

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

The Modern Period I (1890-1930)

COURSE CODE : ENGLN12

DATE : 12-MAY-03

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

Answer three questions, one question from Section A and two from Section B. In Section B 'work' and 'works' include drama and film as well as fiction and other varieties of prose and poetry; 'authors' includes those producing works in all these forms; and 'the period' means 1890 to 1945. If an author of the period produced significant works before or after the period, you may discuss those works, but should base your answers on works produced within the period.

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) Like all poets of decolonisation, Yeats struggles to announce the contours of an imagined or ideal community, crystallized by its sense not only of itself but also of its enemy.

(Edward Said)

Consider Yeats's portrayal of his ideals and enemies in the light of this quotation.

- Or: (b) Players and painted stage took all my love,
And not those things that they were emblems of.

(W. B. Yeats, 'The Circus Animals' Desertion')

Write an essay on Yeats's use of 'emblems'.

2. Either: (a) Hemingway revealed that when he began writing fiction he found

the greatest difficulty was to put down what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced.

Consider the relation between 'emotion' and 'action' in Hemingway's fiction. You may, if you wish, limit your answer to *In Our Time*.

- Or: (b) Write an essay on Hemingway's portrayal of relations between the sexes.

TURN OVER

3. Either: (a) In her diary, Virginia Woolf wrote that when she worked on *To the Lighthouse*, 'I got down to my depths & made shapes square up' (7 November 1928). Write an essay on the novel's preoccupation with 'shapes'.
- Or: (b) Write on the representation of female creativity in Woolf's fiction.
4. Either: (a) Orson Welles claimed in 1960 that *Citizen Kane* was intended consciously as a sort of social document, as an attack on the acquisitive society, but the storyteller's first duty is always to the story.
- Use this remark as the starting point for an essay on storytelling in *Citizen Kane*.
- Or: (b) 'I am, have been, and will be only one thing – an American' (Charles Foster Kane in *Citizen Kane*). How does Welles portray America and Americans?

SECTION B

5. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane claim that modernist fiction has four great preoccupations: with the complexities of its own form, with the representation of inward states of consciousness, with the nihilistic disorder behind the ordered surface of life, and with the freeing of narrative art from the determination of conventional plot.
- Write on one or more of these preoccupations in the work of any novelist of the period.
6. Explore the stance taken towards colonialism in the works of one or more authors of the period.
7. In his autobiography, William Carlos Williams suggests it is an interest in 'the tactile qualities, the words themselves beyond the mere thought expressed, that distinguishes the modern'. Write an essay about the 'tactile qualities' of language in any writer of the period.

CONTINUED

8. In his preface to *The Turn of the Screw*, Henry James wrote that

the new type indeed, the mere modern 'psychical' case, washed clean of all queerness by exposure to a flowing laboratory tap, promised little, for the more it was respectably certified the less it seemed of a nature to rouse the dear old sacred terror.

Use this remark as a starting point for a discussion of one or more ghost stories or gothic narratives in the period.

9. Jonathan Dollimore claims that in Wilde's writing 'insincerity, inauthenticity, and unnaturalness become the liberating attributes of decentred identity and desire'. Write an essay on the inauthentic and the unnatural in the work of any author of the period.
10. Either: (a) In 'He Never Expected Much' Thomas Hardy describes life as a succession of 'neutral-tinted haps'. How does he make such 'haps' interesting in his poetry?
- Or: (b) Write on the relationship between the past and the present in the work of Hardy.
11. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.

(T.S. Eliot)

Discuss in relation to the work of any poet or poets of the period.

12. Lionel Trilling wrote about the 'dark and bloody crossroads' of politics and art in the modernist era. Write about the relationship between an author's work and his or her political beliefs.
13. It's been proved that soldiers don't go mad
 Unless they lose control of ugly thoughts
 That drive them out to jabber among the trees.

(Siegfried Sassoon, 'Repression of War Experience')

How are soldiers affected by war in the work of one or more authors of the period?

14. Consider the ways in which historical events are presented in the work of any author or authors of the period.

TURN OVER

15. 'Nationality roughly corresponds to race, I think – I think it is *meant* to' (Gerald, in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*). Write on race, or nationality, or both, in the work of one or more authors of the period.
16. The first-person narrator of Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* tells us that 'there is always something ungracious (and even disgraceful) in the exhibition of the naked truth'. Consider whether the use of the first-person narrative in two or more works of the period brings the reader closer to the 'truth'.
17. Write an essay on the importance of any author's critical writings or travel writings.

18. when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting
- She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,
 And puts a record on the gramophone.

(T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*)

Consider the impact of new technologies on the work of any writer or writers of the period.

19. The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use. And all this rubbish about love, love in a church, love in a cave!

(Mrs Moore, in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*)

Write on the representation of love, or marriage, or both, in work of the period.

20. 'After one has abandoned a belief in god, poetry is that essence which takes its place as life's redemption' (Wallace Stevens). Consider the work of Stevens, or that of any other poet of the period, in the light of this quotation.
21. Discuss the narrative techniques deployed in any film or films of the period.
22. Nature for Robert Frost is neither friend nor foe, nor is it the backdrop for human drama; it is this poet's terrifying self-portrait.
- (Joseph Brodsky)
- Consider the representation of nature in the work of Frost, or that of any other poet of the period.
23. The period 1890 to 1945 has been described as a golden era of the short story. Why is this?

CONTINUED

24. Write on one of the following in relation to the work of any two dramatists or film-makers of the period: violence, idealism, social conventions, theatrical conventions, cinematic conventions, money, the family.

25. But then I'm inclined to think we are all ghosts, Pastor Manders, every one of us. It's not just what we inherit from our mothers and fathers that haunts us. It's all kinds of old defunct theories, all sorts of old defunct beliefs.

(Mrs Alving, in Ibsen's *Ghosts*)

Consider the ways in which Ibsen, or any author or authors of the period, attacked 'defunct' theories and beliefs. (The general rubric of the paper notwithstanding, answers on Ibsen may be based on works from any period of his career.)

26. Write an essay on the ways in which the work of any author or authors of the period was influenced by developments in other art forms.

27. 'The city is the realization of that ancient dream of humanity, the labyrinth' (Walter Benjamin). Write on the representation of the city in the work of any author or authors of the period in the light of this quotation.

28. In 'Echoes of the Jazz Age' (1931), F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote of his generation's recognition that America was now 'the most powerful nation. Who could tell us anymore what was fashionable and what was fun?' Consider some ways in which American self-confidence is reflected in work of the period.

29. Write on the relationship between literature and politics in some writings of the 1930s.

30. Maria Balshaw has described Harlem Renaissance writings as exploring 'the instability of racial and sexual identities, and the pleasures and dangers of this instability within the urban scene'. Consider the works of the Harlem Renaissance in the light of this quotation.

31. Write on the successes and failures of literary experimentation in the period.

32. Write an essay on what seem to you the most significant work or works produced during the Second World War.

33. With reference to at least two works, write about one of the following: mechanization, the primitive, friendship, same-sex desire, adolescence, work, the masses, wealth, poverty, newspapers, psychoanalysis, spies, frontiers.

END OF PAPER