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Register Number:

DATE:

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE**

**End Semester Examination– April 2020**

**Fourth Semester General English (GE-414)**

**NSA/SSA SPECIAL COURSE/EJP/CPE**

**Time: 2 ½ hrs Max. Marks: 70**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**This paper has four printed pages and two sections**

Please indicate **SSA/NSASPL** course clearly on the front page of your answer booklet

Answer all sections

Stick to the suggested word limits

You are allowed to use a dictionary

**I Read the following passage carefully.** This passage is excerpted from *Knowing the Victorian City: Writing and Representation.*

Throughout the history of work on the Victorian city, the dominant mode of understanding it has been the construction of a series of binaries: city and country (the suburb was an invention of the nineteenth century); rich and poor; East End and West End; attraction and repulsion; possibilities and loss; the old and the new; loss of identity and self-fashioning (our terms, not theirs); movement and stasis; closeness and distance; disease and health; dirt and cleanliness; and so on. Though we are more suspicious of binaries today, we continue to use them in our writings about the city and in fact have added a few of our own, such as public and private, margin and centre. Nonetheless, much of what I see as the most exciting work in the last ten years has had as part of its agenda to challenge, or at the very least to complicate, these kinds of binaries.

We are ready to understand, through Walkowitz's marshalling and analysis of cultural, literary, and journalistic texts, the construction of the Jack the Ripper story as not only a particularly mythic urban story but the ultimate story of the 1880s, and one whose elements lingered well into the second half of the twentieth century. Its mythology was constructed out of established discourses about sexual danger: melodrama (Stead), the Mad Doctor (Weldon), stories of male sexual violence and female victimization.

Similar urban legends exist about Bangalore. Peter Colacco chronicles some of them in his book *Bangalore*. Rumour has it that a witch roamed the streets of Bangalore in the ‘90s, knocking door to door. Armed with the powers of deception, she would speak in the voice of a close relative and when you opened the door, you’d die. The residents devised a plan to save their lives by writing ‘Nale Ba’ (come tomorrow) outside their houses. The local Kannada-speaking witch was quite obedient after all – turned up at your home, looked at the sign, went away, came again tomorrow, looked at the sign and the cycle continues.

**I A. Answer the following questions in about 200 words: [2x15=30]**

1. The author seems to suggest that the most prominent manner of understanding the city though opposites (like public/private, closeness/distance) is not the most exciting way. Do you agree? Discuss while drawing from your reading, classroom discussion and personal experience.
2. How would you understand the adjective ‘urban’ with relation to legends that circulate in cities? How would you read urban legends associated with Bangalore?

**II Read this article by Tejaswi Udupa. It’s titled *Route No 36: The ride through Rajinikanth’s Bangalore.***

Every time a new Rajinikanth movie releases, people learn that Shivaji Rao Gaekwad used to be a bus conductor in Bangalore. *Kaala* has a nice Easter egg that reminds us of Rajini’s original name, too: a Marathi cop who's a fan of Rajini's character is named Shivaji Rao Gaekwad. I’m not writing about the movie or Rajini: all I want to address is a hole in this “superstar as a conductor” story.

So: you know he worked on route 10A. You may have dug deeper to find that the route was from Majestic to Srinagar. I decided to take the next step and travel the same route he did, to map how Bangalore had changed on Rajini’s route. So on a lazy Sunday afternoon, I took a metro to Majestic. Anachronistic but fitting: these days, travelling by the Metro is the only way to recreate the transit times of the '70s and 80s.

At Majestic, I did not look for 10A. A few years after Rajini's career in public transport ended, there was a complete “restructuring” of bus numbers. In the late 80s, the BTS decided to divide Bangalore into two circles, Inner and Outer. The inner circle got bus numbers from 1-190 and the outer circle got numbers 210-400ish. Both started from the South and went clockwise. The inner circle routes were “black board” and the outer circle buses that went to “mofussil” areas were “red board”.

In this scheme of things, the bus that went from Majestic to Srinagar in 2018 was not 10A but 36. I got in and plonked myself into the best window seat. The bus made its way out of the stand. I perked up, all attention to what I saw out of my window. Appropriately, I was shaken out of this by the conductor who ambled up to where I was sitting. I took out a hundred-rupee note and said “last stop”, a phrase I love saying in buses (and, to me, the best way to “learn” a new city: a central bus station, a bus with a free window seat, and a ticket to the terminus).

The conductor didn’t look anything like his famous predecessor, but his snark was worthy of a Rajini punch dialogue : “doDD manushyaru” (“big, rich people”) because I didn't have the sense to tender exact change. I got eighty rupees back with the ticket to Srinagar.

The bus gets out of Majestic and turns towards Anand Rao Circle, just as it would have during Rajini's time - but promptly gets onto the sort of structure Bangalore had none of back in those days: a flyover. On the right, you get a bird's eye view of Gandhinagar, the Kodambakkam of Bangalore. On the left, you get to peek into the Bangalore Turf Club’s race course. But during Rajini's time as a conductor, looking in from the bus was impossible: the walls of the race course were higher even than that of the complex that lay further along the bus route, the Bangalore Central Jail. Today, that place is the site of the ironically named Freedom Park, and the jail has shifted to Parappana Agrahara, close enough to the metaphorical prisons of Bangalore's IT sector.

Soon after, though, 36 passes a stretch of buildings that hasn’t changed since Rajini’s days on 10A. We pass the Raja Mahal of Raja Venkatram, the Officers' Enclave of South Western Railways, Maharani College, and so on, until we arrive at KR Circle, a landmark as prominent then as it is now. Now, the bus takes a right on to Nrupatunga Road, formerly Cenotaph Road, a street filled with historic significance. The beautiful “Revenue Survey Offices” building that we can spot through gaps in the tree cover was where the state government originally sat before the Vidhana Soudha came about.

It was the site of Bangalore's first public protest in independent India, for the right to a democratically elected government rather than the stopgap arrangement of the soi-disant princely rule of the Wodeyars of Mysore. (This protest had a slogan for the ages, “Arcot Boycott!”, because the Dewan then was Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar.) As a direct result, the state got its first chief minister, KC Reddy, beginning a hoary tradition of rich Reddys influencing state politics.

We glide down Nrupatunga Road, the first “white-topped” road in Bangalore, passing landmark after landmark. There goes the Government Science College on the right. There goes Daly Hall of the Mythic Society, formerly the spiritual home of quizzing in Bangalore. There goes Yavanika on the left, and the Reserve Bank of India building that looks like a kitchen implement from hell that's been dropped from the sky. Then the YMCA. Martha's Hospital on the right, and the police memorial that replaced the then-controversial, now demolished, cenotaph to British soldiers who died fighting Indian revolutionaries. The bus proceeds past two more historical landmarks of the city, Hudson's Church and the old and magnificent Corporation building.

After lulling us into the feeling that nothing much has changed on the Rajini route, the bus, instead of heading straight towards Town Hall and then KR Market as it used to, takes a left onto Mission Road. This is a detour that will take it past MTR and Lal Bagh, city favourites for breakfast and working up an appetite respectively. At the Lal Bagh main gate, the bus gets on to the road that hugs the walls of the park all the way until the West gate, named for GH Krumbiegel, the German gardener who was primarily responsible for Bangalore having trees that flower all year round.

Then on to Basavanagudi, the area that usually sends many old Bangaloreans into spasms of nostalgia. Looking out of my window as the bus goes down Vani Vilas Road (or up and down one more flyover, to be precise), I can see some old bungalows, but just as many new buildings: a city that is shedding its old skin for new. At Ramakrishna Ashrama, the bus turns onto Bull Temple Road, where again, if you look carefully, you are rewarded with sights Rajini may have seen every day.

Here and there, fonts from an older era stand out, like on the board of Gruhalakshmi Traders near Nirmala Bus Stop. But otherwise, it's all the bustle of a modern marketplace: most of these stores can’t be more than a couple of decades old. Only when the bus turns right onto 10th Main, just before PES College, do I begin to see many 1970s style homes, upon which Conductor Gaekwad may once have set his eyes.

But just as I am taking in those sights, “last stop” is upon us. Srinagar, true to its name, is a pretty bus stand: a well-asphalted clearing with three large rain trees and half a dozen buses lounging (including the 201 I got into next). The rain trees, and the fact that a residential layout could get away with a name as basic as Srinagar, points to a different era. Rajini's Bangalore today exists only in pockets. But the odd resilience of these pockets seems to be such that they aren't going away anytime soon. They’ll outlast even Rajini.

**II A. Answer the following questions in 5-8 sentences: [4x5=20]**

1. The goal of the essay is to “address a hole in this superstar as conductor story”. In your assessment, does the essay fulfil this goal?
2. For the author, the best way to “learn” a city is to travel end-to-end on a public transportation route. What would your ‘best way’ be?
3. What do you think the description of the Reserve Bank of India building is doing in the essay?
4. Look up the word ‘spasm’. Is it a word that you would use in association with a word like ‘nostalgia’?

**II B. Answer the following questions in 120-150 words: [2x10=20]**

1. Udupa’s essay is structured like a running commentary for a sports event. Pick three comments about individuals/communities that caught your attention and explain what they do to your understanding of the city.
2. The essay contains references to various events from the past. Do these references bring a historical perspective to the essay or do they come across as discrete bits of trivia? Corroborate your opinion based on your reading of the passage.

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