

**STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086**  
**(For candidates admitted during the academic year 2008 – 09 & thereafter)**  
**SUBJECT CODE: EL/PC/CT25**  
**M. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2009**  
**BRANCH VII – ENGLISH**  
**SECOND SEMESTER**

**COURSE : MAJOR – CORE**  
**PAPER : CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THEORY**  
**TIME : 3 HOURS** **MAX. MARKS : 100**

**SECTION – A**

**I. Write short essays on any FOUR of the following in about 250 words each:**  
**(4x10=40)**

- a. What are the salient features of New Criticism?
- b. Show how formalist criticism has revolutionized the interpretation of imaginative literature.
- c. Elaborate on the Post-Structural concern with meaning.
- d. Explain the basic principles of semiotics.
- e. “The best framework for interpreting literature is to place it in its historical context”. Elaborate.
- f. Discuss the scope of the Deconstruction a list approach to interpreting literature.
- g. Show how Subaltern studies have expanded the scope of literary theory.

**SECTION – B**

**II. Write an essay on any ONE of the following in about 750 words : (1x20=20)**  
Explain the connection Freud draws between the unconscious and creative writing.

(OR)

Discuss Umberto Eco’s ideas on the importance of how Mass Communication is received and interpreted.

**III. Write an essay on any ONE of the following in about 750 words: (1x20=20)**

- a. Do you agree that the death of the author is the beginning of interpretation in the post structuralist context?
- b. Do you agree gender and the language of female subculture will and does impact the interpretation of texts.
- c. How does Lyotard define the post modern?

**SECTION – C**

**(2x10=20)**

**Practical Criticism**

**Attempt a critical analysis of any two of the passages given. Specify the theory and its aspects / concepts used in your analysis.**

- a. The Virgin Punishing the Infant  
(after the painting by max Ernst)

He Spoke early. Not the goo goo goo of infancy  
but I am God, Joseph kept away, carving himself  
a silent Pinocchio out in the workshed. He said  
he was a simple man and hadn’t dreamed of this.

She grew anxious in that second year, would stare  
 At stars saying. Gabriel? Gabriel? Your guess.  
 The village gossiped in the sun, the child was solitary  
 His wide and solemn eyes could fill your head.

After he walked our normal children crawled. Our wives  
 Were first resentful, the superior. Mary's child  
 Would bring her sorrow .... Better far to have a son  
 Who gurgled nonsense at your breast. Googoo googoo.

But I am God. We heard him through the window,  
 Heard the smacks which made us peep. What we saw  
 Was commonplace enough. But after, we  
 Wondered  
 Why the infant did not cry. And why the Mother did.  
 Carol Ann Duffy (B.1955)

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Middle-Class Jane  
 (Madhyamavagi Gargi)

Stone of suffering  
 Stone of time.  
 Stone of self – sacrifice.  
 Love of children as self-defence.  
 A clean well swept kitchen  
 She protects and maintains the home.  
 Her name: Mistress of the Household Domestic Goddess  
 Owner of the Home. Surrounded by it. Bound to it.  
 Spinning like a top,  
 Engrossed and unfulfilled.

The sharp smell of cooking  
 Spreads everywhere.

And men compose phrases,  
 Dash off headlines;  
 The Modern, Interdependent Women. Women's Progress  
 Women's Advance on the Path of Progress. Etc., etc  
 Sweet-sounding phrases.  
 Reports of progress that reach for the sky.

In the evening,  
 Twilight time, exhausted, shifting from hand to hand  
 Her handbag and shopping bags, she returns.  
 That's Middle-class Jane.  
 She's the subject of those headlines.

That image of her, carefully with her purse  
 She throws into the fire  
 That the tea may be ready sooner.  
 Her wings are clipped, the tea is poured.  
 Then at the cooker. The *chappatis*. The spices.  
 Difficult children and adults. Sullen servants.  
 Countless threads that bind her tight.  
 What a drag! She who cooks  
 Is the one who is cooked.  
 Indira Sant (B.1914-2000)

Translated by Vrinda Nabar and Nissim Ezekiel

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 Toba Tek Singh

Two or three years after the Partition, it occurred to the governments of Hindustan and Pakistan that, just as they had exchanged civilian prisoners, they should exchange the lunatics confined in the asylums as well. In other words, Muslim Lunatics interred in the asylums of Hindustan should be sent to Pakistan, and Sikh lunatics confined in the asylums of Pakistan should be handed over to Hindustan.

It is difficult to say if this was the right thing to do. Anyway, the decision was made by the wise, and accordingly, several high level conferences were held on either side, and a date set for the exchange. A thorough investigation followed. The Muslim lunatics whose families were still living in Hindustan were allowed to stay on. The rest were dispatched to the border. In Pakistan, where most of the Hindus and Sikhs had already migrated, the question of retaining anyone did not arise. All the Hindu and Sikh lunatics were sent to the border under police escort.

It is not known what transpired there, but when the news of the exchange reached here, in Lahore, it evoked some very interesting and intriguing responses. A Muslim lunatic who had been reading *The Zamindar* regularly for the last twelve years, was asked by his friend, "Manlvi Sahab, what is this Pakistan?"

"It's a place in Hindustan where they make cut throat razors", he answered after profound reflection.

His friend looked satisfied with the answer.

In the same vein, a Sikh lunatic asked another Sikh, "Sardarji, why are we being sent to Hindustan? We don't even know the language they speak there".

The other one smiled, "I know the language of the Hindustooras. These Hindustanis are devils and strut about haughtily...."

A Muslim lunatic, while taking his bath, raised the slogan "Pakistan Zindabad" with such gusto, that he slipped on the floor and passed out. There were some lunatics who were not really insane. Most of them were murderers, whose

relatives had bribed the officials to have them sent to the lunatic asylum, to save them from the hangman's noose. These men had some vague notions about why Hindustan had been partitioned and what Pakistan was, but they did not know the whole story. The newspapers were no help. The policemen on guard were ignorant and illiterates one could make out precious little from their conversations. All they knew was that there was a man named Mohammad Ali Jinnah whom people called Great Leader. And he had created a new land for the Muslims called Pakistan.

However, they did not know a thing about the actual locations and its boundaries. That is why all the inmates of the asylum who weren't completely insane were thoroughly confused about whether they were in Hindustan or Pakistan. If they were in Hindustan, then where was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how was it possible that only a short while ago they had been in Hindustan, when they had not moved from the place at all?

One lunatic got so embroiled in this Hindustan Pakistan rigmarole that he became all the more insane. One day, as he was sweeping the floor, he suddenly climbed up a tree. Perched on a branch, he delivered a two hour long speech on the delicate Hindustan Pakistan issue. When the guards asked him to come down, he climbed up even higher. When they threatened him, he said, "I want to live in neither Hindustan nor Pakistan....."

I'd rather live on this tree "....."

Sa'dat Hasan Manto

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