

M. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2022
BRANCH VII - ENGLISH
SECOND SEMESTER

COURSE: CORE
TITLE: CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THEORY-I

TIME: 3 HOURS
MAX.MARKS: 100

SECTION A

I. Answer any two in about 300 words each: (2x10=20)

1. According to Brooks, how does the use of irony and metaphors as techniques enrich poetic experience as against spontaneity?
2. "Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important". Explain in the context of Shloovsky's "Art as Technique".
3. Comment on Culler's concept of 'literary competence'.
4. What does Iser mean by 'an act of recreation'?

SECTION B

II. Answer any three in about 750 words each: (3x20=60)

5. Write an essay on Barthes' essay "Death of the Author".
6. How does Eco's Semiological guerrilla warfare add a critical dimension to the reception of media communications?
7. Elaborate on Lyotard's definition of Postmodernism as grappling with the multiple meanings of the past and the plural realities of our present.
8. According to Iser, how does reading a text transform it into a creative process for a reader?
9. Examine Derrida's argument that 'sign would be a deferred presence' in his essay "Différance".

SECTION C

III. Critically analyse the given passage using appropriate concepts/theory: (20 marks)

10. So some random light directing them with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, from some uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the Lighthouse even, with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, the little airs mounted the staircase and nosed round bedroom doors. But here surely, they must cease. Whatever else may perish and disappear, what lies here is steadfast. Here one might say to those sliding lights, those fumbling airs that breathe and bend over the bed itself, here you can neither touch nor destroy. Upon which, wearily, ghostily, as if they had feather-light fingers and the light persistency of feathers, they would look, once, on the shut eyes, and the loosely clasping fingers, and fold their

garments wearily and disappear. And so, nosing, rubbing, they went to the window on the staircase, to the servants' bedrooms, to the boxes in the attics; descending, blanched the apples on the dining-room table, fumbled the petals of roses, tried the picture on the easel, brushed the mat and blew a little sand along the floor. At length, desisting, all ceased together, gathered together, all sighed together; all together gave off an aimless gust of lamentation to which some door in the kitchen replied; swung wide; admitted nothing; and slammed to.

[Here Mr. Carmichael, who was reading Virgil, blew out his candle. It was past midnight.]

But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickens, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the wave. Night, however, succeeds to night. The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally, evenly, with indefatigable fingers. They lengthen; they darken. Some of them hold aloft clear planets, plates of brightness. The autumn trees, ravaged as they are, take on the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and how bones bleach and burn far away in Indian sands. The autumn trees gleam in the yellow moonlight, in the light of harvest moons, the light which mellows the energy of labour, and smooths the stubble, and brings the wave lapping blue to the shore.

It seemed now as if, touched by human penitence and all its toil, divine goodness had parted the curtain and displayed behind it, single, distinct, the hare erect; the wave falling; the boat rocking; which, did we deserve them, should be ours always. But alas, divine goodness, twitching the cord, draws the curtain; it does not please him; he covers his treasures in a drench of hail, and so breaks them, so confuses them that it seems impossible that their calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth. For our penitence deserves a glimpse only; our toil respite only.

The nights now are full of wind and destruction; the trees plunge and bend and their leaves fly helter skelter until the lawn is plastered with them and they lie packed in gutters and choke rain pipes and scatter damp paths. Also the sea tosses itself and breaks itself, and should any sleeper fancying that he might find on the beach an answer to his doubts, a sharer of his solitude, throw off his bedclothes and go down by himself to walk on the sand, no image with semblance of serving and divine promptitude comes readily to hand bringing the night to order and making the world reflect the compass of the soul. The hand dwindles in his hand; the voice bellows in his ear. Almost it would appear that it is useless in such confusion to ask the night those questions as to what, and why, and wherefore, which tempt the sleeper from his bed to seek an answer.

-Excerpt from *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf
