

Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay  
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences

Ph. D. Entrance Examination

English

I. Write essays (not exceeding 750 words) on any ONE of the following. Do not repeat writers/topics you will address in Question II (below). [25 marks]

- 1) Performativity
- 2) Modernism and the arts in India
- 3) Translation as Adaptation [Write a short note on the relationship]
- 4) Closure in detective fiction [Argue your point using particular works of detective fiction. Please note that you are not required to provide summaries of these texts]
- 5) Animal characters in modern fiction
- 6) Debating world literature

II. What is the topic you propose for your doctoral work? Identify and discuss the main issues/texts/research questions/authors (or a combination of these, as relevant) of the research project you wish to undertake. [25 marks]

III. Provide a critical reading of the following poem (not exceeding 750 words) [20 marks]

Rite of Passage

[A poem by Sharon Olds]

As the guests arrive at our son's party  
they gather in the living room—  
short men, men in first grade  
with smooth jaws and chins.  
Hands in pockets, they stand around  
jostling, jockeying for place, small fights  
breaking out and calming. One says to another  
*How old are you? —Six. —I'm seven. —So?*  
They eye each other, seeing themselves  
tiny in the other's pupils. They clear their

throats a lot, a room of small bankers,  
they fold their arms and frown. *I could beat you*  
*up*, a seven says to a six,  
the midnight cake, round and heavy as a  
turret behind them on the table. My son,  
freckles like specks of nutmeg on his cheeks,  
chest narrow as the balsa keel of a  
model boat, long hands  
cool and thin as the day they guided him  
out of me, speaks up as a host  
for the sake of the group.  
*We could easily kill a two-year-old*,  
he says in his clear voice. The other  
men agree, they clear their throats  
like Generals, they relax and get down to  
playing war, celebrating my son's life.