

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086  
(For candidates admitted during the academic year 2019–2020 and thereafter)

B.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, NOVEMBER 2023  
BRANCH XII – ENGLISH  
THIRD SEMESTER

COURSE : MAJOR CORE  
PAPER : FICTION  
SUBJECT CODE : 19EL/MC/FN33  
TIME : 3 HOURS

MAX. MARKS: 100

Section A

I. Answer any four of the following in about 100 words each. (4x5=20 marks)

- 1) How do you differentiate between round and flat characters in fiction?
- 2) Explain the concept of focalisation with examples.
- 3) What is an Epistolary Novel?
- 4) Bring out the characteristic features of the Gothic Novel with an example.
- 5) Which subgenre of fiction deals with the life of a rogue? Elucidate the characteristic features of this genre.
- 6) Write a short note on the features of the Short Story.

Section B

II. Answer the following questions in about 500 words each. (3x20=60 marks)

- 7) a. Write an essay on Jane Austen's ability to craft psychologically complex and believable female characters with reference to the prescribed text.  
OR  
b. Comment on the postmodern narrative techniques used by Fowles in the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.
- 8) a. Elaborate on the stream of consciousness technique employed by Virginia Woolf in "The Mark on the Wall".  
OR  
b. Write a note on Magic Realism as a technique in fiction with special reference to Murakami's "The Shinagawa Monkey".
- 9) a. Explain how Chekov brings out the stratified social structure of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia through the story, "Vanka".  
OR  
b. Comment on Faulkner's characterisation of Emily in the Gothic short story "A Rose for Ms. Emily".

Section C

III. Analyse any one of the following extracts with reference to themes and techniques. (1x20= 20 marks)

- 10) On entering the drawing-room she found the whole party at loo, and was immediately invited to join them; but suspecting them to be playing high she declined it, and making her sister the

excuse, said she would amuse herself for the short time she could stay below with a book. Mr. Hurst looked at her with astonishment.

“Do you prefer reading to cards?” said he; “that is rather singular.”

“Miss Eliza Bennet,” said Miss Bingley, “despises cards. She is a great reader and has no pleasure in anything else.”

“I deserve neither such praise nor such censure,” cried Elizabeth; “I am not a great reader, and I have pleasure in many things.”

“In nursing your sister I am sure you have pleasure,” said Bingley; “and I hope it will soon be increased by seeing her quite well.”

Elizabeth thanked him from her heart, and then walked towards a table where a few books were lying. He immediately offered to fetch her others; all that his library afforded.

“And I wish my collection were larger for your benefit and my own credit; but I am an idle fellow, and though I have not many, I have more than I ever look into.”

Elizabeth assured him that she could suit herself perfectly with those in the room.

“I am astonished,” said Miss Bingley, “that my father should have left so small a collection of books.—What a delightful library you have at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy!”

“It ought to be good,” he replied, “it has been the work of many generations.”

“And then you have added so much to it yourself, you are always buying books.”

“I cannot comprehend the neglect of a family library in such days as these.”

“Neglect! I am sure you neglect nothing that can add to the beauties of that noble place. Charles, when you build your house, I wish it may be half as delightful as Pemberley.”

“I wish it may.”

“But I would really advise you to make your purchase in that neighbourhood, and take Pemberley for a kind of model.

There is not a finer county in England than Derbyshire.” “With all my heart; I will buy Pemberley itself if Darcy will sell it.”

“I am talking of possibilities, Charles.”

“Upon my word, Caroline, I should think it more possible to get Pemberley by purchase than by imitation.”

Elizabeth was so much caught by what passed, as to leave her very little attention for her book; and soon laying it wholly aside, she drew near the card-table, and stationed herself between Mr. Bingley and his eldest sister, to observe the game.

“Is Miss Darcy much grown since the spring?” said Miss Bingley; “will she be as tall as I am?”

“I think she will. She is now about Miss Elizabeth Bennet’s height, or rather taller.”

“How I long to see her again! I never met with anybody who delighted me so much. Such a countenance, such manners!—and so extremely accomplished for her age! Her performance on the piano-forte is exquisite.”

“It is amazing to me,” said Bingley, “how young ladies can have patience to be so very accomplished, as they all are.”

“All young ladies accomplished! My dear Charles, what do you mean?”

“Yes, all of them, I think. They all paint tables, cover skreens and net purses. I scarcely know any one who cannot do all this, and I am sure I never heard a young lady spoken of for the first time, without being informed that she was very accomplished.”

“Your list of the common extent of accomplishments,” said Darcy, “has too much truth. The word is applied to many a woman who deserves it no otherwise than by netting a purse, or covering a skreen. But I am very far from agreeing with you in your estimation of ladies in general. I cannot boast of knowing more than half a dozen, in the whole range of my acquaintance, that are really accomplished.”

“Nor I, I am sure,” said Miss Bingley.

“Then,” observed Elizabeth, “you must comprehend a great deal in your idea of an accomplished woman.”

“Yes; I do comprehend a great deal in it.”

“Oh! Certainly,” cried his faithful assistant, “no one can be really esteemed accomplished, who does not greatly surpass what is usually met with. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved.”

“All this she must possess,” added Darcy, “and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.”

“I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any.”

“Are you so severe upon your own sex, as to doubt the possibility of all this?”

“I never saw such a woman. I never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe, united.”

Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley both cried out against the injustice of her implied doubt, and were both protesting that they knew many women who answered this description, when

Mr. Hurst called them to order, with bitter complaints of their inattention to what was going forward. As all conversation was thereby at an end, Elizabeth soon afterwards left the room.

“Eliza Bennet,” said Miss Bingley, when the door was closed on her, “is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own; and with many men, I dare say, it succeeds. But, in my opinion, it is a paltry device, a very mean art.”

“Undoubtedly,” replied Darcy, to whom this remark was chiefly addressed, “there is meanness in all the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation.

Whatever bears affinity to cunning is despicable.”

11)

I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters' minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in (just as I have assumed some of the vocabulary and 'voice' of) a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God.

He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word. So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction; perhaps Charles is myself disguised. Perhaps it is only a game. Modern women like Sarah exist, and I have never understood them. Or perhaps I am trying to pass off a concealed book of essays on you. Instead of chapter headings, perhaps I should have written 'On the Horizontality of Existence', 'The Illusions of Progress', 'The History of the Novel Form', 'The Aetiology of Freedom', 'Some Forgotten Aspects of the Victorian Age' . . . what you will.

Perhaps you suppose that a novelist has only to pull the right strings and his puppets will behave in a lifelike manner; and produce on request a thorough analysis of their motives and intentions. Certainly I intended at this stage (Chap. Thirteen — unfolding of Sarah's true state of mind) to tell all — or all that matters. But I find myself suddenly like a man in the sharp spring night, watching from the lawn beneath that dim upper window in Marlborough House; I know in the context of my book's reality that Sarah would never have brushed away her tears and leant down

and delivered a chapter of revelation. She would instantly have turned, had she seen me there just as the old moon rose, and disappeared into the interior shadows. But I am a novelist, not a man in a garden — I can follow her where I like? But possibility is not permissibility. Husbands could often murder their wives — and the reverse — and get away with it.

But they don't.

You may think novelists always have fixed plans to which they work, so that the future predicted by Chapter One is always inexorably the actuality of Chapter Thirteen. But novelists write for countless different reasons: for money, for fame, for reviewers, for parents, for friends, for loved ones; for vanity, for pride, for curiosity, for amusement: as skilled furniture-makers enjoy making furniture, as drunkards like drinking, as judges like judging, as Sicilians like emptying a shotgun into an enemy's back. I could fill a book with reasons, and they would all be true, though not true of all. Only one same reason is shared by all of us: we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is. Or was. This is why we cannot plan. We know a world is an organism, not a machine. We also know that a genuinely created world must be independent of its creator; a planned world (a world that fully reveals its planning) is a dead world. It is only when our characters and events begin to disobey us that they begin to live. When Charles left Sarah on her cliff-edge, I ordered him to walk straight back to Lyme Regis. But he did not; he gratuitously turned and went down to the Dairy.

Oh, but you say, come on — what I really mean is that the idea crossed my mind as I wrote that it might be more clever to have him stop and drink milk . . . and meet Sarah again. That is certainly one explanation of what happened; but I can only report — and I am the most reliable witness — that the idea seemed to me to come clearly from Charles, not myself. It is not only that he has begun to gain an autonomy; I must respect it, and disrespect all my quasi-divine plans for him, if I wish him to be real. In other words, to be free myself, I must give him, and Tina, and Sarah, even the abominable Mrs Poulteney, their freedoms as well. There is only one good definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist. And I must conform to that definition.

The novelist is still a god, since he creates (and not even the most aleatory avant-garde modern novel has managed to extirpate its author completely); what has changed is that we are no longer the gods of the Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing; but in the new theological image, with freedom our first principle, not authority.

I have disgracefully broken the illusion? No. My characters still exist, and in a reality no less, or no more, real than the one I have just broken. Fiction is woven into all, as a Greek observed some two and a half thousand years ago. I find this new reality (or unreality) more valid; and I would have you share my own sense that I do not fully control these creatures of my mind, any more than you control — however hard you try, however much of a latter-day Mrs Poulteney you may be — your children, colleagues, friends, or even yourself.

But this is preposterous? A character is either 'real' or 'imaginary'? If you think that, hypocrite lecteur, I can only smile. You do not even think of your own past as quite real; you dress it up, you gild it or blacken it, censor it, tinker with it . . . fictionalize it, in a word, and put it away on a shelf — your book, your romanced autobiography.

We are all in flight from the real reality. That is a basic definition of Homo sapiens.

So if you think all this unlucky (but it is Chapter Thirteen) digression has nothing to do with your Time, Progress, Society, Evolution and all those other capitalized ghosts in the night that are rattling their chains behind the scenes of this book . . . I will not argue. But I shall suspect you.

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