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**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27**

**Semester Examination—April 2018**

**IV Semester B.A/BSc—General English**

**GE 414: Special Course for II SSA/ II NSA/ II EJP Students (IV Semester)**

**Mapping the City for II BA SSA/II NSA/II EJP Students**

**Time 2 ½ hours Max Marks: 70**

**(This question paper has four printed pages)**

**Instructions**

**1.This General English paper is for II SSA/ II EJP/ II NSA (IV Semester) students who have chosen the SPL paper Mapping the City’**

**2.You are allowed to use a dictionary**

**3. Please clearly indicate which particular stream you belong to in the answer scripts as II SSA or II EJP or II NSA (IV Semester)**

**4. Please mark your question nos. appropriately**

**5. Do not exceed the word limit. You will lose marks if you do**

**6. Read the paper carefully and then answer the questions appropriately**

**Read the following passage by Anjali Vaidya titled “Peering through the Cracks in the California Dream**” **and answer the questions set on it**

A good rule of thumb in Bangalore, India is that one should not visit shopping malls on Sunday afternoons—particularly not on a rainy Sunday afternoon, when nobody inside the mall is going to be inclined to leave, and everyone out on the wet pavement will see the climate-sheltered building as a welcome relief. I have avoided malls on weekends these last ten years as they have mushroomed across my adopted city. I have avoided them so assiduously that I have forgotten my own rule, and here I am at Mantri Mall on a Sunday afternoon, attempting not to succumb to the general stampede of humanity.

The demographic here is hard to place: families on outings, teenagers, students, IT professionals, seniors escorted by grandchildren. The commonality seems to be a combination of spending power and shopping frenzy. ‘‘Even your wallet will ﬁnd our cuisine irresistible,’’ reads a large poster for a new restaurant. Multihued streamers echo the colors of the Indian ﬂag: they hang from high above in green, saffron, and white, drawing the gaze upward and away from the crowds toward layers of shops rising out of sight—a manystoried, surreal homage to consumerism. Swensen’s Ice Cream lies tucked away in a corner of the ﬁrst ﬂoor of Mantri Mall. Boston-based Au Bon Pain once sat right beside it, but it has vanished, as stores have a way of doing in Bangalore. Outside Swensen’s, a sign proclaims that the chain has been ‘‘America’s favorite ice cream store for sixty years.’’ Having spent half my life in various corners of the United States, from the Paciﬁc Northwest to the Northeast, and most recently Southern California, I ought at some point to have seen a place that sold ‘‘America’s favorite ice cream,’’ and yet I have never heard of Swensen’s outside India. My husband and I seek refuge from the Sunday crowd inside the ice cream parlor, where we are greeted by a picture of Earle Swensen himself. The man is diminutive and white-haired, a broad smile on his face. He holds an ice cream scoop in one hand, arms open wide in welcome. Swensen opened the ﬁrst branch of his ice cream parlor in San Francisco in 1948, an era and place that every piece of the store’s décor is designed to evoke. Stained-glass lampshades hanging above the counter spell out ‘‘Swensen’s’’ in exaggerated old-style lettering. On the walls, alongside brighter-than-life photographs of ice cream sundaes, hang sketch-like depictions of the Golden Gate Bridge and a row of Victorian houses. American pop music plays from the speakers, muddling the 1950s atmosphere with songs from the 1980s and 1990s. The menu lists ice cream combinations

with names like ‘‘Earthquake’’ and ‘‘Gold Rush,’’ with the inclusion of ﬂavors such as lychee and mango as a brief concession to the store’s actual Indian location. We order ‘‘Ring-a-Ding,’’ a name that evokes San Francisco’s cable cars and Frank Sinatra’s crooning.

Our order looks impressive as it arrives in a tall glass, three scoops high and drenched in chocolate syrup, but the ice cream proves unexceptional. Bangalore has many better and cheaper options for sweets. As is increasingly common with multinational chains across India, the price of ice cream here is about the same as in the United States. Nonetheless, Swensen’s is packed with teenagers and twenty-somethings. Why is it so popular? Swensen’s is a relative newcomer to India, one of the latest in a growing stream of American brands that are carving out niches and spawning hybrids across Asia. In the mid-1990s, when my family moved from rural Washington to Bangalore, this trend was just beginning. Pizza Hut was a novelty when it opened here, the year after we arrived. The line to get in stretched all the way down through the building on Cunningham Road. Now, there is little from across the Paciﬁc, be it language or cuisine or branding, that cannot be found in this city. Bangalore has morphed from the Garden City of India to the Silicon Valley of India, in the process becoming overwhelmed by gridlocked trafﬁc beneath the yellow of an eternally smoggy sky. Bangalore’s skyline has lost the gentle contours of tree-lined avenues, replaced by jagged high-rises and new buildings under constant construction. Here, the only constant seems to be a yearning for imagined futures, alongside a burning nostalgia for a vanished past. Swensen’s tastes of a nostalgia for a past that I have never seen. The ice cream parlor is ﬁlled with cultural cues meant to comfort the consumer with signs of a period of economic stability and general prosperity in post-war America. ‘‘Remember these good memories of childhood,’’ the decor seems to whisper, with photographs of children smiling at us in the California sun as we eat our ice cream in 1950sstyle booths. ‘‘Remember the soda fountain down the street? The chime of the cable cars? Old Blue Eyes? How good things were back then.’’ I can imagine those things, but I certainly cannot remember them. I have never been to San Francisco. Those are not my memories, and this is not my nostalgia. Nor does this nostalgia belong to the vast majority of the ice cream parlor’s patrons. Swensen’s has shops all over Asia and South America.

Bangalore alone has seven Swensen’s ice cream parlors. The ice cream that markets itself as America’s favorite, however, has largely disappeared from the United States. Although the chain once spread across the country, by the 1980s, it was in retreat in its homeland. A friend of mine recently told me about a Swensen’s on Bristol Street in Santa Ana, California, where he grew up: ‘‘Of the ice cream places nearby, it was by far the best quality,’’ he said. ‘‘It had a premium reputation, and a lot of that was bound up with it being old-fashioned and old-style.’’ Only four outlets remain in the United States today, one of which is the original Swensen’s in San Francisco. During the Great Recession, Swensen’s, like so many other American brands, looked toward growing markets in the developing world. And as it crossed the ocean, the meaning of Swensen’s 1950s semiotics fundamentally changed. Details that signiﬁed an imagined comforting past were transformed into signs of an imagined shining future. Bangalore is replete with nostalgia for a world that never existed. The Krispy Kreme on bustling Church Street has walls decorated with sepia-toned photographs of small-town Depression-era Americana. Cheerful employees in anachronistic aprons manage a conveyer belt that shines in the warm lights, carrying lightly fried donuts that receive a ﬁnal perfect touch, a decadent waterfall of sugar icing. ‘‘Remember back when you could walk down the street to your neighborhood donut maker?’’ this place seems to ask. ‘‘Remember the time before malls and chain stores took over the world?’’

I don’t, actually. Neither would any of the other customers here, many of whom are younger than me. But Bangalore is replete with imagined pasts, as commercial establishments and the popular media claim pieces of nostalgia for themselves. This sometimes makes the everchanging present seem strangely out of reach. Corner-house ice cream parlor was founded in Bangalore thirty years ago; enough time has passed since then to have seen the expanding city change several times over. On its walls are black-and-white pictures of a Bangalore that predates the store by decades. Here are the gentle curves of colonial-era architecture in pre-independence India, broad promenades where long-dead ﬁgures meander, dusty roads, and spreading trees. ‘‘You remember,’’ the images whisper. ‘‘This is what you’ve lost.’’ I recognize few landmarks in these black-and-white photographs, which also line the walls of seventy-year old Koshy’s Restaurant, nearby. Between the two, the India Coffee house gives the impression with spartan blue paint and dated coffee ads that it has not changed decor in ﬁfty years, despite the fact that this particular outlet is scarcely ﬁve years old. My own memories are no bulwark against this deluge. I cannot tell you what stood where Krispy Kreme now stands, nor Starbucks, nor Swensen’s, nor Taco Bell, another California import. I do not remember what was here before the India Coffee house. In ﬁve years or ten, these too will be gone. Walking through the chaos of Bangalore, a city ﬁlled with newly minted nostalgia for an imported American dream, what I ﬁnd myself looking for is a world that I have never known. I peer through the cracks in barred-up gates to ﬁnd abandoned lots overgrown by spreading trees and crumbled buildings revived by squatters. Lonely artwork painted on walls speak of lives that spill outside the story’s bounds. There is a world here beyond nostalgia, where I catch glimpses of other pasts, and perhaps alternative futures.

**Answer the following in about 150 words each (4x10=40)**

1. What aspects of nostalgia and mall-going experience does the writer describe in her article? What notion of nostalgia and city life does she represent here? Comment on her understanding of both city and nostalgia using appropriate arguments.
2. Among the many issues the writer raises is the role and function of commercial branding. What is your view of branding itself? Does it project the city as an avowed supporter of branding? Give suitable reasons to support your point of view.
3. The writer in the above article makes references to Bangalore weather and Bangalore traffic? Do you consider the descriptions she offers appropriate or are they far too simplistic? Give appropriate reasons for your answer.
4. The writer propounds a peculiar view of Bangalore employing Ice-cream parlour, malls and rain-drenched Sunday afternoons. Do you find such a view sharp and adequate or naïve and insufficient? Using your reading on the course how do you assess the writer’s perspectives. Support your argument with appropriate evidence.

**Read this extract from an EPW article written soon after the cine icon RajKumar was abducted.**

…Is it because he is a wonderful human being? Even if he is, how many had interacted with him? The truth seems to be that he symbolised an era that many in the street felt was fast disappearing. This is the era of Old Mysore, of an enlightened maharaja, of an efficient civil service, of dewans who worked for the well-being of the people like Visvesvarya and Mirza Ismail. Rajkumar in his films evoked a whole world - the counterpart in film of R K Narayan's gentle Malgudi - in which the small person had a place, in which the rich were not wicked, in which tragedy existed but justice prevailed. Rajkumar, in his various roles - as factory worker, as farmer as a small clerk and so many more - showed that such a world was a nice place to be in. His phenomenal singing prowess meant that tunes of songs he sang over a quarter of a century were known everywhere and by everyone who lived in Karnataka. Add to this his humble persona, his quiet pride in his Kannada origins and language, his aloofness from politics - except for his role in the agitation on the Gokak report for Kannada supremacy in the state - and you have the picture of a person with whom most people, particularly 'small' people, could identify. His abduction seemed to be a threat to that era.

**Globalised City**

This world that Rajkumar personified is one that has been rapidly disappearing. If Bangalore was the capital of the state that Rajkumar represented in his films, everyone could see that it was changing fast, that it was moving in a direction that would take it further away. In the last decade, Bangalore changed from being the capital of Karnataka to being the NRI capital of the world. In place of MTR and its fabulous food, the new denizens of Bangalore would look to Infosys and Wipro…The new jobs and opportunities were going to unknown people from elsewhere - even the gentle Kannadiga at some point had to resent such marginalisation…

The 'old' resident does not recognise or 'connect' with the new. But the new one is the rich one. The new one is the one getting the best jobs. With the entry of the new one to the city, the old one is being displaced. His children find it difficult to get into good schools. Rents are increasing beyond his capacity to pay. The old residents find it difficult to get jobs in their own city. For the traditional residents of Bangalore, it is becoming an alien city in which they have little space. They cannot afford the new apartments. 'They cannot understand the pubs and discos. And as they feel more and more threatened with what is happening to their city, they see in the world of Rajkumar films a desirable alternative that is fast slipping from their grasp… And abducting Rajkumar is like taking away their reality

**Answer any two of the following in about 200 words each (15x2=30)**

1. According to the writer, what kind of ethos of Bangalore does the cine star/icon symbolise? What according to ‘common people’ did they lose in the abduction of Rajkumar? Substantiate your response suitably
2. Explain what the writer means when he brings together the notions of “a globalised city” on the one hand and that of “an alien city” on the other. How does the writer assess the ‘past’ and ‘present’ of the city? Provide appropriate arguments for your response
3. From your experience of popular culture in the cities, how do you understand the role and function of film stars in relation nostalgia? Comment on their significance

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