

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For the following qualifications :-

B.A.

Renaissance Literature 1520-1674

COURSE CODE : ENGLN03

DATE : 16-MAY-02

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 hours

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TURN OVER

Renaissance Literature 1520-1674

Answer three questions.

Candidates must not present substantially the same material in any two answers, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

1. In sixteenth-century English the collective noun for a group of courtiers was 'a threat'. Write on threatening and threatenedness in the poetry of Wyatt or any other courtier-poet of the period.

2. Either: (a) The *Arcadia* brings forth the 'golden world' of poetry not simply by creating ideal settings, but by teaching its readers and characters how to see the pastoral world in relation to a whole range of earthly settings which encircle it.

(David Kalstone)

Discuss. You may refer to any version of the *Arcadia* in your answer.

- Or: (b) Why is the plot of the *Arcadia* so complicated? You may refer to any version of the *Arcadia* in your answer.
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3. I am no pick-purse of another's wit.
 How falls it then that with so smooth an ease
 My thoughts I speak; and what I speak doth flow
 In verse, and that my verse best wits doth please?
 Guess we the cause. What, is it thus? Fie, no.
 Or so? Much less. How then? Sure thus it is:
 My lips are sweet, inspired by Stella's kiss.

(Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*)

Consider the presentation of poetic creativity in *Astrophil and Stella*.

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4. According to the Elizabethan rhetorician George Puttenham, 'Love requireth a forme of Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious and most witty of any others'. Does the love poetry of the period satisfy this requirement? You may, if you wish, restrict your answer to the work of a single poet.

5. Either: (a) How effective is the Spenserian stanza as a vehicle for the narrative of *The Faerie Queene*?

Or: (b) Spenser told Sir Walter Raleigh that *The Faerie Queene* was intended 'to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline'. How well does the poem match up to this description?

6. In Spenser's shorter poems, according to Richard McCabe, 'personal fulfilment entails poetic loss'. Discuss.

7. Would it be fair to describe Marlowe's writing for the stage as dramatic poetry rather than poetic drama?

8. Robert M. Adam writes of 'Donne's peculiar wit and seriousness – of intense feeling, daring thought and vast erudition', and suggests that 'his poems, like his mind, are overwhelmingly mobile'. Discuss.

9. Bacon once described himself as 'certain of my way, but not certain of my position'. Do his *Essays* bear that judgment out?

10. To what extent do Renaissance plays comment on the political scandals or crises of their day? Your answer should make reference to at least two plays.

CONTINUED

11. Is Jonson's drama morally schematic?
12. Write on the use of foreign settings in some drama of the period. Your answer should make reference to at least two dramatists.
13. According to the critic Brian Gibbons, revenge tragedies in the Renaissance make substantial use of 'comic method'. Do you agree? Your answer should make reference to at least two plays.
14. Does Webster's drama champion the cause of women? Your answer should make reference to at least two plays.
15. Jonson observed of masques that:

though their voyce be taught to sound to present occasions, their sense doth, or should, always lay hold on more remov'd mysteries.

Discuss. Your answer should make reference to at least two masques of the period?

16. How did dramatists of the period tailor their plays to the conditions of private or public performance? Your answer should make reference to at least two plays.
17. Entangled in dynasties, marriages, coteries, factions, these women were not alone or isolated. Their writing sprang from a sense of involvement with such local worlds, and from a sense that microcosms mattered to the macrocosm.

(Diane Purkiss)

Is this true of writing by women in the period? You may, if you wish, restrict your answer to a single author.

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18. According to the critic George Parfitt, 'the ability to be both unsentimental and yet generously human marks Jonson's best poetry'.

Discuss.

19. The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to show it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables.

(Samuel Johnson)

Discuss. You may, if you wish, restrict your answer to the work of a single poet.

20. Of George Herbert the critic Helen Vendler has written:

Nothing is exempt from his critical eye, when he is at his best, and there is no cliché of religious expression or personal experience that he does not reject after being tempted into expressing it.

Discuss.

21. Write on the handling of beginnings or endings or both in the work of any religious lyric poet of the period.
22. Is Cavalier poetry escapist? You may, if you wish, restrict your answer to the work of a single poet.
23. What efforts did prose writers of the period make to target their works at specific readerships (such as women, the poor, religious radicals)? You may, if you wish, restrict your answer to a single work.

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24. Consider the significances of the English landscape, or of different forms of weaponry, in any writing of the Civil War period.
25. Milton said of poetry that it should be 'simple, sensuous and passionate'. Do Marvell's poems fit this definition?
26. Write on the generic variousness of the *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*.
27. Either: (a) Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed.
- (Milton, *Areopagitica*)
- Discuss, with reference to *Paradise Lost* or to any two or more of Milton's works in verse or prose.
- Or: (b) On the evidence of his writings, did Milton have a sense of humour? You may, if you wish, restrict your answer to *Paradise Lost*.
28. Write on the treatment of one of the following in any two or more works of the period: the commonwealth, classical literature, the past, emblems, marriage.

END OF PAPER