

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

SUBJECT CODE: 11EL/PC/CT24

M. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2015
BRANCH VII – ENGLISH
SECOND SEMESTER

COURSE : CORE

PAPER : CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THEORY

TIME : 3 HOURS

MAX. MARKS: 100

1. **Answer any TWO of the following in about 850 words each. (2x20=40)**
 - a. What radical departure does New Criticism make with regard to the aesthetic concepts of Beauty and Truth?
 - b. How does Viktor Shklovsky show that an appraisal of a work of art more often than not springs from a crisis of perception?
 - c. “Umberto Eco problematizes the veracity of truths created by mass communications” Comment.

2. **Answer any ONE of the following in about 850 words. (1x20=20)**
 - a. Do you agree with the view that the author is decentred and politicized in the context of post-structural reading of texts? Give reasons.
 - b. Respond to Barbara Johnson’s observation that “Deconstruction is not synonymous with ‘destruction.’ It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word “analysis,” which etymologically means “to undo.” ... The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text.”
 - c. Is it possible to map the territories of Postmodernism? Justify your stand.

3. **Answer any ONE the following in about 1000 words. (1x20=20)**
 - a. Discuss Stanley Fish’s “Is There a Text in this Class?” as an affront to New Critical understanding of a literary text, with particular reference to the role of the reader in the act of interpretation.
 - b. Attempt a critique of Stephen Greenblatt’s neo-historicist understanding of Christopher Marlowe’s works.
 - c. Trace the interface between postcolonialism and environmentalism with reference to Rob Nixon’s essay.

4. **Attempt an ecocritical analysis of D.H. Lawrence's "The Triumph of the Machine"**
(1x20=20)

They talk of the triumph of the machine,
 but the machine will never triumph.

Out of the thousands and thousands of centuries of man
 the unrolling of ferns, white tongues of the acanthus lapping at the sun,
 for one sad century
 machines have triumphed, rolled us hither and thither,
 shaking the lark's nest till the eggs have broken.

Shaken the marshes, till the geese have gone
 and the wild swans flown away singing the swan-song at us.

Hard, hard on the earth the machines are rolling,
 but through some hearts they will never roll.

The lark nests in his heart
 and the white swan swims in the marshes of his loins,
 and through the wide prairies of his breast a young bull herds his cows,
 lambs frisk among the daisies of his brain.

And at last
 all these creatures that cannot die, driven back
 into the uttermost corners of the soul,
 will send up the wild cry of despair.

The thrilling lark in a wild despair will trill down arrows from the sky,
 the swan will beat the waters in rage, white rage of an enraged swan,
 even the lambs will stretch forth their necks like serpents,
 like snakes of hate, against the man in the machine:
 even the shaking white poplar will dazzle like splinters of glass against him.

And against this inward revolt of the native creatures of the soul
 mechanical man, in triumph seated upon the seat of his machine
 will be powerless, for no engine can reach into the marshes and depths of a
 man.

So mechanical man in triumph seated upon the seat of his machine
 will be driven mad from within himself, and sightless, and on that day
 the machines will turn to run into one another
 traffic will tangle up in a long-drawn-out crash of collision
 and engines will rush at the solid houses, the edifice of our life
 will rock in the shock of the mad machine, and the house will come down.

Then, far beyond the ruin, in the far, in the ultimate, remote places
the swan will lift up again his flattened, smitten head
and look round, and rise, and on the great vaults of his wings
will sweep round and up to greet the sun with a silky glitter of a new day
and the lark will follow trilling, angerless again,
and the lambs will bite off the heads of the daisies for very friskiness.
But over the middle of the earth will be the smoky ruin of iron
the triumph of the machine.
