

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE- 27**

**MA ENGLISH - II SEMESTER**

**END SEMESTER EXAMINATION - APRIL 2019**

**EN 8318 English Studies - II**

**Time: 2 ½ hours**  **Max. Marks: 70**

**This question paper contains THREE sections and FOUR printed pages.**

**SECTION-A**

**Read the following and answer the questions set on it:**

**Refugee Blues** **by W H Auden**

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew:
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said,
"If you've got no passport you're officially dead":
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go to-day, my dear, but where shall we go to-day?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said;
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread":
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying, "They must die":
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

**Answer the following in not more than three sentences each: (3 x 5 = 15)**

1. Explain the symbolic meaning of the term, “once there was a country”? Why can’t the two central characters of the poem not “go there”? How are these symbolic meanings connected with the last line of the poem?

2. What do “passports” in the poem stand for symbolically? In what ways are they important to the central characters? How are these symbolic meanings connected to being “officially dead”?

3. What does the image of “building with a thousand floors” suggest to you? Why doesn’t even one of them belong to the two central characters?

**SECTION-B**

**Read the following extract from M H Abrams’ *Glossary of Literary Terms* and answer the questions set on it:**

Structuralist Criticism Almost all literary theorists since Aristotle have emphasized the importance of structure, conceived in diverse ways, in analyzing a work of literature. "Structuralist criticism," however, now designates the practice of critics who analyze literature on the explicit model of structuralist linguistics. The class includes a number of Russian formalists, especially Roman Jakobson, but consists most prominently of a group of writers, with their headquarters in Paris, who applied to literature the concepts and analytic distinctions developed by Ferdinand de Saussure in his Course in General Linguistics (1915). This mode of criticism is part of a larger movement, French structuralism, inaugurated in the 1950s by the cultural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who analyzed, on Saussure's linguistic model, such cultural phenomena as mythology, kinship relations, and modes of preparing food. See linguistics in literary criticism. In its early form, as manifested by Lévi-Strauss and other writers in the 1950s and 1960s, structuralism cuts across the traditional disciplinary areas of the humanities and social sciences by undertaking to provide an objective account of all social and cultural practices, in a range that includes mythical narratives, literary texts, advertisements, fashions in clothes, and patterns of social decorum. It views these practices as combinations of signs that have a set significance for the members of a particular culture, and undertakes to make explicit the rules and procedures by which the practices have achieved their cultural significance, and to specify what that significance is, by reference to an underlying system (analogous to Saussure's langue, the implicit system of a particular language) of the relationships among signifying elements and their rules of combination. The elementary cultural phenomena, like the linguistic elements in Saussure's exposition, are not objective facts identifiable by their inherent properties, but purely "relational" entities; that is, their identity as signs are given to them by their relations of differences from, and binary oppositions to, other elements within the cultural system. This system of internal relationships, and of "codes" that determine significant combinations, have been mastered by each person competent within a given culture, although he or she remains largely unaware of its nature and operations. The primary interest of the structuralist, like that of Saussure, is not in the cultural parole but in the langue; that is, not in any particular cultural phenomenon or event except as it provides access to the structure, features, and rules of the general system that engenders its significance.

As applied in literary studies, structuralist criticism views literature as a second-order signifying system that uses the first-order structural system of language as its medium, and is itself to be analyzed primarily on the model of linguistic theory. Structuralist critics often apply a variety of linguistic concepts to the analysis of a literary text, such as the distinction between phonemic and morphemic levels of organization, or between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships; and some critics analyze the structure of a literary text on the model of the syntax in a well-formed sentence. The undertaking of a thoroughgoing literary structuralism, however, is to explain how it is that a competent reader is able to make sense of a particular literary text by specifying the underlying system of literary conventions and rules of combination that has been unconsciously mastered by such a reader. The aim of classic literary structuralism, accordingly, is not (as in New Criticism) to provide interpretations of an individual text, but to make explicit, in a quasi-scientific way, the tacit grammar (the system of rules and codes) that governs the forms and meanings of all literary productions. As Jonathan Culler put it in his lucid exposition, the aim of structuralist criticism is "to construct a poetics which stands to literature as linguistics stands to language" (Structuralist Poetics, 1975, p. 257). Roland Barthes, Gérard Genette, Julia Kristeva, and Tzvetan Todorov were prominent structuralist critics of literature. Structuralism is in explicit opposition to mimetic criticism (the view that literature is primarily an imitation of reality), to expressive criticism (the view that literature primarily expresses the feelings or temperament or creative imagination of its author), and to any form of the view that literature is a mode of communication between author and readers. More generally, in its attempt to develop a science of literature and in many of its salient concepts, the radical forms of structuralism depart from the assumptions and ruling ideas of traditional humanistic criticism. For example:

(1) In the structuralist view, what had been called a literary "work" becomes a "text"; that is, a mode of writing constituted by a play of component elements according to specifically literary conventions and codes. These factors may generate an illusion of reality, but have no truth-value, nor even any reference to a reality existing outside the literary system itself.

(2) The individual author, or subject, is not assigned any initiative, expressive intentions, or design as the "origin" or producer of a work. Instead the conscious "self" is declared to be a construct that is itself the product of the workings of the linguistic system, and the mind of an author is described as an imputed "space" within which the impersonal, "always-already" existing system of literary language, conventions, codes, and rules of combination gets precipitated into a particular text. Roland Barthes expressed, dramatically, this subversion of the traditional humanistic view, "As institution, the author is dead" ("The Death of the Author," in Image-Music-Text, trans. 1977).

(3) Structuralism replaces the author by the reader as the central agency in criticism; but the traditional reader, as a conscious, purposeful, and feeling individual, is replaced by the impersonal activity of "reading," and what is read is not a work imbued with meanings, but écrìture, writing. The focus of structuralist criticism, accordingly, is on the impersonal process of reading which, by bringing into play the requisite conventions, codes, and expectations, makes literary sense of the sequence of words, phrases, and sentences that constitute a text.

**Answer the following in not more than 200 words each: (3 x 15 = 45)**

4. Show how Saussure’s notions of language shape the way in which structuralism functions. Use your reading to substantiate your arguments.

5. Explore the ideas of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations as is proposed in the above extract. Using your reading of Culler, explain what this sought to achieve.

6. How does Culler argue that structuralist literary criticism attempts "to construct a poetics which stands to literature as linguistics stands to language"? From your reading of Culler, explain what such a proposition implies to literary criticism itself.

**SECTION-C**

**Read the following two extracts and answer the questions that follow immediately for each in not more than three sentences:**  **(2 x 5 = 10)**

7. Here is quote from Terry Eagleton on Literature: “What we have uncovered so far, then, is not only that literature does not exist in the sense that insects do, and that the value-judgements by which it is constituted are historically variable, but that these value-judgements themselves have a close relation to social ideologies. They refer in the end not simply to private taste, but to the assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others”. Explain briefly this definition of Literature in simple terms with an example.

8. Here is another quote from TS Eliot about writing and writers: “No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of æsthetic, not merely historical, criticism”. Explain TS Eliot’s understanding of writing and writers using an example.

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