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SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2002
COURSE I AND COURSE II
Paper 2 and B9 Shakespeare

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND MODERN LANGUAGES 2002
Part II, Paper 5 Shakespeare

HONOUR SCHOOL OF CLASSICS AND ENGLISH 2002
Part A, Paper 2(b) Shakespeare

HONOUR SCHOOL OF MODERN HISTORY AND ENGLISH 2002
Paper (iv), (v) Shakespeare

Tuesday 14 May 2002, 9. 30 a.m.

Time allowed – Three hours

Answer *three* questions. At least two of your answers must deal with more than one work by Shakespeare. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

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

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1. **Either (a)** 'Advances in formal criticism of the sonnets often came at the expense of evading the disconcerting biographical material the poems seem to provide' (Walter Cohen). Discuss.

Or (b) To what extent do Shakespeare's Sonnets differ from other sonnet sequences of his time?

2. **Either (a)** 'Isn't desire the same whether the object is present or absent? Isn't the object *always* absent?' (Roland Barthes). Is this comment useful for understanding *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*?

Or (b) 'Once we have seen that the two poems are each other's obverse, in the fairly mechanical way common in mythology, we can see that they are also, in a deeper sense, complementary' (Ted Hughes). Discuss.

3. **Either (a)** 'The sexual license that adolescent boys enjoyed once in Arcadia could be relived on certain occasions in the English greenwood' (Bruce R. Smith). Discuss in relation to Shakespeare's romantic comedies.

Or (b) In what ways is Shakespeare's comedy festive?

Or (c) 'Love is not love / Which alters when it alteration finds' (Sonnet 116). Discuss in relation to the comedies.

Or (d) 'The parts of a comedy are the same with a tragedy; and the end is partly the same, for they both delight and teach; the comics are called *didaskaloi* (teachers) of the Greeks' (Ben Jonson). Compare Shakespeare's comedies with those of **any** of his contemporaries in the light of this claim.

4. **Either (a)** '[History] was turned from a general guide to morality into a more narrowly focused schoolroom of political wisdom' (D.R. Woolf). Is this change of subject visible in Shakespeare's history plays?

Or (b) 'Worcester is stol'n away to-night; thy father's beard is turn'd white with the news; you may buy land now as cheap as stinking mack'rel' (*1 Henry IV*). Consider Shakespeare's dramatisation of history as it affects both king and nation.

Or (c) 'Shakespeare gave depth and coherence to a historical drama which in the work of his contemporaries remained shallow and episodic.' Is this fair?

5. **Either (a)** 'Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature [...] expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another [...] in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another' (Dr Johnson). Discuss.

Or (b) 'Any notion of a strict 'system' of dramatic genres must be modified to take account of the experimentation, the collaborative production, and the competitive commercial pressures fuelling dramatic production' (Jean Howard). Discuss.

6. **Either (a)** 'Comedy consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. To take an obvious example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain' (Aristotle). Discuss.

Or (b) 'Our play is The Most Lamentable Comedy and most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe.' 'A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Discuss in relation to **two or more** plays.

7. **Either (a)** 'Although there is no female citizenship, motherhood nonetheless counts as a civic activity' (Nicole Loraux on Greek drama). Does Loraux's comment fit Shakespeare's Roman plays **or** other tragedies?

Or (b) 'I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf.'
(*Julius Caesar*)

Consider in relation to the Roman plays.

8. 'All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings.'
(*King Lear*)

and

'There never was vainer labour than that of critics who try to make out that the persons in these dramas meet with "justice" or "their deserts".' (A.C.Bradley)

Adjudicate between these two positions in relation to Shakespeare's tragedies.

9. 'Webster and Ford reject the assumptions which underlie Shakespearcan tragedy' (D.L. Frost). Discuss.

TURN OVER

10. **Either (a)** 'The Romances are best understood as paeans to Jacobean orthodoxies of every kind.' In the light of this claim **either** discuss Shakespeare's Romances **or** compare them with those of any of his contemporaries.

Or (b) 'A tragic-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy ... a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy' (John Fletcher). Consider in relation to Shakespeare's Late Plays.

11. 'I have a technical objection to making sexual infatuation a tragic theme. Experience proves that it is effective only in the comic spirit' (G.B.Shaw). Discuss.

12. ' – Why is the underplot of *King Lear* lifted out of Sidney's *Arcadia* and spatchcocked onto a Celtic legend older than history?
– That was Will's way [...] We should not now combine a Norse saga with an excerpt from a novel by George Meredith' (James Joyce, *Ulysses*).
Discuss in relation to any of Shakespeare's sources.

13. 'As twentieth-century readers we recognize the eroticism of gender confusion, and reintroduce that confusion as a feature of the dramatic narrative. Whereas for the Elizabethan theatre audience, it may be the very clarity of the mistakenness – the very indifference to gendering – which is designed to elicit the pleasurable response from the audience' (Lisa Jardine). Discuss.

14. 'Shakespeare knew the Bible with an understanding that is in most ways strange to us' (Daniell). Where do you detect its direct influence in Shakespeare?

15. 'People say only the interior matters. The exterior is nothing. But the exterior is *so* underrated' (Bella Freud). Discuss any work **or** works by Shakespeare in the light of this claim.

16. 'Shall packhorses,
And hollow pampered jades of Asia
Which cannot go but thirty miles a day,
Compare with Caesars?' (*2 Henry IV*)
Was Shakespeare's relationship to his predecessors exclusively parodic?

17. 'And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd
That palter with us in a double sense' (*Macbeth*).
Write on any aspect of Shakespeare's linguistic juggling.

18. 'This chair shall be my state, this dagger my scepter, and this cushion my crown'
(*1 Henry IV*).
Either (a) What capital does Shakespeare make out of the relatively simple resources of his stages?

Or (b) Compare Shakespeare's use of stage effects with the practice of any of his contemporaries.

19. 'But tell me girl, when went' -- and there she stay'd
Till after a deep groan -- 'Tarquin from hence?'
(*The Rape of Lucrece*).

Write on Shakespeare's use of

- (a) metre,
or
(b) dialogue in his narrative poems,
or
(c) poetry in his dramatic dialogues.

20. 'I remember, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penn'd) hee never blotted out a line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand ... His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had beene so too' (Ben Jonson). Write on some of the strengths **and** weaknesses of Shakespeare's many styles.

21. 'So I have heard, and do in part believe it' (*Hamlet*).

Write on Shakespeare's use of

- (a) the supernatural
or
(b) popular story and folk tale.

22. Write on **one** of the following, not necessarily in relation to the play from which it is taken:

- (a) 'And cannibals that each other eat, / The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders' (*Othello*).

Or

- (b) 'Thanks, Rosencrants, and gentle Guildenstern.' 'Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz' (*Hamlet*).

Or

- (c) 'Men may construe things after their fashion / Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.' (*Julius Caesar*)

Or

- (d) 'I am not witty, but the cause that wit is in other men' (Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*).

Or

- (e) 'Spirits are not finely touch'd / But to fine issues' (Duke, of Angelo, in *Measure for Measure*).

Or

- (f) 'Antony / Will be himself.' 'Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony / He comes too short of that great property / Which still should go with Antony' (*Antony and Cleopatra*).

TURN OVER

23. **Either (a)** 'The schools market and its expectations of shallow "relevance" have irretrievably deformed directorial treatment of Shakespeare's plays.' Discuss.

Or (b) Discuss the use of modern dress in stage productions of Shakespeare you have seen.

Or (c) Does theatre in the round bring any particular advantages to productions of Shakespeare?

24. 'It seems extraordinarily difficult for film adaptations to add anything to the Shakespearean text; most often they take away.' Is this your experience?

25. What evidence is there that Shakespeare revised his plays?

26. If you could choose **one** Shakespeare play to edit, which would it be, and why?

27. Write on **one** of the following: dying speeches, murder, the bed-trick, rape, rings, rebirth, time.

28. Write on **one** of the following: Shakespeare's debt to Ovid, Greek influences, the 'Greek' plays, sub-plots, minor characters, costume **and/or** props, Shakespeare's reputation in any century, rewritings of Shakespeare in any medium.

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