



Register Number:

Date:

ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE- 27
III SEMESTER BA/BSc/BCA/BVC/BSW/BCom
END-SEMESTER EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2019
AE 314 - ADDITIONAL ENGLISH

TIME: 2 ½ Hours

MAX MARKS: 70

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This paper contains **FOUR** printed pages and **FOUR SECTIONS**.
2. You will lose marks for exceeding word limits.
3. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.

I. Read the following article by Geetika Mantri from *The News Minute* dated October 22, 2016.

Chetan Bhagat, best-selling author of the recently (2016) released *One Indian Girl* describes the book as one that “explains feminism in a light simple manner” in an interview to *The Wire*. The novel is written in the voice of a female protagonist who is strong, independent, rich and opinionated- clearly a recipe for a feminist, right? Check out four of his statements that prove he still needs a crash course on feminism:

- “You want to tell little girls they don’t need men?” He seems really worried that girls will one day say they no longer need men. A worried-looking Chetan made this statement in an interview to *The Wire*, where he discusses *One Indian Girl* (and, sadly, more). He went on: “Men need women and women need men, yes they do! Where is this feminism? What is this feminism?” (We at *The News Minute* are confused. We thought he just told *The Wire* that his book explained feminism in a “light, simple manner”. Never mind.)
- In ‘One Indian Girl’, Radhika meets a man who thinks feminism is man vs woman and that we should all follow humanism. Here’s how the exchange goes:

[Radhika] “You haven’t heard the word ‘feminist’?”

“Of course I have. I sort of know what it is. Equal rights for women, right? Is that the definition?”

“Feminism is a movement which seeks to define, establish and achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal and social rights for women. A feminist is someone who believes in this movement.”

“Wow”, he said.

And then he mansplains feminism as:

“I think all human beings should have equal rights. It’s not men versus women, it’s human versus human. Feminist is a wrong term. It should be humanist. The right question is ‘Are you a humanist?’ Well, everyone should be.”

While any “strong” feminist, which Bhagat’s Radhika claims to be, would refute him, Radhika agrees with him.

- Chetan Bhagat posted on his twitter handle “If feminism means no girlieness left in this world, then isn't that kind of sad? r feminists ok w flirting for eg?” (Jan 22, 2010). No, it isn’t sad, actually, if girls choose not be “girly”.At the very core of feminism, Chetan Bhagat, is choice. Don’t confuse sex, gender and stereotype.
- In an interview to Nandini Nair of *Open Magazine*, it appears Chetan Bhagat was unable to disguise his lack of understanding (and support) of all things feminist. Here’s what he said:“These are elitist bullies, these feminists. They bully men. They bully women. And they say, ‘Until you are with us 100%, don’t talk about feminism’. That is not caring for a cause.”No, Mr Bhagat, NO. The mistake you’re making here is the same one mansplainers around the world make- they understand feminism and feminists as a singular, uniform movement. In a (rare) nuanced burst in the same interview, Bhagat had demonstrated how feminism changes with context:“In a village, feminism is ‘humaaribeti ko school meindaal do (Enrol my daughter in school)’. In a small city like Indore, feminism is ‘Sunday ko mujhe lunch nahinbanaanahai. Mujhebaaharjaanahai (I don’t want to cook lunch on Sunday, let’s go out),” he had said.In calling feminists “elitist bullies” who want “100%” agreement, he contradicts himself by considering them one homogeneous breed of people and hence proving, he has no idea what it’s like to be one.

I.A. Answer ANY TWO of the following questions in about 150 words each:(2x10=20)

1.“Feminist is a wrong term. It should be humanist. The right question is ‘Are you a humanist?’ Well, everyone should be.” Do you think Chetan Bhagat is right in talking about feminism in this fashion? Close read the above passage and validate your answers.

2. How do you understand the word “mansplain” from the way it is used in the passage?
3. The autobiographical element in Bhagat’s novels ensures that they are realistic portrayals of Indian campus life. Comment.

II. Answer the following question in about 200 words: (1x15= 15)

1. Do you think Euripides’ critique of a male-dominated society can serve as a counter to Chetan Bhagat’s portrayal of women? Give examples from your reading of the novels prescribed in the semester.

III. Read the following excerpt from a 1998 article by Janet Mason Ellerby in *The Lion and The Unicorn*.

Because of the danger and isolation of his life, one would think that Salman Rushdie would have followed *The Satanic Verses* with a novel that would prudently avoid the controversy over the censorship of fiction. However, it is the provocative question, “What’s the use of stories that aren’t even true?” (20) that drives the narrative of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Under the spell of this children’s story, we learn that the ability to tell and hear stories is not only gratifying but, in fact, a necessary ingredient of democratic life. Here is a satiric story that we can read with children that is not a polemic on censorship but rather an engaging narrative that confronts and contributes to the discourse on this issue. Like George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is an allegory of an all-too-real situation that we can explore in order to understand more deeply the complexities of censorship. Like Michael Ende in *The Neverending Story*, Rushdie addresses the serious theme of storytelling and its critical link to cultural emancipation within his own rollicking story of a boy’s fabulous adventures.

Rushdie’s motives and intentions for writing *Haroun* are intimately bound up with—indeed, built up by—his singular historical context, the narrative of his life. That is, they are influenced by what Paul Smith calls the “subject’s self-narrative” (158). First, he had promised his son, Zafar, that he would write a book for him after completing *The Satanic Verses*. Once Rushdie was forced into exile and separated from his son, the promise became even more pressing. Second, a children’s book gave Rushdie a safer venue in which to write again, which was not easy—after the imposition of the fatwa, he confessed, “I felt that everything I had put into the act of being a writer had failed, had simply been invalidated by what had happened...I spent an awful lot of time thinking I would never write again, not because I couldn’t but because

I didn't want to" (qtd. in Fenton 33). Third, Rushdie surely must have been motivated by the chance to wrestle with his awful dilemma of seclusion, danger, and enforced silence. He needed to write a story that could free him to inscribe a happy ending, one that would bring imaginary closure to his specific exile, even if only on the pages of a book for his child. Fourth, *Haroun* gave Rushdie the space to negotiate both his own situation and the social processes of despotic censorship and menace that led to his exile, a space in which he could both allegorically mock and describe the character of his oppressors. Given this biographical and historical context, *Haroun* can be read not only as a children's story but as a politically subversive narrative of resistance.

III.A. Answer the following questions in about 5-7 SENTENCES each: (4x5= 20)

1. Ellerby says "It is the provocative question, "What's the use of stories that aren't even true?" that drives the narrative of *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*." Do you see a "provocation" in the question? Elaborate.

2. The author states that *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is not a "polemic on censorship." From the discussions in class and your reading of the text, do you agree/disagree with this statement? Give suitable arguments.

3. "Rushdie's motives and intentions...are influenced by what Paul Smith calls the "subject's self-narrative"." Who is the subject? Give evidence.

4. Are there any immediate parallels between Rushdie's plight and that of the protagonist in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*? Use examples from your reading to explain your answer.

IV. Answer the following question in about 200 words: (1x15= 15)

1. "Narayan achieved the tremendous task of Indianising English before the likes of Salman Rushdie made its 'chutneyfication' respectable." Do you agree with the above statement? Support your answer by giving examples from the various Narayan selections in your syllabus.

(*chutneyfication: the adoption of Indian elements into English)