FIRST PUBLIC EXAMINATION
Preliminary Examination in English Language and Literature: Paper 4
Preliminary Examination in English and Modern Languages, Part 2: Paper 2(e)
Preliminary Examination in Modern History and English: Paper 4 (c)

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (1910 – PRESENT DAY)

TRINITY TERM 2013

Tuesday, 11 June, 2.30 pm – 5.30 pm
Time allowed – 3 hours

Answer THREE questions:

You may apply the following questions and/or quotations to any author or authors, or
to any work or group of works, as seems to you appropriate. You should NOT write
more than one answer substantially on the same author.

Candidates are reminded that at the start of each essay they should identify clearly
which question they are attempting, and, where appropriate, which option within that
question, identifying it through a letter, where these are given (e.g. Q5(a)), and / or a
key word or phrase.

Please DO NOT turn over until told that you may do so.
1. ‘Every poet is a being caught up in a dialectical relationship (transference, repetition, error, communication) with another poet or poets’ (HAROLD BLOOM).

Discuss. You need not restrict your examples to poetry.

2. ‘For all Hughes’ commitment to the eternal horizon of mythic meanings, and his endeavour, alongside his close friend Seamus Heaney, to propel language beyond the earthly into time zones of eternity, his diction and his narrative style belong to today’s world’ (MARINA WARNER).

Describe one or more singular examples of rewriting and modernising myth.

3. Now when I walk around at lunchtime
   I have only two charms in my pocket
   an old Roman coin Mike Kanemitsu gave me
   and a bolt-head that broke off a packing case
   when I was in Madrid the others never
   brought me too much luck though they did
   help keep me in New York against coercion
   but now I’m happy for a time and interested.
   (FRANK O’HARA)

Write about the use of contingent detail AND/OR travel in the literature of the period.

4. ‘Woolf contests the war by rejecting its models of attention; she approaches the war parenthetically; never erasing its violence, but not allowing violence to absorb, in the total attention that violence demands, the partial attention that resists it’ (REBECCA L. WALKOWITZ).

Discuss representations of war in modern literature.

5. ‘Feminist humanity must, somehow, both resist representation, resist literal figuration, and still erupt in powerful new tropes, new figures of speech, new turns of historical possibility’ (DONNA HARAWAY).

Discuss articulations of ‘feminist humanity’ in literature and critical theory.

6. ‘I always tell the truth in my poems. With The Fish, that’s exactly how it happened. It was in Key West, and I did catch it just as the poem says. This was in 1938. Oh, but I did change one thing’ (ELIZABETH BISHOP).

Discuss representations of space AND/OR time in modern literature.
7. 'Absurdity in Beckett is no longer a state of human existence thinned out to a mere idea and then expressed in images. [...] Absurdity is divested of that generality of doctrine which existentialism, that creed of the permanence of individual existence, nonetheless combines with Western pathos of the universal and the immutable' (THEODOR ADORNO).

Discuss EITHER the absurd OR existentialism.

8. 'We live in a technological world in which everything we say and write is always already given – a storehouse of cliché, stock phraseology, slogancering, a prescribed form of address, a set of formulas that govern the expression of subjectivity. Given the context, poetic discourse is that which most fully calls into question conventional writing practices and which defies the authority of the chronological linear model' (MARJORIE PERLOFF).

What constitutes 'poetic discourse'?

9. 'Well, the nation-state found the novel. And vice-versa: the novel found the nation-state. And being the only form that could represent it, it became an essential component of our modern culture' (FRANCO MORETTI).

Discuss in relation to fiction which imagines and gives symbolic form to a nation.

10. 'Criticism adopts the mode of commentary on and evaluation of art; yet in reality criticism matters more as a necessarily incomplete and preparatory process toward judgment and evaluation' (EDWARD SAID).

Examine the function of literary critical theory and practice with reference to specific texts of modern literature.

11. '[Leopold] Bloom is certainly in some respects a Hibernian version of Baudelaire’s flâneur, the urban pedestrian whose liberated creative vision transforms the art of the modern metropolis. But he is also a melancholic figure who yearns for a lost idyll of domestic happiness that is always mediated through the commodity' (EMER NOLAN).

EITHER Examine representations of the author as 'urban pedestrian' OR Discuss representations of subject formation in the world of commodity.
12. Now, Ariel, I am that I am, your late and lonely master,  
   Who knows what magic is: - the power to enchant  
   That comes from disillusion.  
   
   (W. H. AUDEN)

Discuss EITHER disenchantment in modern thought OR modern magical thinking.

13. ‘The new geography of modernism needs to locate many centers of modernity across the globe, to focus on the cultural traffic linking them, and to interpret the circuits of reciprocal influence and transformation that take place within highly unequal state relations’ (SUSAN STANFORD FRIEDMAN).

Elaborate with examples of transnational or international modernity from any writing of the period.

14. ‘Postmodernism was not the invention of literary critics, but literature can certainly claim to be one of the most important laboratories of postmodernism’ (STEVEN CONNOR).

Discuss.

15. ‘Like all defenders of a true literary autonomy conceived in terms of a language within a language, as it were – a new, free, modern idiom, impertinent in its rejection of the usages of a written language that was fixed, dead, rigidified – Synge worked out the writing of Anglo-Irish for the theater’ (PASCALE CASANOVA).

Write about the use of vernaculars, dialects, AND/OR creole mixtures in modern literature.

16. ‘No social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes into being in social relation to other categories, if in uneven and contradictory ways’ (ANNE McCLINTOCK).

Discuss representations of class in modern literature.

17. ‘The major fiction of the century, especially during the Modernist phase, was highly autobiographical’ (MAX SAUNDERS).

Discuss.
18. ‘Parody is one of the major forms of modern self-reflexivity; it is a form of inter-art discourse’ (LINDA HUTCHEON).

Discuss the use of parody in modern literature, engaging with a part or the whole of this statement.

19. ‘The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity’ (MIKHAIL BAKHTIN).

Discuss with reference to texts that emphasise the thematics of the body.

20. ‘Forster’s India is in a sense as eternal as Kipling’s. […] Because they could not see the Raj in all the complexity of its history, they simply chose the side that the imperatives of their historical moment demanded, the one standing firmly for and the other firmly against imperialism’ (MICHAEL GORRA).

How has literature contributed to or resisted the textual production of colonial discourse?