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SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2004
COURSE I AND COURSE II
PAPER 2 AND B9 SHAKESPEARE**

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND MODERN LANGUAGES 2004
PART II, PAPER 5 SHAKESPEARE**

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF CLASSICS AND ENGLISH 2004
PART A, PAPER 2(b) SHAKESPEARE**

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF MODERN HISTORY AND ENGLISH 2004
PAPER (iv) AND (v) SHAKESPEARE**

PASS SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

Tuesday, 18 May 2004, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

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. You may include Shakespeare's contemporaries in one or more of your answers.

Do not turn over until told that you may do so

1. 'Shakespeare's poetic imagination was essentially dramatic; all his poems presuppose not only a speaker but a situation.'
EITHER (a) how dramatic is Shakespeare's poetry?

OR (b) how critically distorting is it to consider Shakespeare's poems independently of the plays?
2. EITHER (a) 'Shakespeare's series [of sonnets], though it is well within the general tradition of Elizabethan sonnet cycles, is nevertheless in several ways unique' (HALLETT SMITH). Is it?

OR (b) 'The conventions of the sonnet cycle offered ample opportunity for poets to display their wit and ingenuity.' In what ways do sonnet conventions facilitate Shakespeare's wit and ingenuity?
3. 'Criticism of Shakespeare's poems often flounders by failing to place them within their appropriate genres or by seeing them simply as precursors of later Shakespearean drama.' What critical approach(es) have you found helpful in reading the poems?
4. 'Words measure the gap between individuals; they do not bridge it.' Apply this comment to Shakespeare's plays or poems.
5. 'He's an infinitive thing upon my score' (*2 Henry 4*)
'how infinite in faculty' (*Hamlet*)
Consider the infinite in Shakespeare.
6. EITHER (a) 'It is not because he stands above history but because he was so intensely embroiled in it that Shakespeare still translates' (MICHAEL NEILL). Consider Shakespeare's embroilment in (his AND/OR our) history.

OR (b) 'Romantic fictions purporting to represent English history.' How, and how successfully, does Shakespeare reconcile the fictional and the historical ?
7. EITHER (a) In Shakespeare's plays 'imperial aggrandizement and the fashioning of national identity are two sides of a single coin.' Discuss.

OR (b) Alvin Kernan argues that 'in describing the passage from Richard II to Henry V, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, Shakespeare was doing for England something comparable to Vergil's Roman epic [*The Aeneid*].' How helpful is it to think of Shakespeare's history cycles as national epic?
8. Source study is 'the elephant's graveyard of criticism' (GREENBLATT). How can we prevent this being the case?
9. 'Shakespeare's greatest source was himself.' Discuss Shakespeare's re-use of his own writings.

10. Analyse the function of anachronism in Shakespeare.
11. Henry James wrote that 'really, universally, relations stop nowhere' for the artist: 'the continuity of things is the whole matter...of comedy and tragedy.'
EITHER (a) analyse what Shakespearean comedy and tragedy have in common and why.

OR (b) discuss 'the continuity of things.'
12. 'No action can be repealed: that is the revenger's justification. No action can be repeated: that is the revenger's tragedy.' Discuss.
13. 'Tragedy repeatedly experiments with the apparent causelessness of human deeds, for which explanations are only apparently adequate.' Discuss.
14. 'To hear of greater grief would lessen mine' (WEBSTER, *The Duchess of Malfi*). How therapeutic are tragedies for the characters within them?
15. 'All major Shakespeare characters have one speech in which they offer their perspective' (e.g. Caliban, Shylock, Dromio of Ephesus, Katherine Minola). How do we know whose perspective to trust?
16. 'There is no judge over us, and therefore we must do justice upon ourselves' (IBSEN, *Rosmersholm*). Discuss.
17. 'The term "political" is defined to include any act with a social dimension. ...But if everything is political then nothing is, for the words has lost its edge' (LEGGATT). How helpful is the expansive use of 'political' in current criticism?
18. 'It has been said that dramatic texts remain dumb until performance makes them speak—like the recorder with which Hamlet taunts Guildenstern ("and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak").' How does performance make drama 'speak'?
19. Discuss the function of poetry **and/or** songs in Shakespeare's plays.
20. Analyse the losses and gains when Shakespeare is transferred to another medium such as film, opera or painting.
21. Discuss any one of Shakespeare's 'Greek' plays—e.g. *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*—in the light of classical epic **and/or** drama.
22. 'Each of the Roman plays explores some aspect of the private dimension: friendship in *Julius Caesar*, sexual love in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the family in *Coriolanus*' (LEGGATT). Discuss 'some aspect of the private dimension' in any of the Roman plays (you need not confine yourself to the three plays listed above).
23. 'Let's do it after the high Roman fashion.' Consider Shakespeare's treatment of suicide.

24. 'The terrible, however paradoxical it may appear, will be found to touch on the verge of the ludicrous' (COLERIDGE on Shakespeare). Analyse the borders of the terrible and the ludicrous in Shakespeare.
25. Does it always end well?
26. 'These are not natural events; they strengthen
From strange to stranger'
(*The Tempest*)
- How does Shakespeare present the strange?
27. 'I banish you' (*Coriolanus*).
EITHER (a) analyse banishment in Shakespeare.
- OR (b) discuss Shakespeare's obsession with outsider figures.
28. EITHER (a) defend Shakespeare's plays as texts to be read.
- OR (b) examine **one** Shakespeare play in terms of its textual **and/or** editorial challenges.
29. Consider **one** of the following in Shakespeare's plays or poems:
rape; memory; sacrifice; belatedness; money; dreams; the imagination; the play-within-the-play; the common man; exile; mutability; twins; disguise; war; reading/writing; parenthood; slander; rivalry.
30. Analyse the impact of **one** of the following on Shakespeare's plays or poems:
patronage; court culture; religion; Shakespeare's contemporaries; revision.

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