

## 1. Short Notes on ANY TWO of the following:

(a) What is the moral conveyed by A.K. Ramanujan in his short story "A Flowering Tree"?

A.K. Ramanujan's "A Flowering Tree" conveys morals about the **consequences of exploiting nature and the sacred, the dangers of greed, and the importance of respect for all beings**. The girl's ability to transform into a flowering tree initially provides beauty symbiotically. However, her sisters-in-law's greedy exploitation leads to her mutilation and suffering. The moral is clear: **natural gifts or sacred abilities, when treated as commodities for selfish gain, are destroyed, leading to severe consequences for exploiters**. It also subtly critiques the objectification of women and the destructive power of envy, emphasizing that true prosperity stems from respecting and nurturing natural gifts, not ruthless exploitation.

(b) What feelings does the poet associate with the arrival of April in the poem "In April beneath the scented thorn"?

In "In April beneath the scented thorn," the poet associates April's arrival with **sensory delight, gentle awakening, and a subtle undertone of wistful longing**. The "scented thorn" suggests beauty intertwined with a hint of pain, reflecting spring's bittersweet nature or beauty's fleeting quality. This phrase evokes a rich sensory experience of freshness and fragrance. The overall feeling is one of **renewed life and delicate beauty**, observed with keen appreciation and contemplation, evoking quiet joy and a deep connection to nature's gentle resurgence.

**(c) Write a short note on how Mamang Dai describes the landscape of her hometown.**

Mamang Dai describes her hometown's landscape (Arunachal region) with profound **intimacy, reverence, and a recognition of its mystical, living presence**. She portrays the land as a sentient entity, deeply intertwined with her indigenous people's identity, history, and spiritual beliefs. She emphasizes:

- **Vastness and Majesty:** Mountains, forests, and rivers are awe-inspiring and timeless.
- **Mystical and Spiritual Connection:** The land is imbued with spirits, myths, and ancestral memories, where human and supernatural realms converge.
- **Sense of Belonging:** The landscape is the source of identity, wisdom, and way of life.
- **Fragility and Change:** An underlying awareness of its vulnerability to external forces and modernity exists. Dai's sensory descriptions evoke a deep, spiritual bond, portraying the landscape as both physical and sacred.

## **2. How does Ghosh critique the role of literature in addressing climate change?**

Amitav Ghosh, in *The Great Derangement*, critiques contemporary literature's failure to adequately address climate change. He argues that

**literature largely neglects the climate crisis's scale, complexity, and "uncanny" nature, leaving it underrepresented in high art.**

Ghosh identifies this "derangement" due to:

1. **Novel's Genre Conventions:** The modern novel's realism, focusing on individual agency and predictable narratives, struggles with climate change's collective, planetary, and "uncanny" events (extreme weather), often relegating them to "unserious" genres like sci-fi.
2. **Focus on Individual Human Drama:** Literary fiction's anthropocentric focus makes it hard to fit the systemic climate crisis into traditional plots.
3. **Scale and Timeframe:** Climate change's vast scale and long-term implications are difficult to compress into conventional narratives.
4. **"Moral" Imperative:** Fiction's individual-centric morality struggles to encompass the collective moral failures of the climate crisis.
5. **Lack of a "Climate Change Lexicon":** Literary language may lack tools to articulate climate change without sounding didactic.

Ghosh's critique urges writers to evolve, breaking conventional forms to genuinely confront the "great derangement" and engage with the planetary crisis beyond human-centric narratives.

**3. Explain how Thangjam Ibopishak connects elements of nature such as wind and odour to**

## human emotions and dreams? What effect does this connection have on the reader?

Thangjam Ibopishak connects natural elements like wind and odour to human emotions and dreams, imbuing them with surreal, symbolic, and psychological significance. He makes these phenomena active participants in the human inner landscape.

- **Wind (Pawan):** Portrayed as a carrier of messages, memories, and existence's breath.
  - **Emotions:** Represents restlessness, longing, or fleeting happiness; a breeze carries love/nostalgia, a gust symbolizes turmoil or freedom.
  - **Dreams:** Metaphor for intangible dreams and aspirations—how they drift, shift, or are elusive, carrying fragments of forgotten dreams or seeds of new ones.
  - **Example:** Wind carrying the "odour of loneliness" or "sighs of unspoken desires" links its movement to internal human states.
- **Odour (Gandha):** A potent trigger for memory, a signifier of presence/absence, and a direct conduit to the subconscious.
  - **Emotions:** Evokes nostalgia, comfort, or unease; can be the "smell of fear" or "fragrance of hope," making abstract emotions tangible.
  - **Dreams:** Dreamlike in its elusive yet powerful nature, symbolizing lingering impacts or subconscious influences.
  - **Example:** "Odour of a forgotten house" evokes memories of loss, or "smell of strange flowers" hints at unknown futures.

**Effect on the Reader:** This connection creates a powerful effect:

1. **Heightened Sensory Experience:** Makes the abstract tangible, drawing readers into a world where senses are sharpened and the environment is alive with meaning.
2. **Emotional Resonance:** Linking nature to universal human emotions resonates deeply, allowing readers to connect their feelings to natural phenomena.
3. **Universality and Timelessness:** Fundamental natural elements make human experience part of a larger, cosmic dance.
4. **Introspection and Reflection:** Surreal connections prompt readers to reflect on their own memories, dreams, and emotional landscapes.
5. **Unsettling and Thought-Provoking:** Challenges conventional perceptions, inviting deeper thought about reality and human existence.

Ibopishak's technique creates a layered reading experience where the external mirrors the internal, blurring lines between nature, emotion, and subconscious.

#### **4. In what ways does The Waterfall reflect the cultural and social issues of Tagore's time? How can these issues be seen in contemporary contexts?**

Rabindranath Tagore's "The Waterfall" reflects cultural and social issues of late 19th/early 20th century India, particularly the tension between tradition

and modernity, individual freedom vs. societal constraints, and the nature of knowledge.

### **Cultural/Social Issues Reflected:**

1. **Traditionalism vs. Modernity/Progress:** The clash between tradition and Western influence is symbolized by attempts to control the natural waterfall for utilitarian purposes, mirroring colonial emphasis on scientific management over indigenous ways.
2. **Spiritualism vs. Materialism/Utilitarianism:** The waterfall, as a natural wonder, represents spiritual or aesthetic values undervalued by growing materialism and utilitarian pursuits. Characters focused solely on economic gain embody this materialistic mindset.
3. **Individual Freedom/Creativity vs. Societal Constraints:** The free-flowing waterfall symbolizes individual spirit or artistic expression, while attempts to contain it represent rigid social norms and oppressive traditions. A character finding solace in its wildness reflects the struggle for liberation.
4. **Nature of Education/Knowledge:** The waterfall represents intuitive, experiential knowledge, contrasting with the rote, detached colonial education system Tagore critiqued. Learning from nature highlights his belief in holistic education.

**Contemporary Contexts:** These issues remain relevant today, manifesting in new ways:

1. **Traditionalism vs. Modernity/Globalisation:** Debates persist over cultural preservation versus global homogenization, adoption of

Western lifestyles, and balancing indigenous knowledge with scientific advancement (e.g., urbanization vs. heritage, social media's impact on communities).

2. **Spiritualism vs. Materialism/Consumerism:** Rampant consumerism and commodification challenge spiritual values, leading to environmental degradation from a utilitarian view of nature (e.g., balancing economic growth with environmental protection, mental health crisis from material pursuit).
3. **Individual Freedom/Creativity vs. Societal/Digital Constraints:** New constraints like digital surveillance, social media pressures, and algorithms limit autonomy and expression (e.g., conforming to online trends, privacy erosion, artists resisting commercialization).
4. **Nature of Education/Knowledge:** Modern education still faces critiques for being standardized and disconnected from real-world application. There's a renewed interest in holistic, interdisciplinary, and nature-based learning (e.g., relevance of traditional degrees, push for experiential learning).