

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

Renaissance Literature 1520-1674

COURSE CODE : ENGLN03

DATE : 17-MAY-05

TIME : 14.30

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) Lauren Silberman contends that Spenser questioned the patriarchal practice of relegating the female to the margins of culture and, with her, all those aspects of the human condition – emotion, physicality, mortality, subjectivity, vulnerability – that the culture did not, at a given moment, want to confront.
- What evidence of such questioning have you found in Spenser's work?
- Or: (b) What kind of annotation do you think most useful for arriving at an informed critical reading of Spenser's poetry?
- Or: (c) Discuss the tension between conservatism and innovation in Spenser's writing.
2. Either: (a) Peter Ure suggests that in the *Defence of Poetry* Sidney settles too easily, or neglects, the delicate problem of the relation of a poet's innermost experience to what he writes.
- Do you find any evidence in Sidney's works of an interest in the relation between 'innermost experience' and writing?
- Or: (b) Is it fruitful to seek realistic qualities in Sidney's works?
- Or: (c) Astrophil resolves in effect to address a double audience, an outer one of the court dummy wits and an inner audience consisting of Stella and himself.

(Clark Hulse)

Explore Sidney's address to a double or multiple audience in *Astrophil and Stella* or any other of his works.

TURN OVER

3. Either: (a) Jonson's classical bent, his concern for the unities, and so on, is an expression of his own vigorous and simplifying vision of life, of his feeling that saying something effectively is largely a matter of not saying too much.

(L.C. Knights)

Do you agree with this view of Jonson and his writings?

- Or: (b) Thomas N. Corns suggests that

masques could echo alternative voices in ruling circles and reflect concerns and anxieties that run counter to the remote and over-confident perspective sometimes attributed to them.

Do you find alternative perspectives in Jonson's masques, or his panegyric poetry, or both?

- Or: (c) In 'An Ode to Himself', Jonson urges himself, 'Make not thyself a page / To that strumpet, the stage, / But sing high and aloof'. Should we regard his plays and his poems as separate endeavours, or do you see artistic connections between them?

4. Either: (a) How useful is a reading of Milton's prose for an understanding of his poetry?

- Or: (b) Colin Burrow has suggested that Milton's attempt to impose a structure on *Poems 1645* is frustrated by 'many past impulses, half-formed ideas, and personal connections'. Use this observation as a starting point for an essay on Milton's writing. You need not confine yourself to *Poems 1645*.

- Or: (c) Write on Milton's changing poetic response to the natural world.

CONTINUED

SECTION B

5. According to L.G. Salingar, sixteenth-century English poetry derived from Petrarch not only 'his passion for formal perfection' but also his 'restless, self-dramatizing spirit'. Explore this claim with reference to at least one English follower of Petrarch.
6. Ye use to look so sadly when ye mean merrily, that many times men doubt whether ye speak in sport, when ye mean good earnest.

(Thomas More)

Write on the relationship between 'sport' and 'earnest' in the works of More or any other writer of the period.

7. Lori Humphrey Newcomb contends that romance is 'literature with enduring appeal to diverse audiences' because of its 'substantial address to social relations'. What kinds of 'address to social relations' do you find in Renaissance romances?
8. 'Raleigh's poetry embodies all the contradictory emotions of court life' (John Hunter). Write on some poetic treatments of the contradictoriness of courts.
9. To enter into much discourse with strangers argues lightness or indiscretion: what is said of maids may properly be applied to all women: *They should be seen and not heard* ... women's tongues are held their defensive armour, but in no particular detract they more from their honour than by giving too much scope to that glibbery member.

(Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman*, 1631)

- Either: (a) How was writing by Renaissance women affected by such views of their public utterance?
- Or: (b) What roles are played by women's speech in Renaissance literature by men?
10. Either: (a) Shakespeare pays tribute to Marlowe in the following lines from *As You Like It*:

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
'Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?'

Write about Marlowe as a poet of love. Your answer should refer to his plays as well as his poems.

- Or: (b) Write on cruelty in Marlowe's drama.

TURN OVER

11. Gilbert Phelps describes the characters of Renaissance drama as

prolific of grimaces, gestures, witticisms and 'dark sayings', but often with little organic relationship one with another or with an over-all pattern and theme.

Consider this description in relation to the Renaissance drama with which you are familiar.

12. A reviewer of a recent production of *The White Devil* noted that in the play the lines between politics, sex and religion are so blurred they no longer exist. What do you make of the relation between sex and either politics or religion or both in the literature of the period?
13. Lawrence Manley has written of city comedy that 'the incongruity of romantic illusion with urban reality is a major source of humour'. Write on incongruities in some of the city comedies you have read.

14. Either: (a) Frank Kermode has said of 'Love's Alchemy':

It's not simply a good poem because it's got a lot of wit in it. It's a good poem because of the satisfactory quality of its movement.

Do you find this 'satisfactory quality of movement' in Donne's poems?

- Or: (b) Make a case for the interest of Donne's writing beyond *Songs and Sonnets* and *Holy Sonnets*.

15. Ben Jonson said of Bacon's oratory that

no man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered ... his hearers could not cough, or look aside from him, without loss.

Do you find the same qualities in Bacon's written prose?

16. Either: (a) Discuss the influence on Renaissance literature of any English translation or translations of the Bible.

Or: (b) Discuss the Authorized Version as a product of its time.

17. 'God has broken into my study, and taken off my chariot wheels, I have nothing worthy of God' (George Herbert). Discuss Herbert as a poet of dejection and frustration.

CONTINUED

18. Vaughan is more interested in natural creation, in the nature of the country, than Herbert; it conducts him to the creator – ‘rural shades are the sweet fence / Of piety and innocence’ – but he delights in it on the way.

(D.J. Enright)

Explore how natural imagery is used in the poetry of Vaughan or any other devotional poet.

19. R. Malcolm Smuts writes that in the Civil War period ‘the epic was a less characteristic royalist genre than the short lyric, the tragi-comedy and the romance’.
- Either: (a) Explore what uses ‘cavalier’ writers made of one or more of these genres.
- Or: (b) Which genres would you say were characteristic of anti-royalist writers?
20. John Broadbent writes that as readers of Marvell we need ‘to let ourselves explore the weird under-ocean that lies beneath that shelly surface – utterly unreasonable, sometimes mad’. Discuss.
21. There is an antiquarian tradition that privileges the ‘minor’ as that which is firmly centred in its own age, undeflected by the impulse of genius, and consequently of great ‘representative’ value ... Actually ... the minor mode is not something which happens to those who lack the energy or skill to avoid it, but is instead a role constructed, chosen, and publicized, often in outspoken opposition to the laureate ambitions of contemporary works.

(Juliet Fleming)

Consider any Renaissance writer conventionally considered ‘minor’ in the light of this quotation.

22. Herrick celebrated the ‘liquefaction’ and ‘vibration’ of Julia’s clothes as she moved. Write on uses of scientific language in the literature of the period.
23. William Strachey wrote of the Bermudas that most people thought them ‘given over to devils and wicked spirits; whereas indeed we find them now by experience to be habitable and commodious’. Write about responses to foreign travel in the literature of the period.
24. ‘I ruffled out in my silks, in the habit of malcontent’ (Robert Greene). Discuss posturing in the literature of the period.

TURN OVER

25. The last essay in Bacon's collection is 'Of vicissitude of Things'. Write on some literary treatments of this topic.
26. Louis Montrose described new historicism as concerned with 'the textuality of history and the historicity of texts'. Has this critical approach informed your study of Renaissance literature in any way?
27. Write an essay on one of the following in relation to any two or more works of the period: disease, history, the future, gardens, Catholicism, closet drama, new readerships, suicide, same-sex desire.

END OF PAPER