



**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
M.A. ENGLISH – PART II
COURSE V: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH
ASSIGNMENTS (2018 – 2019)
(This set of assignments has 4 printed pages.)**

Instructions

- Answers should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts studied in the Units.
- Answers lifted verbatim from the course material, the internet, or other sources will be awarded poor grades. You may refer to these sources, but you must acknowledge them in your assignments.
- Proof-read your answers for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting them.
- The word limit suggested for each question is meant only to guide you. Try not to *greatly exceed* or *fall greatly below* the word limit.

**Assignment I
(Based on Block I)**

- I. What is your view of Indian Writing in English? Is it merely an off-shoot of colonization, a form of postcolonial writing, or a tradition in its own right? Give reasons for your choice. (500-750 words)
- II. What do you understand by the following terms with reference to the Indian context: (250 words each)
 - a. Nativization of English
 - b. Diasporic writing
- III. Why were the Indian plays in English written before Independence considered “closet plays”, unsuitable for staging? Who were the playwrights who attempted to change this, and how did they evolve a distinctively new form of drama? (500-750 words)

**Assignment II
(Based on Block II)**

- I. Examine the use of Indian myths and legends in the poetry of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu, using for illustration at least one or two of their poems. How do you think their poetry should be viewed today – as imitative, limited by a specific historical context, or as having universal value and relevance? Explain. (800-1000 words)
- II. Read the following poem by Nissim Ezekiel and attempt an interpretation of it, based on what you have studied in Unit 2 about his style and thematic concerns as an Indian English poet of the post-Independence period. (700-900 words)

The Patriot
—Nissim Ezekiel

I am standing for peace and non-violence.
Why world is fighting fighting
Why all people of world
Are not following Mahatma Gandhi,
I am simply not understanding.
Ancient Indian Wisdom is 100% correct,
I should say even 200% correct,
But modern generation is neglecting –
Too much going for fashion and foreign thing.
Other day I'm reading newspaper
(Every day I'm reading Times of India
To improve my English Language)
How one goonda fellow
Threw stone at Indirabehn.
Must be student unrest fellow, I am thinking.
Friends, Romans, Countrymen, I am saying (to myself)
Lend me the ears.
Everything is coming –
Regeneration, Remuneration, Contraception.
Be patiently, brothers and sisters.
You want one glass lassi?
Very good for digestion.
With little salt, lovely drink,
Better than wine;
Not that I am ever tasting the wine.
I'm the total teetotaller, completely total,
But I say
Wine is for the drunkards only.
What you think of prospects of world peace?
Pakistan behaving like this,
China behaving like that,
It is making me really sad, I am telling you.
Really, most harassing me.
All men are brothers, no?
In India also
Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Hindiwallahs
All brothers –
Though some are having funny habits.
Still, you tolerate me,
I tolerate you,
One day Ram Rajya is surely coming.
You are going?
But you will visit again
Any time, any day,
I am not believing in ceremony
Always I am enjoying your company

- III. According to Bruce King, A K Ramanujan's poems never make generalizations about India and are set in specific situations or scenes. Do you agree with this statement? Support your answer with references to his poems that you have studied in the course. (700-900 words)
- IV. Write short notes on the following: (400 words each)
- Kamala Das as a feminist poet
 - Rabindranath Tagore
 - Nationalism as a theme in Indian English poetry

Assignment III
(Based on Block III)

- I. Read the following extract from the Foreword to Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and comment on it in the light of the novels that you have studied in this block. (700-900 words)

“The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.”

- II. Critically examine *Kanthapura* as a novel that deals with history. What are its imaginative aspects and what are the historical elements? How are these two aspects intertwined in the novel? (You must support your answer with references and illustrations from the novel.) (700-900 words)
- III. What are the different ways in which *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* can be interpreted? Explain. Which interpretation do you find the most appealing? Why? (700-900 words)
- IV. 'Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* is as much about storytelling as it is about storytellers'. Explain. (800-1000 words)
- V. Critically examine the portrayal of women characters in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. (800-1000 words)

Assignment IV
(Based on Block IV)

I. Compare and critically comment on the recommendations made by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Vennelacunty Soob Row on education in India.
(800-900 words)

II. Read and identify the following extract, and then explain and critically comment on it.
(500-700 words)

“In my opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that women should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down. The sin will be on man’s head for tempting or compelling his companion to desert her special calling. There is as much bravery in keeping one’s home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against attack from without.”

III. What is the Chaturvarnya system? Explain. Describe Ambedkar’s response to and evaluation of this system.
(700-800 words)

IV. Identify and explain the following extract and critically comment on it with reference to its context:
(500-700 words)

AMRITLAL: Do you know where a man’s happiness lies?

RATNA: No.

AMRITLAL: In being a man

RATNA: That sounds profound. What does it mean?

AMRITLAL: Does Jairaj know where his happiness lies?

RATNA: He does. But I don’t think it fits in with your idea of where it should be.

AMRITLAL: Yes I am aware of that and I am disappointed with that.

V. Comment on the melos and ophis of Ramu Ramanathan’s play *Mahadevbhai*.
(800-900 words)

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