

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007



SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
M.A. ENGLISH – PART II

COURSE II: LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY
ASSIGNMENTS (2018– 2019)

(This set of assignments is printed on 4 pages.)

Instructions

- Answers should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts discussed 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 answers.
- 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 to adhere to it.
- For any queries, please write to the Course Instructor: lavanya@efluniversity.ac.in (Dr. K. Lavanya).

Assignment I
(Based on Block I)

- I. (a) What, in your view, is the role of criticism in the study of literature?
(about 300 words)
- (b) What does the word ‘classical’ mean in the term ‘classical criticism’?
(about 300 words)
- II. Examine the relevance of classical criticism to the present times, with specific reference to the work of **any one** of the classical critics that you have studied in Unit 1 of this Block. [You must mention specific ideas or concepts by the critic you choose, which continue to be relevant today.] (600-800 words)
- III. Write short notes on **any three** of the following: (300 -350 words each)
- a) The Sublime
 - b) “Ut pictura poesis”
 - c) Humanism
 - d) Dr. Samuel Johnson
 - e) Characters in Dryden’s *Of Dramatic Poesy*

- IV. Read the following extract, identify its text and author, and explain it. What charge against poets is being addressed in the extract? Explain. (500-700 words)

Now for the poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false; so as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies. But the poet, as I said before, never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writeth.

- V. What are the two main themes of Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*? Explain with appropriate references to the text. (800 words)

Assignment II (Based on Block II)

- I. Read the following extract and then answer the questions that follow: (500-700 words)

He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them.

- a) Identify the text and the author.
- b) Who is the man referred to in the extract?
- c) Explain the qualities that are ascribed to the man referred to in the extract. Why is he being distinguished from other men?

- II. Write short notes on **any three** of the following: (300-350 words each)

- a) Imagination and Fancy
- b) Mary Wollstonecraft
- c) Touchstone method
- d) "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."
- e) Characteristics of Romantic poetry

- III. Why, according to Charles Lamb, are Shakespearean tragedies not 'actable' or 'stageable'? Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (about 500 words)

- IV. Explain Matthew Arnold's concept of 'disinterestedness'. What are the sources he draws from for this concept? And what is the significance of this concept in Arnold's formulation of the role of the critic? (about 1000 words)

Assignment III
(Based on Block III)

- I. How does A.C. Bradley distinguish between subject, substance and form in poetry? Explain. (700 – 800 words)

- II. Write short notes on *any three* of the following: (300 – 350 words each)

- a. Depersonalization
- b. The four kinds of meaning
- c. New Criticism
- d. Organic unity
- e. "Poetry for Poetry's Sake"

- III. Read the following extract and answer the questions given below: (500-700 words)

[...] the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

- a. Identify the extract — the text and the author.
 - b. What is meant by the term 'historical sense' in the extract? What is its significance in literary criticism?
 - c. What is the main criticism against the ideas of historical sense and of the role of the writer referred to in this extract? Explain.
- IV. Why were the New Critics generally regarded as 'anti-Romantics'? Explain. Do you agree with their view that all art is autonomous? Give reasons for your answer. (700-800 words)
- V. In Unit 4 of this Block, you were given an example of a Brooksonian analysis of poetry – See Activity C in this Unit, which discusses a Brooksonian analysis of Yeats' poem, "Sailing to Byzantium". Now, attempt a Brooksonian analysis of your own, in a similar manner, using any poem of your choice. Remember to attach a copy of the poem with your assignment. (about 1000 words)
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Assignment IV
(Based on Block IV)

- I. What are the salient features of Marxist criticism? How does it signal a break from the Formalist notions of art? (1000 words)
- II. Read the following extract and identify the text and its author. What critical approach is being referred to in this extract? Explain. (500-700 words)
- “The idea is not to find outside the work of art some rock onto which interpretation can be securely chained but rather to situate the work in relation to other representative practices operative in the culture at a given moment in both its history and our own. And we can begin to understand something of the dialectical nature of these relations. In Louis Montrose's convenient formulation, the goal has been to grasp simultaneously the historicity- of texts and the textuality of history.”
- III. How did Derrida contribute to the breaking up of Eurocentric notions? Explain. (600-800 words)
- IV. Do you think Feminism and Postcolonialism are distinctly related in their claim to the rights of marginalized groups? Discuss with reference to one Feminist and one Postcolonial critic that you have studied in this Block. (1000 -1500 words)
- V. Write short notes on *any three* of the following: (300- 350 words each)
- a. Raymond Williams
 - b. Differance
 - c. *Grand Recits* and *petit recits*
 - d. Hegemony
 - e. *Ecriture feminine*
- VI. Of the various critical theories discussed in the 6 Units of this Block, which did you personally find appealing, and why? (700-800 words)
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