

GENERAL ENGLISH

Full Marks : 300

Time : 3 hours

The figures in the margin indicate full marks for the questions

1. Write a precis of the following passage : 50

Man, it would seem, has descended from arboreal apes. They lived a happy life in tropical forests eating coconuts when they were hungry, and throwing them at each other when they were not. They were perpetually occupied in gymnastics, and acquired an agility which to us is truly astonishing. But after some millions of years of this arboreal paradise, their numbers increased to the point where the supply of coconuts was no longer adequate. The population problem set in, and was dealt with in two different ways : those who lived in the middle of the forest learn to throw coconuts with such accuracy as to disable adversaries, whose consequent death relieved the pressure of population, but those who lived on the edge of the forest found another method : they looked out over the fields and discovered that they yielded delicious fruits of various kinds quite as pleasant as coconuts, and gradually they came down from trees and spent more and more time in the open on the ground. This had advantages and disadvantages : the obvious advantage was that it opened to them larger territories previously inaccessible ; the other advantage which in the long run proved the more important one was that since they did not need their arms and hands for climbing, they had the free use of them as tools. They soon discovered that if you live on the ground it is easy to pick up stones with sharp edges which are more effective

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missiles then coconuts. The even came to know that ones with sharp edged are preferable to those that are more rounded. And so when later armies of arboreal apes tried to imitate their pioneering predecessors, they were met with volleys of sharp stones, to which they had no adequate reply, and the terrestrial apes won great victories by superiority in munitions. All this happened some ten million years ago, but I will not pretend to know the date exactly. For nine million years or thereabouts, these terrestrial apes gradually extended their territory ; whereas the arboreal apes had sought safety by superiority in gymnastics, the terrestrial apes scored most by intelligence. They discovered, for instance, that you could open an oyster shell with a stone, and the succulent result was the first prize for scholastic eminence. In the course of some nine million years, the brains of some these apes gradually increased to the point which allows present day anthropologists to classify them as human, or very nearly so.

2. Write an essay on any one of the following topics : 100

- (a) Free thinking
- (b) Science in everyday life
- (c) International terrorism
- (d) Literature and life

3. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow :

People keep asking me why I do not write my own biography. I reply that I am not at all interesting biographically. I have never killed anybody. Nothing every unusual has happened to me. The first time I had my hands examined by a palmist he amazed me by telling me the history of my life, or as much of it as he had time for. Apparently he know about things I had never told to anyone. A few days later I mentioned in conversation with a friend (William

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Archer) that I had been dabbling in palmistry. He immediately put out his hand and challenged me to tell him anything in his life that I did not know from any acquaintance with him. I told him about himself exactly what the palmist had told me about myself. He too was amazed, just as I had been. We had believed our experiences to be unique, whereas they were ninety-nine point nine per cent the same ; and of the point one per cent the palmist had nothing.

It was as if a couple of monkeys had believed their skeletons to be unique. To the extent of a bone or two they would have been right ; for anatomists tell us that no two skeletons are exactly alike. Consequently a monkey is fully entitled to exhibit his unique bone or two as curiosities ; but the rest of his skeleton he must reject as totally uninteresting. He must keep it to himself on pain of boring people with it intolerably.

And here comes my difficulty as an autobiographer. How am I to pick out and describe that point five per cent of myself that distinguishes me from other men more or less fortunate than I ? What earthly interest is there in a detailed account of how the illustrious Smith was born at Number Six high street, and grew taller and taller until he was twenty, when the obscure Brown, Jones and Robinson, born at Number Seven, Eight and nine, went through exactly the same routine of growing, feeding, excreting, dressing and undressing, lodging and moving ? To justify a biography Smith must have had adventures. Exceptional things must have happened to him.

Now I have had no heroic adventures. Things have not happened to me : on the contrary it is I who have happened to them ; and all happening have taken the form of books and plays. Read them

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or spectate them ; and you have may whole story : the rest is only breakfast, lunch, dinner, sleeping, wakening and washing, may routine being just the same as everybody routine. Voltaire tells you in two pages all you need to know about Moliere's private life. A hundred thousand world about it world be unbearable.

Then there is the difficalty that when an adventure does come somebody else is usually mixed up in it. Now your right to tell your own story does not include the right to tell anyone else's. If you violate this right, and the other party still lives, you are sure to be indignantly contradicted ; for no two people recollect the same incident in the same way ; and very few people know what has actually happened must be artistic if they are to be readable.

The best autobiographies are confessions ; but if a man is a deep writer all his works are confessions. One of the greatest men who ever attempted an autobiography was Goethe. After his childhood, which is the readable part of even the worst autbiography, his attempts to escape from his subject are pitiable. He takes refuge in sketches of all the Toms, Dicks and Harrys he knew in his youth, persons utterly unmemorable, until the book drops from your hand and is not picked up again. I am one of the very few people who have read Rousseau's confessions through to the end, and can certify that from the moment he ceases to be a rather rascally young adventurer, and becomes the great Rousseau, he might as well be anybody else for all one can grasp or remember of his everyday life.

Questions :

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| (a) Write a summary of the above passage. | 40 |
| (b) What is the author's opinion on the palmist ? | 5 |
| (c) Why does the author find no justification for writing his autobiography? | 5 |

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- (d) What point does the author make by alluding to a couple of monkeys? 5
- (e) What makes autobiographies uninteresting? 5
4. Amplify the ideas contained in any two of the following : $30 \times 2 = 60$
- (a) Fools rush in where angels fear to tread
- (b) Look before you leap
- (c) A bird in hand is worth two in the bush
- (d) Art lies in concealing art
- (e) Beggars can't be choosers
5. Write the antonyms of any five of the following : $2 \times 5 = 10$
- (a) fierce
- (b) abstract
- (c) extensive
- (d) agree *****
- (e) dynamic
- (f) individualism
- (g) blunt
6. Frame sentences with any five of the following words as directed within brackets : $2 \times 5 = 10$
- (a) must (as a noun)
- (b) poor (as a noun)
- (c) slow (as a verb)
- (d) field (as a verb)
- (e) X-ray (as a verb)
- (f) Assam (as an adjective)
- (g) then (as an adjective)
7. Rewrite the following sentences as directed (any five) : $2 \times 5 = 10$
- (a) When the authorities had arrived, the ceremony began.
(Turn it into a simple sentence)

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(b) I am hearing a dog barking.

(Correct it)

(c) I am your friend.

(Add appropriate tag)

(d) The man died with his works unpublished.

(Turn it into a compound sentence)

(e) He heard his name called.

(turn it into active voice)

(f) He felt that a blaze of light dazzled his eyes.

(Turn it into passive voice)

(g) I promised him help.

(Turn it into an interrogative sentence)
