

ENGLISH LITERATURE I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

You may answer on any literature written in English

1. Would it help to know where and when *Beowulf* was composed?
2. 'English writing around the first millennium might readily be described as a literature of trauma' (LAURA ASHE). Discuss.
3. What is the significance of locality in medieval English writing?
4. Write a medieval dream vision.
5. What did it mean to be English in 1390? Or Scottish? Or Welsh?
6. What did the Black Death do for literature?
7. What kinds of things can be learned from reading poetry in manuscript? You may limit yourself to one period or manuscript if you wish.
8. Is early Tudor poetry a form of political advice?
9. Does the occasionality of early sixteenth-century drama make it unreadable now?
10. 'Whatever else humanism is, it is emphatically not a movement towards freedom and expansion. It is the impulse of men who feel themselves simple, rustic, and immature, towards sophistication, urbanity, and ripeness' (C. S. LEWIS). Discuss.
11. When and why does satirical prose flourish?
12. 'And then I asked him, how many women he had seen, go into the pulpit and preach. He said, he never saw none' (ANNE ASKEW). Write about any aspect of women and religion in the light of this quotation.
13. 'The copying out of truth, then, is but the plain ground; the descant and, consequently, sweetness of music is the poet's delightful ornament and fiction' (WILLIAM SCOTT). Discuss.
14. Why have sonnets been very popular during certain literary periods? You may limit yourself to the discussion of one period.
15. 'When we write about "Shakespeare's reading" we are designating a practice as much as all the books he consulted. It was a practice in which he was caught up, involving many more agents than he, but one which also—whether or not it was done pen in hand (and much of the time it probably was)—led readily into writing' (JOHN KERRIGAN). Discuss.

16. What kind of relationships do you find between acting companies and the plays they put on in the early modern period?
17. 'All things are prepared for the journey, all now merry, contented, nothing amisse; greife forsaken, sadnes cast off, Pamphilia is the Queene of all content; Amphilanthus joying worthily in her; And' (LADY MARY WROTH). Why are so many romances incomplete?
18. 'The King James Bible is the most important book in English.' Do you agree? If not, which book would you nominate?
19. 'In all Civil Dissentions, when they break into open hostilities, the War of the Pen is allowed to accompany that of the Sword, and every one is in a maner obliged with his Tongue, as well as Hand, to serve and assist the side which he engages in' (ABRAHAM COWLEY). Discuss.
20. 'We dare not take from men's inventive brains' (LUCY HUTCHINSON). Discuss.
21. How does theological argument influence any aspect of literary activity?
22. What, if anything, can reception history bring to our understanding of Milton?
23. 'I tremble at the inconveniencies attending so great a journey, with a numerous family, and a little infant hanging at the breast. However, I endeavour, upon this occasion, to do, as I have hitherto done in all the odd turns of my life; turn them, if I can, to my diversion' (LADY WORTLEY MONTAGU). Discuss either travel or letter writing in the light of this quotation.
24. Can mock-heroic make a serious point?
25. Write about the relationship between plot and narrative in any eighteenth-century novel(s) of your choice.
26. 'He never spoke out' (MATTHEW ARNOLD on THOMAS GRAY). Do eighteenth-century poets say what they mean?
27. Was Gothic just a fad?
28. Why is Jane Austen remembered while many of her contemporaries are not?
29. 'Every Author, so far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is enjoyed' (WILLIAM WORDSWORTH). Discuss.
30. 'Who would write, who had anything better to do?' (LORD BYRON). Discuss.
31. 'I who have written much in prose and verse / For others' uses, will write now for mine' (ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, *Aurora Leigh*). Discuss interiority in nineteenth-century poetry.
32. Defend doggerel.

33. 'The essential secret is the motive force of Henry James's tales' (TZVETAN TODOROV). Discuss in relation to James or any other writer.
34. 'I am the wine and bread. / I keep the law, / I hold the mysteries true' (H.D.). Where's God in modernist poetry?
35. '*Thirty seconds before end of speech lamplight begins to fail*' (SAMUEL BECKETT). Discuss the role of stage directions in drama.
36. 'Walking thus, hour after hour, the senses keyed, one walks the flesh transparent. But no metaphor, transparent, or light as air, is adequate. The body is not made negligible, but paramount. Flesh is not annihilated but fulfilled. One is not bodiless, but essential body' (NAN SHEPHERD). Discuss writing about the natural world in the light of this quotation.
37. 'X/Self is ... a Calibanization of what I have read, the things that informed my growth in terms of ideas' (EDWARD KAMAU BRATHWAITE). Discuss any aspect of Caribbean writing in the light of this remark.
38. 'In the broad sense, as a processing of everything one hears or witnesses, all fiction is autobiographical - imagination ground through the mill of memory' (ROHINTON MISTRY). Discuss.
39. 'A warm afternoon in early spring, New York City. We went to the Chelsea Hotel to fuck' (MAGGIE NELSON). Is literature always ultimately about sex?
40. 'Publication of a book is always a bit of a non-event. It doesn't happen anywhere in space and time that you can get hold of or inhabit. Sending the book to friends by mail is charming but imaginary. Reviews may or may not dribble in but anyway by then you're writing the next thing' (ANNE CARSON). Discuss.
41. 'Explain how poetry | pursues the human like the smitten moon | above the weeping, laughing earth; how we | make prayers of it' (CAROL ANN DUFFY). Go on.
42. Which present-day writer do you think is most overrated or underrated, and why?

ENGLISH LITERATURE II

Candidates should answer **Section A** and **TWO** questions from **Section B**

Note that Section A is compulsory. In Section B you may answer in relation to literature written in languages other than English if you wish

Section A

1. Compare the following two passages in any way you like.

- a) **Florizel.** What you do
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet.
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs, 5
To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; move still, still so,
And own no other function: each your doing, 10
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deed,
That all your acts are queens.
Perdita. O Doricles,
Your praises are too large: but that your youth, 15
And the true blood which peepeth fairly through't,
Do plainly give you out an unstained shepherd,
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
You wooed me the false way.

(WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE)

- b) If I were the moon
With a star papoose
In the windy sky
I'd carry my one star home,

If I were the sea 5
With boats in my arms
On this cold morning
I'd carry them,

If I were sleeping
And my dream turned 10
I would carry you
Little papoose
Wherever you choose.

(HELEN DUNMORE)

[OVER]

Section B

2. 'In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful' (WALTER BENJAMIN). Discuss.
3. 'It is not necessary for good translators to be good poets' (PAUL DE MAN). Discuss.
4. 'Genres, like biological species, have a relatively circumscribed existence both in space and in time' (ALASTAIR FOWLER). Discuss.
5. Write an essay on any aspect of the relationship between law and literature.
6. Are great works of literature always transgressive?
7. Do poets need poetics?
8. 'A man's most vivid and sensuous experience is inevitably bound up with the language that he actually speaks' (F.R. LEAVIS). Should we have got rid of poetic diction earlier?
9. Does fiction thrive on disaster?
10. 'Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write yourself. Your body must be heard' (HELÈNE CIXOUS). Discuss.
11. Should we value Young Adult fiction as much as we do any other kind of fiction?
12. 'The analytic situation is the only place explicitly provided for in the social contract in which we are allowed to talk about the wounds we have suffered and to search for possible new identities and new ways of talking about ourselves' (JULIA KRISTEVA). Discuss.
13. 'When a poem rhymes, when a form generates itself, when a metre provokes consciousness into new postures, it is already on the side of life' (SEAMUS HEANEY). Discuss.
14. 'Consider gender as *a corporeal style*, an "act," as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where "*performative*" suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning' (JUDITH BUTLER). Discuss.
15. 'Parody is one of the major forms of modern self-reflexivity; it is a form of inter-art discourse' (LINDA HUTCHEON). Discuss.
16. What's in a name?
17. 'Both the modern novel and the detective novel are centred around the same formal problem—the *impossibility of telling a story in a linear consistent way*' (SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK). Discuss.
18. Does literary biography have a place in literary criticism?

19. Consider the positive or negative influence of editors in relation to any text or texts.
20. Would we be as interested in manuscripts if more of them had survived?
21. What can we learn from anthologies?
22. 'Deprivation is for me what daffodils were for Wordsworth' (PHILIP LARKIN). Is subject matter irrelevant for poetry?
23. 'I think that I shall never see / A poem as lovely as a tree' (JOYCE KILMER). Discuss.
24. 'For romantic art the lyric is as it were the elementary fundamental characteristic' (HEGEL). Discuss.
25. Are we beyond writing epics?
26. Why aren't jokes literature?
27. 'I have a foolish habit of reading periodicals, and it seems to me that most modern criticism is perfectly valueless' (OSCAR WILDE). Have things improved?
28. 'Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself' (MARY SHELLEY). Discuss.
29. Could computers ever write poems as well as humans do?
30. How might twenty-first-century writers combat the shorter attention-spans of their readers?
31. What would the work of an 'unoriginal genius' look like?
32. 'Short stories are journeys you can make to the far side of the universe and still be back in time for dinner' (NEIL GAIMAN). Discuss.
33. 'Fantasy is escapist, and that is its glory. If a soldier is imprisoned by the enemy, don't we consider it his duty to escape?' (J.R.R. TOLKIEN). Discuss.
34. Can tragedy transcend time?
35. "But it isn't easy", said Pooh. "Because Poetry and Hums aren't things which you get, they're things which get you. And all you can do is go where they can find you" (A.A. MILNE). Was Pooh right?
36. Discuss the literary treatment of **ONE** of the following:
aspirations; biodiversity; cold; dragons; expression; food; ghosts; health; illusions; jealousy; kings; liminality; migration; newness; observation; philosophy; questions; revision; ships; time; unmentionables; veracity; welfare; xenotext; zeugma.

ENGLISH LITERATURE I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

You may answer on any literature written in English

1. 'All the titles and most of the familiar layout of Old English verse are editorial' (JONATHAN WILCOX). Is this a problem?
2. 'It is far more constructive to read Bede as representative of a quite foreign community, distant and strange, whose thought world should be approached with caution' (NICHOLAS HIGHAM). Discuss, with reference to Bede **OR** another Anglo-Saxon writer.
3. What can Lydgate tell us about Chaucer, **AND/OR** vice versa?
4. Write about temptation in medieval literature.
5. Is the only justice we find in fabliaux the poetic variety?
6. 'When we have seen what an allegory signifies, we are always tempted to attend to the signification in the abstract and throw aside the allegorical imagery as something which has now done its work. But this is not the way to read an allegory' (C.S. LEWIS). Discuss.
7. Is it anachronistic to talk about medieval narrators as self-conscious?
8. What explains the abiding European fascination with King Arthur?
9. Write about the dialogue as a medieval literary form.
10. Could we have had metaphysical poetry without Wyatt?
11. 'Twice or thrice had I loved thee / Before I knew thy face or name' (JOHN DONNE). Is Donne sincere?
12. Write about the relationship between actors and playwrights in early modern theatre.
13. 'For never was a story of more woe' (WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*). Can dramatic tragedy sometimes be read as dramatic comedy?
14. Write about the significance of **ANY ONE** literary patron.
15. 'Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging' (BEN JONSON). Write about metre in the work of **ONE OR MORE** poet(s).
16. Is all literature written during the Civil War political by nature?

[OVER]

17. '[Wit] involves, probably, a recognition, implicit in the expression of every experience, of other kinds of experience which are possible' (T.S. ELIOT on Andrew Marvell). Discuss.
18. 'The school which existed till lately since the restoration of Charles the 2d, was rather a school of wit and ethics in verse, than anything else' (LEIGH HUNT). Is this a fair description of the poetry of the long eighteenth century?
19. Did the Ancients or the Moderns have the right idea?
20. 'Our Forefathers looked upon Nature with more Reverence and Horrour, before the World was enlightened by Learning and Philosophy, and loved to astonish themselves with the Apprehensions of Witchcraft, Prodigies, Charms and Enchantments' (JOSEPH ADDISON). Why were eighteenth-century writers fascinated by the primitive?
21. 'They consist of fourteen lines, and appear to me no improper vehicle for a single sentiment' (CHARLOTTE SMITH). What, if anything, was distinctive about the sonnet in the Romantic period?
22. Wordsworth or Coleridge?
23. Would we think about the course of literary history differently if Shelley, Byron and Keats had not all died young?
24. 'Mills and Boon written by a genius' (P.D. JAMES). Is this a fair assessment of Jane Austen?
25. 'No language is too strong to condemn the mixed vileness and childishness of depicting the spurious passions of a putrescent imagination, the unnamed lusts of sated wontons, as if they were the crown of character and their enjoyment the great glory of human life' (JOHN MORLEY on Algernon Charles Swinburne). Defend a transgressive Victorian writer of your choice.
26. '[Henry James] had reached a stage at which the click of a Remington typewriter acted as a positive spur. He found it more difficult to compose to the music of any other make. During the fortnight when the Remington was out of order he dictated to an Oliver typewriter with evident discomfort, and he found it almost impossibly disconcerting to speak to something that made no responsive sound at all' (THEODORA BOSANQUET, James's amanuensis). Write about how methods of composition affect style.
27. 'Every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because its means are so melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed ends' (PAUL FUSSELL). Discuss in relation to any literature of the Great War.
28. 'I haven't that 'reality' gift. I insubstantise, wilfully to some extent, distrusting reality – its cheapness' (VIRGINIA WOOLF). Discuss.
29. '[Samuel Beckett] has written a play in which nothing happens, twice' (VIVIAN MERCIER). Discuss with reference to **ONE OR MORE** twentieth-century playwright(s).

30. 'Wrote (?) (Made) five sonnets tonight, by taking one line from each of a group of poems, at random, going from first to last poem then back again until 12 lines, then making the final couplet from any 2 poems, in the group, one line at random from each. Wrote by ear, and automatically. Very interesting results' (TED BERRIGAN). Can cutting and pasting produce an original work of literature?
31. What does pastoral look like in the post-war novel?
32. Whose next work – of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama, screenwriting or any other written genre – are you most looking forward to reading?

ENGLISH LITERATURE II

Candidates should answer **Section A** and **TWO** questions from **Section B**

Note that Section A is compulsory. In Section B you may answer in relation to literature written in languages other than English if you wish

Section A

1. Write a critical comparison of **ANY TWO** of the following passages:

- a) Processionals in the exemplary cave,
Benediction of shadows. Pomfret. London.
The voice fragrant with mannered humility,
With an equable contempt for this world,
'In honorem Trinitatis'. Crash. The head 5
Struck down into a meaty conduit of blood.
So these dispose themselves to receive each
Pentecostal blow from axe or seraph,
Spattering block-straw with mortal residue.
Psalteries whine through the empyrean. Fire 10
Flares in the pit, ghosting upon stone
Creatures of such rampant state, vacuous
Ceremony of possession, restless
Habitation, no man's dwelling-place.

(GEOFFREY HILL)

- b) Then, before he shoulde say his prayers, because the morning was sharpe,
the sheriff offered him to bring him downe off the scaffold to warme him
by a fire. No, good Mr Sheriff (said he) lett us dispatche; for within this
quarter of this hower mine ague will come upon me, and if I be not dead 5
before then mine enemies will saye that I quake for feare. So he made a most
divine and admirable prayer, and then he rose up, clapped his hands and
saide, Nowe I am going to god. He then bid the hangman to shewe him his
axe, which having poized in his hand, he felte upon the edge, saying, here is a
medicin will cure me of all my diseases, and so delivered it the hangman
again. Then he putt off his gowne, untrussed himselfe, and put off his 10
band and doublett, and most gracefully took his leave at all 4. sides of the
Scaffold. Laying his head downe the block, he was angry with the
hangman that would have blindfolded his eyes, saying you thinke I feare
the shadow of the axe, when I fear not the axe itselfe. And so when he sould
holde up his handes saying his last prayer he bad him strike. Many other 15
circumstances, and pointes of substance there were bothe before and at
the time of his execution, which were very memorable; but nowe mine
other occasions will not suffer me to recount all.

(JOHN PORY)

[OVER]

c) Anne's arm shakes as she raises it to lift off her hood. It comes easily, no fumbling; he thinks, it cannot have been pinned. Her hair is gathered in a silk net at the nape of her neck and she shakes it out, gathers up the strands, raising her hands above her head, coiling it; she holds it with one hand, and one of the women gives her a linen cap. She pulls it on. You would not think it would hold her hair, but it does; she must have rehearsed with it. But now she looks about as if for direction. She lifts the cap half off her head, puts it back. She does not know what to do, he sees she does not know if she should tie the cap's string beneath her chin—whether it will hold without fastening or whether she has time to make a knot and how many heartbeats she has left in the world. The executioner steps out and he can see—he is very close—Anne's eyes focus on him. The Frenchman bobs to his knees to ask pardon. It is a formality and his knees barely graze the straw. He has motioned Anne to kneel, and as she does so he steps away, as if he does not want contact even with her clothes. At arm's length, he holds out a folded cloth to one of the women, and raises a hand to his eyes to show her what he means. He hopes it is Lady Kingston who takes the blindfold; whoever it is, she is adept, but a small sound comes from Anne as her world darkens. Her lips move in prayer. The Frenchman waves the women back. They retreat; they kneel, one of them almost sinks to the ground and is propped up by the others; despite the veils one can see their hands, their helpless bare hands, as they draw their own skirts about them, as if they were making themselves small, making themselves safe. The queen is alone now, as alone as she has ever been in her life. She says, Christ have mercy, Jesus have mercy, Christ receive my soul. She raises one arm, again her fingers go to the coif, and he thinks, put your arm down, for God's sake put your arm down, and he could not will it more if—the executioner calls out sharply, 'Get me the sword.' The blinded head whips around. The man is behind Anne, she is misdirected, she does not sense him. There is a groan, one single sound from the whole crowd. Then a silence, and into that silence, a sharp sigh or a sound like a whistle through a keyhole: the body exsanguinates, and its flat little presence becomes a puddle of gore.

(HILARY MANTEL)

[OVER]

Section B

1. JAMES BOSWELL: 'Then, Sir, what is poetry?'
SAMUEL JOHNSON: 'Why, Sir, it is much easier to say what it is not.'
Have there been any satisfactory positive definitions?
2. 'That is not what I meant, at all; that is not it, at all' (T.S. ELIOT). Does it matter what was meant?
3. 'The epistolary novel, despite the prestige of Richardson and Rousseau, was obviously a technical dead end' (ELAINE SHOWALTER). Why use the epistolary form?
4. Why do poets imitate?
5. '...the full, the monstrous demonstration that Tennyson was not Tennysonian' (HENRY JAMES). Do authors make good celebrities? **OR** Who was the greatest self-publicist in literary history?
6. Write about the relationship between literature and the law.
7. 'What's that coming over the hill? A white, middle-class Englishman! A Lone Enraptured Male' (KATHLEEN JAMIE on the 'new nature writing'). Is contemporary writing gendered?
8. Is there poetry in propaganda?
9. 'Genre classifications are empirical, not logical. They are historical assumptions constructed by authors, audiences, and critics in order to serve communicative and aesthetic purposes' (RALPH COHEN). Discuss.
10. 'One book walking along in prose, can be read publicly by the brothers in the church...the other running with the muse of poetry, your pupils can read over and over again in their rooms' (ALCUIN). Do different reading traditions produce different kinds of text?
11. Is dividing literature into historical periods helpful?
12. 'Big words on small matters' (WILLIAM COWPER). Is there anything more to mock-heroic?
13. 'You know there is £10 more at least to be received of you for the play. We desire you to lend us £5 of that...without which we cannot be bailed till this be dispatched' (PHILIP MASSINGER, from debtors' prison). Write about the relationship between literature and money.
14. 'There are no noble subjects or ignoble subjects; from the standpoint of pure Art one might almost establish the axiom that there is no such thing as subject, style in itself being an absolute manner of seeing things' (GUSTAVE FLAUBERT). Do you agree?
15. Is book history a sub-discipline of literary studies or something else entirely?

16. ‘‘Reader’ is an optimistic term; there are so many cheaper ways of getting something out of writing that the arduous and inward act such a word should imply’ (ADRIAN POOLE). Discuss.
17. ‘Bottom, thou art translated!’ (WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE). Write about transformation in the work of **TWO OR MORE** writers of your choice.
18. What consequences does Internet piracy have for print culture?
19. ‘By far the greater part of the archive through which knowledge about the so-called Third World is generated in the metropolises has traditionally been and continues to be assembled within institutions of research and explication’ (AIJAZ AHMAD). Discuss.
20. Do editors equivocate too much?
21. Every US president since Kennedy has had a poet read at his inauguration. Does it matter that Trump did not?
22. ‘One of the things that makes paranoia possible is that interpretations can seldom be disproved, even if they are such as no person in his sane sense would accept’ (F.E. SPARSHOTT). Are there limits?
23. Why study an author’s juvenilia?
24. ‘To operate within the matrix of power is not the same as to replicate uncritically relations of domination’ (JUDITH BUTLER). Write about power **AND/OR** sex in the work of **ONE OR MORE** female writer(s).
25. ‘Well, Arthur, I mean to be famous’ (ALFRED TENNYSON). Do poets always want fame?
26. Are utopias satires?
27. Who do you think is the most overrated poet? **OR** Who do you think is the most underrated?
28. Are there any serious works about dragons? If not, write one.
29. Discuss literary representations of **ANY ONE** of the following:
arguments; boys; cursing; dilettantes; entropy; fraud; gossip; hedonism; idiocy; jazz; knowledge; Lucifer; modesty; nonsense; ostracism; prudery; Quakers; rap; slovenliness; typhus; unzipping; Vikings; whining; xenophobia; yearning; zoology.

ENGLISH LITERATURE I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

You may answer on any literature written in English

1. Why should Anglo-Saxon writing be regarded as part of English literature?
2. How Italian was Chaucer?
3. ‘The medieval world was innocent of our profound concern for tension.’ (D.W. ROBERTSON) Discuss.
4. ‘Clerkes kenne me that crist is in alle places
Ac I saw hym nevere soothly but as myself in a Mirour.’ (WILLIAM LANGLAND)
Discuss in relation to Langland or any other author or authors.
5. ‘The Renaissance invented the Middle Ages in order to define itself: the Enlightenment perpetuated them in order to admire itself; and the Romantics revived them in order to escape from themselves.’ (BRIAN STOCK) Discuss.
6. ‘In our eagerness to make the Renaissance relevant to the Modern, have we not been precipitous in identifying it as the onset of the Modern?’ (MARGRETA DE GRAZIA)
Discuss.
7. Did Shakespeare revise *King Lear*?
8. ‘Shakespeare was aware of and not indifferent to the readerly (or literary) reception of his plays (in print and, conceivably, manuscript); he and many of his contemporaries considered his printed plays as more than discardable ephemera.’ (LUKAS ERNE)
Discuss.
9. ‘It seems to me that translating from one language to another, unless it is from Greek and Latin, the queens of all languages, is like looking at Flemish tapestries from the wrong side, for although the figures are visible, they are covered by threads that obscure them.’ (CERVANTES) Discuss.
10. Was Milton a heretic?
11. ‘Had I had a fancy, I durst not have exercised it here; for I tremble to think of turning Scripture into a romance.’ (LUCY HUTCHINSON) Discuss.
12. Are ‘literature’ and ‘worship’ convergent or divergent concepts?
13. Can we understand Restoration literature without knowing about court culture?
14. ‘There are many grievous excesses which Law does not reach. Satire supplies, in some measure, the defects of Law in creating a Tribunal of its own.’ (WILLIAM COMBE) How true is this of eighteenth-century satire?

15. Was Shakespeare an eighteenth-century invention?
16. ‘Where [Homer’s] Diction is bold and lofty, let us raise ours as high as we can; but where it is plain and humble, we ought not to be deterr’d from imitating him by the fear of incurring the Censure of a meer *English Critick*.’ (ALEXANDER POPE) Discuss in relation to Pope’s Homer or any other translation.
17. ‘Eighteenth-century pastoral poetry [was] characterised by an extreme reluctance to mention the practical aspects of rural life.’ (JOHN BARRELL) Is this fair?
18. ‘Could a rule be given from *without*, poetry would cease to be poetry, and sink into a mechanical art. The *rules* of the IMAGINATION are themselves the very powers of growth and production.’ (SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE) Discuss.
19. ‘The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.’ (WILLIAM WORDSWORTH) Discuss.
20. ‘The great literature of the years immediately after 1817 – what is normally designated the era of the younger Romantics – discovers a great nineteenth-century preoccupation: the necessity of historical change, but also and more particularly the damage done to individuals by that process.’ (MARILYN BUTLER) Discuss.
21. ‘Do you suppose that I could have any intention but to giggle and make giggle?’ (LORD BYRON) How serious was he?
22. Was the rise of the novel really a middle-class phenomenon?
23. ‘The dissolution of the self began to gain ground as a prominent theme in art and literature only after the middle of the nineteenth century.’ (JACOB KORG) Discuss.
24. Write a dialogue on poetry between Henry James and Alfred, Lord Tennyson.
25. ‘Literary “Irishness” is every bit as complex a concept as literary “Englishness”.’ Discuss.
26. ‘Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves.’ (JAMES JOYCE) Discuss.
27. ‘Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked.’ (CHINUA ACHEBE) Discuss in relation to Conrad **OR ANY OTHER** writer.
28. ‘If I turn my attention from man to nations, I note that here too there is great danger; that colonial enterprise is to the modern world what Roman imperialism was to the ancient world: the prelude to Disaster and the forerunner of Catastrophe.’ (AIMÉ CÉSAIRE) Discuss.
29. Is there a modernist philosophy?

30. 'Every story you tell to a child is a whole kit of blueprints for dealing with himself and for dealing with his own imagination.' (TED HUGHES) Discuss.
31. Have twentieth-century futurist narratives been proved right?
32. 'Given its global dominance it is surprising that the United States of America has not had a more radical influence on literature in English.' Discuss.
33. What will the canon of twenty-first century English literature look like from the perspective of the twenty-second century?

ENGLISH LITERATURE II

Candidates should answer **Section A** and **TWO** questions from **Section B**

Note that Section A is compulsory. In Section B you may answer in relation to literature written in languages other than English if you wish

Section A

1. Write a critical comparison of the following passages:

a) Doc was collecting marine animals in the Great Tide Pool on the tip of the Peninsula. It is a fabulous place: when the tide is in, a wave-churned basin, creamy with foam, whipped by the combers that roll in from the whistling buoy on the reef. But when the tide goes out the little water world becomes quiet and lovely. The sea is very clear and the bottom becomes fantastic with hurrying, fighting, feeding, breeding animals. Crabs rush from frond to frond of the waving algae. Starfish squat over mussels and limpets, attach their million little suckers and then slowly lift with incredible power until the prey is broken from the rock. And then the starfish stomach comes out and envelops its food. Orange and speckled and fluted nudibranchs slide gracefully over the rocks, their skirts waving like the dresses of Spanish dancers. And black eels poke their heads out of crevices and wait for prey. The snapping shrimps with their trigger claws pop loudly. The lovely, colored world is glassed over. Hermit crabs like frantic children scamper on the bottom sand. And now one, finding an empty snail shell he likes better than his own, creeps out, exposing his soft body to the enemy for a moment, and then pops into the new shell. A wave breaks over the barrier, and churns the glassy water for a moment and mixes bubbles into the pool, and then it clears and is tranquil and lovely and murderous again. Here a crab tears a leg from his brother. The anemones expand like soft and brilliant flowers, inviting any tired and perplexed animal to lie for a moment in their arms, and when some small crab or little tide-pool Johnnie accepts the green and purple invitation, the petals whip in, the stinging cells shoot tiny narcotic needles into the prey and it grows weak and perhaps sleepy while the searing caustic digestive acids melt its body down.

(JOHN STEINBECK)

b) There were barnacles that marked the edges of oceans. Late scramblers on the rocks could feel their calcic ridges stoving sharply underfoot. The wet rocks glittered beneath and in the wind they smelled of verdigris. The barnacles fused in vermiculate settlements. For their whole lives they cleaved, and in turn the fragile rock cleaved to them. Volcanoes and thimbles and strange constellations. Together they mapped distant cities and willed the sea to overtake them. And when the russet tide came they opened themselves like

[OVER]

unfamiliar lovers. The whole thing some actinic
principle: a forest grew up in a second, to grace a
world where the sun was a watery lamp. Where
none had been before, white mouths frilled softly 15
in the current and squat armour issued forth the
unlikeliest of cilia: transparent, lightly haired,
cherishing each updraft as, feathered, they moved
with it. They only existed for that half-sunk terrain.
And as they briefly lived, those tender quills wrote 20
of their mystery.

(SARAH HOWE)

[OVER]

Section B

1. Does book history need putting back into its (now slightly foxed) box?
2. 'Every living Language, like the perspiring Bodies of living Creatures, is in perpetual motion and alteration.' (RICHARD BENTLEY) Discuss.
3. Is reading a text necessarily a creative act?
4. Take a forgotten author and explain a) why he or she has been forgotten; and b) why he or she should not have been.
5. 'Why flourish'd verse in great *Augustus*' reign?
He and Mecaenas lov'd the Muse's strain.' (JOHN GAY) Discuss.
6. 'Before going about putting a certain example to the test, I shall attempt to formulate, in a manner as elliptical, economical, and formal as possible, what I shall call the law of the law of genre. It is precisely a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy.' (JACQUES DERRIDA) Discuss.
7. 'An irony has no point unless it is true, in some degree, in both senses. The fundamental impulse of irony is to score off both the arguments that have been puzzling you, both sets of sympathies in your mind, both sorts of fool who will hear you.' (WILLIAM EMPSON) Discuss.
8. Is it time we just got over epic?
9. Did Cervantes invent the novel?
10. 'When you talk of rectifying Mistakes not from Manuscripts, but by Sagacity and happy guessing, I own I pity *Milton*, and every other Author who runs the same Fate; and by falling into the Hands of a Critick, lose his own Beauties through the Corrector's want of Taste.' (ANON., *Bentley Depos'd*) Is 'Sagacity' in editors all bad?
11. 'I wanted to continue to write as I always had, and I have tried very hard not to write a poem I previously wouldn't have written.' (CAROL ANN DUFFY) Discuss in relation to any poet(s) laureate of your choosing.
12. 'Philology is the handmaid of the historical disciplines.' (E. R. CURTIUS) Discuss
13. 'Every time I open my mouth, I'm insinuating myself into some conversation which preexists me and to which my contribution is only a rustle of echoes – on paper, which is where we all must live.' (DENISE RILEY) Discuss.
14. 'Storytellers are a threat. They threaten all champions of control, they frighten usurpers of the right-to-freedom of the human spirit – in state, in church or mosque, in party congress, in the university or wherever.' (CHINUA ACHEBE) Discuss.
15. 'The humorous is an imaginary terrain where moral judgment is suspended.' (MILAN KUNDERA) Discuss.

16. 'We congratulate parrots on their adroit mimicry; why should we not congratulate authors for theirs?' Discuss.
17. What role have institutions played in the development of English literature?
18. **EITHER** a) Is literary history old hat? **OR** b) Should advocates of the historical understanding of texts be more aware of their own historicity?
19. 'Denouncing the universe has never seemed to me a sensible thing for a poem to do.' (WILLIAM EMPSON) Discuss.
20. Is it wicked to play literary games with gender?
21. Is there a place for aesthetic appreciation within literary criticism?
22. 'We live in an unprecedented inescapability from clichés. All around us is a rising tide of them; we shall drown and no one will save us.' (CHRISTOPHER RICKS) Discuss
23. What can be done with stanzaic form?
24. 'Too tum tum at a stretch.' (EZRA POUND) Should meter be more or less tum tum?
25. Is plot really just a means of structuring a reader's desire?
26. Is political reading necessarily reductive reading?
27. Write an allegory.
28. Is English literature at its best when it is most un-English?
29. How has the representation in literature of **ANY ONE** of the following changed over time? Discuss with reference to an author or authors of your choosing.

anthologies; bathos; caste; dogs; expectation; fantasies; geography; Helicon; imagism; jests; kissing; letters; masculinities; nonsense; optimism; plot; questions; relationships; starships; tea; underworlds; vehicles; wandering; xenia; yesteryear; zaniness.

ENGLISH LITERATURE I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

You may answer on any literature written in English

1. How Christian is *Beowulf*?
2. Would Anglo-Saxon literature be less interesting if there were more of it?
3. Why do abstract nouns (e.g. 'franchise', 'trouthe') play such a major role in medieval narrative poetry?
4. Is there anything that resembles a 'system' of chivalry in medieval romance?
5. Rewrite *The Wife of Bath's Tale* in the style of *Piers Plowman*.
6. 'We have radically changed our ideas about the middle ages over the past thirty years, but we have not yet made correspondingly radical adjustments to the interpretation of medieval literary texts'. Is this true? You may limit your discussion to one author if you wish.
7. 'After this the Lord browte to my mynd the longyng that I had to Hym afor. And I saw that nothyng letted me but synne, and so I beheld generally in us al. And methowte, if synne had not a ben, we should al a ben clene and like to our Lord as He made us.' [JULIAN OF NORWICH]. What would medieval English literature look like without sin?
8. What was humanism and how did it influence English literature?
9. Is it possible for a poem to be courtly without also being dishonest?
10. Does *The Faerie Queene* know what it is about?
11. 'Methinks sometimes, to beguile the ear, with a running out, and passing over the Ryme, as no bound to stay us in the line where the violence of the matter will breake through, is rather graceful than otherwise' [SAMUEL DANIEL]. Discuss.
12. What would literary history have looked like if Shakespeare had died in 1593 and Marlowe had lived to be sixty?
13. What can be gained from thinking carefully about a writer's confessional allegiances? You may limit your discussion to one author if you wish.
14. Consider the contribution to English literature made by **ANY ONE** stationer or publisher.
15. 'This delivering of knowledge in distinct and disjointed aphorisms doth leave the wit of man more free to turn and toss' [FRANCIS BACON]. Discuss in relation to any Renaissance writer or writers.

16. 'The creativity of the artist is a sort of spiritual power, a nimbus or halo inherited by the artist from a disappeared, or a disappearing, God' [GORDON TESKEY]. Discuss in relation to Milton or any other writer.
17. 'In liquid raptures I dissolve all o'er,
Melt into sperm, and spend at every pore.
A touch from any part of her had done 't:
Her hand, her foot, her very look's a cunt.' [ROCHESTER].

Is there always a price to pay for obscenity?
18. 'Methinkes we should not so soone yeeld our consents captive to the authoritie of Antiquitie, unlesse we saw more reason: all our understandings are not to be built by the square of *Greece* and *Italie*. We are the children of nature as well as they.' [SAMUEL DANIEL]. Discuss.
19. 'What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden, *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*, he found it brick and he left it marble' [SAMUEL JOHNSON]. Discuss.
20. 'A Satyr's Smile is sharper than his Frown' [JOHN SHEFFIELD, EARL OF MULGRAVE]. Discuss.
21. Discuss **EITHER** a) any aspect of the influence of Shakespeare on the eighteenth century; **OR** b) any aspect of the influence of the eighteenth century on Shakespeare.
22. 'Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest.' [JANE AUSTEN]. Discuss.
23. How can a writer's notebooks or drafts illuminate their published works?
24. 'Like most of my school-fellows I was an impassioned Nutter' [WILLIAM WORDSWORTH]. Did Wordsworth speak more truly than he knew?
25. 'I have been endeavouring to discover a better sonnet stanza than we have. The legitimate does not suit the language over-well from the pouncing rhymes—the other kind appears too elegiac—and the couplet at the end of it has seldom a pleasing effect' [JOHN KEATS]. Discuss in relation to any poet or poets.
26. 'Keats's poems bring us at last to verify the intuitive perception that made August William Schlegel adopt the term "romantic" as comprehending an ironic sensibility' [STUART CURRAN]. Discuss in relation to any author or authors.
27. 'No dearth of bards can be complain'd of now' [BYRON]. Were there too many?
28. 'There is no such thing as a simply reliable or a completely unreliable narrator. The pleasure of encountering a narrator in a novel depends on not quite being sure, moment by moment, which kind one is dealing with.' Discuss.

29. 'If the novel develops, is it not likely to develop on different lines from the British Constitution, or even the Women's Movement? I say "even the Women's Movement" because there happened to be a close association between fiction in England and that movement during the nineteenth century—a connection so close that it has misled some critics into thinking it an organic connection.' [E. M. FORSTER]. Discuss.
30. 'Of all the misleading period labels "Victorian" is the worst'. Discuss.
31. 'Some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St Paul's' [THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY]. Why did the Victorians like imagining the end of their civilization?
32. Why hasn't Wales played as important a part in the history of English literature as Ireland? Or has it?
33. 'He would not mind hearing Petrus's story one day. But preferably not reduced to English. More and more he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa. Stretches of English code whole sentences long have thickened, lost their articulations, their articulateness, their articulatedness. Like a dinosaur expiring and settling in the mud, the language has stiffened. Pressed into the mould of English, Petrus's story would come out arthritic, bygone' [J. M. COETZEE]. Discuss
34. 'A symbol is indeed the only possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame; while allegory is one of many possible representations of an embodied thing, and belongs to fancy and not to imagination' [W.B. YEATS]. Discuss.
35. 'The poetry of a people takes its life from the people's speech and in turn gives life to it' [T. S. ELIOT]. Is this true of modernist poetry?
36. '*Ulysses* is the first of the great modern works that in effect create for themselves an *ad hoc* genre and so entail an *ad hoc* critical tradition' [HUGH KENNER]. Do you agree?
37. 'Fiction has had no rules drawn up for her. And though rules may be wrong, and must be broken, they have this advantage—they confer dignity and order upon their subject, they admit her to a place in civilized society' [VIRGINIA WOOLF]. Discuss
38. 'They all seem to articulate indecision, as if the poem was writing itself in an unfinished moment.' [ALICE OSWALD]. Discuss in relation to **ONE OR MORE** American poets.
39. Discuss the representation of magic in any author or authors from the past century.

ENGLISH LITERATURE II

Candidates should answer **Section A** and **TWO** questions from **Section B**

Note that Section A is compulsory. In Section B you may answer in relation to literature written in languages other than English if you wish

Section A

1. Write a critical comparison of the following two passages.

- a) Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
Coz'ning the pillow of a lawful kiss,
Who therefore angry seems to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his bliss,
Between whose hills her head entombèd is; 5
Where, like a virtuous monument, she lies,
To be admired of lewd unhallowed eyes.
- Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet, whose perfect white
Showed like an April daisy on the grass, 10
With pearly sweat resembling dew of night.
Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheathed their light,
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay
Till they might open to adorn the day.
- Her hair, like golden threads, played with her breath: 15
O modest wantons, wanton modesty!
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim looks in life's mortality.
Each in her sleep themselves so beautify
As if between them twain there were no strife, 20
But that life lived in death, and death in life.
- Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquerèd:
Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honourèd. 25
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred,
Who like a foul usurper went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.
- What could he see, but mightily he noted?
What did he note, but strongly he desirèd? 30
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
And in his will his wilful eye he tirèd.
With more than admiration he admirèd
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin. 35

[from WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *The Rape of Lucrece*]

b) Dream Land

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmed sleep:
Awake her not.
Led by a single star, 5
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn, 10
For twilight cold and lorn
And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale 15
That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
The purple land. 20
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore 25
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake;
Night that no morn shall break 30
Till joy shall overtake
Her perfect peace.

[CHRISTINA ROSSETTI]

Section B

2. Defend philology.
3. Do students of literature need to know about history?
4. 'The Copies of antient Authors are no more susceptible of Property than the Elements of Air and Water, which are for the common Benefit of Mankind.' [ANON., 1762]. What has the concept of literary ownership contributed to literary activity?
5. 'Who ever heard of *Bullion Dross*? *Bullion* is the purified Ore, *Dross* is the Scum and Refuse of it. The Author [Milton] gave it, *Severing each kind, and scum'd FROM Bullion Dross.*' [RICHARD BENTLEY]. What can be learned from past editors' emendations?
6. 'Every literary work changes the genres it relates to' [ALASTAIR FOWLER]. Discuss.
7. 'Full speech is speech which aims at, which forms, the truth such as it becomes established in the recognition of one person by another. Full speech is speech which performs.' [JACQUES LACAN]. Discuss.
8. Given the widespread availability of facsimiles, should editors just turn their attentions to the Times crossword puzzle and give up on editing?
9. 'Literary works do not know themselves, and cannot *be* known, apart from their specific modes of existence/resistance. They are not channels of transmission, they are particular forms of transmissive interaction.' [JEROME MCGANN]. Discuss.
10. 'The use of metaphor, like all the other beauties of style, always tempts writers to excess.' [LONGINUS]. Discuss.
11. Must heroic ideals always be called into question when they are embodied in a narrative?
12. Should all literary texts be thought of as works in progress?
13. Has there been a socialist literary masterpiece?
14. Provide a working definition of a 'pamphlet' and explain why that form has been important in any one period or place.
15. 'There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth: it is called Wye at Monmouth; but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both.' [Fluellen in SHAKESPEARE'S *Henry V*]. Is there a warning here for cross-cultural literary comparison?
16. Can the fear of prosecution have positive literary consequences? You may limit your discussion to a single author or period if you wish.
17. What is the point of performance history?
18. 'Words do not hold themselves neutral in the great conflict between good and evil, light and darkness; they are not contented to be the passive vehicles, now of the truth, and now of falsehood. We see on the contrary that they continually take their side' [RICHARD CHEVENIX TRENCH]. Discuss.

19. Is it a bad thing to have a literary canon?
20. 'Experimentation is the cause of all regeneracy in art; an endless repetition of tradition the cause of its decadence.' Discuss.
21. 'I once believed that until the genres, languages, forms, poetics and politics of women poets had been established, it would be right to study them discretely without reference to their male peers, and not to yoke them precipitately to male figures. I was wrong.' [ISOBEL ARMSTRONG]. Discuss.
22. 'Like when god throws a star
And everyone looks up
To see that whip of sparks
And then it's gone' [ALICE OSWALD, the final lines of *Memorial*, a version of *The Iliad*]

Why are contemporary adaptations of classical literature so preoccupied with the fragmentary?
23. 'Hellas: half-naked men, their breasts gleaming with olive oil, sitting on the temple steps discoursing about the good and the true. Free minds in free bodies. More than an idealised picture: a dream, a delusion. But how else are we to live but by dreams?' [J. M. COETZEE]. Discuss in relation to any author or authors.
24. 'You must be feeling I am a bit of a shogbelly for not writing before this, now why didn't this type writer begin at the beginning og flaming sh of the line eh, its Chriss type writer, the truth is I have been worrying about man destroying mandaed oh balls I say, and about the result of the examination I took recently.' [KINGSLEY AMIS to Philip Larkin]. How did the typewriter influence the way people wrote?
25. 'This book was made by sending the entire text of Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* between two GMail accounts page by page. We saved the relational ads for each page and added them back into the text as footnotes. In total, we collected over 800 relevant ads for the book. The constellations of footnoted ads throughout these pages retell the story of *American Psycho* in absence of the original text.' [JASON HUFF/MIMI CABELL]. Should electronic media make us reinvent the processes of writing?
26. What is the material turn and is it a good one to take?
27. 'I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time' [MICHEL FOUCAULT]. Discuss.
28. Write a pastoral.
29. Discuss literary aspects of **ANY ONE** of the following: anonymity; boats; cities; digression; epigram; forgery; geographies; homosexuality; indecision; jokes; kings; lack; manual work; *négritude*; old age; parleying; *querelles*; radicalism; *szujet*; tactlessness; underground; virtual reality; walking; zeugma.

[With effect from 2015, the College has decided to add a new rubric to English Literature I : 'You may answer on any literature in English.' There will also be a small change in the rubric of English Literature II: its last sentence will now read: 'In Section B you may answer in relation to literature written in languages other than English if you wish'.]

ENGLISH LITERATURE I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. What would have been different about English literature if the Norman Conquest never happened?
2. '*Beowulf* is a narrative meditation in Old English verse on the origins of violence in human affairs and the capacity of both political institutions and individual leaders to control it.' Discuss.
3. 'The modern failure to see Ricardian poetry whole stems from the nature, the polycentricity, of the period itself' [J.A. BURROW]. Discuss.
4. Was Langland a satirist?
5. Is the concept of an author useful for thinking about medieval writing?
6. Discuss the influence of **EITHER** Erasmus **OR** rhetoric on early modern literature.
7. 'It is only slightly excessive to suggest that Renaissance English poetry, in the forms that now seem definitive of the mode and the age, was created out of the intense political pressure of Henrician tyranny' [GREG WALKER]. Discuss.
8. What can be learnt from reading poems in manuscript that cannot be learnt from reading them in another medium?
9. Why was Sir Philip Sidney so exciting in the late sixteenth century, and why might it be hard to recapture that excitement today?
10. 'It was not near his thoughts that hath published this either to traduce the author or to make vulgar and cheap any the peculiar and sufficient deserts of the actors, but rather, whereas many censures fluttered about it, to give all leave and leisure to judge with distinction' (*Advertisement* to Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*). Discuss.
11. Assess the significance of theatrical collaboration in sixteenth and seventeenth century drama.
12. **EITHER:**
 - a) How inventive was Shakespeare?

OR:

 - b) Was Shakespeare invented?
13. 'Let no man that does not heare God speaking to him, in this present voice, despaire that hee shall never heare him, but hearken still, and in one language or other, perchance a *sickness*, perchance a *sinne*, hee shall heare him, for these are several dialects in Gods language, severall instruments in Gods Consort' [JOHN DONNE]. Discuss.
14. 'George Herbert is Philip Sidney on God, where God is a mind-altering drug.' Discuss.
15. Consider the relationship between literature and sociability in any period you care to define.

16. 'Can I remember how ignorantly and innocently I suffered it [passion] to steal upon me by degrees; how under a maske of friendship I couzen'd my self into that, which had it appear'd to mee at first in its true shape, I had fear'd and shunn'd' [DOROTHY OSBORNE]. Discuss the representation of passion by any woman writer in the light of this quotation.
17. 'Milton floated among a thousand systems. In his eyes, the created universe is nothing more than a little corner of chaos that happened to be arranged and is ready at any moment to fall back into disorder' [ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE]. Discuss.
18. 'He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy'. Samuel Johnson said that of Dryden. Should he have said it about someone else?
19. 'You modern Wits, should each Man bring his Claim,
Have desperate Debentures on your Fame;
And little wou'd be left you, I'm afraid,
If all your Debts to *Greece* and *Rome* were paid' [ALEXANDER POPE].
Discuss.
20. 'What words shall I find, my dear mother, (for my father should not see this shocking part) to describe the rest, and my confusion, when the guilty wretch took my left arm, and laid it under his neck as the vile procuress held my right; and then he clasped me round the waist!' [SAMUEL RICHARDSON]. In the light of this quotation discuss the representation of female writing in any author or authors.
21. 'Inferior houses now our notice claim,
But who shall deal them their appropriate fame?' [GEORGE CRABBE].
How is the 'inferior' represented in any author or authors?
22. Who is the most underrated poet in the eighteenth century?
23. 'Romantic poets convey alienation (some of the time), but they also treat group and national experience in what was already, recognisably, the modern world' [MARILYN BUTLER]. Discuss.
24. 'In the longest perspective that we can achieve, the supposedly sober and tame Wordsworth remains the most original and disturbing poet of the nineteenth or the twentieth century' [HAROLD BLOOM].
Discuss.
25. 'She used no rhetoric in her passion; or it was nature's own rhetoric, most legitimate then, when it seemed without rule or law' [CHARLES LAMB on the actress Mrs Jordan].
EITHER:
a) Does the nineteenth century have anything interesting to tell us about the stage?
OR:
b) Discuss some relationships between nature, rhetoric, and lawlessness in Romantic writing.
26. 'His very faults, doubts, swervings, doublings upon himself, have been typical of our age' [WALT WHITMAN on Tennyson]. Discuss.
27. 'A concentration on moments of overt protest can extract the content of a direct polemic about women's condition in a way which retrieves the protest, but not the poem' [ISOBEL ARMSTRONG]. So which poems by Victorian women poets require, or deserve, retrieving?

28. 'The intellectual moods of the last decades of the [nineteenth] century were given a peculiar intensity and unease both by the aesthete's claim to all experience as right and by the imperialist's daily exposure to the jarring encounters of alien cultures' [JOHN BURROW]. Discuss.
29. 'What makes Dickens unique is the power of his imagination and, in Kafka's phrase, its "great, careless prodigality" – careless, because extending itself typically into odd angles and side-alleys of his subject' [JOHN CAREY]. Discuss.
30. 'Hou'd up, man. Thy lile Jack shall na' clem. I ha' gotten brass, and we'll go buy the chap a sup o' milk an' a good four-pounder this very minute' [ELIZABETH GASKELL]. In the light of this quotation write an essay on **EITHER** a) dialect **OR** b) social realism.
31. Is it fair of John Carey to accuse Virginia Woolf of 'upper middle-class obtuseness'?
32. 'That every great work of poetry tends to make impossible the production of equally great works of the same kind is indisputable' [T.S. ELIOT]. How, if they do, do modernist poems register such impossibility?
33. 'L'artiste qui joue son être est de nulle part. Et il n'a pas de frères' [SAMUEL BECKETT]. Discuss any author or authors of the twentieth century in the light of this remark.
34. Explore any relationship that interests you between literary modernism and technology (e.g. recording, radio, television, aeroplanes).
35. 'I'm convinced that shaping, | voicing, are types of civic action' [GEOFFREY HILL]. Discuss.
36. 'I don't feel any of the people writing in England can tell me very much. That may be unfair' [ALAN BENNETT]. Discuss.

ENGLISH LITERATURE II

Candidates should answer **Section A** and **TWO** questions from **Section B**

Note that Section A is compulsory. In Section B you may answer in relation to literatures other than English if you wish

Section A

1. Write a critical comparison of the following two poems:

a) **The Bubble. A Song.**

To my revenge, and to her desp'rate feares,
Flie thou made Bubble of my sighs, and tears.
In the wild aire, when thou hast rowl'd about,
And (like a blasting Planet) found her out;
Stoop, mount, passe by to take her eye, then glare
Like to a dreadful Comet in the Aire:
Next, when thou dost perceive her fixed sight,
For thy revenge to be most opposite;
Then like a Globe, or Ball of Wild-fire, flie,
And break thy self in shivers on her eye.

(Robert Herrick)

b) **Poem**

I want neither glory
nor, that in the memory
of men, my songs survive;
but still . . . those subtle worlds,
those weightless mother-of-pearl
soap-bubbles of mine . . . I just love
the way they set off, all tarted up
in sunburst and scarlet, hover
low in the blue sky, quiver,
then suddenly pop

(Don Paterson)

Section B

2. How do different ways of thinking about genre influence the practices of particular authors? Give examples from two different periods or cultures.
3. Invent a new literary genre and write something that belongs to it. (Tip: keep it short; you've only got an hour).
4. What is the value of periodization in literary history?
5. What ought we to mean by 'comparative literature'?
6. 'Poesy is a part of learning in measure of words for the most part restrained, but in all other points extremely licensed, and doth truly refer to the imagination; which, not being tied to the laws of matter, may at pleasure join that which nature hath severed, and sever that which nature hath joined, and so make unlawful matches and divorces of things' [FRANCIS BACON]. Discuss.
7. 'The high creative poet might even be thought to a great extent, impassive (as shallow people think Dante stern), receiving indeed all feelings to the full, but having a great centre of reflection and knowledge in which he stands serene, and watches the feeling, as it were from afar off' [JOHN RUSKIN]. Discuss.

[OVER]

8. Does it improve poems to think of them as political acts?
9. How did the way books were printed influence how they were read? You may answer in relation to any author or period.
10. 'I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman' [VIRGINIA WOOLF]. Discuss.
11. 'Aristotle says that metaphor causes the mind to experience itself | in the act of making a mistake' [ANNE CARSON]. Discuss.
12. 'Suicide without a cause, or sacrifice without fuss for an apparent cause which, in our age, is usually political: a woman can carry off such things without tragedy, even without drama, but rather as though it were simply a matter of making an inevitable, irresistible and self-evident transition' [JULIA KRISTEVA]. Discuss.
13. Describe a walk down the street in the style of **EITHER** Henry James **OR** Robert Browning **OR**, if you have the language, any foreign author. (Learned footnotes drawing attention to your own wit and artifice are allowed; parody is discouraged).
14. 'Is not Fable then the Life and Soul of Poetry?' [KNIGHTLY CHETWOOD]. Discuss.
15. 'Telling stories is a euphemism for telling lies' [B.S. JOHNSON]. Discuss.
16. 'We need not be too solicitous about the Words of an Author, to have a right Taste of him' [HENRY FELTON]. Discuss.
17. 'The worth of a skilfull and worthy translator, is to observe the sentences, figures, and formes of speech, proposed in his author: his true sence and height, and to adorne them with figures and formes of oration fitted to the originall, in the same tongue to which they are translated' [GEORGE CHAPMAN]. Discuss.
18. 'Art tends, sooner or later, to float free of biography' [JULIAN BARNES]. Discuss.
19. 'Impose a unitary language: you kill the novel, but you also kill the society' [CARLOS FUENTES].
20. What can be learnt from performance history?
21. Is it possible to construct a convincing general theory about the social conditions that encourage literary innovation?
22. 'The trouble with a lot of nature poems is the ease with which they domesticate the wild for their own purposes.' Discuss.
23. Should editors be bolder than they tend to be at present?
24. 'The dark, forbidden chamber is the origin of novelistic fantasy per se; in creating an obscenity, in enveloping it in mystery, the state creates the preconditions for the novel to set about its work of representation' [J.M. COETZEE]. Discuss.

25.



"She's texting me, but I think she's also subtexting me."

Discuss.

26. Do utopian fictions seek to change the world?
27. 'The perception of an artistic text is always a struggle between audience and author. The audience takes in part of the text then "finishes" or "constructs" the rest' [YURI LOTMAN]. Discuss.
28. Does any contemporary drama overcome the limitations imposed by a small cast?
29. Why does tragedy give pleasure?
30. Discuss **one** of the following: adversity; Babel; collocation; destiny; elegance; fragrance; ghosts; hell; improvisation; jeremiads; kindle; letters; miniaturism; nastiness; opulence; piquancy; querulousness; reception; stage directions; transmission; unbelievability; verisimilitude; walks; Xanadu; yearning; Zelig.