

**SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION**

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**HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2002**

**COURSE II**

**B3 Modern English Philology**

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**Monday 13 May 2002, 9.30 a.m.**

**Time allowed – Three hours**

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**You must answer *three* questions, including at least *one* from Section A. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the question.**

**Do *not* turn over until told that you may do so**

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## SECTION A

1. Discuss in detail the language of **one** of the following passages:

(a)

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own Thoughts; which I hope will not be liable to the least Objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing *American* of my Acquaintance in *London*; that a young healthy Child, well nursed, is, at a Year old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome Food; whether *Stewed, Roasted, Baked, or Boiled*; and, I make no doubt, that it will equally serve in a *Fricasie, or Ragoust*.

I do therefore humbly offer it to *publick Consideration*, that of the Hundred and Twenty thousand Children, already computed, Twenty thousand may be reserved for Breed; whereof only one Fourth Part to be Males; which is more than we allow to *Sheep, black Cattle, or Swine*; and my Reason is, that these Children are seldom the Fruits of Marriage, a *Circumstance not much regarded by our Savages*; therefore, *one Male* will be sufficient to serve *four Females*. That the remaining Hundred thousand, may, at a Year old, be offered in Sale to the *Persons of Quality and Fortune*, through the Kingdom; always advising the Mother to let them suck plentifully in the last Month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good Table. A Child will make two Dishes at an Entertainment for Friends; and when the Family dines alone, the fore or hind Quarter will make a reasonable Dish; and seasoned with a little Pepper or Salt, will be very good Boiled on the fourth Day, especially in *Winter*.

I have reckoned upon a Medium, that a Child just born will weigh Twelve Pounds; and in a solar Year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to twenty eight Pounds.

I grant this Food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very *proper for Landlords*; who, as they have already devoured most of the Parents, seem to have the best Title to the Children.

Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal* (1729)

(b)

"Provoking!" exclaimed Miss Ingram: "you tiresome monkey!" (apostrophizing Adèle) "who perched you up in the window to give false intelligence?" and she cast on me an angry glance, as if I were in fault.

Some parleying was audible in the hall, and soon the new-comer entered. He bowed to Lady Ingram, as deeming her the eldest lady present.

"It appears I come at an inopportune time, madam," said he, "when my friend, Mr. Rochester, is from home; but I arrive from a very long journey, and I think I may presume so far on old and intimate acquaintance as to install myself here till he returns."

His manner was polite; his accent, in speaking, struck me as being somewhat unusual,—not precisely foreign, but still not altogether English; his age might be about Mr. Rochester's,—between thirty and forty; his complexion was singularly sallow: otherwise he was a fine-looking man, at first sight especially. On closer examination, you detected something in his face that displeased: or rather, that failed to please. His features were regular, but too relaxed: his eye was large and well cut, but the life looking out of it was a tame, vacant life—at least so I thought.

The sound of the dressing-bell dispersed the party. It was not till after dinner that I saw him again: he then seemed quite at his ease. But I liked his physiognomy even less than before: it struck me as being, at the same time, unsettled and inanimate. His eye wandered, and had no meaning in its wandering: this gave him an odd look, such as I never remembered to have seen.

Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (1847)

TURN OVER

2. Make a phonetic transcription of **one** of the following passages in the pronunciation of its time, commenting on any points of special interest **or** difficulty.

**KENT**                               **Royal Lear,**  
Whom I have ever honoured as my king,  
Loved as my father, as my master followed,  
As my great patron thought on in my prayers—  
**LEAR**  
The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.  
**KENT**  
Let it fall rather, though the fork invade  
The region of my heart. Be Kent unmannerly  
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?  
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak  
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's  
    bound  
When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state,  
And in thy best consideration check  
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgement,  
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least,  
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds  
Reverb no hollowness.

**LEAR**                               Kent, on thy life, no more!

Shakespeare, *King Lear* (1623, Folio)

- (b) Joss looks up from his paper. 'There's no need for that. You make him worse when you do that,' he says. 'Come back when you *do* like scrambled eggs?!! Are you out of your mind?' I laugh and stand behind him. I kiss the back of his neck. 'You've hurt me,' I whisper in his ear and he smiles, shamefaced. I bend over him and kiss him on his soft lips. 'You go and get him,' I say and sit down to my Sunday brunch.

When Colman is back with us at the table, eating his eggs and trying really hard, I feel all guilty again. My lovely boy. He looks beautiful. He is a good eater, really, I say to myself. Why was I so hard on him? He's only a boy. (Show me the boy and I'll show you the man.) Why do I let him annoy me so much? I'll need to try to be better. Try to be a better mummy. That's a nice boy, I say to him and smile. His eyes look all loving and hurt. Like a tiny pityful Oedipus.

Jackie Kay, *Trumpet* (1998)

3. How certain can we be about the pronunciation of periods of English earlier than our own? You may confine your answer to one period if you wish.
4. 'The first factor which obscures the process of historical change is the fact that the synchronic analysis of a language always requires a certain degree of idealization of the data' (BYNON). By what means can this difficulty be addressed?

## SECTION B

5. **Either (a)** Why was it found impossible to establish a phonetic spelling system for English in the early modern period?
- Or (b)** How accurate is it to describe the modern English spelling system as etymological?
6. What were the most important changes in the English vowel system since 1500?
7. 'The extent of regional variation in the pronunciation of English is universally acknowledged and often remarked on' (LEITH). How well has this been reflected in the written records?
8. What were the main developments in the English verb since 1500?
9. 'In the early eighteenth century the "hard words" tradition finally began to give way before the more useful philosophy of serving the reader's more general need to know the meanings of all sorts of words' (LANDAU). Show how this philosophy has been put into practice with reference to **at least two** dictionaries.
10. **Either (a)** 'Eloquence inhered not in the native elements in the language but only in the words introduced into it from the classics' (JONES). Discuss English Renaissance word-borrowing in the light of this.
- Or (b)** 'The most important impact in Renaissance lexical change was on the processes of English word-formation.' Discuss.
11. What model or models of semantic change are most enlightening in application to English words?
12. Conversion by zero-morpheme has been the most productive process in English word-formation ever since the Renaissance'. Discuss.
13. 'Milton's poetry is poetry at the farthest possible remove from prose.' Can the language of poetry be consistently distinguished from general usage in the history of English?
14. 'Language change is always a matter of pragmatics.' Discuss.

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