

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007



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

COURSE II: LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY

(This set of assignments is printed on 3 pages.)

Instructions

- Each Assignment is based on one Block of the course material, as indicated at the top of the Assignments. Please read the Block thoroughly before attempting the Assignment based on it.
- Answers in each Assignment should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts discussed in the Blocks.
- 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. What in your view is the need of studying literary theory? How do you think it helps in making sense of literary texts? (500-750 words)
- II. "...the questions posed by the Classical masters are as relevant now as they were in the past." Do you agree with this statement on page 5, Unit 1, Block I? Explain your answer with reference to the ideas of Plato and Aristotle that you have studied in this Unit. (1000 words)
- III. Write short notes on the following: (300—350 words each)
 - a) The Sublime
 - b) Renaissance Humanism
 - c) Dr. Samuel Johnson's contributions to English Literary Criticism
 - d) Aphra Behn
- IV. "In the Neoclassical discourse, invention is contained by the demands of imitation (Section 3.2, Unit 3, Block I)". Explain this statement with reference to the work of **any one** of the Neoclassical critics that you have studied in this Unit. (1000 words)

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

- I. Describe Wordsworth's critical views on poetic diction. Explain how they mark a departure from the views of his predecessors. (1000 words)
- II. Identify the following extract (text and author) and explain the view on poets it expresses. (500-750 words)

“Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”
- III. Write short notes on the following: (300—350 words each)
 - a) Romanticism versus Enlightenment.
 - b) *Biographia Literaria*
 - c) Mary Wollstonecraft
 - d) Charles Lamb as an impressionistic critic
- IV. What according to Mathew Arnold are the ‘fallacies’ that influence the evaluation of poetry? Explain the method that he proposed for judging poetry. (1000 words)

**Assignment III
(Based on Block III)**

- I. Critically examine Bradley's notion that “character is destiny”, in his evaluation of Shakespearean tragedy. (600-800 words)
- II. Write short notes on the following: (300-350 words each)
 - a) Bradley's distinction of subject, substance and form
 - b) Depersonalization
 - c) Close reading
- III. Critically examine Eliot's notion of ‘Tradition’. Would you characterize his stance as ‘anti-Romantic’? Explain. (1000 words)
- IV. What are the four kinds of meaning that I.A. Richards describes? What is the significance of this distinction for reading and understanding poetry? (750-1000 words)
- V. According to Cleanth Brooks, the fundamental element of great poetry is ‘Paradox’ — the co-presence of opposites/contraries to convey a complex experience (see Section 4.4 in Unit 4 of this Block). Now, attempt a Brooksonian analysis of paradox in John Donne's poem “The Canonization” which you have

studied in your MA Part I, in the British Literature I course. (Your answer must make adequate references to the poem.) (1000-1500 words)

**Assignment IV
(Based on Block IV)**

- I. Which literary theory recognizes the economic foundation of all human activity? Discuss its salient features and mention some of its important theorists. (1000 words)
 - II. “Deconstruction is a persistent practice of unravelling hierarchies (p 26, Unit 2, Block IV)”. What are the ‘hierarchies’ that Deconstruction unravels and how does it propose to transform them? Explain. (750-1000 words)
 - III. What is the fundamental difference between a Formalist understanding of a text and a Historicist reading of it? Discuss with reference to the work of at least one major New Historicist critic you have read. (1000 words)
 - IV. What does a postcolonial critique of a text involve? Illustrate your answer with reference to at least one postcolonial literary text that you have studied, explaining a postcolonial critique of it. (1000 words)
 - V. Write short notes on the following: (300-350 words each)
 - a) Raymond Williams
 - b) *Écriture féminine*
 - c) Differance
 - 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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