

Date: 9-04-2018

**St. Joseph’s College (Autonomous)**

**End-Semester Exam- APRIL 2018**

**II Semester EJP**

**Optional English OE- 213**

(For supplementary candidates)

Do not write the register number on the question paper

Please attach the question paper along with the answer script.

**Time allotted: 21/2 hours Marks: 70**

**Instructions:**

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

**2. This Question paper has TWO sections and THREE printed sheets.**

**3. You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limits.**

**Section A**

1. **Read the following extract from an article published on the Guardian.**

Science fiction triggers 'poorer reading', study finds

*US academics find words such as ‘airlock’ and ‘antigravity’ are cues for test subjects to assume a story isn’t worth a careful read*

It might feature such thought-stretching concepts as time travel and warp drives, but reading science fiction actually [makes you read more “stupidly”](https://thepatronsaintofsuperheroes.wordpress.com/2017/10/30/science-fiction-makes-you-stupid/), according to new research.

In a paper published in the journal Scientific Study of Literature, Washington and Lee University professors Chris Gavaler and Dan Johnson set out to measure how identifying a text as science fiction makes readers automatically assume it is less worthwhile, in a literary sense, and thus devote less effort to reading it. They were prompted to do their experiment by a 2013 study which found that literary fiction made readers more empathetic than genre fiction.

“In comparison to narrative realism readers, science fiction readers reported lower transportation, experience taking, and empathy. Science fiction readers also reported exerting greater effort to understand the world of the story, but less effort to understand the minds of the characters. [Science fiction](https://www.theguardian.com/books/science-fiction) readers scored lower in comprehension, generally, and in the subcategories of theory of mind, world, and plot.”

Readers of the science fiction story “appear to have expected an overall simpler story to comprehend, an expectation that overrode the actual qualities of the story itself”, so “the science fiction setting triggered poorer overall reading”.

The science fiction setting “appears to predispose readers to a less effortful and comprehending mode of reading – or what we might term non-literary reading – regardless of the actual intrinsic difficulty of the text”, they write.

“While this wouldn’t be true of all readers, for those who are biased against SF, thinking of it as an inferior genre of fiction, they assume the story will be less worthwhile, one that doesn’t require or reward careful reading, and so they read less attentively. This then lowers their scores on objective comprehension tests because they miss so much. Interestingly, they don’t even realise it, because they still report that the story required less effort to understand. It’s a self-fulfilling bias – except we can now show objectively that the weakness is with the reader, not the story itself,” said Gavaler.

“So when readers who are biased against SF read the word ‘airlock’, their negative assumptions kick in – ‘Oh, it’s that kind of story’ – and they begin reading poorly. So, no, SF doesn’t really make you stupid. It’s more that if you’re stupid enough to be biased against SF you will read SF stupidly.”

Gavaler said that in the future, he would like to test readers’ responses to longer texts and to other genres, exploring whether “genre markers” such as a cowboy hat or a sorcerer’s wand would have similar effects on readers. He was not, he added, tempted to move away from genre in his own writing. “The study makes me want to blend genres even more. I’m working on a short story that could be categorised as a literary science fiction horror western. I have a novel manuscript that’s a literary YA supernatural thriller. Another is a literary mystery about superhero comics. The possibilities are exciting and endless,” he said.

Science fiction author Jon Courtenay Grimwood said that “the problem is a very basic one – people give an art form the care and attention they think it deserves. (Or perhaps have been told it deserves.) You get out of a book what you bring to it.”

1. **Answer the following questions in 200 to 250 words. (2x15=30)**
2. The science fiction setting “appears to predispose readers to a less effortful and comprehending mode of reading – or what we might term non-literary reading – regardless of the actual intrinsic difficulty of the text” – Do you agree with this statement? Give examples to demonstrate your argument.
3. After all the trouble the academics took to conduct this test, the conclusion seems to be ‘You get out of a book what you bring to it.’ Do you agree with this? Do you think that these experiments are futile? Whom do they benefit?

**SECTION B**

1. **Answer ANY THREE of the following questions in 100 words each. (3x10=30)**
2. Which of the texts from your Optional English classes this semester did you enjoy reading? Why? Explain what is different this semester in terms of your reading experience in comparison to the last semester.

1. The following is a quote from Alison Bechdel’s *Are you my Mother*? -- "There was a certain thing I did not get from my mother. There is a lack, a gap, a void. But in its place, she has given me something else. Something, I would argue, that is far more valuable. She has given me the way out." – What is the way out? Is this the same way out for Virginia Woolf? Give examples from your reading of *To the Lighthouse*.
2. “The original is unfaithful to the translation” said Jorge Luis Borges.

Salman Rushdie said - “It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately to the notion that something can also be gained” and –

Umberto Eco said - “Translation is the art of failure.”

Which of these quotes do you agree the most with? Substantiate your argument with examples from various translations read over this semester.

1. Explain Intentional Fallacy and comment on its significance for reading and interpreting literature. Use appropriate examples.

**B. Read the following poem by AK Ramanujan.**

 *When she left me
after lunch, I read
for a while.
But I suddenly wanted
to look again
and I saw the half-eaten
sandwich,
bread,
lettuce and salami,
all carrying the shape
of her bite.*

**II.B Answer the following questions in 4 sentences each. (2x5=10)**

1. Draw a picture of a half-eaten sandwich carrying what you assume is the shape of ‘her bite’ Write a short note explaining your illustration.
2. The poet says ‘*But I suddenly wanted to look again’.* Whom or what is he referring to? Did ‘looking’ bring him any satisfaction? Comment -

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