

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

Scand. Studs. SC5571: Modern Icelandic Literature: Special Topics

COURSE CODE : **SCAN5571**

UNIT VALUE : **0.50**

DATE : **24-MAY-04**

TIME : **10.00**

TIME ALLOWED : **3 Hours**

Answer **ONE** question from SECTION A and **ONE** question from SECTION B.
Both questions carry equal marks.

Candidates must avoid any duplication of material within this paper, and must not cover the same ground as in an assessed or extended essay.

SECTION A.

1. 'Icelandic literary history can be read as an enduring attempt to force European paradigms, many of which originated in urban industrial centres, onto Icelandic literature, which nevertheless remained solidly pastoral and epic'. To what extent would you agree with this claim?
2. What makes Icelandic literature 'Icelandic' in your view, and how has this changed over time? Illustrate your answer with examples.
3. EITHER (a) Analyse the structural (rather than thematic) influence of landscape and nature in Icelandic literature. Illustrate your answer with the help of THREE works from different time periods.

OR (b) Analyse the opposition between nature and society in the development of Icelandic fiction, with particular reference to THREE works from different time periods.
4. 'Neither the Icelandic language nor Icelandic literature can be expected to thrive on regurgitating what was consumed a long time ago'. Discuss the struggle of modern Icelandic writers with the influence of Old Icelandic literature.
5. Discuss the development of the female protagonist in Icelandic fiction and its reception over time.
6. EITHER (a) How accurate do you find Gestur Pálsson's statement that prior to the twentieth century, 'measured by international standards, Icelandic literature does not exist, only a few individual works, most of which are rather unremarkable'?

OR (b) Icelandic literature was long out of sync with what was being written contemporaneously in the rest of Europe. Discuss TWO Icelandic writers who attempted to introduce new ideas from abroad by adapting them to the situation in Iceland. How successful were they?

SECTION B.

7. EITHER (a) Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson has credited Gunnar Gunnarsson with the introduction of 'the modern man' into Icelandic literature. How valid do you find this assessment in relation to the character of Eyjólfur in *Svarfugl*?

OR (b) How accurate do you find Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson's analysis of *Svartfugl* as a 'negative *Bildingsroman*'?

8. 'Vordraumur' is generally classified in Icelandic literary history as the archetypal example of Icelandic 'realist' fiction. Viewing the story in both an Icelandic and a larger European context, to what extent would you agree?
9. 'Laxness' female characters are so laden with symbolism, mystique and classical representations of the female that they border on being little more than mere signs.' How valid do you find this assessment of Snæfríður's character in *Íslandsklukkan*?
10. Ásta Sigurðardóttir's short fiction was hailed by the literary establishment as 'the first instance of modernist fiction in Iceland'. How useful do you find such assessments in general, and this one in particular?
11. EITHER (a) Discuss the self-image constructed in the autobiographical works read on the course, and its connection to the subject's relationship with Icelandic society and literature.

OR (b) Discuss the relationship between private and public memory in TWO autobiographical works read on the course.