

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON**

University of London

**EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS**

For The Following Qualification:–

*B.A.*

**Renaissance Literature 1520–1674**

**COURSE CODE : ENGLN03**

**DATE : 11–MAY–04**

**TIME : 10.00**

**TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours**

Answer three questions, at least one from each section. Answers in Section B should make reference 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) Write an essay about Sidney's sense of the dramatic.  
Or: (b) R.A. Foakes has said that romances demand that 'their readers take pleasure in the telling of the tale rather than in neatness of plot or characterization'. Do you find this is so in Sidney's work?  
Or: (c) In *The Defence of Poetry* Sidney wrote that the poet  

goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the  
narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only  
within the zodiac of his own wit.

Discuss with reference to Sidney's own writings.
2. Either: (a) Discuss Spenser's sense of an ending.  
Or: (b) Spenser described *The Faerie Queene* as 'an historicall fiction'. How important is the 'historicall' in Spenser's writing? You may, if you wish, confine your answer to one work.  
Or: (c) Does Spenser manage to reconcile the ideal and the actual in his work?
3. Either: (a) A.R. Braunmuller has detected in Jonson 'a deep anxiety' over the erosion of "'old" values' when they encounter 'commercial greed, social ambition, and ... the inevitable drive to destroy others in order to create one's self'. Do you find the same anxiety in Jonson's work?  
Or: (b) Consider Jonson's confessed concern with 'order and disposure'.  
Or: (c) Samuel Johnson said that 'Language is the dress of thought'. Consider the relationship between language and thought in Jonson's work.

TURN OVER

4. Either: (a) Milton asked 'For what can Warr but endless warr still breed'. Write an essay on his treatment of war and strife.
- Or: (b) Write an essay on Milton's sense of his own career as a writer.
- Or: (c) Consider Milton's treatment of love and marriage.

## SECTION B

5. Did Christian Humanism bring anything new to Tudor writing?
6. Did either women writers, or women readers, or both, have a Renaissance?
7. The Elizabethan critic George Puttenham found 'little difference' between Wyatt and Surrey. Do you agree with him?
8. Goethe exclaimed of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, 'How nobly it is all planned!' Consider the dramatic planning and construction of Marlowe's works.
9. Write an essay on the importance of either Ovid or Virgil to authors of the period.
10. How useful do you find the idea that a distinctive sort of poetry was written for the court?
11. Discuss John Carey's contention that with the exception of Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* Elizabethan prose fiction was
- deservedly dead ... This is because it was meticulously superficial. The variegation of the prose surface with stock rhetorical figures was, generally speaking, all it was seriously interested in. Meaning was secondary.
12. Are the sonnet cycles of the period more than just collections of sonnets?
13. Discuss Donne's use of colloquial language in his writing.

CONTINUED

14. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but, few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

(Samuel Johnson)

Is this your view of the devotional poetry of the period?

15. Our scene is London, 'cause we would make known  
No country's mirth is better than our own.  
No clime breeds better matter for your whore,  
Bawd, squire, impostor, many persons more,  
Whose manners, now called humours, feed the stage,  
And which have still been subject for the rage  
Or spleen of comic writers.

(Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*)

Write on the role of London in some literature of the period.

16. Revenge for Vindice, as for Hieronimo, is itself a kind of theatre. Vindice shares Hieronimo's didactic zeal. Careful choreography allows plenty of time to instruct the Duke in the meaning of his death; the dying Lussurioso must also be apprised of his assailant's identity. In both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Revenger's Tragedy* successful revenge is thus connected with the moment of revelation that Aristotle claims is the end to which all tragedy moves.

(Katharine Eisaman Maus)

Discuss with reference to any two or more revenge plays of the period.

17. Michael Taylor has remarked about Middleton's drama that:

A fascination with damnation (however melodramatically conceived), the body's natural drunkenness, and the way things fall apart, hardly suggest a writer indifferent to the corruption he satirizes. And yet the traditional assessment of Middleton talks of his detachment, his ability to render his world in vivid colours without giving anything of himself away, least of all his moral position.

What do you think?

TURN OVER

18. DUCHESS Who am I?  
BOSOLA Thou art a box of worm seed, at best, but a salvatory  
of green mummy. What's this flesh? A little curded milk,  
fantastical puff-paste; our bodies are weaker than those paper  
prisons boys use to keep flies in; more contemptible, since ours  
is to preserve earth-worms. Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage?  
Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of  
grass, and the heaven o'er our heads, like her looking-glass,  
only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of  
our prison.

(Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*)

Is this also Webster's view of the body and soul?

19. Write an essay on the use of rhyme in the poetry of the period. You may  
confine your answer to the work of one poet.
20. T.S. Eliot remarked that the metaphysical poets 'were, at best, engaged  
in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalents for states of mind  
and feeling'. Is this helpful?
21. Brian Vickers has written of Bacon's  
  
constant dramatization of the pursuit of knowledge, the recognition of  
difficulties together with the certainty that they could be overcome.
- Use this remark as a starting point for an essay on Bacon or any other prose  
writer of the period.
22. Kitty Scoular has described Marvell's habit of 'reconciling opposing qualities,  
and ... demonstrating multiplicity in unity'. Does he achieve this?
23. Write about the relations between the visual and the verbal in the literature of  
the time.
24. 'When he shall be able to call the creatures by their true names he shall again  
command them' (Bacon). Write an essay on names and naming in the  
literature of the period.
25. In small proportions, we just beauties see:  
And in short measures, life may perfect bee.

(Ben Jonson)

Discuss the use Renaissance writers make of small things in their work.

CONTINUED

26. Here we are all, by day; By night w'are hurl'd  
By dreames, each one, into a sev'rall world.

(Robert Herrick)

In the light of this quotation consider the use of dreams made by writers of the period.

27. What part have you found that class differences play in the female friendships depicted in the literature of the time?
28. Write an essay on one of the following in relation to the literature of the period: music, children, travel, food, money, clothes, death, rhetoric.

END OF PAPER