ASSIGNMENT
BEGC 133 BRITISH LITERATURE

Programme: BAG/2026/2027
Course Code: BEGC-133
Max. Marks:100

Answer all the questions in this assignment.

SECTION A

I. Explain the following passages with reference to the context.

10x4=40

1. "Is this a dagger, which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:--
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw."

2. "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!—One; two; why, then 'tis time to do't. –
Hell is murky.–Fie, my Lord, fie! A soldier and afeard? –what need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? –Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?"

3. "Raina: Well, it came into my head just as he was holding me in his arms and looking into my eyes that perhaps we only had our heroic ideas because we are so fond of reading Byron and Pushkin, and because we were so delighted with the opera that season at Bucharest….I wondered whether all his heroic qualities and his soldiership might not prove mere imagination when he went into a real battle. I had an uneasy fear that he might cut a poor figure there beside all those clever Russian officers".

4. "For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;"

SECTION B

II. Write short notes on the following:

5x4=20

1. The 'porter scene' in *Macbeth*.

2. The significance of the title *Far From the Madding Crowd.*
3. The influence of Ibsen on Bernard Shaw's dramatic work.
4. The central themes of Tennyson's poem 'Morte d'Arthur'.

III. Write short essays on the following:

10x2=20

1. Explain the significance of the literary landscape of Wessex in Hardy's novels. What is the role of Nature in the novel *Far from the Madding Crowd?*
2. Discuss the allegorical significance of Tennyson's poem 'Morte d'Arthur'.

SECTION C

IV. "Shakespeare skillfully employs soliloquys in his play *Macbeth* to explore the inner workings of the minds of his characters and to understand their intentions." Discuss.

20

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Answer

These lines are spoken by Macbeth in William Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth, Act II, Scene I. They belong to the celebrated dagger soliloquy, delivered just before Macbeth murders King Duncan, who has come to stay as a guest in Macbeth's castle at Inverness. Macbeth has already considered the consequences of killing Duncan and has been persuaded by Lady Macbeth to carry out the crime. He is now alone, waiting for the appointed moment, when the imagined dagger seems to appear before his eyes. The passage shows a mind caught between ambition, moral awareness and almost unbearable fear.

The first question, “Is this a dagger, which I see before me,” immediately presents uncertainty. Macbeth can see the weapon, but he cannot grasp it: “I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.” The contrast between sight and touch matters because it makes him question the evidence of his senses. When he calls it “a dagger of the mind,” he recognises the possibility that the vision has been produced by his own imagination. The expression “heat-oppressed brain” suggests a mind overstrained by anxiety, secrecy and the pressure of an approaching violent act. Shakespeare does not provide a straightforward medical explanation; rather, he dramatises how guilt can begin even before a crime has been committed.

The dagger has a strong dramatic function. Its handle appears to point towards Macbeth, as though inviting him to take it and move towards Duncan's chamber. It thus makes a private intention visible on the stage. The audience understands that Macbeth is no longer considering murder in an abstract way: the decision is becoming an immediate physical action. At the same time, the apparition may seem to lead him, raising the uncomfortable question of whether he is guided by some external force or by desires that he himself has created. His later recognition that it points along the way he was already going supports the second interpretation.