

**2024**  
**ENGLISH**  
**(Honours Elective)**  
**Paper: ENG-HE-6026**  
**(World Literatures)**  
**Full Marks: 80**  
**Time: 3 hours**

(The figures in the margin indicate full marks for the questions)

**1. Answer the following as directed:** 1 × 10 = 10

(a) What is the name of the missionary who runs a school in the town in A Bend in the River?

Answer: **Father Huismans**

(b) Name the French woman who was romantically involved with Salim.

Answer: **Yvette**

(c) What is the occupation of Indar in the story, A Bend in the River?

Answer: **Indar is an academic/intellectual and later becomes a government official.**

(d) The Unnatural and Accidental Women does not address the issue of violence against indigenous women.

(Write True or False)

Answer: **False**

(e) Name the literary movement to which Julio Cortázar was associated with.

Answer: **Latin American Boom**

(f) What does the protagonist initially believe about the detail he discovers in the photograph in Blow-Up?

Answer: **He believes it captures a romantic or mundane scene of a couple in the park.**

(g) When was the story Blow-Up published?

Answer: **1959**

(h) What does the repetition of the phrase "The song is gone" signify in Bora Ring?

Answer: **It signifies the loss of Aboriginal culture and traditions.**

(i) What does the phrase "The mystic drum calls, calls, calls" suggest in the poem?

Answer: **It suggests a spiritual or cultural awakening; a call to ancestral or communal identity.**

(j) Kishwar Naheed is a Pakistani poet. (Write True or False)

Answer: True

**2. Answer the following questions:** 2x5=10

(a) What motivates Salim to leave his home on the coast and move to the interior of Africa?

Answer: Salim is motivated by a desire for independence, escape from his stagnant coastal community, and the opportunity to seek personal and economic growth in the changing political and economic landscape of the African interior.

(b) What is the main theme of the play The Unnatural and Accidental Women?

Answer: The main theme is the systemic violence against Indigenous women and the erasure of their identities and stories, highlighting issues of marginalization, racism, and gender-based violence.

(c) Mention any two symbols from The Little Prince.

Answer: 1. The rose – symbolizes love, beauty, and the complexity of relationships.

2. The baobab trees – represent negative forces or problems that can grow uncontrollably if not dealt with early.

(d) What is the protagonist's occupation in Blow-Up and how does his occupation influence his perception of reality?

Answer: The protagonist is a photographer, and his occupation causes him to question the nature of reality, as he becomes obsessed with interpreting and reconstructing truth through photographic images, blurring the line between appearance and actuality.

(e) What is the poet trying to say in the line "But neither the Earth's nor woman's desire to manifest life dies"?

Answer: The poet is expressing that the creative and life-giving forces of both Earth and women are enduring and resilient, continuing to persist despite suffering, oppression, or destruction.

**3. Answer any four of the following questions: 5×4 = 20**

(a) Discuss the significance of the motif of photography in the story Blow-Up.

Answer: Photography in Blow-Up represents the tension between appearance and reality. The protagonist, a photographer, captures what he believes is an ordinary moment but later discovers hidden details upon enlarging the image. This process mirrors the human tendency to reinterpret memories and perceptions when examined more closely. Photography serves as a metaphor for the elusive nature of truth and the fragility of objective reality.

(b) Comment on the narrative techniques employed by Julio Cortázar in his short story Blow-Up.

Answer: Cortázar uses a mix of first-person narration and metafictional elements, where the narrator reflects on his storytelling process. The stream-of-consciousness style blurs the line between narrator and protagonist, creating an introspective, almost dreamlike tone. The shifts between past and present, reality and imagination, deepen the ambiguity and reinforce the theme of perception versus reality.

(c) Comment on the setting of Judith Wright's poem Bora Ring.

Answer: The setting of Bora Ring is a desolate Australian landscape where a sacred Aboriginal ceremonial ground lies abandoned. This setting underscores the poem's themes of loss and cultural erasure, as the once-vibrant traditions and songs of the Indigenous people have vanished due to colonization. The silence and emptiness of the land evoke a haunting sense of mourning for a displaced culture.

(d) What kind of culture is reflected through Gabriel Okara's poem The Mystic Drum? Elaborate.

Answer: The Mystic Drum reflects African traditional culture, spirituality, and its connection to nature and community. The drum symbolizes ancestral voice and cultural heartbeat, calling people together and linking the physical with the spiritual. However, the poem also reflects the disruption of this culture, possibly by Western influence or personal disillusionment, showing a shift from unity and mysticism to silence and detachment.

(e) How does Jean Arasanayagam use imagery to depict the aftermath of war in 'Two Dead Soldiers'?

Answer: Arasanayagam uses stark and poignant imagery to convey the brutality and futility of war. The title itself evokes death and loss. Descriptions of mangled bodies, silence, and desolation reflect the physical and emotional toll of conflict. The imagery also extends to the emotional aftermath—grief, trauma, and the dehumanizing impact of violence.

(f) Attempt a brief character sketch of Indar from 'A Bend in the River'.

Answer: Indar is an educated, introspective man caught between cultures. Originally from the same coastal community as Salim, he seeks meaning through academic pursuits and later aligns with political powers in the interior. He embodies the intellectual class's struggle in postcolonial societies—alienated, disillusioned, and constantly searching for identity and purpose in a rapidly changing world.

**4. Answer any four of the following questions: 10×4=40**

(a) Discuss the central idea of the poem, 'The Mystic Drum'.

Answer: The central idea of 'The Mystic Drum' by Gabriel Okara revolves around the powerful connection between spirituality, love, and community in traditional African culture. The drum symbolizes a pulsating life force that unites the natural, human, and spiritual worlds. However, as the poem progresses, the fading beat of the drum reflects cultural disruption, personal disillusionment, and the intrusion of external influences that weaken communal bonds and indigenous traditions.

(b) How do the power dynamics in 'A Bend in the River' influence the trajectory of the narrative?

Answer: In 'A Bend in the River', power dynamics between the new African elite, post-colonial leadership, and foreign investors shape the storyline. The rise and fall of the central authority affect Salim's business, relationships, and sense of stability. As political instability grows, personal ambitions collapse, businesses fail, and characters like Salim are forced into displacement. The constantly shifting power mirrors the chaos and unpredictability of post-colonial African nations.

(c) Historically situate Shu Ting's Assembly Line and elaborate the socio-political contexts that inspired the poem.

Answer:

Shu Ting's Assembly Line is rooted in the socio-political climate of post-Cultural Revolution China during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The poem critiques the mechanical, dehumanized nature of industrial labor under a rigid socialist system. It reflects the oppressive conditions of mass production, where individuality and creativity are stifled for collective economic goals. Shu Ting, part of the "Misty Poets," used veiled language and subtle metaphors to express discontent with political conformity and the suppression of personal freedom.

(d) Discuss how Marie Clements' play, The Unnatural and Accidental Women provides a social commentary on the rights of indigenous women as well as the issues of race.

Answer:

Marie Clements' play addresses the systemic neglect and violence faced by Indigenous women in Canada. Through the stories of murdered Indigenous women, the play highlights racial discrimination, institutional apathy, and the historical erasure of Indigenous lives and voices. It exposes the intersection of gender and racial violence and critiques the justice system's failure to protect marginalized communities, ultimately demanding recognition, remembrance, and accountability.

(e) How does Judith Wright address issues of indigenous culture and colonization in the poem, Bora Ring?

Answer:

In Bora Ring, Judith Wright laments the loss of Aboriginal traditions due to colonization. The abandoned ceremonial site becomes a symbol of cultural destruction and disconnection. The poem mourns not only the physical loss of Indigenous spaces but also the spiritual and societal devastation wrought by colonial settlers. Wright's tone is elegiac and respectful, acknowledging the deep damage inflicted on Indigenous communities and emphasizing a collective cultural amnesia.

(f) Mention some of the literary devices employed in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's The Little Prince, and explain how these devices elevate the narrative technique of the text.

Answer:

The Little Prince uses allegory, symbolism, and simple, poetic language to craft a profound narrative. Allegory transforms the story into a philosophical reflection on love, loss, and human nature. Symbols like the rose (love) and the baobab trees (dangerous habits) deepen meaning beyond the surface. The childlike narration masks deep existential questions, making the story accessible to both children and adults while inviting multiple interpretations.

(g) Critically comment on the idea of World Literature with any two texts of your choice.

Answer:

World Literature promotes cross-cultural understanding and highlights the universality of human experiences. For example, *A Bend in the River* shows the complex legacy of colonialism beyond a Western lens, while *The Little Prince* transcends national boundaries to explore love and responsibility. Both works, though emerging from different cultural contexts, resonate globally, demonstrating how literature can foster empathy across geographical divides.

(h) Can *The Grass is Really Like Me* be analyzed from the perspective of eco-feminism? Justify your arguments.

Answer:

Yes, *The Grass is Really Like Me* by Kishwar Naheed can be analyzed through an eco-feminist lens. The poem draws parallels between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature, suggesting that both are subjected to forces of control and destruction. The poet emphasizes resilience and regeneration, illustrating that just as nature endures environmental damage, women persist despite social oppression. This interconnected struggle highlights core eco-feminist ideas.