

**Study Material**

**Krishna Chandra College, Hetampur, Birbhum**

# Discipline Specific Elective-III

## A: Literary Theory

Semester-VI (English Honours)

Prepared by Arindam Ghosh

### Syllabus of DSE-III (A)

Sl No.	Topic	No. of Lectures
<b>Section- A</b>		
1.	<b>Marxism</b> Genealogy and definition; Scope and relevance in textual reading; Major theorists; Key terms: <b>Class, Base and Superstructure, Dialectics, Interpellation</b>	16 (L) + 3 (T)
<p><b>Recommended Essays:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antonio Gramsci, 'The Formation of the Intellectuals' and 'Hegemony (Civil Society) and Separation of Powers', in <i>Selections from the Prison Notebooks</i>, ed. and tr. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Novell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) pp. 5, 245–6.</li> <li>Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in <i>Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays</i> (New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2006) pp. 85–126.</li> </ul>		
2.	<b>Poststructuralism</b> Genealogy and definition; Scope and relevance; Major theorists; Key terms: <b>Logocentrism, Binaries, Deconstruction, Hyperreal Simulation.</b>	21 (L) + 4 (T)
<p><b>Recommended Essays:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Science', tr. Alan Bass, in <i>Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader</i>, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988) pp. 108–23.</li> <li>Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power', in <i>Power and Knowledge</i>, tr. Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino (New York: Pantheon, 1977) pp. 109–33.</li> </ul>		
<b>Section- B</b>		
3.	<b>Feminism</b> Genealogy and definition; Scope and relevance in textual reading; Major theorists; Key terms. <b>Phallogentrism, Androgyny, Sex and Gender, Ecriture Feminine</b>	18 (L) + 3 (T)
<b>Recommended Essays:</b>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaine Showalter, ‘Twenty Years on: A Literature of Their Own Revisited’, in <i>A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing</i> (1977. Rpt. London: Virago, 2003) pp. xi–xxxiii.</li> <li>Luce Irigaray, ‘When the Goods Get Together’ (from <i>This Sex Which is Not One</i>), in <i>New French Feminisms</i>, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) pp. 107–10.</li> </ul>	
4.	<b>Postcolonial Studies:</b> Genealogy and definition; Scope and relevance in textual reading; Major theorists; Key terms (any 4): <b>Imperialism and Colonialism, Orientalism, Nation and Nationalism, Diaspora</b>	21 (L) + 4 (T)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mahatma Gandhi, ‘Swaraj’ ‘Passive Resistance’ and ‘Education’, in <i>Hind Swaraj and Other Writings</i>, ed. Anthony J Parel (Delhi: CUP, 1997) pp. 88–106.</li> <li>Edward Said, ‘The Scope of Orientalism’ in <i>Orientalism</i> (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978) pp. 29–110.</li> <li>Aijaz Ahmad, ‘Indian Literature’: Notes towards the Definition of a Category’, in <i>In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures</i> (London: Verso, 1992) pp. 243–285.</li> </ul>	
<b>Other Suggested Topics:</b> The East and the West, Questions of Alterity, Power, Language, and Representation, The State and Culture		
<b>Recommended Critical Books:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terry Eagleton, <i>Literary Theory: An Introduction</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).</li> <li>Peter Barry, <i>Beginning Theory</i> (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).</li> <li>David Hawkes. <i>Ideology</i>. Routledge Critical Idioms.</li> </ul>		

**Marks Division for DSE-III (A)**

**End Semester Exam**

Serial No.	Type of Question	Distribution of Number	Marks
1.	Objective	Answer 10 questions out of 15 carrying 02 marks each	10x 02 =20
2.	Explanatory	Answer 04 questions out of 06 carrying 05 marks each	04x 05 =20
3.	Broad	Answer 02 questions out of 04 carrying 10 marks each	02x 10 =20
<b>Total Marks:</b>			<b>60</b>

**Total Marks Division**

Serial No.	Criterion	Marks	Duration
1.	End Semester Exam	60	3 Hours
2.	Internal Assessment (On the basis of Component I & II)	10	
3.	Attendance	5 (According to the Percentage)	
Total		<b>75</b>	

## Marxism

### What is Marxism? (5 Marks)

**Ans.** Marxism is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx, which examines the effect of capitalism on labor, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker revolution to overturn capitalism in favor of communism.

Marxism posits that the struggle between social classes, specifically between the bourgeoisie, or capitalists, and the proletariat, or workers, defines economic relations in a capitalist economy and will inevitably lead to revolutionary communism.

Marxism analyzes the material conditions and the economic activities required to fulfill human material needs to explain social phenomena within any given society. It assumes that the form of economic organization, or mode of production, influences all other social phenomena—including wider social relations, political institutions, legal systems, cultural systems, aesthetics, and ideologies. The economic system and these social relations form a base and superstructure. As forces of production, i.e. technology, improve, existing forms of organizing production become obsolete and hinder further progress.

### Marxist literary criticism? (5 Marks)

**Ans.** Marxist literary criticism is a loose term describing literary criticism based on socialist and dialectic theories. Marxist criticism views literary works as reflections of the social institutions from which they originate.

The simplest goals of Marxist literary criticism can include an assessment of the political ‘tendency’ of a literary work, determining whether its social content or its literary form are ‘progressive’. It also includes analyzing the class constructs demonstrated in the literature. Further, another of the ends of Marxist criticism is to analyze the narrative of **class struggle in a given text**. Does the **text serve to perpetuate the ruling class ideology**; to subvert that ideology, such as William Morris’s *News from Nowhere*; or to signify both a perpetuation and subversion of the dominant ideology, such as in the works of Charles Dickens with *Hard Times* being the novel that most openly textualizes such a double signification as it offers a damning criticism of capitalism while also and at the same time seeking a perpetuation of a class-structured society.

### What is Class Consciousness? (5 Marks)

**Ans.** In political theory and particularly Marxism, class consciousness is the set of beliefs that a person holds regarding their social class or economic rank in society, the structure of their class, and their class interests. According to Karl Marx, it is an awareness that is key to sparking a revolution that would “create a dictatorship of the proletariat, transforming it from a wage-earning, property-less mass into the ruling class”.

Class consciousness and false consciousness are concepts introduced by Karl Marx that were later expanded by social theorists who came after him. Marx wrote about the theory in his book *Capital, Volume 1*, and again with his frequent collaborator, Friedrich Engels, in the impassioned treatise, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Class consciousness refers to the awareness by a social or economic class of their position and interests within the structure of the economic order and social system in which they live. In contrast, false consciousness is a perception of one’s relationships to social and economic systems of an individual nature, and a failure to see oneself as a part of a class with particular class interests relative to the economic order and social system.

Class consciousness is a core facet of Marx's theory of class conflict, which focuses on the social, economic, and political relationships between workers and owners within a capitalist economy. The precept was developed in conjunction with his theory on how workers might overthrow the system of capitalism and then go on to create a new economic, social, and political system based on equality rather than inequality and exploitation.

**What is False Consciousness? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** According to Marx, before workers developed a class consciousness they were actually living with a false consciousness. (Though Marx never used the actual term, he did develop the ideas that it encompasses.) In essence, false consciousness is the opposite of class consciousness. Individualistic rather than collective in nature, it produces a view of oneself as a single entity engaged in competition with others of one's social and economic standing, rather than as part of a group with unified experiences, struggles, and interests. According to Marx and other social theorists who followed, false consciousness was dangerous because it encouraged people to think and act in ways that were counterintuitive to their economic, social, and political self-interests.

Marx saw false consciousness as a product of an unequal social system controlled by a powerful minority of elites. The false consciousness among workers, which prevented them from seeing their collective interests and power, was created by the material relations and conditions of the capitalist system, by the ideology (the dominant worldview and values) of those who control the system, and by social institutions and how they function in society.

Marx cited the phenomenon of commodity fetishism—the way capitalist production frames relationships between people (workers and owners) as relationships between things (money and products)—with playing a key role in producing false consciousness among workers. He believed that commodity fetishism served to obscure the fact that relations with regard to production within a capitalist system are actually relationships between people, and that as such, they are changeable.

Building on Marx's theory, Italian scholar, writer, and activist Antonio Gramsci expanded the ideological component of false consciousness by arguing that a process of cultural hegemony guided by those holding economic, social, and cultural power in society produced a "common sense" way of thinking that imbued the status quo with legitimacy. Gramsci noted that by believing in the common sense of one's age, a person actually consents to the conditions of exploitation and domination that one experiences. This "common sense"—the ideology that produces false consciousness—is actually a misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the social relationships that define the economic, social, and political systems.

**What is Ideology? (5 Marks)**

**Ans. Ideology** enables the dominant classes to reinforce their power over the oppressed and marginalized classes because ideology serves as a system of beliefs that naturalizes the unequal power relations, and leads the oppressed to accept it as natural, a given and as self-evident and therefore beyond questioning.

In the Marxist economic base and superstructure model of society, base denotes the relations of production and modes of production, and superstructure denotes the dominant ideology (religious, legal, political systems). The economic base of production determines the political superstructure of a society. Ruling class-interests determine the superstructure and the nature of the justifying ideology—actions feasible because the ruling class control the means of production. For example, in a feudal mode of production, religious ideology is the most prominent aspect of the superstructure, while in capitalist formations, ideologies such as

liberalism and social democracy dominate. Hence the great importance of the ideology justifying a society; it politically confuses the alienated groups of society via false consciousness.

Antonio Gramsci uses cultural hegemony to explain why the working-class have a false ideological conception of what their best interests are. Marx argued that “The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production”.

### **Base-Superstructure Model (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans.** In Marxist theory, society consists of two parts: the base (or substructure) and superstructure. The base comprises the forces and relations of production (e.g. employer–employee work conditions, the technical division of labour, and property relations) into which people enter to produce the necessities and amenities of life. The base determines society’s other relationships and ideas to comprise its superstructure, including its culture, institutions, political power structures, roles, rituals, and state. While the relation of the two parts is not strictly unidirectional, as the superstructure often affects the base, the influence of the base is predominant. Marx and Engels warned against such economic determinism.

Marx’s “base determines superstructure” axiom, however, requires qualification:

1. the *base* is the whole of productive relationships, not only a given economic element, e.g. the working class
2. historically, the *superstructure* varies and develops unevenly in society’s different activities; for example, art, politics, economics, etc.
3. the *base–superstructure* relationship is *reciprocal*; Engels explains that the base determines the superstructure *only in the last instance*.

Marx’s theory of base and superstructure can be found in the disciplines of political science, sociology, anthropology, and psychology as utilized by Marxist scholars. Across these disciplines the base-superstructure relationship, and the contents of each, may take different forms. The Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci divided Marx’s superstructure into two elements: political society and civil society. Political society consists of the organized force of society (such as the police and military) while civil society refers to the consensus-creating elements that contribute to hegemony. Both constituents of this superstructure are still informed by the values of the base, serving to establish and enforce these values in society.

Contemporary Marxist interpretations such as those of critical theory criticise this conception of the base–superstructure interaction and examine how each affects and conditions the other. Raymond Williams, for example, argues against loose, “popular” usage of base and superstructure as discrete entities which, he explains, is not the intention of Marx and Engels. According to him we have to revalue ‘superstructure’ towards a related range of cultural practices, and away from a reflected, reproduced, or specifically-dependent content. And, crucially, we have to revalue ‘the base’ away from [the] notion[s] of [either] a fixed economic or [a] technological abstraction, and towards the specific activities of men in real, social and economic relationships, containing fundamental contradictions and variations, and, therefore, always in a state of dynamic process.

### **Marxian Class Theory (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Marx distinguishes social classes on the basis of two criteria: ownership of means of production and control over the labour power of others. Following this criterion of class based on

property relations, Marx identified the social stratification of the capitalist mode of production with the following social groups:

- **Proletariat:** “[...] the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live.” The capitalist mode of production establishes the conditions enabling the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat because the workers’ labour generates a surplus value greater than the workers’ wages.
- **Bourgeoisie:** those who “own the means of production” and buy labour power from the proletariat, thus exploiting the proletariat. They subdivide as bourgeoisie and the petite bourgeoisie.
  - **Petite bourgeoisie** are those who work and can afford to buy little labour power i.e. small business owners, peasant landlords, trade workers and the like. Marxism predicts that the continual reinvention of the means of production eventually would destroy the petite bourgeoisie, degrading them from the middle class to the proletariat.
- **Lumpenproletariat:** the outcasts of society such as the criminals, vagabonds, beggars, or prostitutes without any political or class consciousness. Having no interest in international or national economic affairs, Marx claimed that this specific sub-division of the proletariat would play no part in the eventual social revolution.
- **Landlords:** a historically important social class who retain some wealth and power.
- **Peasantry and farmers:** a scattered class incapable of organizing and effecting socio-economic change, most of whom would enter the proletariat while some would become landlords.

#### **What is Class Conflict? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** **Class conflict**, also referred to as class struggle and class warfare, is the political tension and economic antagonism that exists in society consequent to socio-economic competition among the social classes. The forms of class conflict include direct violence, such as wars for resources and cheap labor and assassinations; indirect violence, such as deaths from poverty and starvation, illness and unsafe working conditions. Economic coercion, such as the threat of unemployment or the withdrawal of investment capital; or ideologically, by way of political literature. Additionally, political forms of class warfare are: legal and illegal lobbying, and bribery of legislators.

The social-class conflict can be direct, as in a dispute between labour and management, such as an employer’s industrial lockout of their employees in effort to weaken the bargaining power of the corresponding trade union; or indirect, such as a workers’ slowdown of production in protest of unfair labor practices, such as low wages and poor workplace conditions. In the political and economic philosophies of Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin, class struggle is a central tenet and a practical means for effecting radical social and political changes for the social majority.

**(You have to write both the notes on Class Theory and Class Conflict if you encounter a 10 marks question on Marx’s theory on Class)**

#### **Significance of Historical Materialism (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Historical materialism, also known as the materialist conception of history, is a methodology used by some communist and Marxist historiographers that focuses on human societies and their development through history, arguing that **history is the result of material conditions rather than ideals**. This was first articulated by Karl Marx (1818–1883) as the “**materialist conception of history**”. It is principally a theory of history which asserts that the

material conditions of a society's mode of production or in Marxist terms, the union of a society's productive forces and relations of production, fundamentally determine society's organization and development. Historical materialism is an example of Marx and Engel's scientific socialism, attempting to show that socialism and communism are scientific necessities rather than philosophical ideals.

Historical materialism is materialist as it does not believe that history has been driven by individual's consciousness or ideals, but rather ascribes to the philosophical monism that matter is the fundamental substance of nature and henceforth the driving force in all of world history; this drove Marx and other historical materialists to abandon ideas such as rights (e.g. "right to life, liberty, and property" as liberalism professed). In contrast, idealists believe that human consciousness creates reality rather than the materialist conception that material reality creates human consciousness. This put Marx in direct conflict with groups like the liberals who believed that reality was governed by some set of ideals, when he stated in *The German Ideology*: "Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence".

Historical materialism looks for the causes of developments and changes in human society in the means by which humans collectively produce the necessities of life. It posits that social classes and the relationship between them, along with the political structures and ways of thinking in society, are founded on and reflect contemporary economic activity. Since Marx's time, the theory has been modified and expanded by some writers. It now has many Marxist and non-Marxist variants. Many Marxists contend that historical materialism is a scientific approach to the study of history.

### **Dialectics (10/ Marks 5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Dialectic or dialectics (Greek: *dialektiké*; related to dialogue), also known as the dialectical method, is at base a discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned arguments. Dialectic resembles debate, but the concept excludes subjective elements such as emotional appeal and the modern pejorative sense of rhetoric. Dialectic may thus be contrasted with both the eristic, which refers to argument that aims to successfully dispute another's argument (rather than searching for truth), or the didactic method, wherein one side of the conversation teaches the other. Dialectic is alternatively known as minor logic, as opposed to major logic or critique.

Within Hegelianism, the word dialectic has the specialised meaning of a contradiction between ideas that serves as the determining factor in their relationship. Dialectic comprises three stages of development: first, a thesis or statement of an idea, which gives rise to a second step, a reaction or antithesis that contradicts or negates the thesis, and third, the synthesis, a statement through which the differences between the two points are resolved. Dialectical materialism, a theory or set of theories produced mainly by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, adapted the Hegelian dialectic into arguments regarding traditional materialism.

Dialectic tends to imply a process of evolution and so does not naturally fit within formal logic (see logic and dialectic). This process is particularly marked in Hegelian dialectic and even more so in Marxist dialectic which may rely on the evolution of ideas over longer time periods in the real world; dialectical logic attempts to address this.

The term "**dialectical materialism**" was coined by the 19th-century social theorist Joseph Dietzgen who used the theory to explain the nature of socialism and social development. The original populariser of Marxism in Russia, Georgi Plekhanov used the terms "dialectical

materialism” and “historical materialism” interchangeably. For Lenin, the primary feature of Marx’s “dialectical materialism” (Lenin’s term) was its application of materialist philosophy to history and social sciences. Lenin’s main input in the philosophy of dialectical materialism was his theory of reflection, which presented human consciousness as a dynamic reflection of the objective material world that fully shapes its contents and structure. Later, Stalin’s works on the subject established a rigid and formalistic division of Marxist–Leninist theory in the dialectical materialism and historical materialism parts. While the first was supposed to be the key method and theory of the philosophy of nature, the second was the Soviet version of the philosophy of history.

A dialectical method was fundamental to Marxist politics, e.g., the works of **Karl Korsch**, **Georg Lukács** and certain members of the **Frankfurt School**. Soviet academics, notably Evald Ilyenkov and Zaid Orudzhev, continued pursuing unorthodox philosophic study of Marxist dialectics; likewise in the West, notably the philosopher Bertell Ollman at New York University.

### **Criticism of Capitalism (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans.** According to the Marxist theoretician and revolutionary Vladimir Lenin, “the principal content of Marxism” was “Marx’s economic doctrine”. Marx believed that the capitalist bourgeois and their economists were promoting what he saw as the lie that “the interests of the capitalist and of the worker are ... one and the same”, therefore he believed that they did this by purporting the concept that “the fastest possible growth of productive capital” was best not only for the wealthy capitalists but also for the workers because it provided them with employment.

Exploitation is a matter of surplus labour—the amount of labour one performs beyond what one receives in goods. Exploitation has been a socioeconomic feature of every class society and is one of the principal features distinguishing the social classes. The power of one social class to control the means of production enables its exploitation of the other classes. In capitalism, the labour theory of value is the operative concern; the value of a commodity equals the socially necessary labour time required to produce it. Under that condition, surplus value (the difference between the value produced and the value received by a labourer) is synonymous with the term “surplus labour”, thus capitalist exploitation is realised as deriving surplus value from the worker. In pre-capitalist economies, exploitation of the worker was achieved via physical coercion. In the capitalist mode of production, that result is more subtly achieved and because workers do not own the means of production, they must voluntarily enter into an exploitive work relationship with a capitalist in order to earn the necessities of life. The worker’s entry into such employment is voluntary in that they choose which capitalist to work for. However, the worker must work or starve, thus exploitation is inevitable and the “voluntary” nature of a worker participating in a capitalist society is illusory.

**Alienation** is the estrangement of people from their humanity (German: *Gattungswesen*, “species-essence”) which is a systematic result of capitalism. Under capitalism, the fruits of production belong to the employers, who expropriate the surplus created by others and so generate alienated labourers. In Marx’s view, alienation is an objective characterization of the worker’s situation in capitalism—his or her self-awareness of this condition is not prerequisite.

### **Communism (10 Marks/ 5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Communism (from Latin *communis*, “common, universalis a philosophical, social, political, economic ideology and movement whose ultimate goal is the establishment of a communist society, namely a socioeconomic order structured upon the ideas of common ownership of the means of production and the absence of social classes, money and the state.



Communism includes a variety of schools of thought which broadly include Marxism and anarchism (especially anarcho-communism) as well as the political ideologies grouped around both. All of these share the analysis that the current order of society stems from its economic system and mode of production, capitalism; that in this system there are two major social classes; that conflict between these two classes is the root of all problems in society; and that this situation will ultimately be resolved through a social revolution. The two classes are the proletariat (the working class)—who must work to survive and who make up the majority within society—and the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class)—a minority who derives profit from employing the working class through private ownership of the means of production. According to this analysis, revolution would put the working class in power and in turn establish social ownership of the means of production which is the primary element in the transformation of society towards communism.

Along with social democracy, communism became the dominant political tendency within the international socialist movement by the 1920s. While the emergence of the Soviet Union as the world's first nominally communist state led to communism's widespread association with the Soviet economic model and Marxism–Leninism, some economists and intellectuals argued that in practice the model functioned as a form of state capitalism, or a non-planned administrative or command economy.

#### **Marx's Theory of Revolution/Revolutionary Socialism (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans. Revolutionary socialism** is the socialist doctrine that social revolution is necessary in order to bring about structural changes to society. More specifically, it is the view that revolution is a necessary precondition for a transition from capitalism to socialism. Revolution is not necessarily defined as a violent insurrection; it is defined as seizure of political power by mass movements of the working class so that the state is directly controlled or abolished by the working class as opposed to the capitalist class and its interests. Revolutionary socialists believe such a state of affairs is a precondition for establishing socialism and orthodox Marxists believe that it is inevitable but not predetermined.

Revolutionary socialism encompasses multiple political and social movements that may define “revolution” differently from one another. These include movements based on orthodox Marxist theory, such as De Leonism, impossibilism, and Luxemburgism; as well as movements based on Leninism and the theory of vanguardist-led revolution, such as Maoism, Marxism–Leninism, and Trotskyism.

#### **Socialist Realism (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans. Socialist realism** is a style of idealized realistic art that was developed in the Soviet Union and was the official style in that country between 1932 and 1988, as well as in other socialist countries after World War II. Socialist realism is characterized by the glorified depiction of communist values, such as the emancipation of the proletariat. Despite its name, the figures in the style are very often highly idealized, especially in sculpture, where it often leans heavily on the conventions of classical sculpture. Although related, it should not be confused with social realism, a type of art that realistically depicts subjects of social concern, or other forms of “realism” in the visual arts.

Socialist realism was the predominant form of approved art in the Soviet Union from its development in the early 1920s to its eventual fall from official status beginning in the late 1960s until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. While other countries have employed a prescribed canon of art, socialist realism in the Soviet Union persisted longer and was more restrictive than elsewhere in Europe.

The purpose of socialist realism was to limit popular culture to a specific, highly regulated faction of emotional expression that promoted Soviet ideals. The party was of the utmost importance and was always to be favorably featured. The key concepts that developed assured loyalty to the party, “partiinnost” (party-mindedness), “ideinost” (idea- or ideological-content), “klassovost” (class content), “pravdivost” (truthfulness).

Vladimir Lenin, head of the Russian government 1917–1924, laid the foundation for this new wave of art, suggesting that art is for the people and the people should love and understand it, while uniting the masses. Artists Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner attempted to define the lines of art under Lenin by writing “The Realist Manifesto” in 1920 suggesting that artists should be given free rein to create as their muse desired. Lenin, however, had a different purpose for art; wanting it functional, and Stalin built on that belief that art should be propaganda.

Maxim Gorky, founder of the Socialist Realist movement, proclaimed in 1934 at the Soviet Writer’s congress that any works of art that portrayed a negative or anti-governmental view of Russia were illegal. This turned individual artists and their masterpieces into state controlled propaganda.

After the death of Stalin in 1953, he was succeeded by Nikita Khrushchev who harbored less draconian state controls and openly condemned Stalin’s artistic demands in 1957 with his “Secret Speech”, and thus began a reversal in policy known as “Khrushchev’s Thaw.” He believed that artists should not be constrained and should be allowed to live by their creative talents. In 1964, Khrushchev was removed and replaced by Leonid Brezhnev who reintroduced Stalin’s ideas and reversed the artistic decisions made by Khrushchev.

However, by the early 1980s, the Socialist Realist movement had begun to fade. Artist to date remark that the Russian Social Realist movement as the most oppressive and shunned period of Soviet Art.

### **What is Hegemony/Cultural Hegemony? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** In Marxist philosophy, **cultural hegemony is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society** — the beliefs and explanations, perceptions, values, and mores — so that the imposed, ruling-class worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm; the **universally valid dominant ideology**, which justifies the social, political, and economic status quo as natural and inevitable, perpetual and beneficial for every social class, rather than as artificial social constructs that benefit only the ruling class. This Marxist analysis of how the ruling capitalist class (the bourgeoisie) establishes and maintains its control was originally developed by the Italian philosopher and politician **Antonio Gramsci**.

The bourgeoisie, in Gramsci’s view, develops a hegemonic **culture using ideology rather than violence, economic force, or coercion**. Hegemonic culture propagates its own values and norms so that they become the “common sense” values of all and thus maintain the status quo. Hegemonic power is therefore used to maintain consent to the capitalist order, rather than coercive power using force to maintain order. **This cultural hegemony is produced and reproduced by the dominant class through the institutions that form the superstructure.**

### **Ideological State Apparatus (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans.** “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)” is an essay by the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. First published in 1970, it advances Althusser’s theory of ideology.

The ruling class uses the **repressive state apparatuses (RSA)** to dominate the working class. The basic, social function of the RSA (government, courts, police and armed forces, etc.)

is timely intervention to politics in favour of the interests of the ruling class, by repressing the subordinate social classes as required, either by violent or non-violent coercive means. The ruling class controls the RSA, because they also control the powers of the state (political, legislative, armed).

Ideological state apparatuses (ISA), according to Althusser, use methods other than physical violence to achieve the same objectives as RSA. They may include educational institutions (e.g. schools), media outlets, churches, social/sports clubs and the family. These formations are ostensibly apolitical and part of civil society, rather than a formal part of the state (i.e. as is the case in RSA). In terms of psychology they could be described as psychosocial, because they aim to inculcate ways of seeing and evaluating things, events and class relations. Instead of expressing and imposing order, through violent repression, ISA disseminate ideologies that reinforce the control of a dominant class. People tend to be co-opted by fear of social rejection, e.g. ostracisation, ridicule and isolation. In Althusser's view, a social class cannot hold state power unless, and until, it simultaneously exercises hegemony (domination) over and through ISA.

Educational ISA, in particular, assume a dominant role in a capitalist economy, and conceal and mask the ideology of the ruling class behind the "liberating qualities" of education, so that the hidden agendas of the ruling class are inconspicuous to most teachers, students, parents and other interested members of society.

However, because ISA cannot dominate as obviously or readily as RSA, ideological state apparatuses may themselves become a site of class struggle. That is, subordinate social classes are able to find the means and occasions to express class struggle politically and in so doing counter the dominant class, either by utilizing ideological contradictions inherent in ISA, or by campaigns to take control of positions within the ISA.

**The differences between the RSA and the ISA are:**

1. The repressive state apparatus (RSA) functions as a unified entity (an institution), unlike the ideological state apparatus (ISA), which is diverse in nature and plural in function. What unites the disparate ISA however is their ultimate control by the ruling ideology.
2. The apparatuses of the state, repressive and ideological, each perform the double functions of violence and ideology. A state apparatus cannot be exclusively repressive or exclusively ideological. The distinction between an RSA and an ISA is its primary function in society, respectively, the administration of violent repression and the dissemination of ideology. In practice, the RSA is the means of repression and violence, and, secondarily, a means of ideology; whereas, the primary, practical function of the ISA is as the means for the dissemination of ideology, and, secondarily, as a means of political violence and repression. The secondary functions of the ISA are affected in a concealed and a symbolic manner.

**Interpellation (10 Marks/ 5 Marks)**

**Ans. Interpellation** is the constitutive process where individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies, thereby recognizing themselves as subjects. Interpellation is a process, a process in which we encounter our culture's values and internalize them.

Interpellation expresses the idea that an idea is not simply yours alone (such as "I like blue, I always have") but rather an idea that has been presented to you for you to accept. Ideologies – our attitudes towards gender, class, and race – should be thought of more

as *social processes*. Accepting or not accepting a culture's given attitudes places one in a particular relationship with power.

For **Althusser**, interpellation works in a manner much like giving a person a name, or calling out to them in the street. That is, ideologies "address" people and offer them a particular identity which they are encouraged to accept. However, one is not forced to accept that role through violence. Because those roles are offered to us everywhere we look, or even assigned to us by culture, they are presented in such a way that we are encouraged to *accept* them. This works best when it is an invisible, but consensual process. It works best when we believe these values are our own, and reflect the most obvious, logical way to live.

Althusser emphasizes the ubiquity of ideology and interpellation by noting how subjects are consistently constituted by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) such as the family, educational institutions, and media such as literature, radio and television. The idea that an individual can be interpellated through various mediums would later be appropriated by theorists from diverse backgrounds such as cinema and media studies and cultural studies.

Although he initially presents a temporal example of interpellation, Althusser insists that the process is not governed by cause and effect, but happens simultaneously. He emphasizes that "the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing". In other words ideology, interpellation, and subjecthood, mutually reinforce each other so that "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: individuals are always-already subjects".

#### **Reification (5 Marks)**

Ans. In his essay "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat", **György Lukács** presents the category of reification whereby, due to the commodity-centred nature of capitalist society, social relations become objectified. Reification ("making into a thing") is the process by which social relations are perceived as inherent attributes of the people involved in them, or attributes of some product of the relation, such as a traded commodity.

This implies that objects are transformed into subjects and subjects are turned into objects, with the result that subjects are rendered passive or determined, while objects are rendered as the active, determining factor. **Hypostatization** refers to an effect of reification which results from supposing that whatever can be named, or conceived abstractly, must actually exist, an ontological and epistemological fallacy. **Commodity fetishism is a specific form of reification.**

#### **Frankfurt School: Exponents and Ideas (5 Marks)**

Ans. **Frankfurt School**, group of researchers associated with the **Institute for Social Research** in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, who applied Marxism to a radical interdisciplinary social theory. The Institute for Social Research was founded by Carl Grünberg in 1923. After 1933, the Nazis forced its closure, and the Institute was moved to the United States where it found hospitality at Columbia University in New York City. **Max Horkheimer** took over as director in 1930 and recruited many talented theorists, including **T.W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin.**

They used basic Marxist concepts to analyze the social relations within capitalist economic systems. This approach, which became known as "**critical theory**," yielded influential critiques of large corporations and monopolies, the role of technology, the industrialization of

culture, and the decline of the individual within capitalist society. Fascism and authoritarianism were also prominent subjects of study.

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**What is Culture Industry? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Frankfurt School philosophers Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno in their book **Dialectic of Enlightenment** coined the term culture industry, arguing that in a capitalist society mass culture is akin to a factory producing standardized cultural goods - films, radio programmes, magazines, etc. These homogenized cultural products are used to manipulate mass society into docility and passivity. The introduction of the radio, a mass medium, no longer permits its listener any mechanism of reply, as was the case with the telephone. Instead, listeners are not subjects anymore but passive receptacles exposed "in authoritarian fashion to the same programs put out by different stations.

## Poststructuralism

**What is Poststructuralism? What are the main characteristics of Poststructuralism? (10 Marks/5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Poststructuralism, movement in literary criticism and philosophy begun in France in the late 1960s. Drawing upon the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss (see structuralism), and the deconstructionist theories of Jacques Derrida (see deconstruction), it held that language is not a transparent medium that connects one directly with a “truth” or “reality” outside it but rather a structure or code, whose parts derive their meaning from their contrast with one another and not from any connection with an outside world. Writers associated with the movement include Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, and Michel Foucault.

Structuralism posits the concept of binary opposition, in which frequently used pairs of opposite but related words (concepts) are often arranged in a hierarchy, for example: Enlightenment/Romantic, male/female, speech/writing, rational/emotional, signified/signifier, symbolic/imaginary.

Post-structuralism rejects the structuralist notion that the dominant word in a pair is dependent on its subservient counterpart and instead argues that founding knowledge either on pure experience (phenomenology) or systematic structures (Structuralism) is impossible because history and culture condition the study of underlying structures and these are subject to biases and misinterpretations. This impossibility was not meant as a failure or loss, but rather as a cause for “celebration and liberation”. A post-structuralist approach argues that to understand an object (e.g., a text), it is necessary to study both the object itself and the systems of knowledge that produced the object. The uncertain distance between structuralism and post-structuralism is further blurred by the fact that scholars rarely label themselves as post-structuralists. Some

scholars associated with structuralism, such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, also became noteworthy in post-structuralism.

We can say that a post-structuralist text can be recognized via these key characteristics:

- the critique of the sign;
- the absence/critique of a transcendental signified;
- the absence/critique of a centre/structure/author;
- the idea of multiple meanings;
- the critique of a singular meaning;
- the focus on the reader;
- intertextuality;
- the text offers a large space for interpretation (different interpretations are encouraged);
- the idea of reading as writing, not as discovering/deciphering;
- breadth analysis;
- support for multiculturalism, feminism, pluralism;
- the language is studied not at an abstract level, but at its speaker's level (the uses of the language are important);
- the idea of a multivoiced language;
- there is no Truth;
- history is present, it is used a diachronic method;
- there are no hierarchies or binary oppositions;
- the subject is decentered.

### **What is Sign? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** In semiotics, a sign is anything that communicates a meaning that is not the sign itself to the interpreter of the sign. The meaning can be intentional such as a word uttered with a specific meaning, or unintentional, such as a symptom being a sign of a particular medical condition. Signs can communicate through any of the senses, visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, or taste.

Two major theories describe the way signs acquire the ability to transfer information. Both theories understand the defining property of the sign as a relation between a number of elements. In the tradition of semiotics developed by Ferdinand de Saussure (referred to as semiology) the sign relation is dyadic, consisting only of a form of the sign (the signifier) and its meaning (the signified). Saussure saw this relation as being essentially arbitrary (the principle of semiotic arbitrariness), motivated only by social convention. Saussure's theory has been particularly influential in the study of linguistic signs. The other major semiotic theory, developed by C. S. Peirce, defines the sign as a triadic relation as "something that stands for something, to someone in some capacity". This means that a sign is a relation between the sign vehicle (the specific physical form of the sign), a sign object (the aspect of the world that the sign carries meaning about) and an interpretant (the meaning of the sign as understood by an interpreter). According to Peirce signs can be divided by the type of relation that holds the sign relation together as either icons, indices or symbols. Icons are those signs that signify by means of similarity between sign vehicle and sign object (e.g. a portrait, or a map), indices are those that signify by means of a direct relation of contiguity or causality between sign vehicle and sign

object (e.g. a symptom), and symbols are those that signify through a law or arbitrary social convention.

**What is Signifier and Signified? (5 Marks/ 2 Marks)**

**Ans.** In his book, *Course in General Linguistics*, published in 1916, Saussure explained that a sign was not only a sound-image but also a concept. Thus he divided the sign into two components: the **signifier (or “sound-image”)** and the **signified (or “concept”)**. For Saussure, the signified and signifier were purely psychological; they were form rather than substance. Today, following Hjelmslev, the signifier is interpreted as the material form (something which can be seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted) and the signified as the mental concept.

The concept of signs has been around for a long time, having been studied by many philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, William of Ockham, and Francis Bacon, among others. The term “semiotics” “comes from the Greek root, *seme*, as in semeiotikos, an interpreter of signs”. It was not until the early part of the 20th century, however, that Saussure and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce brought the term into awareness. While both Saussure and Peirce contributed greatly to the concept of signs, it is important to note that each differed in their approach to the study. It was Saussure who created the terms signifier and signified in order to break down what a sign was. He broke from the previous studies on language since he focused on the present when it comes to the act of communication instead of the history and development of words and language over time.

**Binaries Opposition (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** A binary opposition (also binary system) is a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning. Binary opposition is the system of language and/or thought by which two theoretical opposites are strictly defined and set off against one another. It is the contrast between two mutually exclusive terms, such as on and off, up and down, left and right. Binary opposition is an important concept of structuralism, which sees such distinctions as fundamental to all language and thought. In structuralism, a binary opposition is seen as a fundamental organizer of human philosophy, culture, and language.

Binary opposition originated in Saussurean structuralist theory. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the binary opposition is the means by which the units of language have value or meaning; each unit is defined in reciprocal determination with another term, as in binary code. It is not a contradictory relation but a structural, complementary one. Saussure demonstrated that a sign’s meaning is derived from its context (syntagmatic dimension) and the group (paradigm) to which it belongs. An example of this is that one cannot conceive of ‘good’ if we do not understand ‘evil’.

Typically, one of the two opposites assumes a role of dominance over the other. The categorization of binary oppositions is “often value-laden and ethnocentric”, with an illusory order and superficial meaning. Furthermore, Pieter Fourie discovered that binary oppositions have a deeper or second level of binaries that help to reinforce meaning. As an example, the concepts hero and villain involve secondary binaries: good/bad, handsome/ugly, liked/disliked, and so on.

**Deconstruction (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** Deconstruction is an approach to understanding the relationship between text and meaning. It was originated by the philosopher **Jacques Derrida (1930–2004)**, who defined the term variously throughout his career.

Although deconstruction has roots in Martin Heidegger's concept of *Destruktion*, to deconstruct is not to destroy. Deconstruction is always a double movement of simultaneous affirmation and undoing. It started out as a way of reading the history of metaphysics in Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, but was soon applied to the interpretation of literary, religious, and legal texts as well as philosophical ones, and was adopted by several French feminist theorists as a way of making clearer the deep male bias embedded in the European intellectual tradition.

To deconstruct is to take a text apart along the structural "fault lines" created by the ambiguities inherent in one or more of its key concepts or themes in order to reveal the equivocations or contradictions that make the text possible. For example, in "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida deconstructs Socrates' criticism of the written word, arguing that it not only suffers from internal inconsistencies because of the analogy Socrates himself makes between memory and writing, but also stands in stark contrast to the fact that his ideas come to us only through the written word he disparaged. The double movement here is one of tracing this tension in Plato's text, and in the traditional reading of that text, while at the same time acknowledging the fundamental ways in which our understanding of the world is dependent on Socrates' attitude toward the written word. Derrida points out similar contradictions in philosophical discussions of a preface and a picture frame, which are simultaneously inside and outside the respective works under consideration.

Since the distinction between what is inside the text (or painting) and what is outside can itself be deconstructed according to the same principles, deconstruction is, like *Destruktion*, an historicizing movement that opens texts to the conditions of their production, their con-text in a very broad sense, including not only the historical circumstances and tradition from which they arose, but also the conventions and nuances of the language in which they were written and the details of their authors' lives. This generates an effectively infinite complexity in texts that makes any deconstructive reading necessarily partial and preliminary.

The tools of deconstruction and the sorts of truths they reveal, are similar in both spheres. The basic strategy is still to follow the trace of a key ambiguity or blind spot through the text to illuminate hierarchical oppositions it relies on and the fault lines along which it can be undone, while still acknowledging its power and importance in European thought. Ernest Jones' classic psychoanalytic reading of "Hamlet", for instance, is deconstructive in that it foregrounds the suppressed patricide in "Julius Caesar" (Shakespeare ignores the fact that Brutus was Caesar's illegitimate son, thus implying an invariant (beloved-)father/(legitimate-)son pair), and then uses this omission as one key in tracing the Oedipal fault line in the later play. Here deconstruction yields, not a new meaning to "Hamlet", as one could say Derrida does in his discussion of prefaces in Hegel, but a new richness to our understanding of Shakespeare's work.

This highlights the fact that deconstruction plays a different role in literature than in philosophy. Deconstruction tends to be used in literary theory in arguments between and among theorists about the value of their theories, rather than about the value of the texts under discussion. One deconstructs Kant to argue with Kant (and perhaps others), but one doesn't deconstruct Shakespeare to argue with Shakespeare (or, as we saw above, Cézanne to argue with Cézanne). In addition, literary deconstruction is about texts that are of a different nature than the deconstruction itself, while the deconstruction of one philosophical text results in another philosophical text. This makes it much clearer in philosophy that deconstructive texts can themselves be, in fact must be, deconstructed. What literary deconstruction produces, on the other hand, is not itself literature. This doesn't mean that literary deconstructions cannot be



deconstructed, but that they are not deconstructed in the same way that they are constructed. The context in which such a deconstruction might be carried out, is quite different from the context in which the original deconstructive text was created. Put another way, literary deconstruction assumes the possibility and reality of literature in at least some sense of the term, whereas deconstruction as a philosophical enterprise questions, at its most basic level, the possibility of philosophy itself.

**Metaphysics of presence/ Logocentricism (10 Marks/ 5 Marks)**

**Ans.** According to Derrida, “logocentrism” is the attitude that logos (the Greek term for speech, thought, law, or reason) is the central principle of language and philosophy.[3] Logocentrism is the view that speech, and not writing, is central to language. Thus, “Of Grammatology” (a term which Derrida uses to refer to the science of writing) can liberate our ideas of writing from being subordinated to our ideas of speech. *Of Grammatology* is a method of investigating the origin of language which enables our concepts of writing to become as comprehensive as our concepts of speech.

According to logocentrist theory, says Derrida, speech is the original signifier of meaning, and the written word is derived from the spoken word. The written word is thus a representation of the spoken word. Logocentrism maintains that language originates as a process of thought which produces speech, and that speech then produces writing. Logocentrism is that characteristic of texts, theories, modes of representation and signifying systems that generates a desire for a direct, unmediated, given hold on meaning, being and knowledge.

Derrida argues that logocentrism may be seen in the theory that a linguistic sign consists of a signifier which derives its meaning from a signified idea or concept. Logocentrism asserts the exteriority of the signifier to the signified. Writing is conceptualized as exterior to speech, and speech is conceptualized as exterior to thought. However, if writing is only a representation of speech, then writing is only a ‘signifier of a signifier.’ Thus, according to logocentrist theory, writing is merely a derivative form of language which draws its meaning from speech. The importance of speech as central to the development of language is emphasized by logocentrist theory, but the importance of writing is marginalized.

Derrida explains that, according to logocentrist theory, speech may be a kind of presence, because the speaker is simultaneously present for the listener, but writing may be a kind of absence, because the writer is not simultaneously present for the reader. Writing may be regarded by logocentrist theory as a substitute for the simultaneous presence of writer and reader. If the reader and the writer were simultaneously present, then the writer would communicate with the reader by speaking instead of by writing. Logocentrism thus asserts that writing is a substitute for speech and that writing is an attempt to restore the presence of speech.

Logocentrism is described by Derrida as a “metaphysics of presence,” which is motivated by a desire for a “transcendental signified.” A “transcendental signified” is a signified which transcends all signifiers, and is a meaning which transcends all signs. A “transcendental signified” is also a signified concept or thought which transcends any single signifier, but which is implied by all determinations of meaning.

Derrida argues that the “transcendental signified” may be deconstructed by an examination of the assumptions which underlie the “metaphysics of presence.” For example, if presence is assumed to be the essence of the signified, then the proximity of a signifier to the signified may imply that the signifier is able to reflect the presence of the signified. If presence is assumed to be the essence of the signified, then the remoteness of a signifier from the signified may imply that the signifier is unable, or may only be barely able, to reflect the presence of the

signified. This interplay between proximity and remoteness is also an interplay between presence and absence, and between interiority and exteriority.

**Difference (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Against the metaphysics of presence, deconstruction brings a (non-)concept called differance. Derrida uses the term “difference” to describe the origin of presence and absence. Differance is indefinable, and cannot be explained by the “metaphysics of presence.” In French, the verb “deferrer” means both “to defer” and “to differ.” Thus, difference may refer not only to the state or quality of being deferred, but to the state or quality of being different. Differance may be the condition for that which is deferred, and may be the condition for that which is different. Differance may be the condition for difference.

Derrida explains that difference is the condition for the opposition of presence and absence. Differance is also the “hinge” between speech and writing, and between inner meaning and outer representation. As soon as there is meaning, there is difference.

**Contribution of Derrida (10 Marks)**

**Ans. Jacques Derrida (1930 – 2004)** was an Algerian-born French philosopher best known for developing a form of semiotic analysis known as deconstruction, which he discussed in numerous texts, and developed in the context of phenomenology. He is one of the major figures associated with post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy.

Some critics consider *Speech and Phenomena* (1967) to be his most important work. Others cite: *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Writing and Difference* (1967), and *Margins of Philosophy* (1972). These writings influenced various activists and political movements. He became a well-known and influential public figure, while his approach to philosophy and the notorious abstruseness of his work made him controversial.

Distancing himself from the various philosophical movements and traditions that preceded him on the French intellectual scene (phenomenology, existentialism, and structuralism), he developed a strategy called “deconstruction” in the mid 1960s. Although not purely negative, deconstruction is primarily concerned with something tantamount to a critique of the Western philosophical tradition. Deconstruction is generally presented via an analysis of specific texts. It seeks to expose, and then to subvert, the various binary oppositions that undergird our dominant ways of thinking—presence/absence, speech/writing, and so forth.

**Deconstruction** has at least two aspects: literary and philosophical. The literary aspect concerns the textual interpretation, where invention is essential to finding hidden alternative meanings in the text. The philosophical aspect concerns the main target of deconstruction: the “metaphysics of presence,” or simply metaphysics. Starting from an Heideggerian point of view, Derrida argues that metaphysics affects the whole of philosophy from Plato onwards. Metaphysics creates dualistic oppositions and installs a hierarchy that unfortunately privileges one term of each dichotomy (presence before absence, speech before writing, and so on).

The deconstructive strategy is to unmask these too-sedimented ways of thinking, and it operates on them especially through two steps—reversing dichotomies and attempting to corrupt the dichotomies themselves. The strategy also aims to show that there are undecidables, that is, something that cannot conform to either side of a dichotomy or opposition. Undecidability returns in later period of Derrida’s reflection, when it is applied to reveal paradoxes involved in notions such as gift giving or hospitality, whose conditions of possibility are at the same time their conditions of impossibility. Because of this, it is undecidable whether authentic giving or hospitality are either possible or impossible.

In this period, the founder of deconstruction turns his attention to ethical themes. In particular, the theme of responsibility to the other (for example, God or a beloved person) leads Derrida to leave the idea that responsibility is associated with a behavior publicly and rationally justifiable by general principles. Reflecting upon tales of Jewish tradition, he highlights the absolute singularity of responsibility to the other.

Deconstruction has had an enormous influence in psychology, literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, feminism, sociology and anthropology. Poised in the interstices between philosophy and non-philosophy (or philosophy and literature), it is not difficult to see why this is the case. What follows in this article, however, is an attempt to bring out the philosophical significance of Derrida's thought.

### Contribution of Michel Foucault in Poststructuralism (10 Marks)

**Ans. Michel Foucault (1926-1984)** was a French philosopher, historian of ideas, social theorist, and literary critic. Foucault's theories primarily address the relationship between power and knowledge, and how they are used as a form of social control through societal institutions. Though often cited as a post-structuralist and postmodernist, Foucault rejected these labels. Foucault's work can generally be characterized as philosophically oriented historical research; towards the end of his life, Foucault insisted that all his work was part of a single project of historically investigating the production of truth. What Foucault did across his major works was to attempt to produce an historical account of the formation of ideas, including philosophical ideas.

After several years as a cultural diplomat abroad, he returned to France and published his first major book, *The History of Madness* (1961). After obtaining work between 1960 and 1966 at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, he produced *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) and *The Order of Things* (1966), publications which displayed his increasing involvement with structuralism, from which he later distanced himself. Foucault subsequently published *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). Foucault later published *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), in which he developed archaeological and genealogical methods which emphasized the role that power plays in society.

Foucault developed what he called the 'archaeology of the human sciences' in which he studied the rise of the forms of knowledge, the classificatory mechanisms of knowledge and the rules by which knowledge was collected, archived and disseminated. Foucault's interest lay in unpacking the underlying structures of thinking in the various fields of knowledge because, he argued, these structures conditioned and constructed

- the process of inquiry (knowledge-gathering),
- the very nature of the object (about which knowledge is being gathered), and
- the possibilities of using and distributing this knowledge.

Knowledge is constructed, organized, shared and used through particular forms of speech, writing and language—or what is called discourse. **Discourse is the context of speech, representation, knowledge and understanding.** It defines what can be said, studied and the processes of doing so. It is the context in which *meaning itself is produced*.

Foucault's originality lay in discerning the underlying structures of power that informed 'neutral' scientific inquiries. He argued that some sections of the population were classified as sick, criminal, mad so that they could be placed under surveillance and 'observed' by particular kinds of authorities. This surveillance was coded as a discourse, a terrain of thought, a system of

knowledge, a particular kind of language that allowed some things to be said and disallowed some others. Thus,

- the *priest* used the discourse of religion, of sin and salvation in order to preach particular norms of behaviour in domains like marriage, sexuality, family and charity,
- the *physician* used the discourse of sickness and health in order to proscribe particular kinds of lifestyles (excessive eating, for example),
- the *psychiatrist* constructed particular kinds of behaviour as ‘deviant’ through a discourse of rationality.

Foucault’s major contribution has been to show how these discourses condition people’s lives and inform their thinking. By focusing on power as central to the human condition, Foucault was able to argue that human relations, science, institutions are all caught up in a struggle for power, and discourse is a terrain on which this struggle is carried out. The person/institution that controls discourse also controls the subjects in those discourses.

Foucault underscored the **discursive basis of power**, social relations and institutions by showing how the so-called ‘objective’ disciplines like the sciences relied upon underlying assumptions about the object to be investigated, used particular forms of language and thought in order to talk about this object, and eventually constructed an institution around the object for its study and control.

### **Contribution of Jacques Lacan in Psychoanalytic School of Poststructuralist thought (10 Marks)**

**Ans. Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (1901-1981)** was a major figure in Parisian intellectual life for much of the twentieth century. Sometimes referred to as “the French Freud,” he is an important figure in the history of psychoanalysis. His teachings and writings explore the significance of Freud’s discovery of the unconscious both within the theory and practice of analysis itself as well as in connection with a wide range of other disciplines.

Lacan begins, like Freud, with childhood. Lacan constructs a model of identity-formation that takes a three-stage process or ‘orders’, as Lacan calls them.

**The Imaginary:** Here the child makes its first identification—with the reflection in the mirror. It now associates coordinated limbs and movements in the mirror with itself and thus forms a sense of the self. In the ‘**mirror stage**’, as Lacan terms it, the child’s sense of the self is similar to its conception of the relationship between himself and the mother. Just as the child does not see a distinction between himself and the mother (what Lacan calls ‘desire-of-the-mother’), looking into the mirror, he does not see any distinction between himself and the reflection. In the Imaginary the child seeks to erase all difference and otherness by imagining himself as the person in the mirror and seeing himself and his mother as the same. In Lacan’s terms the mirror stage is a ‘homologue for the Mother/Child symbolic relation’.

**The Symbolic:** This is the stage when the child acquires language, and is perhaps the most important formulation in Lacan. It is the moment in which the child enters society and social relations. In language, for example, the child discovers that society has different names for ‘father’, ‘mother’ and ‘child’. She is ‘Mother’ in language, and is different from ‘I’. The child discovers here an endless chain of signifiers: ‘I’, ‘mother’, ‘father’ and thereby discovers social relations. He moves along a chain of signifiers in a **metonymic displacement** from one to the other. It is the first sign of difference. The child discovers that he is different from others, and that he cannot desire the mother. He discovers the Symbolic Order that is external to himself,

what Lacan terms the 'Other'. Thus, the 'desire of the mother' is now prohibited by the order or Name-of-the-father.

**The Real:** This is the order that both the Imaginary and the Symbolic try to control. This is where the child's illusions (of being one with his reflection or being one with the mother) from the Imaginary is at odds with the sense of otherness from the Symbolic.

Lacan identifies three stages in the making of the psyche: the Imaginary is the pre-linguistic (i.e., before language) where the child sees himself reflected in the mirror and considers himself whole and complete and one with the mother; the Symbolic is when the child acquires language and begins to understand difference, social relations, that he is not one with the mother or the primary desire of the mother and that the law of the father is supreme; the Real is the stage where the Imaginary and Symbolic both seek power and the psyche is caught between the 'lack' (i.e., the desire for the absent mother discovered during the Symbolic stage and eventually pushed into the unconscious) and the need to fulfill this lack.

Lacan suggests that all desire is linked to a lack. In fact, Lacan said the lack is desire. Here he turns to linguistics and suggests that all signifiers merely gesture at the lack. When we pursue the signifier's meaning (i.e., the signified) to fill the lack what we find are more signifiers. We thus proceed on the chain of signifiers without ever reaching an end-signified. Desire thus remains as a lack, and constitutes our unconscious/repressed. What is crucial here is that the loss of the object of desire (Mother) is what gives the child language. Language, therefore, is always connected with the loss of the object and the desire. Language itself is about lack, since signifiers do not lead to a final meaning but more signifiers. As Elizabeth Wright summarizes it, 'language imposes a chain of words along which the ego must move while the unconscious remains in search of the object it has lost' (1984: 111).

With this move Lacan links language with desire and the unconscious. In the unconscious desire is structured like language: the name/signifier ('Mother') as opposed to the signified (the object, Mother) that the child will never get. To put it differently: 'Mother' is the name (signifier) the unconscious gives to the absence and to the desire. Mother is the object/body (signified) the child seeks but never acquires.

The unconscious thus develops a language of/for desire: 'Mother'. This language comes from the outside (as we have seen in the section on the Symbolic Order) and is, therefore, the language of the Other. Between the signifier and the signified mediates the language of the Other (the name of the father that pushes the desire for the mother into the unconscious). And, therefore, the unconscious with its desire is the discourse of the Other. This complex argument is worth mapping as a step-by-step process.

1. There is desire.
2. There is an object of desire (the Mother).
3. The child discovers that there is a name for the Mother.
4. This name is from the language, which comes from outside the child, from the social order, i.e., from the Other.
5. There is only a name, the Mother cannot be attained.
6. The missing object of desire is replaced by a name.
7. The name or speech of/from the Other drives desire inside by replacing the object of desire with the name.
8. Desire is thus repressed and enters the unconscious.
9. Desire is always, therefore, about lack/absence of the object of desire, which has been replaced by a name.

10. In the unconscious desire is always linked to names, where the names lead to more names but never to the object of desire.

11. The unconscious is about a perpetual lack/desire.

12. The unconscious is also based on a structure of difference (between names that become codes for relations: 'mother', 'father', 'child', and the chain of signifiers), just as language is based on a structure of difference and endless chains of signification (As we have seen, the child proceeds along a chain of names seeking a signified that he will never reach, just as in Saussure's notion of language, we move along a chain of signifiers and every signifier leads us to more signifiers rather than a signified.).

13. The unconscious is produced as the repository of desire, through the effect of speech/names from the outside/Other, which drives desire inwards, substituting the signifier of Mother instead for the object-Mother.

14. Therefore, the unconscious is constituted by desire and the effect of language of the Other.

This sequence leads to Lacan's more famous formulations: '[T]he unconscious is the discourse of the Other' and '[T]he unconscious is structured like a language'. What Lacan is proposing is that the unconscious is available to us only through language - whether of desire or of psychoanalysis.

#### **Hyperreal Simulation (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** **Hyperreality**, in semiotics and postmodernism, is an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced postmodern societies. Hyperreality is seen as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are seamlessly blended together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. It allows the co-mingling of physical reality with virtual reality (VR) and human intelligence with artificial intelligence (AI).

Individuals may find themselves, for different reasons, more in tune or involved with the hyperreal world and less with the physical real world. Some famous theorists of hyperreality/hyperrealism include **Jean Baudrillard, Albert Borgmann, Daniel J. Boorstin, Neil Postman and Umberto Eco.**

The postmodern semiotic concept of "hyperreality" was contentiously coined by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation*. Baudrillard defined "hyperreality" as "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality"; hyperreality is a representation, a sign, without an original referent. According to Baudrillard, the commodities in this theoretical state do not have use-value as defined by Karl Marx but can be understood as signs as defined by Ferdinand de Saussure. He believes hyperreality goes further than confusing or blending the 'real' with the symbol which represents it; it involves creating a symbol or set of signifiers which represent something that does not actually exist, like Santa Claus. Baudrillard borrows, from Jorge Luis Borges' "On Exactitude in Science" (already borrowed from Lewis Carroll), the example of a society whose cartographers create a map so detailed that it covers the very things it was designed to represent. When the empire declines, the map fades into the landscape. He says that, in such a case, neither the representation nor the real remains, just the hyperreal.

#### **Simulation/Simulacra (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Simulation is the norm of postmodernity, according to Baudrillard. We live in an age saturated with images, maps, models and signs that have become ends in themselves, and for which we have never known originals. Thus, we only have signs without an external reality, copies without originals. We cannot distinguish between real and artifice any longer because

there is no 'real' we can recognize: We only know the image of the real. The concepts most fundamental to hyperreality are those of **simulation and the simulacrum**, first conceptualized by Jean Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*. The two terms are separate entities with relational origin connections to **Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality**.

### Simulation

Simulation is characterized by a blending of 'reality' and representation, where there is no clear indication of where the former stops and the latter begins. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance; "It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal." Baudrillard suggests that simulation no longer takes place in a physical realm; it takes place within a space not categorized by physical limits i.e., within ourselves, technological simulations, etc.

### Simulacrum

The simulacrum is often defined as a copy with no original, or as Gilles Deleuze (1990) describes it, "the simulacrum is an image without resemblance". Baudrillard argues that a simulacrum is not a copy of the real, but becomes truth in its own right. He created four steps of reproduction: (1) basic reflection of reality, (2) perversion of reality; (3) pretense of reality (where there is no model); and (4) simulacrum, which "bears no relation to any reality whatsoever".

## Feminism

### What is Feminism? Discuss the major waves of the movement (10 Marks)

**Ans.** Feminism is a range of diverse socio-political movements, and ideologies that aim to define, establish, and achieve the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes. Feminism incorporates the position that societies prioritize the male point of view, and that women are treated unfairly within those societies. Efforts to change that include fighting gender stereotypes and seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to those for men.

Feminist movements have campaigned and continue to campaign for women's rights, including the right to vote, to hold public office, to work, to earn fair wages, equal pay and eliminate the gender pay gap, to own property, to receive education, to enter contracts, to have equal rights within marriage, and to have maternity leave. Feminists have also worked to ensure access to legal abortions and social integration and to protect women and girls from rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. Changes in dress and acceptable physical activity have often been part of feminist movements.

Modern Western feminist history is conventionally split into **three time periods, or "waves"**, each with slightly different aims based on prior progress:

- ❑ **First Wave Feminism** - late 1700s-early 1900's: writers like **Mary Wollstonecraft** (*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792) highlight the inequalities between the sexes. Activists like Susan B. Anthony and Victoria Woodhull contribute to the women's suffrage movement, which leads to National Universal Suffrage in 1920 with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment.
- ❑ **Second Wave Feminism** - early 1960s-late 1970s: building on more equal working conditions necessary in America during World War II, movements such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), formed in 1966, cohere feminist political activism. Writers like **Simone de Beauvoir** (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, 1949) and **Elaine Showalter**

established the groundwork for the dissemination of feminist theories dove-tailed with the American Civil Rights movement.

- ❑ **Third Wave Feminism** - early 1990s-present: resisting the perceived essentialist (over generalized, over simplified) ideologies and a white, heterosexual, middle class focus of second wave feminism, third wave feminism borrows from post-structural and contemporary gender and race theories (see below) to expand on marginalized populations' experiences. Writers like Alice Walker work to "...reconcile it [feminism] with the concerns of the black community...[and] the survival and wholeness of her people, men and women both, and for the promotion of dialog and community as well as for the valorization of women and of all the varieties of work women perform"
- ❑ **The fourth wave (2012-Present)** from around 2012, **used social media to combat sexual harassment, violence against women and rape culture**; it is best known for the Me Too movement.

### **What is Patriarchy? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Patriarchy literally means "the rule of the father". Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Some patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage.

Historically, the term patriarchy has been used to refer to autocratic rule by the male head of a family; however, since the late 20th century it has also been used to refer to social systems in which power is primarily held by adult men, particularly by writers associated with second-wave feminism such as Kate Millett; these writers sought to use an understanding of patriarchal social relations to liberate women from male domination. This concept of patriarchy was developed to explain male dominance as a social, rather than biological, phenomenon.

Patriarchy is associated with a set of ideas, a patriarchal ideology that acts to explain and justify this dominance and attributes it to inherent natural differences between men and women. Sociologists tend to see patriarchy as a social product and not as an outcome of innate differences between the sexes and they focus attention on the way that gender roles in a society affect power differentials between men and women.

### **What is Feminist Literary Theory? How Feminist can be applied while reading a particular literary text? (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theory, or more broadly, by the politics of feminism. It uses the principles and ideology of feminism to critique the language of literature. This school of thought seeks to analyze and describe the ways in which literature portrays the narrative of male domination by exploring the economic, social, political, and psychological forces embedded within literature. This way of thinking and criticizing works can be said to have changed the way literary texts are viewed and studied, as well as changing and expanding the canon of what is commonly taught. It is used a lot in Greek myths.

Traditionally, feminist literary criticism has sought to examine old texts within literary canon through a new lens. Specific goals of feminist criticism include both the development and discovery female tradition of writing, and rediscovering of old texts, while also interpreting symbolism of women's writing so that it will not be lost or ignored by the male point of view and resisting sexism inherent in the majority of mainstream literature. These goals, along with the intent to analyze women writers and their writings from a female perspective, and increase



awareness of the sexual politics of language and style were developed by Lisa Tuttle in the 1980s, and have since been adopted by a majority of feminist critics.

The history of feminist literary criticism is extensive, from classic works of nineteenth-century women authors such as George Eliot and Margaret Fuller to cutting-edge theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors. Before the 1970s - in the first and second waves of feminism - feminist literary criticism was concerned with women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within the literature; in particular the depiction of fictional female characters. In addition, feminist literary criticism is concerned with the exclusion of women from the literary canon, with theorists such as Lois Tyson suggesting that this is because the views of women authors are often not considered to be universal.

Additionally, feminist criticism has been closely associated with the birth and growth of queer studies. Modern feminist literary theory seeks to understand both the literary portrayals and representation of both women and people in the queer community, expanding the role of a variety of identities and analysis within feminist literary criticism.

Though a number of different approaches exist in feminist criticism, there exist some areas of commonality:

1. Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which women are oppressed.
2. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other: she is marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values.
3. All of Western (Anglo-European) civilization is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology, for example, in the Biblical portrayal of Eve as the origin of sin and death in the world.
4. While biology determines our sex (male or female), culture determines our gender (scales of masculine and feminine).
5. All feminist activity, including feminist theory and literary criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by prompting gender equality.
6. Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not.

### What is Gender essentialism? (5 Marks)

**Ans.** In feminist theory and gender studies, gender essentialism is the attribution of a fixed essence to women. Women's essence is assumed to be universal and is generally identified with those characteristics viewed as being specifically feminine. These ideas of femininity are usually related to biology and often concern psychological characteristics such as nurturance, empathy, support, non-competitiveness, etc. Feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz states in her 1995 publication, *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, that essentialism "entails the belief that those characteristics defined as women's essence are shared in common by all women at all times. It implies a limit of the variations and possibilities of change—it is not possible for a subject to act in a manner contrary to her essence. Her essence underlies all the apparent variations differentiating women from each other. Essentialism thus refers to the existence of fixed characteristic, given attributes, and ahistorical functions that limit the possibilities of change and thus of social reorganization".

Furthermore, **biological reductivism** claims that anatomical and physiological differences - especially reproductive differences - characteristic of human males and females determine both the meaning of masculinity and femininity and the appropriately different positions of men and women in society.

**What is Phallogocentrism? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** The privileging of the masculine (the phallus) in understanding meaning or social relations. This term evolved from deconstructionists who questioned the “logocentrism” of Western literature and thought, i.e. the belief in the centrality of logos, understood as cosmic reason (affirmed in ancient Greek philosophy as the source of world order and intelligibility) or, in the Christian version, the self-revealing thought and will of God. The term is also associated with Lacanian psychoanalysis, which understands the entrance of subjects into language as a negotiation of the phallus and the Name of the Father. Feminists illustrate how all Western languages, in all their features, are utterly and irredeemably male-engendered, male-constituted, and male-dominated. Discourse is “phallogocentric” because it is centered and organized throughout by implicit recourse to the phallus both as its supposed ground (or logos) and as its prime signifier and power source; and not only in its vocabulary and syntax, but also in its rigorous rules of logic, its proclivity for fixed classifications and oppositions, and its criteria for what we take to be valid evidence and objective knowledge.

**What is Androgyny? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** **Androgyny** is the combination of masculine and feminine characteristics into an ambiguous form. Androgyny may be expressed with regard to biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual identity.

When androgyny refers to mixed biological sex characteristics in humans, it often refers to intersex people. As a gender identity, androgynous individuals may refer to themselves as non-binary, genderqueer, or gender neutral. As a form of gender expression, androgyny can be achieved through personal grooming, fashion, or a certain amount of THT treatment. Androgynous gender expression has waxed and waned in popularity in different cultures and throughout history.

**Difference between the conceptions: Sex and Gender (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** The difference between sex and gender is that sex is a biological concept based on biological characteristics such as difference in genitalia in male and female. Gender on the other hand primarily deals with personal, societal and cultural perceptions of sexuality.

The term sex refers to biological characteristics, namely chromosomes, internal and external sex organs, and the hormonal activities within the body. Essentially, when we use the term sex, what we are really commenting on is “male” vs. “female”, scientifically speaking. The sex of an individual is based on genetics, making it much more difficult to change.

Unlike “sex”, gender does not have a basis in science, although it is affected by the biological and physiological characteristics we display as “males” and “females”. Instead, gender is based on the societal constructions and belief systems put in place that deal with masculinity and femininity. The gender identity that most people adhere to is usually unconscious, or forced upon us at an early age. We see the concepts of gender in the colors assigned to children (blue for boys, pink for girls), the common length of our hair (men-short, women-long), the toys we play with, the jobs we aspire to, and the behaviors and interests we are “supposed” to embrace.

**Significance of Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s own* in Feminist Literary Studies (5 Marks/10 Marks)**

**Ans. *A Room of One's Own*** is an extended essay by **Virginia Woolf**, first published in September 1929. An important feminist text, the essay is noted in its argument for both a literal and figurative space for women's writers within a literary tradition dominated by men.

Woolf notes that women have been kept from writing because of the constraints they face and their relative poverty: "In the first place, to have a room of her own, let alone a quiet room or a sound-proof room, was out of the question, unless her parents were exceptionally rich or very noble, even up to the beginning of the nineteenth century". The essay examines whether women were capable of producing, and in fact free to produce, work of the quality of William Shakespeare, addressing the limitations that past and present women writers face.

In the essay, Woolf constructs a critical and historical account of women writers thus far. Woolf examines the careers of several female authors, including Aphra Behn, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea, and George Eliot. In addition to female authors, Woolf also discusses and draws inspiration from noted scholar and feminist Jane Ellen Harrison. Harrison is presented in the essay only by her initials separated by long dashes, and Woolf first introduces Harrison as "the famous scholar, could it be J---- H---- herself?"

#### **Contribution of Simone De Bevoir in Second Wave Feminism (10 Marks)**

**Ans. Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986)** was a French writer, intellectual, existentialist philosopher, political activist, feminist and social theorist. Though she did not consider herself a philosopher, she had a significant influence on both feminist existentialism and feminist theory.

Simone de Beauvoir – French feminist, lifelong partner of Jean-Paul Sartre, pro-abortion and women's-rights activist, founder of the newspaper *Nouvelles féministes* and of the journal of feminist theory, *Questions féministes* – marks the moment when 'first-wave' feminism begins to slip over into the 'second wave'. While her hugely influential book *The Second Sex* (1949) is clearly preoccupied with the 'materialism' of the first wave, it beckons to the second wave in its recognition of the vast difference between the interests of the two sexes and in its assault on men's biological and psychological, as well as economic, discrimination against women. The book established with great clarity the fundamental questions of modern feminism. When a woman tries to define herself, she starts by saying 'I am a woman': no man would do so. This fact reveals the basic asymmetry between the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine': man defines the human, not woman, in an imbalance which goes back to the *Old Testament*. Being dispersed among men, women have no separate history, no natural solidarity; nor have they combined as other oppressed groups have. Woman is riveted into a lop-sided relationship with man: he is the 'One', she the 'Other'. Man's dominance has secured an ideological climate of compliance: 'legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth', and, à la Virginia Woolf, the assumption of woman as 'Other' is further internalized by women themselves.

De Beauvoir's work carefully distinguishes between sex and gender, and sees an interaction between social and natural functions: **"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman . . . it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature . . . Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other"**.

#### **Significance of *The Second Sex* (5 Marks)**

**Ans. *The Second Sex*** (French: *Le Deuxième Sexe*) is a 1949 book by the French existentialist **Simone de Beauvoir**, in which the author discusses the treatment of women throughout history. Beauvoir researched and wrote the book in about 14 months between 1946 and 1949. Revolutionary and incendiary, *The Second Sex* is one of the earliest attempts to confront human history from a feminist perspective. It won de Beauvoir many admirers and just as many

detractors. Today, many regard this massive and meticulously researched masterwork as not only as pillar of feminist thought but of twentieth-century philosophy in general.

De Beauvoir's primary thesis is that men fundamentally oppress women by characterizing them, on every level, as the Other, defined exclusively in opposition to men. Man occupies the role of the self, or subject; woman is the object, the other. He is essential, absolute, and transcendent. She is inessential, incomplete, and mutilated. He extends out into the world to impose his will on it, whereas woman is doomed to immanence, or inwardness. He creates, acts, invents; she waits for him to save her. This distinction is the basis of all de Beauvoir's later arguments.

*The Second Sex* chronicles de Beauvoir's effort to locate the source of these profoundly imbalanced gender roles. In Book I, entitled "Facts and Myths," she asks how "female humans" come to occupy a subordinate position in society. To answer this question—and to better understand her own identity—de Beauvoir first turns to biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism. These disciplines reveal indisputable "essential" differences between men and women but provide no justification for woman's inferiority. They all take woman's inferior "destiny" for granted.

She then moves to history to trace the emergence of male superiority in society, from nomadic hunter-gatherers through the French Revolution and contemporary times. Here she finds ample examples of female subordination, but again, no persuasive justification for them. History, she argues, is not an immutable "fact," but a reflection of certain attitudes, preconceptions, and injustices.

De Beauvoir next discusses various mythical representations of women and demonstrates how these myths have imprinted human consciousness, often to the disservice of women. De Beauvoir hopes to debunk the persistent myth of the "eternal feminine" by showing that it arose from male discomfort with the fact of his own birth. Throughout history, maternity has been both worshipped and reviled: the mother both brings life and heralds death. These mysterious operations get projected onto the woman, who is transformed into a symbol of "life" and in the process is robbed of all individuality. To illustrate the prevalence of these myths, de Beauvoir studies the portrayal of women by five modern writers. In the end of this section, de Beauvoir examines the impact of these myths on individual experience. She concludes that the "eternal feminine" fiction is reinforced by biology, psychoanalysis, history, and literature.

From the very beginning of her discussion, de Beauvoir identifies the economic underpinnings of female subordination—and the economic roots of woman's liberation. Only in work can she achieve autonomy. If woman can support herself, she can also achieve a form of liberation. In the concluding chapters of *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir discusses the logistical hurdles woman faces in pursuing this goal.

**What is Gynocriticism? Describe the basic principles of this school. (5 Marks)**

**Ans. Gynocriticism or gynocritics** is the term coined in the seventies by **Elaine Showalter** to describe a new literary project intended to construct "a female framework for the analysis of women's literature". By expanding the historical study of women writers as a distinct literary tradition, gynocritics sought to develop new models based on the study of female experience to replace male models of literary creation, and so "map the territory" left unexplored in earlier literary criticisms.

While previous figures like Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir had already begun to review and evaluate the female image in literature, and second-wave feminism had explored phallogentrism and sexism through a female reading of male authors, gynocriticism was

designed as a “second phase” in feminist criticism – turning to a focus on, and interrogation of female authorship, images, the feminine experience and ideology, and the history and development of the female literary tradition.

Gynocriticism also examines the female struggle for identity and the social construct of gender. According to Elaine Showalter, gynocritics is the study of not only the female as a gender status but also the ‘internalized consciousness’ of the female. The uncovering of the female subculture and exposition of a female model is the intention of gynocriticism, comprising recognition of a distinct female canon where a female identity is sought free from the masculine definitions and oppositions.

Gynocriticism accordingly challenged a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective whereby the female inherently suffers envy of men and feelings of inadequacy and injustice, combined with feelings of intellectual inferiority. Arguing that male ‘phallic prejudice’ itself creates a female consciousness that demands a critique, and that prejudice against the female incites a specific noesis that gets attributed to the female, Gynocriticism stressed that this prejudice has concealed the female literary tradition to the point of imitating the masculine.

#### **Significance of Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics* (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** *Sexual Politics* is a 1970 book by **Kate Millett**, based on her Ph.D dissertation. The book is regarded as a classic of feminism and one of radical feminism’s key texts. Millett argues that “sex has a frequently neglected political aspect” and goes on to discuss the role that patriarchy plays in sexual relations, looking especially at the works of **D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer**. Millett argues that these authors view and discuss sex in a patriarchal and sexist way. In contrast, she applauds the more nuanced gender politics of homosexual writer **Jean Genet**. Other writers discussed at length include **Sigmund Freud, George Meredith, John Ruskin, and John Stuart Mill**.

#### **Écriture Feminine (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** **Écriture féminine**, or “women’s writing”, is a term coined by French feminist and literary theorist **Hélène Cixous** in her 1975 essay “**The Laugh of the Medusa**”. Cixous aimed to establish a genre of literary writing that deviates from traditional masculine styles of writing, one which examines the relationship between the cultural and psychological inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text. This strand of feminist literary theory originated in France in the early 1970s through the works of Cixous and other theorists including **Luce Irigaray, Chantal Chawaf, Catherine Clément, and Julia Kristeva** and has subsequently been expanded upon by writers such as psychoanalytic theorist **Bracha Ettinger**, who emerged in this field in the early 1990s. These writers are as a whole referred to by Anglophones as “the French feminists”.

Écriture féminine as a theory foregrounds the importance of language for the psychic understanding of self. It has been suggested by Cixous herself that more free and flowing styles of writing such as stream of consciousness, have a more “feminine” structure and tone than that of more traditional modes of writing. This theory draws on ground theory work in psychoanalysis about the way that humans come to understand their social roles. In doing so, it goes on to expound how women, who may be positioned as ‘other’ in a masculine symbolic order, can reaffirm their understanding of the world through engaging with their own otherness, both within and outside their own minds, or consciousness.

Using Lacan’s ideas that the structure of language is centered by the Phallus, and that language within the Symbolic Order is representational, where a single signifier is connected to a single signified, Cixous argues that the subject position of “woman” or the “feminine” is on the

margins of the Symbolic, and thus less firmly anchored and controlled by the Phallus. For Cixous, *écriture féminine* is not only a possibility for female writers; rather, she believes it can be (and has been) employed by male authors such as **James Joyce or Jean Genet**. Some have found this idea difficult to reconcile with Cixous' definition of *écriture féminine* (often termed 'white ink') because of the many references she makes to the female body ("There is always in her at least a little of that good mother's milk. She writes in white ink") when characterizing the essence of *écriture féminine* and explaining its origin.

Refusing to define or encode *l'écriture féminine*—because to define it would be to limit and imprison it within the logic of Western phallogocentric rationalism—Cixous contradictorily asserts that *l'écriture féminine* comes from the female body, and that men can write from that position as well. She describes *l'écriture féminine* through a variety of metaphors, including milk, orgasm, honey, and the ocean; she claims that *l'écriture féminine* serves as a disruptive and deconstructive force, shaking the security and stability of the phallogocentric Symbolic Order, and therefore allowing more play—in gender, writing, and sexuality—for all language-using subjects.

For Luce Irigaray, women's sexual pleasure *jouissance* cannot be expressed by the dominant, ordered, "logical," masculine language because, according to Kristeva, feminine language is derived from the pre-oedipal period of fusion between mother and child which she termed the **semiotic**. Associated with the maternal, feminine language (which Irigaray called *parler femme, womanspeak*) is not only a threat to culture, which is patriarchal, but also a medium through which women may be creative in new ways. Irigaray expressed this connection between women's sexuality and women's language through the following analogy: women's **jouissance** is more multiple than men's unitary, phallic pleasure because

woman has sex organs just about everywhere...feminine language is more diffusive than its 'masculine counterpart'. That is undoubtedly the reason...her language...goes off in all directions and...he is unable to discern the coherence.

Irigaray and Cixous also go on to emphasize that women, historically limited to being sexual objects for men (virgins or prostitutes, wives or mothers), have been prevented from expressing their sexuality in itself or for themselves. If they can do this, and if they can speak about it in the new languages it calls for, they will establish a point of view (a site of difference) from which phallogocentric concepts and controls can be seen through and taken apart, not only in theory, but also in practice.

### **Significance of Judith Butler's Gender Trouble (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) is a book by the philosopher Judith Butler, in which the author argues that gender is a kind of improvised performance.

Butler criticizes one of the central assumptions of feminist theory: that there exists an identity and a subject that requires representation in politics and language. For Butler, "women" and "woman" are categories complicated by factors such as class, ethnicity, and sexuality. Moreover, the universality presumed by these terms parallels the assumed universality of the patriarchy, and erases the particularity of oppression in distinct times and places. Butler thus eschews identity politics in favor of a new, coalitional feminism that critiques the basis of identity and gender.

Examining the work of the philosophers Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray, Butler explores the relationship between power and categories of sex and gender. For de Beauvoir, women constitute a lack against which men establish their identity; for Irigaray, this dialectic belongs to a "signifying economy" that excludes the representation of women altogether because

it employs phallogocentric language. Both assume that there exists a female “self-identical being” in need of representation, and their arguments hide the impossibility of “being” a gender at all. Butler argues instead that gender is performative: no identity exists behind the acts that supposedly “express” gender, and these acts constitute, rather than express, the illusion of the stable gender identity. If the appearance of “being” a gender is thus an effect of culturally influenced acts, then there exists no solid, universal gender: constituted through the practice of performance, the gender “woman” (like the gender “man”) remains contingent and open to interpretation and “resignification”.

#### **What is Black Feminism? (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Black feminism holds that the experience of Black women gives rise to a particular understanding of their position in relation to sexism, class oppression, and racism. The experience of being a black woman, it maintains, cannot be grasped in terms of being black or of being a woman, but must be elucidated via intersectionality, a term coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw argued that each concept - being black, being female - should be considered independently while understanding that intersecting identities compound upon and reinforce one another.

Proponents of black feminism argue that black women are positioned within structures of power in fundamentally different ways than white women. In recent years, the distinction of black feminism has birthed the tag “white feminist”, used to criticize feminists who do not acknowledge issues of intersectionality.

Among the notions that evolved out of the black feminist movement are **Alice Walker’s** womanism, and historical revisionism with an increased focus on black women. **Angela Davis, Bell hooks, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Patricia Hill Collins** have emerged as leading academics on black feminism, while black celebrities, notably Beyoncé, have encouraged mainstream discussion of black feminism.

## **Postcolonialism**

#### **What is Colonialism and Imperialism? (5 Marks)**

**Ans. Colonialism** is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. The etymology of the two terms, however, provides some clues about how they differ. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This root reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin.

**Imperialism**, on the other hand, comes from the Latin term *imperium*, meaning to command. Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control. The greatest distinction of an empire is through the amount of land that a nation has conquered and expanded. Political power grows from conquering land; however, cultural and economic aspects flourished through sea and trade routes.

The term “imperialism” is often conflated with “colonialism”; however, many scholars have argued that each have their own distinct definition. Imperialism and colonialism have been used in order to describe one’s perceived superiority, domination and influence upon a person or group of people. Robert Young writes that while imperialism operates from the center, is a state

policy and is developed for ideological as well as financial reasons, colonialism is simply the development for settlement or commercial intentions. However, colonialism still includes invasion. Colonialism in modern usage also tends to imply a degree of geographic separation between the colony and the imperial power. Particularly, Edward Said distinguishes the difference between imperialism and colonialism by stating; “imperialism involved ‘the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory’, while colonialism refers to the ‘implanting of settlements on a distant territory.’ Contiguous land empires such as the Russian or Ottoman have traditionally been excluded from discussions of colonialism, though this is beginning to change, since it is accepted that they also sent populations into the territories they ruled.

**Postcolonialism as an intellectual discourse is inextricably tagged to the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism.** The term ‘Postcolonialism’ as such implies the freedom and political emancipation of the colonized from the colonizers and examines the cultural activities used by the imperial powers to overpower the body and mind of the colonized people.

#### **Postcolonialism? Basic premises of the school of thought (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** Postcolonialism is the academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. Postcolonialism is a critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and discourse of European imperial power.

**Postcolonial theory is a method of interpreting, reading and critiquing the cultural practices of colonialism,** where it proposes that the exercise of colonial power is also the exercise of racially determined powers of representation. **Postcolonial theory focuses on question of race within colonialism,** and shows how the optic of race enables colonial powers to represent, reflect, refract and make visible native cultures in particular ways. It begins with the assumption that colonial writing, arts, legal systems, science and other sociocultural practices are always racialized and unequal where the colonial does the representation and the native is represented.

Postcolonialism encompasses a wide variety of approaches, and theoreticians may not always agree on a common set of definitions. On a simple level, it may seek through anthropological study to build a better understanding of colonial life from the point of view of the colonized people, based on the assumption that the colonial rulers are unreliable narrators. As an **epistemology** (the study of knowledge, its nature and verifiability), as an **ethics** (moral philosophy), and as a **politics** (affairs of the citizenry), the field of postcolonialism addresses the politics of knowledge—the matters that constitute the postcolonial identity of a decolonized people, which derives from: (i) the colonizer’s generation of cultural knowledge about the colonized people; and (ii) how that Western cultural knowledge was applied to subjugate a non-European people into a colony of the European mother country, which, after initial invasion, was effected by means of the cultural identities of ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’.

#### **Postcolonial Literature and basic characteristics associated with the genre (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** Post-colonialism is a broad cultural approach to the study of power relations between different groups, cultures or people, in which language, literature and translation play role Postcolonial literature is the literature by people from formerly colonized countries. Postcolonial literature often addresses the problems and consequences of the decolonization of a country, especially questions relating to the political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated people, and themes such as racialism and colonialism. A range of literary theory has evolved



around the subject. It addresses the role of literature in perpetuating and challenging what postcolonial critic Edward Said refers to as cultural imperialism.

Migrant literature and postcolonial literature show some considerable overlap. However, not all migration takes place in a colonial setting, and not all postcolonial literature deals with migration. A question of current debate is the extent to which postcolonial theory also speaks to migration literature in non-colonial settings.

**Edward Said's *Orientalism*** (1978) is considered as pivotal in the shaping of postcolonial studies. In *Orientalism*, Said argued for seeing a direct correlation between the knowledges that oriental scholars produced and how these were redeployed in the constitution of colonial rule.

Postcolonial literature represents all these conditions and comes from various sources and inspiration. It includes works such as Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, and Ingolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*, among many others. Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest* have been taken as key texts for the application of postcolonial modes of analysis. This suggests that postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literatures by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as well as from the various minority diasporas that live in the west. Postcolonialism has also been a term used to reinterpret western canonical literature from a variety of fresh and diverse perspectives.

#### **What is Postcolonial Identity (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** Postcolonial theory holds that decolonized people develop a postcolonial identity that is based on cultural interactions between different identities (cultural, national, and ethnic as well as gender and class based) which are assigned varying degrees of social power by the colonial society.

In postcolonial literature, the anti-conquest narrative analyzes the identity politics that are the social and cultural perspectives of the subaltern colonial subjects—their creative resistance to the culture of the colonizer; how such cultural resistance complicated the establishment of a colonial society; how the colonizers developed their postcolonial identity; and how neocolonialism actively employs the Us-and-Them binary social relation to view the non-Western world as inhabited by The Other.

In establishment of postcolonial identity, the writers explain and analyze the personal and social experiences of imperial subjugation of having endured the imposed identity of “a colonial subject”. For instance, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) describes the Nigerian experience of being part of the British Empire. Through the varieties of colonial languages, the anti-conquest narrative addresses the Mother Country's cultural hegemony and by writing to the center, the natives create their own national histories to form and establish a national identity of decolonization.

#### **Cultural Imperialism (5 Marks)**

**Ans. Cultural imperialism**, also called cultural colonialism, comprises the cultural aspects of imperialism. “Imperialism” here refers to the creation and maintenance of unequal relationships between civilizations, favoring a more powerful civilization. Thus, the cultural imperialism is the practice of promoting and imposing a culture, usually that of a politically powerful nation, over a less powerful society; in other words, the cultural hegemony of industrialized or politically and

economically influential countries which determine general cultural values and standardize civilizations throughout the world. The term is employed especially in the fields of history, cultural studies, and postcolonial theory. It is usually used in a pejorative sense, often in conjunction with calls to reject such influence. Cultural imperialism may take various forms, such as an attitude, a formal policy, or military action, insofar as it reinforces cultural hegemony.

### Concepts of Nation and Nationalism (10 Marks)

**Ans.** A **nation** is a stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, history, ethnicity, or psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. A nation has also been defined as a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, unity and particular interests. American political scientist Benedict Anderson characterised a nation as an “imagined community”, and Australian academic Paul James sees it as an “abstract community”. A nation is an imagined community in the sense that the material conditions exist for imagining extended and shared connections and that it is objectively impersonal, even if each individual in the nation experiences him or herself as subjectively part of an embodied unity with others. For the most part, members of a nation remain strangers to each other and will likely never meet.

The term “**nationalism**” is generally used to describe two phenomena: (1) the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and (2) the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination. (1) raises questions about the concept of a nation (or national identity), which is often defined in terms of common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties, and specifically about whether an individual’s membership in a nation should be regarded as non-voluntary or voluntary. (2) raises questions about whether self-determination must be understood as involving having full statehood with complete authority over domestic and international affairs, or whether something less is required. Theories, expounded by people such as **Benedict Anderson** and **Ernest Gellner**, argue that nationalism is a “socially constructed” phenomenon. In other words, they believe that it is an artificial designation, imposed on the denizens of a country for social or political purposes.

It is traditional, therefore, to **distinguish nations from states** — whereas a nation often consists of an ethnic or cultural community, a state is a political entity with a high degree of sovereignty. While many states are nations in some sense, there are many nations which are not fully sovereign states. As an example, the Native American Iroquois constitute a nation but not a state, since they do not possess the requisite political authority over their internal or external affairs. If the members of the Iroquois nation were to strive to form a sovereign state in the effort to preserve their identity as a people, they would be exhibiting a state-focused nationalism.

There are various definitions of a “nation”, however, which leads to different strands of nationalism. Ethnic nationalism defines the nation in terms of shared ethnicity, heritage and culture, while civic nationalism defines the nation in terms of shared citizenship, values and institutions, and is linked to constitutional patriotism. The adoption of national identity in terms of historical development has often been a response by influential groups unsatisfied with traditional identities due to mismatch between their defined social order and the experience of that social order by its members, resulting in an anomie that nationalists seek to resolve.

In practice, nationalism can be seen as positive or negative depending on context and individual outlook. Nationalism has been an important driver in independence movements, such as the Greek Revolution, the Irish Revolution, the Zionist movement that created modern Israel, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Conversely, radical nationalism combined with racial hatred was also a key factor in the Holocaust perpetrated by Nazi Germany.

In postcolonial literature, politics regarding the formation of nation-state becomes an important issue in that the anti-conquest narrative analyses its social and cultural perspectives of the marginalized people. These social and cultural perspectives of the marginalised deal with the creative resistance to the culture of the coloniser and difficulties of establishment of the colonial society because of cultural resistance; how the colonizers developed their postcolonial identity; and how neo-colonialism employs the social relation to view the non-western world as inhabited by others. For example, in **William Butler Yeats's poetry**, metaphors for national character and the struggle toward independence abound. In poems such as "The Stolen Child," "Chuchulain's Fight with the Sea," "Who Goes with Fergus?," and the long poem "The Wanderings of Oisin," Yeats strives to invoke old Ireland, mystical and Celtic, in order to create for the modern country a precolonial image to which it might aspire. Ireland was the oldest of England's colonies, held for nearly 800 years, and an obstacle for Irish nationalists was finding a way to clearly distinguish what was Irish from what was English.

Other literary works, such as **Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*** (1983), are openly critical of nationalist movements, portraying them as dehumanizing groups that stress unity over humanity. In *Midnight's Children*, both the Indian nationalist movement and the Indo-Pakistani War (a nationalist-driven war) come very close to destroying the future of India, all for the advancement of the idea of a strong, homogenous, modern nation. Just as nationalism itself is a term that is difficult to define, literary portrayals of nationalism take many different forms and approach the subject from many different angles. Minority groups, dominant religions and ethnicities, and political entities (both new and long-established) may all embrace the ideology of nationalism. Literature, with its many layers of meaning, can express this ideology in support of all these different groups.

### **Diaspora and Diasporic Literature (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** A **diaspora** is a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic locale. Historically, the word diaspora was used to refer to the involuntary mass dispersion of a population from its indigenous territories, in particular the dispersion of Jews. This has since changed, and today there is no set definition of the term because its modern meaning has evolved over time.

Indian Diasporic writing can be divided into 2 forms - writings emerging from forced migration and writings emerging from voluntary migration. Forced migration is when the writers are forced to move out of the country due to various reasons. Voluntary migration, on the other hand is when Indian writers voluntarily opt to move out of India to settle abroad. These divisions therefore harbor the Indian writers who then, either criticize the country or praise it.

It basically puts forth the idea of how exile, in the form of migration, has led to emergence of a large number of writers who have contributed to the progress of the English Literature. The major contributors are writers like **Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul**, who were accepted as world citizens. Indian-English writers like **Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee,**

**Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Sunetra Gupta, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Hari Kunzru** have established themselves as fine writers in the tradition of the Indian Diasporic writing.

The themes on which these diasporic writings largely focus on are **homeland, dislocation, displacement, a feeling of Loss, alienation and cultural identity and ethnicity**. In order to get a better insight into the Indian Diasporic Literature, It is imperative to explain every theme using the works of the Indian writers.

**Displacement** becomes one such theme. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* clearly shows how one culture overlaps with the other. **Nostalgia, a longing for the past**, is seen as a major element in these diasporic writings, wherein the migrants long to be reacquainted with their lost homelands, its history, rituals, traditions and languages. The sense of homelessness is intensified by the realization that the writer has not found a new home in the new country. The large part of the corpus of diasporic writings explores the theme of a lost, original home. Avtar Brah stated that 'home' is a mythical place in diasporic literature. In this sense, it becomes a place where no return is possible. Even if it is possible to revisit the geographical territory, the affectation attached to it gets lost somewhere. An element of nostalgia is also found in the works of the Indian writer, **Rohinton Mistry**. His works like *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1992) and *Family matters* (2002) are some of the best examples that include an element of nostalgia in them. He stated that "Nostalgia is interesting as an emotion, but for a writer to write out of a feeling of nostalgia is debilitating because it makes the writing too sentimental."

**Jhumpa Lahiri** in her book, *The Namesake* relates the aspects and themes of the novel to the **immigrant experiences**. She expresses the emotions of the novel and its linkage to the immigrant experience, in a rather dispassionate way. The complexities of a diasporic identity and the immigrant experiences are reflected in the way the novel presents Gogol's situation—"he is aware that his parents, and their friends and the children of their friends and all his own friends from high school will never call him anything but Gogol". In another line from her book, it is stated that, "for being a foreigner, Ashima is starting to realize, is a sort of lifetime pregnancy, a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts." Both these statements truly reflect the confused identity which comes as part of such an act of migration.

Indian Diasporic writings become really important as they provide the readers a wide range of views and opinions on India as a country and cultural space. It also throws light on the traditions and social status of the Indians. The most reoccurring element in each of these Indian diasporic books is the element of "Indianness", due to which these writings often present to the readers a view of the Indian culture and its flavors.

### **Racism in Postcolonial Discourse (10 Marks/ 5Marks)**

**Ans.** Racism is basically a belief in the superiority of one race to another which results in discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity. It may also mean prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race or ethnicity. In terms of political systems (e.g., **apartheid**) that support the expression of prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices or laws, racist ideology may include associated social aspects such as **nativism, xenophobia, otherness, segregation, hierarchical ranking, and supremacism**.

**Toni Morrison's** first novel, *The Bluest Eye* is a novel about racism, yet there are relatively few instances of the direct oppression. The Bluest Eye presents a more complicated portrait of racism. The characters are subject to an internalized set of values which creates its

own cycle of victimization. The novel shows how cultural ideals based on skin color and physical features function as tools of racial oppression. By illustrating the influence of cultural ideals and approaching different psychical responses, this paper shows how racial oppression works in the form of white-defined beauty internalization and explains its damaging effect on African-Americans. The focal character, Pecola, in *The Bluest Eye* is victimized by a society that conditions her to believe that she is ugly and therefore worthless, because she doesn't epitomize white Western culture's ideas of beauty. The novel projects that only after fully comprehending the influences that touch and shape the lives of the whole community, can people strive to combat the defective symbols and grow to their fullest potential.

#### **Definition of Subaltern (5 Marks)**

**Ans.** In postcolonial studies and in critical theory, the term **subaltern** designates the colonial populations who are socially, politically, and geographically outside the hierarchy of power of a colony, and of the empire's metropolitan homeland.

In describing cultural hegemony as popular history, **Antonio Gramsci** coined the term subaltern to identify the social groups excluded and displaced from the socio-economic institutions of society in order to deny their political voices. The terms subaltern and subaltern studies entered the vocabulary of post-colonialism through the works of the Subaltern Studies Group of historians who explored the political-actor role of the men and women who constitute the mass population, rather than re-explore the political-actor roles of the social and economic elites in the history of India.

#### **Frantz Fanon and the Psychopathology of Colonialism (10 Marks)**

**Ans. Frantz Omar Fanon (1925 –1961)**, also known as Ibrahim Frantz Fanon, was a French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher from the French colony of Martinique, whose works are influential in the fields of post-colonial studies, critical theory and Marxism. **His *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and later *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967)** rank with some of the most influential texts in the twentieth century.

Fanon was fascinated by the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized. He argued that, for the repressed and suffering native, colonialism destroyed the very soul. The colonial master's constant representation of the native as a non-human, animalized 'thing' annihilates the identity of the native. Fanon's insight into the psychology of colonialism was simply this: When the colonial paints the native as evil, pagan and primitive, over a period of time the native begins to accept this prejudiced and racialized view as true. As a result, the native comes to see himself as evil, pagan and primitive. The black man loses his sense of self and identity because he can only see himself through the eyes of the white man. Fanon argues that for the native the term man itself begins to mean white man because he does not see himself as a man at all. In terms of culture, the native extends this accepted notion to believe that the only values that matter are those of the white man.

For the white man, the native is always the negative, primitive Other: the very opposite of what he and his culture stand for. Fanon here develops a psychoanalytic theory of colonialism where he suggests that the European self develops in its relation and encounter with the Other (the native). **Thus, colonialism engages the white and the native in an encounter/relation where one develops only in its contrast with the Other.** Colonialism is a violent conjugation where the sense of self develops through a negotiation rather than a separation, a relation rather than a disjunction, with the Other.

For the native the only way of dealing with this psychological inadequacy is by trying to be as 'white' as possible. The native takes on western values, religion, the language and practices of the white colonial and rejects his own traditions. He puts on, in Fanon's phrase, 'white masks'. However, this 'mask' over the black skin is not a perfect solution or fit. Fanon argues that the native experiences a schizophrenic condition as a result of this duality.

Fanon recognized the significance of cultural nationalism when he propounded the idea of a national literature and national culture (in his essay of the same title in *Wretched of the Earth*) leading to a national consciousness. His deployment of the term national culture was an attempt to plead for a greater, pan-African cause (and not just narrow, sectarian-tribal ones). The blacks had to create their own history, write their own stories and it is through this control over representation that the native can break free of the colonial shackles.

However, Fanon was also prophetic enough to argue that the idea of a 'national literature' and 'national culture' might result in xenophobia and intolerance. He proposed that national culture had a limited value: It could help define native culture against the overwhelming assault of the colonial. However, the return to a pre-colonial past through the espousal of a precolonial national culture did not guarantee that the working classes and the oppressed would benefit. For such a national culture to be effective, it has to account for and remedy the economic conditions of the working classes. With this, Fanon was moving away from a purely representational and cultural view of national identity towards a more materialist-economic one. Fanon was one of the first theorists to realize that the anti-colonial struggle must be fought at the level of both culture and economics, just as postcolonial states would have to frame their identities within the cultural and economic domains.

#### **Contribution of Edward Said/ Orientalism (10 Marks)**

**Ans.** Known as a literary and cultural theorist, Edward Said was born in Jerusalem, Palestine. Having attended schools in Jerusalem, Cairo, and Massachusetts, he received his BA from Princeton in 1960 and his Ph.D from Harvard in 1964. From 1963 until his death he was Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He was also visiting professor at Harvard, Stanford, Johns Hopkins, and Yale.

**Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)** may be said, quite accurately, to have inaugurated the postcolonial field. Written with breathtaking erudition and an engaging style (for an academic, that is), *Orientalism* was a book whose time had come. Appearing around the same time as the works of Derrida, Foucault, Althusser and the French feminists, it set in motion an intellectual turbulence that altered the shape and canon of Western and Eastern academia.

Edward Said saw colonialism as a project that was, undeniably, military-political. However, colonialism also had a discursive component. That is, the primitive or pagan East was the literary-discursive creation of the European imagination that then begins to be accepted as true. What Said is interested in here is the literary-documentary and ideological construction of the non-European cultures in European texts and thought. By discursive construction, Said means the apparatuses of representation, such as, archaeology, literary, history, music, ethnography, political theory and social commentary, used by the European colonial powers to talk about the East in a certain way. Said argued that this representation of the East was integral to the conquest of the East: the epistemological domination of the East through documented knowledge and archivization enabled Europe to obtain and retain power. To word it differently, discourses that constructed the Orient in certain ways contributed to the political and military power of the European over the native.

Said became an established cultural critic with the book *Orientalism* (1978) a critique of Orientalism as the source of the false cultural representations with which the Western world perceives the Middle East—the narratives of how The West sees The East. The thesis of *Orientalism* proposes the existence of a “subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo–Islamic peoples and their culture”, which originates from Western culture’s long tradition of false, romanticized images of Asia, in general, and the Middle East, in particular. That such cultural representations have served, and continue to serve, as implicit justifications for the colonial and imperial ambitions of the European powers and of the U.S. Likewise, Said denounced the political and the cultural malpractices of the régimes of the ruling Arab élites who have internalized the false and romanticized representations of Arabic culture that were created by Anglo–American Orientalists.

*Orientalism* concluded that “Western knowledge of the Eastern world”, i.e. Orientalism fictionally depicts the Orient as an irrational, psychologically weak, and feminized, non-European Other, which is negatively contrasted with the rational, psychologically strong, and masculine West. Such a binary relation, in a hierarchy of weakness and strength, derives from the European psychological need to create a difference of cultural inequality, between West and East, which inequality is attributable to “immutable cultural essences” inherent to Oriental peoples and things.

The notion of an Orient has played a central role in constructing European culture, and “helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience”. The binary relationship of strong-West-and-weak-East reinforces the cultural stereotypes invented with literary, cultural, and historical texts that are more fictitious than factual; yet, which give the reader of Orientalist texts (history, travelogue, anthropology, etc.) a limited understanding of life in the Middle East, because Orientalism conflates the different societies of the Eastern world, into the homogeneous world of “the Orient”.

Now it is important to see the stages in which this so-called truth is produced:

1. The European has particular ideas about the Hindu/Islamic systems within his consciousness (Said’s ‘latent Orientalism’).
2. The European collects notes about the native ‘systems’.
3. The European interprets these notes from the standpoint of his already existing (mis)conceptions and ideas.
4. Native opinions on native reality are ignored in favour of ‘authoritative’ European readings/interpretations (Said’s ‘manifest Orientalism’).
5. European interpretations become the standard readings that then reinforce the ‘latent’ ideas about the Hindu/Islamic systems.
6. These readings are actively linked to and reflect the political demands and acts of the colonial administration.

As we can see, Orientalist discourse moves from imaginative (what Said calls ‘fantasies’) representations of the East to actual administrative manifestations: **it moves from discourse to event.**

**Contribution of Homi K. Bhabha: Hybridity, Mimicry and Ambivalence (10/ Marks 5 Marks)**

**Ans. Homi K. Bhabha (1949-Present)** is an Indian English scholar and critical theorist. He is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University. He is one of the most important figures in contemporary post-colonial studies, and has developed a number of the field’s neologisms and key concepts, such as *hybridity, mimicry, difference, and ambivalence.*

Bhabha's work reveals how the colonial discourse that sought to impose a unidirectional flow of power (colonizer to colonized) and a monolithic structure, often failed. Bhabha's work on **mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity radically interrogates the effectiveness in/of colonial discourse, all the while pointing to its fractures.** Bhabha begins his reading by noting how identities in the colonial encounter are never stable or fixed. Colonial encounters are transactions: between the colonizer and the colonized. The European in the colony constructs his identity only through a relationality based on difference.

Building on Lacanian psychoanalysis and poststructuralism, Bhabha proposes that identities, even in the colonial context, are based on differential relations: The colonizer establishes his identity by positioning himself against and in opposition to the native. This means, effectively, the colonizer can never possess a self-identical identity, because it requires the colonized to validate it. **Identity, therefore, is constantly shifting, liminal and displaced.** With this move, Bhabha suggests that we cannot see colonial identity as fixed or monolithic; it is unstable, shifting and relational.

Bhabha proposes that colonial discourse is actually conflictual and ambivalent. The colonial master, far from being the strong, unflinching and certain Englishman, is actually informed by two contradictory psychic states, what Bhabha terms, fetish and phobia. These two contradictory states result in stereotypes of the native subject. Bhabha argues that the **fetish/phobia structure of colonial relations** results in a condition where the white man seeks and desires the Other, while at the same time wishes to erase the difference. **Bhabha thus proposes a divided colonial discourse, and a native subject whose subject-position is never stable or automatic (just as the colonial master's position is never stable or automatic).** This is the inherent instability of colonial discourse, and the potential for resistance. Bhabha uses the term **ambivalence** to describe this rupture between the hoped-for original authority of the colonizer and the effect of repetition and difference on colonized.

Extending this argument about the potential resistance by the native subject, Bhabha proposes the **idea of 'mimicry'** (in 'Of Mimicry and Man'). **Mimicry is the disciplined imitation of the white man by the native.** The native has been taught, consistently, that he needs to try and ape the white man and his culture. Mimicry is sought through Western education, religion and structures where the native is trained to think/ behave like the white man. However, Bhabha sees this as a site where colonial authority, rather than being reinforced, actually breaks down. What happens in the colonial encounter is that the native becomes Anglicized but is never fully or truly white. He is a mimic who can now insinuate himself into the colonial structure, respond in English and adopt the structure of logic and reasoning in argument which Western education has taught him. When **Raja Rammohun Roy** argues in favour of English education (in his letter to Lord Amherst), he appropriates a rational argument rather than a sentimental one: He appeals to the English in the language of logic, reason, administrative convenience and expediency that they would recognize (rather than sentimental pleas, which would have been rejected for being truly 'native'). The mimic man here appears to 'follow' the white man's authority—to show the power of colonial discourse—but in effect fractures and disrupts it.

The mimicry of the native often encodes (i) a facile obedience and obsequiousness and (ii) a deeper disobedience and mockery (what Bhabha in his essay of the same title calls 'sly civility'). This dual state of mimicry by the native—one that is the direct result of the fractured nature of colonial discourse—is what Bhabha terms **'hybridity'**. According to Bhabha, this hybridized native who refuses to return the colonial gaze, and who refuses to acknowledge the colonizer's position and authority, **is placed in a position of in-betweenness: between 'adopted'**



**Englishness and 'original' Indianness.** Mimicry that results in this dualism of deference and disobedience is what Bhabha sees as resistance. **This hybridity creates a 'third space'**, a space of relations (between colonizer and colonized). This is a site where

- colonial identity and native identity meet and often contest
- colonial discourse is both/at once asserted and subverted
- there is deference and difference
- there is a split and a negotiation (within colonial discourse),
- it is a space where mimicry and mockery occur.

**The 'third space' is the space where the subject begins to articulate resistance.** The 'subject', for Bhabha, is thus the split, decentered, unstable and resistant one.

**Contribution of Spivak and *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (10 Marks/ 5 Marks)**

**Ans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-Present)** is an Indian scholar, literary theorist, and feminist critic. She is a University Professor at Columbia University and a founding member of the establishment's Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. Considered one of the most influential postcolonial intellectuals, Spivak is best known for her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and for her translation of and introduction to Jacques Derrida's *De la grammatologie*. She also translated such works of Mahasweta Devi as *Imaginary Maps* and *Breast Stories* into English and with separate critical appreciation on the texts and Devi's life and writing style in general.

Spivak's most-quoted essay is surely her 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985). Spivak adapts the notion of the subaltern, meaning the oppressed class, from Antonio Gramsci in order to theorize the condition of the native within colonialism and the woman in postcolonial state. She argues, via a reading of a woman's suicide in early twentieth-century India, that the structure of colonialism prevents any speaking. This structure is doubly strengthened in the case of the native woman, who is silenced through both patriarchy and colonialism (i.e., for both, her gender and her race). Hence, reduced to silence by these structures, the woman writes her body. Spivak argues that the subaltern wrote her body, because there was no other way of speaking.

Spivak's move is to argue, via poststructuralism, that subjects are constituted through discourse. Discourse is, of course, a regime of representation that is controlled by power. This means, an individual cannot develop an identity without being the subject of a discourse over which s/he may have little or no control. The subaltern is one who has no position or sovereignty outside the discourse that constructs her as subject. Spivak rejects the idea that one can access a 'pure' subaltern consciousness because, as she argues, the subaltern cannot speak, and is hence spoken for. The subaltern woman, in particular, has no position of enunciation: She remains within the discourse of patriarchy and colonialism as the object of somebody else's discourse.

Spivak's influential notion of the subaltern notes the power of both patriarchy and colonialism where the native woman, because of her location within these two structures, cannot enunciate and instead is always spoken for by intellectuals - a process Spivak is critical of because, as she argues, it is better to let the woman remain on the margins of the discourse (thus disturbing it) rather than speaking on her behalf and thus consigning her deeper into the silence.