

ORIENTAL STUDIES TRIPOS Part II

South Asian Studies

Wednesday 4 June 2008 09.00 – 12.00

SA.23 WOMEN AND LITERATURE IN INDIA

*Candidates should answer **three** questions.*

*All questions are of **equal** value.*

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** Section booklet.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20 Page Answer Book x 1

Rough Work Pad

**You may not start to read the questions
printed on the subsequent pages of this
question paper until instructed that you may
do so by the Invigilator.**

1. **EITHER:** (a) How do Mahadevi Verma's writings (including her poetry, essays on the modern woman, and life-sketches) reflect her ambivalent social position as a woman writer?

OR: (b) What was so significant about Mahadevi Verma's use of the poetic 'I'?
2. In Krishna Sobti's *Ai Ladki*, how does the mother's own understanding of family and womanhood compare to her daughter's perception of these concepts?
3. **EITHER:** (a) How would you characterise Shaman's gender performance as she moves through childhood and adolescence into adulthood in Ismat Chughtai's *The Crooked Line*?

OR: (b) Rashid Jahan and Ismat Chughtai were both members of the Progressive Writers' Movement. How would you compare their works?
4. Discuss the importance of 'audience' to Baby Halder's autobiographical narrative *A Life Less Ordinary*.
5. **EITHER:** (a) How does 'modernity' offer different possibilities for the three generations of *kabutari* women in Maitreyi Pushpa's Hindi novel *Alma Kabutari*?

OR: (b) What does Maitreyi Pushpa's Hindi novel *Alma Kabutari* suggest about the relationship between the *kajja* and *kabutara* communities through characters such as Rana, Alma, and Mansaram, including the possibility (or impossibility) of crossing the boundary from one community to the other?
6. **EITHER:** (a) How does the narrative's focalisation through the daughter Sunaina contribute to an evolving view of the mother in Geetanjali Shree's Hindi novel *Mai*?

OR: (b) Discuss the complex symbolism of '*parda*' and the ambivalent meaning of 'freedom' in Geetanjali Shree's *Mai*.
7. Discuss the character Krishna's position amidst the shifting hostilities between English and Hindi in the media of post-independence India as described in Mrinal Pande's *My Own Witness*.

8. What narrative strategies does Mahasweta Devi use to highlight deeper links between local elites and larger capitalist forces in the oppression of tribal people?
9. Assess the controversies surrounding the activism and political essays of writer Arundhati Roy.
10. Discuss the 'politics of production' of the text *Viramma* in terms of subaltern orality and the genre of the testimonio.
11. How does Hindi author Mannu Bhandari portray the ambivalent experience of modernity in short-stories such as 'Nayak, Khalnayak, Vidushak', 'Trishanku', and/or 'Salt'?
12. What aesthetic devices does Nai Kavita poet Amrita Bharti employ to express her personal spiritual journey?
13. **EITHER:** (a) What dilemmas do Indian writers face when they choose to write in English? How have several prominent writers chosen to address these issues?

OR: (b) How does Anita Desai use the characters Bim and Tara to reveal the ambivalent experience of the diasporic return in *Clear Light of Day*?

END OF PAPER