had struck Candide; he lay prostrate in the street, covered with rubble, and calling to Pangloss: - For pity's sake bring me a little wine and oil; I'm dying.

-This earthquake is nothing novel, Pangloss replied; the city of Lima, in South America, underwent much the same sort of tremor, last year; same causes, same effects; there is surely a vein of sulphur under the earth's surface reaching from Lima to Lisbon.

-Nothing is more probable, said Candide; but, for God's sake, a little oil and wine.

-What do you mean, probable? replied the philosopher; I regard the case as proved.

Candide fainted and Pangloss brought him some water from a nearby fountain.

Next day, as they wandered amid the ruins, they found a little food which restored some of their strength. Then they fell to work like the others, bringing relief to those of the inhabitants who had escaped death. Some of the citizens whom they rescued gave them a dinner as good as was possible under the circumstances; it is true that the meal was a melancholy one, and the guests watered their bread with tears; but Pangloss consoled them by proving that things could not possibly be otherwise.

-For, said he, all this is for the best, since if there is a volcano at Lisbon, it cannot be somewhere else, since it is unthinkable that things should not be where they are, since everything is well.

A little man in black, an officer of the Inquisition, who was sitting beside him, politely took up the question, and said :- It would seem that the gentleman does not believe in original sin, since if everything is for the best, man has not fallen and is not liable to eternal punishment.

-I most humbly beg pardon of your excellency, Pangloss answered even more politely, but the fall of man and the curse of original sin entered necessarily into the best of all possible worlds.

-Then you do not believe in free will? said the officer.

-Your excellency must excuse me, said Pangloss; free will agrees very well with absolute necessity, for it was necessary that we should be free, since a will which is determined ..."

1) How do you think Pangloss's observation regarding the earthquake might strike a reader? Analyse Pangloss as a rationalist. (10)

2) What appears to be the cornerstone of Pangloss's belief? How does he use rationality to establish his belief? (10)

3) What are the implications of such a belief as suggested by an officer of the Inquisition? (10)

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MA English Admission Test 2015

PART II

Full marks 100

1. Read the poem below and answer all the questions that follow: (40)

Heroic Simile

When the swordsman fell in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*  
in the gray rain,  
in Cinemascope and the Tokugawa dynasty,  
he fell straight as a pine, he fell  
as Ajax fell in Homer  
in chanted dactyls and the tree was so huge  
the woodsman returned for two days  
to that lucky place before he was done with the sawing  
and on the third day he brought his uncle.

They stacked logs in the resinous air,  
hacking the small limbs off,  
tying those bundles separately.  
The slabs near the root  
were quartered and still they were awkwardly large;  
the logs from midtree they halved:  
ten bundles and four great piles of fragrant wood,  
moons and quarter moons and half moons  
ridged by the saw's tooth.

The woodsman and the old man his uncle  
are standing in midforest  
on a floor of pine silt and spring mud.  
They have stopped working  
because they are tired and because  
I have imagined no pack animal  
or primitive wagon. They are too canny  
to call in neighbours and come home  
with a few logs after three days' work.  
They are waiting for me to do something  
or for the overseer of the Great Lord  
to come and arrest them.

How patient they are!  
 The old man smokes a pipe and spits.  
 The young man is thinking he would be rich  
 if he were already rich and had a mule.  
 Ten days of hauling  
 and on the seventh day they'll probably  
 be caught, go home empty-handed  
 or worse. I don't know  
 whether they're Japanese or Mycenaean  
 and there's nothing I can do.  
 The path from here to that village  
 is not translated. A hero, dying,  
 gives off stillness to the air.  
 A man and a woman walk from the movies  
 to the house in the silence of separate fidelities.  
 There are limits to imagination.

- i) How do the first three lines of the poem connect with the last three? (10)
- ii) Do you think the title of the poem apt? Give reasons for your answer. (10)
- iii) Why are the woodman and his uncle waiting for the poet to 'do something'? (10)
- iv) Why does the poet feel 'There are limits to imagination'? (10)

2. Write an essay on any one of the following topics: (40)

- a. The banality of evil
- b. Art and mechanical reproduction
- c. 'And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music.'
- d. Postcolonialism and the Third World Woman
- e. Theatre, audience and estrangement

3. Write notes on any four of the following, taking two from each group: (20)

- a) Beat Poetry; metanarrative; the Bloomsbury group; allegory; the Frankfurt School; Dadaism; *terza rima*
- b) 'Reader. I married him'; Yeats's preface to *Gitanjali*; the Ministry of Truth; Coleridge's conversation poems; the dog in *Odyssey*; 'The Key to All Mythologies'.