

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

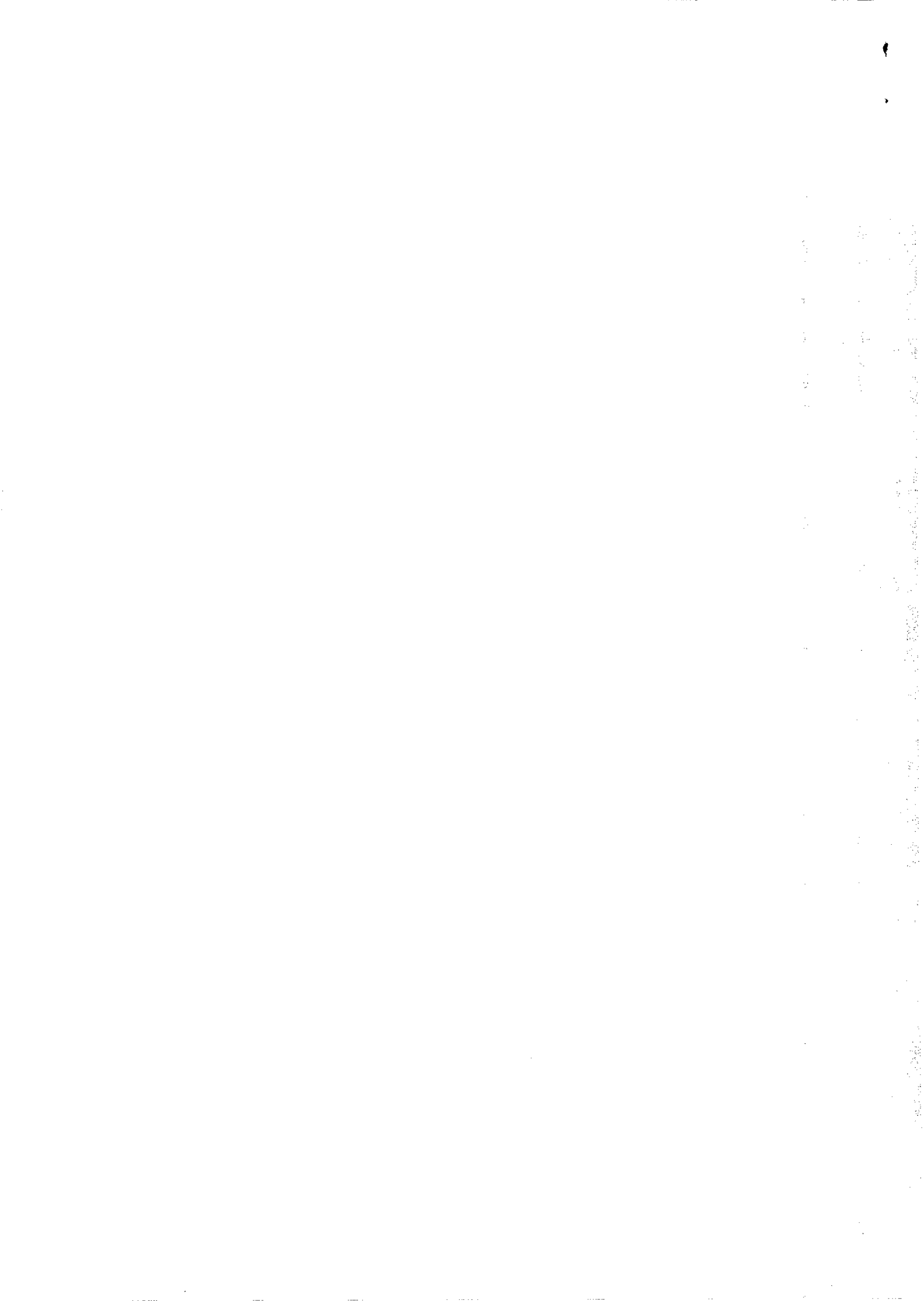
The Modern Period II (1930 to the present day)

COURSE CODE : ENGLN14

DATE : 19-MAY-03

TIME : 14.30

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours



Answer three questions, one 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 'since 1930'. If an author of the period produced significant works before the period, you may discuss those works, but should base your answer on works produced within the period.

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

SECTION A

1. Think of the long trip home.
Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?

(Elizabeth Bishop, 'Questions of Travel')

Write an essay on the relation between place and imagination in Bishop's writing.

2. The young, brash Orson Welles imparted to American movies a long overdue intimation of the mortal limits and disillusioning shortcomings of the American Dream.

(Andrew Sarris)

Discuss. You may restrict your answer to Citizen Kane.

3. FOSTER: Why am I talking to him? I'm wasting my time with a non-starter. I must be going mad. I don't usually talk. I don't have to. Normally I keep quiet.

(Harold Pinter, No Man's Land)

Discuss conversational self-consciousness in Pinter.

4. Treading the soil of the moon, palpitating its pebbles, tasting the panic and splendour of the event, feeling in the pit of one's stomach the separation from *terra* -- these form the most romantic sensation the explorer has ever known.

(Vladimir Nabokov on the moon landings of 1969)

Write on 'romantic sensation' in Nabokov's works. You may if you wish confine yourself to one novel.

TURN OVER

SECTION B

5. We are left alone with our day, and the time is short, and History to
the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help or pardon.

(W.H. Auden, 'Spain')

Consider the work of a writer or writers of the period preoccupied with what History has to say.

6. 'Then he thought *No. If I had been there I could not have seen it this plain*' (William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!). Consider the relation between imagination and direct experience in the work of any author of the period.

7. Either: (a) The unencumbered stage encourages the truth operative in everyone. The less seen the more heard. The eye is the enemy of the ear in real drama.

(Thornton Wilder)

Discuss the work of at least two dramatists of the period in the light of this quotation.

- Or: (b) 'The structure of a play is always the story of how the birds came home to roost' (Arthur Miller). With regard to Miller's generalization, what evidence of structural originality do you find in the drama of the period? You should discuss at least two plays.

8. P. H. Newby wrote of Stevie Smith's poetry that 'she can be very funny indeed; but the undercurrent is, it seems to me, dark, cold and frightening'. Write on the relation between comedy and darkness, or comedy and coldness, or comedy and fear, in Smith, or in any other author of the period.

9. Their redness talks to my wounds, it corresponds.

(Sylvia Plath, 'Tulips')

Write an essay on the relationship between beauty and violence in Plath's poetry, or in the work of any other poet of the period.

10. 'The singular strength of Robert Lowell's poetry has always been a matter of his power to enforce a sense of context' (Christopher Ricks). Assess the power of the 'sense of context' in Lowell's poetry, or in that of any other poet of the period.

CONTINUED

11. What are days for?
Days are where we live.

(Philip Larkin, 'Days')

Write an essay on the significance of the everyday in Larkin, or in another poet of the period.

12. 'I'm going to end up in a hole in the ground,' he says, 'And so are you. So are we all.'

(J.M. Coetzee, Disgrace)

Compare the treatment of death in the work of two or more authors.

13. 'We are left to believe. Fools, children. Those who have abandoned belief must still believe in us. They are sure that they are right not to believe but they know belief must not fade completely. Hell is when no one believes. There must always be believers.'

(Don DeLillo, White Noise)

Discuss self-consciousness about belief in two or more modern writers.

14. The gentleness of the English civilization is perhaps its most marked characteristic.

England is the most class-ridden country under the sun. It is a land of snobbery and privilege, ruled largely by the old and silly.

(George Orwell, 'The Lion and the Unicorn')

Use these two remarks by Orwell as the starting point for a discussion of the idea of Englishness in the period.

15. And all at once it happens again, I am impaled again upon the long ago, what was, what will never be! The door slams, she is gone -- my salvation! my kin! -- and I am whimpering on the floor with MY MEMORIES! My endless childhood! Which I won't relinquish -- or which won't relinquish me! Which is it!

(Philip Roth, Portnoy's Complaint)

Compare and contrast two treatments of memory in works of the period.

16. Discuss works by at least two authors of the period who have shocked their audiences.

TURN OVER

17. 'I have always felt isolated. I believe that any good artist feels isolated.' (Orson Welles). Write on the treatment of feelings of isolation by any good artist in the period.

18. Explore some of the uses of boredom in works of the period.

19. I had been reading a lot of detective novels that year, mostly of the hard-boiled American school, and beyond finding them to be good medicine, a balm against stress and chronic anxiety, I had developed an admiration for some of the practitioners of the genre. The best ones were humble, no-nonsense writers who not only had more to say about American life than most so-called serious writers, but often seemed to write smarter, crisper sentences as well.

(Paul Auster)

Use this quotation, or any part of it, as a starting point for an essay on the possibilities of detective fiction, or of crime fiction.

20. Ronald Reagan said of The Killers (1964), the last film in which he acted, that

It's one of those pictures in which you have no one to root for. There is no good guy. Everyone is a villain. My definition has always been: if the theatrical show is satisfactory, the audience must have an emotional experience and be able to identify.

In your definition of drama or film, how important is the audience's identification with a 'good guy'?

21. The cinema fascinates because we alternately take it as real and unreal, that is, as participating in the familiar world of our ordinary experience yet then slipping into its own quite different screen world.

(Dudley Andrew)

Comment on the movement between real and unreal in two or more films of the period.

22. You wanna stop time, that's what you wanna do. You want to live forever, right Allen? Huh? In order to live forever you have to stop time. In order to stop time you have to exist in the moment, so strong as to stop time and prove your point.

(Bob Dylan, in conversation with Allen Ginsberg, 1977)

Write on 'the moment' in the work of the Beats, of Dylan himself, or of any other poet of the period.

CONTINUED

23. Maturing as a poet means maturing as a whole man, experiencing the emotions appropriate to one's age, and with the same intensity as the emotions of youth.

(T.S. Eliot)

Chart the development of one or more poets of the period.

24. Comedy used to be a challenge to the mental processes. It has become a therapy of relaxation; a kind of tranquillizing drug.

(James Thurber)

Can modern comedy still be challenging?

25. The diminution of the reality of class, however socially desirable in many respects, seems to have the practical effect of diminishing our ability to see people in their difference and specialness.

(Lionel Trilling)

Examine changing attitudes to class and social difference in at least two works of the period.

26. Their singleness, their ruthlessness, their one continuous wish makes them bound to be cruel, and to suffer. The innocent are so few that two of them seldom meet -- when they do meet, their victims lie strewn all around.

(Elizabeth Bowen, The Death of the Heart)

Consider the cruelty of innocence in at least two works of the period.

27. Make a case for the artistic value of two or more works of the period centrally concerned with national, racial, ethnic, religious or sexual identity.

28. 'Consumer culture lends itself to images of unconscious imprisonment' (Rachel Bowlby). Discuss, with reference to at least two authors of the period.

29. GUILDENSTERN: All your life you live so close to truth, it becomes a permanent blur in the corner of your eye, and when somebody nudges it into outline it is like being ambushed by a grotesque.

(Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead)

Examine some of the ways in which authors have sought to reveal 'truth'.

TURN OVER

30. In what ways does the concept of the postmodern help you to understand some works of the period?
31. Compare the treatment of one of the following by two or more authors of the period: war, marriage, masculinity in crisis, paranoid fantasy, the future.
32. What does 'coming of age' mean in at least two works of the period?
33. Discuss the use of one of the following forms in at least two works of the period: the sonnet, the manifesto, the short story, the documentary film, the interview, the essay, reality TV, the memoir, the elegy, farce.

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