

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27**

**VI SEMESTER – B.A. EJ/EP**

**END-SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2024**

**(Examination conducted in May/June 2024)**

**OE 6323 – CONTEMPORARY INDIAN LITERATURE-II**

**(For current batch students only)**

**Time: 2 Hours Max Marks: 60**

**This paper contains FOUR printed pages, FOUR parts and THIRTEEN questions.**

**PART A**

**I. Answer ANY FIVE of the following questions in 2-3 sentences each. (5x2=10 Marks)**

1. What is the protagonist Joey’s occupation in Samit Basu’s *Chosen Spirits*? Why might the job title seem ironic?
2. In Tashan Mehta’s short story, how is the protagonist, Yukti, punished for creating her own universe?
3. In Vikram Seth’s poem “The Gift,” what gift does the poet receive? What does the poet long for after receiving the gift?
4. Imagine that you are running a film review channel similar to “Pretentious Movie Reviews”. What would be the title of your next film review video? Briefly explain the reason why you chose this title and why you find it funny.
5. What term does Twinkle Khanna recurrently use to refer to her husband, Akshay Kumar, in *Mrs Funnybones*? How does the use of this term affect your perception of her (and her relationship with) her husband?
6. Arundhathi Subramaniam’s poetry is notable for the use of extended metaphors. Explain briefly one of the possible ways in which you can interpret Subramaniam’s use of fabric in her poem “Textile”.

**PART B**

**II. Answer ALL THREE of the following questions in 5-6 sentences each. (3x5=15 Marks)**

1. What role does the natural landscape and topography play in Mamang Dai’s poetry? Base your answer on any one poem you have read this semester.
2. Ruchira Mandal, in her review of *Chosen Spirits*, comments, “What makes *Chosen Spirits* specifically Indian and particularly disorienting is its rootedness in current Indian socio-political events.” Describe two significant contemporary socio-political events the novel alludes to.
3. Read the following excerpt from the *Times of India* article titled “Laughter track: Kanan Gill riding the comedy wave” by Cajole Kapoor on “Pretentious Movie Reviews”.

Late one night, while watching a film on Star Gold, Gill realized that no one would review these obscure movies, and that he wanted to do so. “I genuinely enjoy watching such movies. They are so unusual and over-the-top, which is what makes them entertaining.

Are the films Gill and Rath review “genuinely” enjoyable or intentionally funny? What is so “pretentious” about “Pretentious Movie Reviews”?

**PART C**

**III. Answer ANY TWO of the following questions in 120-150 words each. (2x10=20 Marks)**

10. *The Sunday Guardian*’s review of Twinkle Khanna’s *Mrs Funnybones* states the following:

Even though Khanna shows remarkable restraint by not actually milking her family’s celebrity, and keeping the focus on “relatable things” like house help, managing kids and how her mother is prone to driving her crazy, you know you’re only reading this book because of who she is.

Was your reading of Twinkle Khanna’s novel mediated by your awareness “of who she is”? How far do you think Khanna’s status as a celebrity-housewife affects her experience or expression of domesticity? Briefly comment, providing examples from the text.

11. In his analysis of Vikram Seth’s literary style, Bruce King makes this remark,

In poetry and interviews, [Vikram Seth](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/english-literature-20th-cent-present-biographies/vikram-seth) has mocked experimental literature and romantic and extreme attitudes towards life. For him literature and life should be enjoyable, commonsensical, this worldly. For someone seemingly in favor of the conventional and practical, there is a Faustian side to his writing… In our time when being avant-garde and shocking has become expected of the modern, Seth is a different kind of revolutionary, an extremely daring artist using older literary models and pretending to be an old-fashioned writer for the general reader. Yet such drawing on older artistic styles to create a contemporary literature is one characteristic fashion of our time and often termed the postmodern.

In what ways does Vikram Seth’s poetry pretend to be old-fashioned? Does the apparent simplicity and this-worldliness of Seth’s writing allow the reader to relate to and comprehend his poetry with ease? Express your thoughts, based on your reading of this works this semester.

12. In her article titled “A Love Affair with Bhakti”, Arundhathi Subramaniam writes,

It took me time to see [bhakti] for the subversive animal that it is. Not weekend spirituality, not armchair spirituality, not institutional spirituality. Instead, a journey in which the seeker stakes her very life, demanding some intensely personal answers to ultimate questions. It took me a long time to see bhakti for the radical, scorching, self-implicating existential quest that it really is.

Attempt to study Arundhathi Subramaniam’s poem “God as a Traveller” as a modern rendition of bhakti poetry? How does she subvert and reconfigure the relationship between deity and devotee? Explain.

**PART D**

**IV. Read the following excerpt taken from Amit Sunilkumar Jaiswal’s article “Indianness in Indian English Poetry” and answer the question in 180-200 words. (1x15=15 Marks)**

Like all forms of art Indian English poetry too reflects the Indian society and Indian sensibility. Though imitative in the beginning in themes and styles, the modern poets writing in English successfully capture Indian life in all its hues and temper. Socio-political fabric, psychological issues, economic concerns, religious gusto all which go to make India the present India find a genuine and bold expression in modern Indian English poetry.

13. Do you find Jaiswal’s argument to be valid based on your reading of contemporary Indian poetry this semester? How far have the poems engaged with and reflected “the Indian society and Indian sensibility”? Attempt a comparative analysis of the poems you have read this semester.

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