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**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE**

**V SEMESTER B.A. (EJP) - OPTIONAL ENGLISH**

SEMESTER EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2021

(Examination conducted in March 2022)

**OE 5118 - The Sacred and the Profane**

**Time: 2 ½ hours Max marks: 70 marks**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. **This paper has 3 pages and 3 sections**
2. **You are allowed to use a dictionary**
3. Read the following passage from The Guardian and answer the following questions (3x15=45 marks)

"To paint the things of Christ you must live with Christ," said the 15th-century artist Fra Angelico. He knew what he was talking about – he was a Dominican monk of such exemplary virtue that in 1982 he was officially beatified by Pope John Paul II. He was also a truly great religious artist whose frescoes at San Marco in Florence have influenced modern artists such as Mark Rothko. But is all holy art that holy?

From the dark ages to the end of the 17th century, the vast majority of artistic commissions in Europe were religious. Around 1700 this somehow stopped, at least when it came to art anyone cares to look at now. The great artists of the 18th century, and since, worked for secular patrons and markets. But in all those centuries when Christianity defined art, its genres, its settings, its content, was every painter and sculptor totally sincerely faithful in every work of art? Or were some of them just doing what they had to do and finding pleasure in the craft?

This question relates to another. What is it like to live in a world where everyone is religious? It is often said it was impossible to even imagine atheism in the middle ages and the Renaissance. This is so different from modern times that people do not even try to imagine it. Modern Christians blithely imagine a connection when actually a universal church meant a mentality so different from modern "faith" that today's believers are as remote from it as today's non-believers. Among other things it meant that while some artists "lived with Christ" and made art that searched their souls, others enjoyed the colours, the drama, the rich effects of religious paintings without thinking too deeply about the meaning.

Here are two contrasting examples from the National Gallery. Zurbarán's painting of St Francis in Meditation (1635-9) is a harrowing and profoundly spiritual work. The face of a kneeling friar is barely glimpsed in a darkness that speaks of inner searching, of the long night of the soul. This is a true Christian masterpiece. But compare it to Carlo Crivelli's painting The Annunciation (1486) in the same museum. Crivelli's picture is a feast for the eye. Potted plants, a peacock, elaborately decorated classical buildings – and is that a gherkin just added in at the front of the scene? – add up to a materialistic cornucopia of visual interest. What is the religious function of such detail? Art historians, who sometimes seem to be high on piety, will point to the allegorical meaning of everyday objects in Renaissance art. But that's all nonsense. I am not saying the allegories do not exist – I am saying they do not matter much to the artist, his original audience or us. In reality, Crivelli is enjoying himself, enjoying the world, and he paints religious scenes because that's what he got paid to paint.

By smothering the art of the past in a piety that in some cases may be woefully misplaced, its guardians do it a disservice. Is Crivelli a Christian artist? Not in any sense that is meaningful today. He loves the things of this life, not the next.

1. The article questions “ is all holy art that holy?” Debate on this question using examples from the texts you have encountered this semester.
2. The article states that “while some artists "lived with Christ" and made art that searched their souls, others enjoyed the colours, the drama, the rich effects of religious paintings(or texts) without thinking too deeply about the meaning.” Explore one text that you read this semester that exemplifies the second position.
3. The article claims that often critics see an allegorical element in Renaissance art. Discuss one Renaissance text where allegory plays a dominant role.

II. Read the extract and answer the following questions. (15X1=15 marks)

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit

Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast

Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,

With loss of EDEN, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,

Sing Heav’nly Muse, that on the secret top

Of OREB, or of SINAI, didst inspire

That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,

In the Beginning how the Heav’ns and Earth

Rose out of CHAOS: Or if SION Hill

Delight thee more, and SILOA’S Brook that flow’d

Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence

Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar

Above th’ AONIAN Mount, while it pursues

Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.

Who is the ‘Heavenly muse’ invoked in the above extract? What does the reference to the ‘Aonian Mount’ refer to? What does the poet mean when he talks of “Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime”? Why is there only a single full stop at the end of this extract?

III. Read the extract and answer the following question. (10x1=10 marks)

In his essay on Metaphysical poets T.S. Eliot writes “Johnson, who employed the term "metaphysical poets," apparently having Donne, Cleveland, and Cowley chiefly in mind, remarks of them that "the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together." The force of this impeachment lies in the failure of the conjunction, the fact that often the ideas are yoked but not united; and if we are to judge of styles of poetry by their abuse, enough examples may be found in Cleveland to justify Johnson's condemnation. But a degree of heterogeneity of material compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is omnipresent in poetry.”

Discuss this charge against Metaphysical Poetry by Johnson while attempting a close reading of John Donne’s *Sun Rising*.