

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

M.A.

M.A. Comparative Literature : Modern Literary Theory Take home

COURSE CODE : CLIT0001

COLLECT : 06-JUN-06, from 10am

RETURN : 08-JUN-06, by 5pm

Modern Literary Theory Take Home Paper 2005-06

Collect 6 June 2006 from 10 am onwards (Foster Court, Room 316) - Submit 8 June 2006 by 5 pm (Foster Court, Room 316)

Answer **TWO** questions, beginning each answer in a fresh answer book. Answers should not be more than approximately 2,000 words. Footnotes and bibliographies are not required.

DO NOT SUBSTANTIALLY BASE MORE THAN ONE ANSWER IN THIS OR ANY OTHER ASSESSED PIECE OF WORK ON THE SAME MATERIAL.

FEEL FREE TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR DISCUSSION OF THEORETICAL ISSUES WITH REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC LITERARY TEXTS.

1. Either (a) Discuss Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia for the analysis of literary texts.

Or (b) With reference to one or more literary texts, discuss the merits and demerits of Bakhtin's claim that carnival is characterised by a liberating sense of the 'relativity of prevailing truths and authorities'.

2. 'On the one hand the ruling ideas of any epoch are those of the ruling class and on the other hand art permanently seeks to free itself from such constraints.' Discuss.

3. 'An analysis of a work of literature must decide the historical point of view from which to exercise its attribution of value.' Discuss.

4. Either (a) How far does Roman literary criticism represent a continuation of that of Greece?

Or (b) Do the tenets of Greek and/or Roman literary criticism have any validity outside the societies in which they were formulated? Explain your answer.

5. F.R. Leavis thought that one of the chief duties of the literary critic was to pass moral judgements on works of literature. What do you think should be the function of the literary critic?

6. Is the author really dead, as Barthes claimed?

7. Does literature ever mean anything?

8. Either (a) "Postcolonial literary texts express the anguish created by the suppression of indigenous culture beneath the weight of imperial control." Discuss.

Or (b) "The concept of universalism is of particular interest to postcolonial writers because it is this notion of a unitary and homogeneous human nature which marginalises and excludes the distinctive characteristics, the difference, of postcolonial societies." Discuss.

9. Either (a) How do feminist literary critics participate in the project of rescuing women's histories? Illustrate your answer with examples of feminist readings of canonical texts.

Or (b) Judith Butler's discussion of parodic repetitions is crucial to her theorising of gender identity constitution. What is the relevance of these concepts to the discussion of female writing? Illustrate your answer with examples.

10. Either (a) To what extent can any act of theorising be considered "tragic" or a resistance to the "tragic"? Comment with specific reference to two or more thinkers you have studied for this course.

TURN OVER

Or (b) To what extent is the idea of tragedy a useful theoretical tool in the discussion of literary texts? Comment with reference to at least one thinker and at least one literary text.

11. Either (a) 'Structuralism provides a useful tool for analysing black-and-white contrasts in meaning but has little of use to say about those more interesting situations where meanings come in shades of grey.' Discuss.

Or (b) 'Structuralism and post-structuralism succeeded too well in their stated goal of opening up the meanings of literary texts; they provide no way to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant facts or interpretations.'

12. Discuss the relevance of Derrida's claim that 'There is no outside-the-text' for the study of literature.

END OF PAPER