

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

Renaissance Literature 1520-1674

COURSE CODE : ENGLN03

DATE : 14-MAY-03

TIME : 14.30

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours



Answer three questions, at least one from each section. Answers in Section B should refer to at least two works unless otherwise indicated.

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

SECTION A

1. Either: (a) How unjust it is to allow every other walk of life its relaxations but none at all to learning, especially when trifling may lead to something more serious!

(Erasmus, Preface to Praise of Folly)

Do you regard Sidney as following in the humanist tradition of serious trifling?

- Or: (b) Sidney's speakers lock themselves into positions of emotional and rhetorical impasse ... they are left either with nothing to say or no one to say it to, or both.

(Katherine Duncan-Jones)

Do you agree?

- Or: (c) How can knowledge of Elizabethan politics enhance the reading of Sidney's works?
2. Either: (a) Richard McCabe describes Spenser as adopting 'the conflicting, if oddly complementary, *personae* of satirist and eulogist, elegist and lover, polemicist and prophet'. Discuss.
- Or: (b) Write about Spenser's treatment of time.
- Or: (c) How important is awareness of Spenser's residence in Ireland for an understanding of his works?
3. Either: (a) 'In the work of Ben Jonson, learning energizes a powerful artistic grasp of the world' (R. V. Young). Discuss.
- Or: (b) Are there any strong female roles in Jonson's dramatic works?
- Or: (c) According to Jonas Barish, Jonson's works demonstrate 'anti-theatrical prejudice'. Do you agree?

TURN OVER

4. Either: (a) 'Republicanism, in Milton's writing, is more an attitude of mind than a particular governmental configuration' (Thomas N. Corns). Do you agree?
- Or: (b) Is it more important to journey than to arrive in Milton's works?
- Or: (c) Consider the significances of times of the day and night in Milton's writing.

SECTION B

5. Describe some of the continuities and discontinuities that you have observed between medieval and Renaissance literature.
6. Some literary critics and historians prefer the term 'early modern' to the term 'Renaissance'. What are the different implications of these terms? Which do you prefer, and why?
7. Wyatt was quite untouched by Italian Neoplatonism, and his desire is not for any kind of transcendent goal, for the self as it were to rise above itself, but simply for the self to be securely positioned in the matrix of tangled forces surrounding it.

(Michael R. G. Spiller)

Does this description strike you as accurate?

8. Dramatic figures in Marlowe's plays are vehicles for actions; they are not psychologically complex. In Marlowe's drama there is no real interest in demonstrating individual subjectivities through intimating an interior life.

(Thomas Healy)

Discuss.

9. How did reading Ovid change Elizabethan writers' understanding of narrative?
10. Say to the court it glows
And shines like rotten wood.

(Sir Walter Raleigh, 'The Lie')

What distinctive tones and themes in poetry did the court generate in this period?

11. Do you find female subjectivity anywhere in Renaissance love poetry?

CONTINUED

12. Discuss the balance between the fantastical and the realistic in any one or more prose works of the period.
13. Though Donne liked joining things, he also liked the joint to show. Division fascinated him as much as union. What pleased his imagination was not a sense of the world's various components amicably coalescing, but of opposition within union, of paired antagonists locked together.

(John Carey)

Discuss.

14. 'Luck and play are essential to the essay' (Theodor Adorno). Discuss, with reference to Bacon or any other essayist of the period.
15. Discuss some of the ways in which Renaissance women writers address women readers in their works.
16. 'Revenge might be thought of as lament provoked to action' (Katharine Eisaman Maus). Discuss with relation to at least two plays.
17. The genre of revenge tragedy began in the 1580s and continued for at least four decades. What developments have you noticed in the genre? Your answer should refer to at least two dramatists.
18. Discuss the poetic qualities of Webster's drama.
19. If there is something 'puritan' in his obsession with the human capacity for depravity, there is nothing 'puritan' about Middleton's uninhibited exploration of sexual behaviour or his capacity for depicting so much of sexual aspiration as transposed sexual aggression.

(Richard Dutton)

Is this equally true of Middleton's tragedies and comedies?

20. Discuss the balance between the satirical and the celebratory in the representation of London and its citizens in city comedy.
21. 'Religious art to the seventeenth-century lyricists was not so much a making as a finding' (Helen Wilcox). Discuss.

TURN OVER

22. Thomas Vaughan, brother of Henry, wrote of

The mysterious Signatures, and Symbols of Nature ... those Impressions and Characters, which God hath communicated to, and marked (as I may say) all his Creatures with.

Compare some examples of this way of thinking about nature in the literature of the period.

23. Consider the importance of any one of the following books of the Bible in the literature of the period: Exodus; Kings (I and II); Job; Psalms; Song of Solomon; Jeremiah; Revelation.
24. Peter Davidson has suggested that Cavalier love poems 'look past the ostensible beloved to their real audience in a male literary coterie'. Do you agree?
25. Alan Rudrum has described the poetry written by royalists during the Civil War period as preoccupied with 'the themes of hiddenness and potentiality'. Do you share this view?
26. Does radical religious writing in the period preach only to the converted?
27. According to Don Friedman, Marvell's poems 'treat the question of legitimate boundaries and the forces that disrupt and ultimately redefine them'. Discuss.
28. To what ends did dramatists or prose writers of the period employ foul or abusive language? You may, if you wish, limit your answer to a single author.
29. A number of critics have detected an 'imaginative regionalism' in the literature of the period. Are they right?
30. The relationship between the garden and the world outside it echoes the relationship between reality and a fictive world and invites us to ask what fictionalizing accomplishes.

(Balachandra Rajan)

Discuss, with reference to the garden poems of any poet or poets of the period.

31. Present mirth hath present laughter.
What's to come is still unsure.

(Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*)

Write about any interesting variations on the *carpe diem* theme that you have encountered in the literature of the period.

END OF PAPER