

M.A. 2nd SEMESTER EXAMINATION, 2021

ENGLISH

Course Code: ENG204C

Course ID: 20354

Shakespeare II (Tragedy, History Play, Shakespeare Criticism and Performance)

Full Marks: 40

Time: 2 hours

The figures in the margin indicate full marks.

Answer all the questions.

UNIT I

1. Answer any one of the following questions: (1x12=12)

- a) Discuss the interplay of blindness and madness in *King Lear*.
- b) Examine critically Shakespeare's representation of Nature in Act III Scene II of *King Lear*.
- c) Explore the constructions of masculinity and femininity with reference to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- d) Analyse the significance of betrayal as a motif in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

UNIT II

2. Answer any one of the following questions: (1x12=12)

- a) Discuss Dr. Johnson as a neo-classical critic of Shakespeare.
- b) Critically analyse any two liberal humanist myths of Shakespeare criticism that John Drakakis seeks to dismantle in the introduction to *Alternative Shakespeares*. What alternative methods of reading Shakespeare does he propose?
- c) Discuss various features of Elizabethan Playhouses and the complex rules and codes practised, in relation to the stage, acting and production.

- d) Explore any two shifts in the meaning of marriage and family as reflected in the sixteenth century English portrait paintings according to Catherine Belsey. How according to Belsey do they relate to gender identities in the comedies of Shakespeare?

UNIT III

3. Answer any four of the following questions:

(4 x 4=16)

- a) What does Cordelia mean when she says: 'I love your Majesty / According to my bond; no more nor less'?
- b) 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, / They kill us for their sport' – Who says this and why?
- c) Briefly comment on hints of cross-dressing in Act I of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- d) What does Dr. Johnson say about Shakespeare's mingling of tragic and comic elements?
- e) What is Coleridge's assessment of Hamlet's madness? Discuss briefly.
- f) What, according to *Alternative Shakespeares*, constitutes a major flaw in Coleridge's interpretation of Shakespeare? Discuss briefly.
- g) Do you believe that the absence of elaborate stage props was a blessing in disguise for the Elizabethan playwright as dialogues evoked a picture-perfect imagination of the setting in the minds of the audience? Justify your comments.
- h) Comment on the need for cross-dressing or transvestism by male actors during Elizabethan drama performances.

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