

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086

(For candidates admitted from the academic year 2007–08)

SUBJECT CODE: EN/FC/RL23

B. A. /B.Sc./B.Com./B.S.W. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2008

SECOND SEMESTER

COURSE : FOUNDATION ENGLISH: GROUP B

PAPER : READING AND LISTENING SKILLS - II

TIME : 2 HOURS

MAX. MARKS : 50

SECTION A

- I. Read the article given below & answer the questions that follow in your own words:
(20 marks)

Solidarity against All Forms of Terrorism -Vandana Shiva

18th September 2001 was the day for solidarity with victims of the September 11th terrorist attack on the U.S. I joined the millions to observe two minutes silence at 10:30 a.m. for those who lost their lives in the assault on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. But I also thought of the millions who are victims of other terrorist actions and other forms of violence. And I renewed my commitment to resist violence in all its forms. At 10:30 a.m. on 18th September, I was with Laxmi Raibari Suranam in Jhodia Sahi village in Kashipur district in Orissa. Laxmi's husband Ghabi Jhodia was among the 20 tribals who have recently died of starvation. In the same village Subarna Jhodia had also died. Later we met Singari in Bilamal village who has lost her husband Sadha, elder son Surat, younger son Paila and daughter-in-law Sulami.

The deliberate denial of food to the hungry is at the core of the World Bank Structural Adjustment programmes. Dismantling the Public Distribution System (PDS) was a World Bank conditionality. It was justified on grounds of reducing expenditure. But the food subsidy budget has exploded from Rs. 2,800 crore in 1991 to Rs. 14,000 crore in 2001. More money is being spent to store grain because the Bank required that food subsidies be withdrawn. This led to increase in food prices, lowering of purchase from PDS and hence build up of stocks. The food security of the nation is collapsing.

While observing 2 minutes silence in the midst of tribal families who are victims of starvation even while 60 million tonnes are rotting in the godowns, I could not help but think of economic policies which push people into poverty and starvation as a form of terrorism. Starvation deaths in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Orissa are a symptom of the breakdown of our food systems. Kashipur was gifted with abundance of nature. Starvation does not belong here. It is the result of waves of violence against nature and the tribal communities. It is a result of a brutal state ever present to snatch the resources of the tribals for industry and private corporations, but totally absent in providing welfare and security to the dispossessed tribals.

The starvation deaths in Kashipur and other regions are a result of the ecological plunder of the resources of the region, the dismantling of the food, the security system under economic reform policies and the impact of climate change which caused two years of crop failure due to drought and this year's crop failure due to excessive and unseasonal rain. Twenty years ago, the pulp and paper industry raped the forests of Kashipur. Today the herbs stand naked, and the

paper mills are bringing Eucalyptus from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. The terrorism of the pulp industry has already left the region devastated. Now the giant mining companies - Hydro of Norway, Alcan of Canada, Indico, Balco/Sterlite of India have unleashed a new wave of error. They are eyeing the bauxite in the majestic hills of Kashipur. Bauxite is used for aluminium - aluminium that will go to make Coca Cola cans and fighter planes.

Imagine each mountain to be a World Trade Centre built by nature over millennia. Think of how many tragedies bigger than what the world experienced on September 11th are taking place to provide raw material for insatiable industry and markets. The Supreme Court closed the mines, and ruled that commerce that threatens life must be stopped. But our ecological victories of the 1980s were undone with the environmental deregulation accompanying globalisation policies. Mining has been "liberalised" and corporations are rushing to find minerals wherever they can. The Aluminium companies want the homelands of the Kashipur tribals.

But tribals of Kashipur refuse to leave their homes. They are defending the land and earth - through a non-violent resistance movement -- the movement for the "Protection of Nature and People". As Mukta Jhodia, an elderly woman leader of the movement said at a rally on the 18th in Kashipur, "the earth is our mother. We are born of her. We are her children. The mining companies cannot force us to leave our land. This land was given to us by God and creation, not by the government. The government has no right to snatch our land from us." This forced apportion of resources from people too is a form of terrorism - corporate terrorism.

I had gone to offer solidarity to victims of this corporate terrorism which was not only threatening to rob 200 villages of their survival base but had already robbed their lives when they were shot and killed on 16th December 2000 by the police. Abhilash was one of the victims killed in the police firing. His wife Subarna Jhodia was expecting a baby when he was shot. Fifty million tribals who have been flooded out of their homes by dams over the past 4 decades were also victims of terrorism - they have faced the terror of technology and destructive development.

The tragedy of September 11 provides us with an opportunity to stop all forms of terrorism -- militaristic, technological, economic, political. Terrorism will not be stopped by militarised minds which create insecurity and fear and hence breed terrorism. The present "war against terrorism" will create a vicious cycle of violence. It will not create peace and security. We are already witnessing a xenophobic wave sweeping across the U.S., with Indians, Asians and Arabs being attacked and killed. We are seeing fundamentalists of every hue emboldened by the mood for 'revenge'.

Terrorism can only be stopped by cultures of peace, democracy, and people's security. It is wrong to define the post September 11th world as a war between "civilisation and barbarianism" or "democracy and terrorism". It is a war between two forms of terrorism which are mirror images of each other's mindsets - mindsets based on this that can only conceive of monocultures and must erase diversity, the very pre-condition for peace. They share the dominant culture of violence. They used the same weapons and the same technologies. In terms of the preference for violence and use of terror, both sides are clones of each other. And their victims

are innocent people everywhere. The real conflict is between citizens across the world longing to live in peace and security and forces of violence and terror - denying them peace and security.

The tribals in Jhodia Sahi had lit a lamp for me at the village shrine - a small stone. These tribal shrines are insignificant when one measures them in physical terms against the twin towers of the World Trade Centre. But they are spiritually deeply significant because they embody a generous cosmology of peace - peace with the earth, peace between people, peace within people. This is the culture of peace we need to reclaim, and spread. The whole world repeatedly watched the destruction of the World Trade Centre towers, but the destruction of millions of sacred shrines and homes and farms by forces of injustice, greed and globalisation go unnoticed.

1. What are the different forms of terrorism mentioned by Vandana Shiva? (2)
2. Why does the writer say starvation does not belong to Kashipur? What is the present condition of Kashipur? (2)
3. What is the underlying intent of the writer when she asks us to imagine each mountain to be a World Trade Centre? (3)
4. Give one instance that reveals to us the indomitable spirit of the tribals of Kashipur. (2)
5. What do you understand by the term “monoculture”? (1)
6. What, according to you, is the significance of the lamp lit at the village shrine? (3)
7. Mention any one form of terrorism that you think goes unnoticed in our everyday life. What do you think can be done to combat it? (2)
8. Replace the phrases underlined in the passage with other suitable words or phrases. (5 x 1 = 5)

SECTION B

II Read the following short story & answer the questions that follow: (20 marks)

Eclipse

- by Qodsi Qasi-Nour

Nothing is indicative of his footprint, but his presence is everywhere, like heavy air. I go to the old chest and rummage through it. A chess piece or a santur (stringed musical instrument) plectrum would be enough. But I return empty-handed.

Mother is as always sitting quietly on the bed, like a stick of dynamite whose long fuse is ignited. It's years that she's been like this. When you are constantly under such a gaze, you become anxious, you become cold, you freeze; the geranium leaves shake awkwardly, as if they are anxious too. There isn't the slightest absentmindedness in mother; perhaps she's eradicated part

of her life; then what's this tumultuous silence? No, she hasn't eradicated it, she's buried it in a corner of her mind: a corpse that doesn't rot away, doesn't become dust.

I get up and get out. The taxi driver says, 'From here on, it's a dirt road, if . . .' The rest of his words swirl among the poplar trees on the two sides of the street; the sparrows fly away all of a sudden and all together. I start walking, I reach my destination; grandfather takes a look at my dust-covered shoes. 'They don't regard this patch of road as a part of town; it's abandoned – no asphalt, no nothing.' And with his finger he shows me the brown piece of cloth beside the row of lined shoes.

We go into the room and sit; he offers me a piece of nabaat, crystallized sugar, I eat it although I don't feel like eating. I start out of the blue: 'Grandfather, a chess piece would do!'

He shakes his head. I say, 'A photograph, a letter or something.' He is staring at me. Grandfather isn't a good liar; grandmother knew this very well, when she laughed and spoke about the days of their youth and of grandfather's innocent tricks, and how he would easily give himself away.

I say, 'Grandfather, this silence has got to be broken; the fuse of this dynamite is getting shorter every moment; it will finally explode; let me extinguish the fuse.'

He clutches at his white hair. He says, 'What do you know about her world, girl? How could she survive if she accepted it'

'She will, she will! If she accepts it, then she'll bury her dead, cry for him, she'll calm down, she'll do whatever she wants to.'

Grandfather sighs and says, 'Yes, the earth is cold,' and keeps staring at grandmother's needlework on the wall. Suddenly he gets up, pushes aside the qalamkar curtain hanging in the room, and seems to disappear; he's gone. In grandfather's absence, the room looks like a museum, a museum of memories: behind every object lie decades.

Grandfather's picture in the brown walnut frame shows him with an oiled and muscular body, as if he's Sohrab, the symbol of youth and honesty!

Grandfather says, 'Here!'

When did he come in? When did the museum become a room again? I look at grandfather's worn-out figure and at his picture in the frame.

He hands me an old folded newspaper; I open it; there is another fold; the more I unfold it, the colour of the newspaper becomes paler. There is a picture inside it: like an image of the Chinese idol in a mysterious box!

A young man with smooth, soft, chestnut hair flowing on his forehead; there are two plectrums

in a blurred movement between his fingers, and under his ample eyelids, there are eyes that I know are amber, and black long eyebrows.

‘Your mother will have a heart attack if she sees this.’

‘She won’t, grandfather.’

‘Yes, the earth is cold.’

And he looks at the picture in my hand and at the frame on the wall, which is full of small pictures set next to one another, like the patchwork that grandmother has sewn.

I hang the picture in a silver frame from the wall, facing mother. Mother suddenly shivers and with a strange voice that doesn’t sound to be hers, she says, ‘Where did you get it?’

‘Out of my head, out of your head.’

She shouts, ‘Take it away!’ and her shout turns into a moan: ‘Take it away, take it away.’

After years, she cries and moans quietly: ‘My withered flower, hey, hey!’ and stares at my face with her red, sad eyes.

‘Tea?’ I ask.

I go into the kitchen; the sound of her quiet weeping is heard; again there’s a sound of santur, it’s the neighbouring boy practicing as usual, but this time I don’t close the window and don’t furtively look at mother! I take the tea. Mother is weeping quietly, ‘Did he play like this? Hey, hey!’

She gets up and takes her pinky-white handkerchief from under her pillow; she approaches the wall, touches the frame with her mouth and pulls back: the glass has become misty; she runs the handkerchief over it gently. Soft, chestnut hair appears, and there are eyes hidden under ample eyelids; I know they are amber.

1. Identify the point of view in the short story. (1)

2. The pervading mood of the story is one of:

a) nostalgia and enhanced happiness b) desolation, remorse and silent grief c) sadness, indignation and annoyance d) bitterness and revenge (1)

3. Identify any four phrases from the story that contribute to the creation of a tense atmosphere / mood or suggest an uneasy calm. (3)

4. Why is the girl's mother compared to "a stick of dynamite whose long fuse is ignited"? What is her emotional state? What do you think is responsible for this? (3)
5. How is the road that leads to the grandfather's house described? What effect does this have in the story? (3)
6. What does the young girl want her grandfather to do? (3)
7. What do you understand when the girl says, 'out of my head, out of your head'? (3)
8. How would you explain the line, "Soft, chestnut hair appears, and there are eyes hidden under ample eyelids; I know they are amber"? What change is brought about in the mother at the end of the short story? (3)

SECTION C

Hillary, a tenth grade student, sampled an equal number of boys and girls at her high school and asked them to pick the one snack food they liked the most. She created a double horizontal bar chart to display the results of her survey. Summarise the information given by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant. (Word limit – about 200 words). (10 marks)

(Note: In each of the double horizontal bars, the bar on the top represents the preference of girls and the bar below it represents the preference of boys.)



