

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

B.A.

Spanish S901A: Cultural Dilemmas: Literature and Film in Spanish America

COURSE CODE : SPAN901A

UNIT VALUE : 1.00

DATE : 18–MAY–05

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

SPANISH S901A: Cultural Dilemmas: Literature and Film in Spanish America

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

Essays may be written in either Spanish or English, but no extra credit will be given for answers in Spanish.

Candidates should not base more than ONE answer on a particular work.

Candidates should not normally base their answers on any text or texts used extensively in their course work essays.

1. **EITHER a)** 'La historia del socialismo en el Perú es la historia del indio.' Discuss José Carlos Mariátegui's *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* in the light of this idea.

OR b) 'Though sympathetic, Mariátegui's *criollista* perspective means he misjudges some of the problems faced by Indian communities in Peru in the 1920s.' Discuss.

2. **EITHER a)** 'In his short stories Arguedas unveils a modern world still traumatized by an event, the Conquest, which occurred some 400 years earlier.' Discuss with reference to the short stories of José María Arguedas' *Diamantes y pedernales*.

OR b) 'By alluding to Quechua, without quoting it except on rare occasions, Arguedas in effect converts it into a ghost which hovers over the text, an image of a society riven by cultural dilemmas.' Evaluate *Diamantes y pedernales* in the light of this idea.

3. **EITHER a)** 'More than Ignacio's story, this is the story of Sixto's life.' Discuss *Yawar Mallku* in the light of this comment.

OR b) 'In *Yawar Mallku* the cross-cutting is used in such a way as to echo the cyclical world-view of the Aymara.' Discuss.

4. **EITHER a)** 'In the final gesture of its explosive climax, *El matadero* reveals its true colours; neither a realist text nor an allegory, it is a melodrama pure and simple.' Discuss.

OR b) 'Though acclaimed as the first example of the short story genre in Spanish America, *El matadero* is more of a truncated, failed, novel than a true short story.' Discuss.

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5. **EITHER a)** 'Rosas operates in *Amalia* like a pistol shot in the theatre; highly politicised, the novel is ruined as a result.' Discuss Mármol's novel in the light of this statement.

OR b) '*Amalia* portrays human beings as intrinsically embedded in the social fabric, shows their trials and tribulations being taken seriously, and is therefore a novel worthy of Auerbach's term "serious realism".' Discuss.

6. **EITHER a)** 'More than a love story *Camila* is a tale about nation-building in nineteenth-century Argentina.' Do you agree with this statement about María Luisa Bemberg's film?

OR b) 'It had all those little tricks, such as the handkerchief, the gold coin, the priest who's sick with love, and the thunder when God gets angry. They're all like winks at the audience' (Bemberg). Discuss *Camila* in the light of the director's comment.

7. **EITHER a)** *La historia oficial* takes 'a nuclear family as the exemplary microcosm that condenses the entire nation'. Discuss Luis Puenzo's film in the light of this statement.

OR b) *La historia oficial* 'brushes over the political dimension of the *guerra sucia* rather than dealing with it in a serious or systematic way'. Discuss.

8. **EITHER a)** '*Calibán* invokes an indigenous, anti-western icon in order to promote its left-wing ideology, and the mix is not always a felicitous one.' Discuss Roberto Fernández Retamar's essay in the light of this comment.

OR b) Assess the success, or lack thereof, of the rhetorical strategies used by Fernández Retamar to turn Caliban from a negative into a positive cultural icon.

9. **EITHER a)** 'Manzano's *Autobiografía de un esclavo* shows the hallmark - and flaw - of all autobiographies, namely the inability to accept any version of events other than one's own.' Discuss Manzano's text in the light of this statement.

OR b) Analyse the use of language in Manzano's *Autobiografía de un esclavo*, with special reference to syntax, vocabulary, *cubanisms*, and any other aspect you see fit to refer to.

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10. **EITHER a)** 'Miguel Barnet's *Biografía de un cimarrón* is, ultimately, unsatisfactory because we are never allowed to know what he added and what he suppressed from Esteban Montejo's account.' Discuss.

OR b) Analyse the portrayal of a transculturated social reality in *Biografía de un cimarrón*.

11. **EITHER a)** '*La última cena* is not so much about the history of slavery in Cuba's past as about Cuba's plight in the 1970s, overwhelmed by the threat of white, Anglo-Saxon culture in the form of the United States.' Discuss.

OR b) 'Though offering revolutionary examples of hand-held camera filmed sequences depicting a slave rebellion, *La última cena* is ultimately ruined by its tedious, over-moralising sequences shot on set.' Discuss.

12. **EITHER a)** '*El amor en los tiempos del cólera* is not so much about love as about human endurance, namely, the ability to carry on despite overwhelming obstacles.' Discuss Gabriel García Márquez's novel in the light of this idea.

OR b) 'The real protagonist of *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* is the Magdalena river.' Discuss.

13. **EITHER a)** '*Cartas del parque* is as much about the illusion of love as about the real thing.' Discuss.

OR b) Discuss the ways in which literature is used in the portrayal of love in *Cartas del parque*.

14. **EITHER a)** *Como agua para chocolate* 'appears on the surface to offer women a new "way of being", but ultimately they are never allowed to leave the kitchen.' Discuss the validity of this statement about Arau's film.

OR b) Examine the role played by humour in *Como agua para chocolate*. Does it act as a socially conservative or socially subversive force in Arau's film?

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