

## Assignment 2020

Q1. Bring out the relevance of culture in "Dry September" and "All That Rises Must Converge" and comment on the difference of perspective in the two stories.

Paragraph	Dry September	All That Rises Must Converge	Weightage
Introduction	Martin King Luther Jr. spoke for the integration of Blacks in society. Both the stories deal with the question of position of whites and blacks in society. Perceptions are formed by what one sees in society.		5
Culture	<p>White Supremacy &amp; White Goddess</p> <p>Assumes the responsibility of giving punishment without establishing the facts.</p> <p>Patriarchal views on gender.</p>	<p>White Supremacy &amp; Segregation: Whites have lost their position of privilege, apparent from the locality in which they lived but continue to live in the past of the grandeur of their ancestors.</p> <p>Assumes the superior role by giving a penny to the Black child.</p>	10
Difference	The Blacks are submissive: revealed in Will Mayes punishment and the next day no Negroes were seen on the roads	Blacks have prospered and are aggressively taking their position of equality in society: revealed in the attitude of the Black man and woman in the bus. Woman's aggressive rejection of the penny given by the white woman.	10

## Class Test 2020

Q1. Bring out the salient points in Adrienne Rich's essay "WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN: WRITING AS RE-VISION" 25

Ans. The base of this essay is writer's own life as a writer and a woman.

How can women writers find their female voice?

1. Recognize the patriarchal control over society and literature.
2. Male readership and criticism have made women adopt masculine writing style.
3. By re-vision Rich is asking women to understand the representation of women in literature by patriarchy and attempt to subvert it.
4. Women have to find their voice and create a writing style of their own, not be afraid of placing oneself in one's creativity.
5. Patriarchy will resist it as it will deprive them of benefits enjoyed since long.

- Q2. The novel *Beloved* is a story about mother daughter bond and beyond. Discuss 25
- Ans. Introduction  
Novel is based on real life story  
Time and location of the story  
Slavery denies family ties
- Para 2  
Relevance of mother daughter bond  
Discuss all mother daughter relations
- Para3  
The manner of narration of the story conveys that it is not only about Mother daughter bond but about the role of past history on the lives of people.  
Story addresses the inhuman existence of slaves.
- Para 4  
Conclusion

### Assignment 2018

Discuss the theme of the myth of white supremacy in “Dry September”.

### Key to Class Test American Literature 2018

Time 90 Min.

Max. Marks 50

Q.1 The novel **Beloved** asks questions like what it means to be a ‘man’ and ‘free’. Explain

A Introduction: The Afro Americans’ experience of slavery denies human beings the opportunity and freedom to live their lives with dignity. Toni Morrison in Beloved has portrayed the deprecating lives of male and female slaves. They are not only denied the dignity of a man’s life but considered and treated as animals. The ordeals suffered are not only physical but psychological and emotional. Their lives are so onerous that they attempt to escape to freedom at the very peril of their life and even if they do escape successfully they live under constant fear of being discovered because the Fugitive Law allows the masters to apprehend their escaped slaves and force them back into slavery.

Second Paragraph: The title of the novel draws attention to Beloved’s story but the novel is essentially about the tribulations of slavery and their animal like existence experienced by the Afro Americans in 1860s.

Refer to School Teacher’s Diary, definer and the defined, bit in Paul D’s mouth, they are sold and bought as animals,

Sethe's milk is taken away, explain the tree scar on her back and living conditions

Third Paragraph: Women suffer double disadvantage as they are sexually exploited. They are also denied the solace of a family. Mothers cannot nurture their children because they don't have the time and also because they lose them to slave traders.

Baby Suggs has nine children from seven men, Sethe's mother did not have milk to breast feed her daughter or sooth her at night.

Fourth Paragraph: A mother commits a heinous crime of killing her daughter to protect her from the life of slavery. The School Teacher takes advantage of the fugitive law and comes to House 124 to capture Sethe and her children and return them to slavery.

Beloved returns as ghost to trouble the family that betrayed her. Experience of guilt, seeks forgiveness from Beloved.

Beloved problematises all relationships.

Conclusion: Slaves had no freedom of any kind to live their lives.

Physically they were chained, they did not have the freedom to establish love bonds. To make them meek and submissive their spirit is broken by denying them dignity of life.

Q2. It is wrong to conclude that The Crack-Up pieces are entirely negative, and despairing and several critics have believed them to be. They are more a relentless self-examination and self-searching with a view to moving forward. Discuss **(25)**

A **Introduction:** F. Scot Fitzgerald's Crack Up received mixed response from critics. Ernest Hemingway likened Fitzgerald to a man "taking his clothes off in public" whereas Lionel Trillings appreciated it for their 'heroic quality'. Fitzgerald was the writer of the Jazz age, living the American Dream. In the 1930s the economic condition of America changed and so did the personal life of the writer. In the Crack Up essays Fitzgerald is recording the reasons of his crack up, the analysis and most importantly the affirmative action he dedicates himself to. It is the analysis and the proactive action that makes the series of essays more than negative and despairing.

Second para: explain the reasons for the crack up and the use of the metaphor of a cracked plate. Wife's illness

Tuberculosis and alcoholism

Failure as a writer

Third para: Analysis of his social life and his decision to start writing for movies.

Conclusion: A Banerjee in his article 'A Move Towards Maturity: Scott Fitzgerald's The Crack Up' Fitzgerald underwent a self-examination "in the sense that he was able to analyse his past as a writer in the context of the demands of the present. He came to realize that he would have to change according to the changing circumstances of his life, and presumably write differently. Unfortunately, his health gave way before he could accomplish such a change."

### **Class Test 2017**

Q. Who is Beloved, a ghost from the past or yet another victim of slavery? **(25)**

A. Introduction: In the novel Beloved Toni Morrison is portraying the pain a slave woman suffers. The novel refers to a news that was reported in the papers, a mother, Mrs. Garner, murders her little daughter to protect her from the atrocities of slavery. Beloved is not Mrs. Garner's story but it acts as a catalyst to provoke Toni Morrison to portray the travails of slavery. While delineating the loathsome life lived by slaves at Sweet Home the novelist focusses on the double disadvantage suffered by the women slaves. Their bodies are exploited, and they suffer emotional and moral retributions. A mother's impulsive action of murdering her daughter exposes her to other atrocities and the feeling of guilt. She seeks forgiveness from the ghost of Beloved and Lady Beloved who comes to house 124, Bluestone Road.

Paragraph 1: The novel opens with the shouting and violence of the ghost Beloved. Sethe tolerates the wrath of the ghost because she is guilty of betraying her daughter. The School Teacher and his nephews at Sweet Home treat the slaves as animals because they believe that the coloured race do not qualify to be treated as humans. The nephews take away Sethe's milk and she is beaten mercilessly for complaining against it. She has a tree like scar on her back, a constant reminder to Sethe of her slave existence. It was to save her daughter from such atrocities that Sethe is impelled to kill her daughter when the Schoolteacher knocks at 124 to reclaim his property of slaves. Sethe's two sons cannot live in the house with the ghost so they leave home. Paul D too tries to rid the house from the clutches of the ghost and succeeds.

Paragraph 2: A young wet woman comes to 124 claiming to have "come from the other side". This appearance problematizes the character of Beloved. Is she a ghost or another victim of slavery? On one hand she encourages Sethe and PaulD to recall their past and on the other builds on the story of the institution of slavery by referring to the boat ride that brought her and many others like her to America. The confusion around who is she? is further confounded by her knowledge of incidents from Sethe's life. Stamp Paid gives the explanation that she was kept captive by a white man in the house across the creek and she has now escaped from there.

Paragraph 3: Sethe and Beloved are both attracted towards each other because each fulfills the lack in the other. Beloved in Sethe finds her mother, whom she has lost to slavery and Sethe seeks the solace of her lost daughter in the woman. Toni Morrison has not cleared the perplexity because her objective of portraying the demeaning and devastating experiences of slavery was served better through the stream of consciousness ramblings where past and present tend to coexist.

Critics: Carol Rumens says in the Times Literary Supplement that the baby ghost, after being driven from the house, "loses little time in effecting a more solid manifestation, as a young woman runaway." Then Rumens faults Morrison for using a spirit as a main character, for, as she says, "the travails of a ghost cannot be made to resonate in quite the same way as those of a living woman or child."

Q.2 What does the poem Prologue reveal about Bradstreet's view of herself and her role as a woman and a poet?

A Introduction: The American poet Anne Bradstreet is recognised for her excellence in poetry. She was writing in a time when women were confined to the domestic sphere and the poet herself was also trying to adhere to the Puritan lifestyle. Prologue offers a strange blend of ideas and notions where the reader is continuously debating regarding poet's stand on role of women and position of women poet in the society. The clever use of irony and sarcasm in the poem brings out the position of women poet in the patriarchal set up. While trying to create a niche in the patriarchal literary sphere she is asking for due recognition and speaking out against unjust criticism that undermines women's poetic creativity.

Second Para: Anne Bradstreet first sets out to enumerate her limitations as a poet. She makes it clear that the male domain of war, explorations and adventures, which are unknown to the world of women, are not the subjects for her poetry. They are an Historians responsibility. While trying to establish a position for the women poet she does not claim to have the skills to write an epic. She accepts a modest position when she calls her work akin to music from a defective instrument. To some extent she also acknowledges inherent inability when she writes "A weak or wounded brain admits no cure". While acknowledging the greatness of Bartas she bemoans the fact that women do not have muse of their own.

Third Para: It will be wrong to assume that Anne Bradstreet is belittling the position of women by using words like 'mean' to qualify her writings because she uses strong vocabulary to defend women writer's position, "I am obnoxious to each carping tongue". Elaborate the following points: thyme and parsley wreath

Pen vs needle

Luck and copied

Conclusion: Critic Eileen Margerum considers "The Prologue" to be in the tradition of humility that was common in the poetry of Bradstreet's time. Margerum refuted some critics' claims that Bradstreet was unhappy with her own work and was too deferential to male poets and figures in her life, like her father.

## Key to Assignment 1

### The Purloined Letter

- Dupin & Minister \_ Poet and Mathematician so Ratiocination
- Corrupt Royalty
- Importance of content of letter?
- Detective story
- Prefect - usual method of investigation.

### The Crack Up

- Recounts his physical emotional & spiritual breakdown
- He was regarded as the spokesman of boom & Jazz age.
- He fell on bad times- lost his celebrity status and his wife was institutionalised. He was diagnosed with TB.
- He draws parallel between his own and nations boom & bust.
- In Pasting it he talks about how and why he lost vitality.
- In Handle with Care he writes about psychological adjustments.

### Dry September

- Racism
  - White Angel
  - White woman cannot be attracted to a Black man.
  - White woman does not lie.
- Gender
  - McLendon's wife does not enjoy the honour on the contrary she faces violence.
  - Miss Minnie is a victim of idle and empty days.
- Mob mentality and violence

## AMERICAN LITERATURE CLASS TEST 2016

Time: 1 hour

Max. Marks: 50

**Q1.** Explain with reference to the context the following lines:

25

The white man, disguised  
as a falcon, swoops in  
and yet again steals a salmon  
from Crow's talons.

**Or**

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue  
Who says my hand a needle better fits.  
A Poet's Pen all scorn I should thus wrong,  
For such despite they cast on female wits.

**Q2.** The ending of the play *The Glass Menagerie* is somewhat unsatisfying in that it does not resolve the characters' situations or psychological limitations. It appears that there has been little or no emotional or intellectual growth for any of the characters, and their life circumstances have not improved at all. Comment.

**Or**

Write a critical appraisal of Tom as a character and narrator.

25