

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086
(For candidates admitted during the academic year 2011-12)

SUBJECT CODE: 11EL/PC/CT24

M. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2012
BRANCH VII – ENGLISH
SECOND SEMESTER

COURSE : CORE

PAPER : CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THEORY

TIME : 3 HOURS

MAX. MARKS : 100

Section A

I Answer any three of the following in about 850 words each: (3x20=60 marks)

- a. Explain how the focus shifted from the 'author' to the 'text' in the New Critical approaches.
- b. The encoding and the decoding of the text depends upon the encoder, text and the decoder as constructed codes. Discuss.
- c. The elimination of the authority of the author is a major concern of poststructuralism. Explain.
- d. The text lends itself for multiple and infinite readings – Elucidate with reference to any one of the postmodernists.
- e. Explain how the text deconstructs itself.

Section B

II Answer any one of the following in about 850 words: (1x20=20 marks)

- a. Discuss key ideas in Nixon's "Environmentalism and Postcolonialism".
- b. Show how Greenblatt's essay on Marlowe reflects a New Historicist approach.

Section C

III Attempt a critical analysis of the following poem by Judith Wright. Identify the critical theory that you have selected and demonstrate how meaning is produced.

(1x20=20 marks)

Eve To Her Daughters

It was not I who began it.
Turned out into draughty caves,
Hungry so often, having to work for our bread,
Hearing the children whining,
I was nevertheless not unhappy.
Where Adam went I was fairly content to go.
I adapted myself to the punishment: it was my life.
But Adam, you know...!
He kept on brooding over the insult,
Over the trick They played on us, over the scolding.
He has discovered a flaw in himself
And he had to make up for it.

Outside Eden the earth was imperfect,
The seasons changed, the game was fleet-footed,
He had to work for our living, and he didn't like it.
He even complained of my cooking
(it was hard to compete with Heaven).
So he set to work.
The earth must be made a new Eden
With central heating, domesticated animals, mechanical harvesters, combustion
engines,
Escalators, refrigerators,
And modern means of communication
And multiplied opportunities for safe investment
And higher education for Abel and Cain
And the rest of the family.
How his pride had been hurt.
In the process he had to unravel everything,
Because he believed that mechanism
was the whole secret—he was always mechanical minded.
He got to the very inside of the whole machine
exclaiming as he went, So this is how it works!
And now that I know how it works, why, I must have invented it.
As for God and the Other, they cannot be demonstrated
and what cannot be demonstrated
doesn't exist.
You see, he had always been jealous.
Yes he got to the centre
where nothing at all can be demonstrated.
And clearly he doesn't exist; but he refuses
To accept the conclusion.
You see, he was always an egoist.
It was warmer than this in the cave;
There was none of this fall-out.
I would suggest, for the sake of the children,
That it's time you took over.
But you are my daughters, you inherit my own faults of character;
You are submissive, following Adam
even beyond existence.
Faults of character have their own logic
And it always works out.
I observed this with Abel and Cain.
Perhaps the whole elaborate fable
Right from the beginning
Is meant to demonstrate this; perhaps it's the whole secret.
Perhaps nothing exists but our faults?
At least they can be demonstrated.
But it's useless to make such a suggestion to Adam.
He has turned himself into God,
Who is faultless, and doesn't exist.
