

MASTER OF ARTS EXAMINATION 2019

First Year Second Semester

ENGLISH

John Milton: Prose and Poetry

Time: Two hours

Full Marks: 30

Answer *any three* questions. All questions carry the same marks.

1. "The 'Nativity Ode' hesitates at a moment of premature apocalypticism or fullness of meaning at its center when "wisest fate says no" and then must turn to the dispelling of residual error". Comment, in the light of this remark, on Milton's handling of time in the 'Nativity Ode'.
2. Would you consider Milton's Hobson poems merely academic exercises in "metaphysical" wit? Give reasons.
3. Stanley Fish writes: " 'L'Allegro' is so structured that at no point is the reader held responsible for an action or an image or a unit of thought beyond the moment of its fleeting appearance in a line or couplet... In contrast, the activities required of us in the act of reading 'Il Penseroso' are consistently and self-consciously strenuous." Do you agree? Discuss.
4. "Why is Milton's ethical masque about three lost children trying to get home?" asks Steven Orgel. What would be your response? Discuss.
5. Dr Johnson famously wrote that where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief. How would you read Milton's 'Epitaph for Damon' in this light?
6. Would you agree with the view that the autobiographical passages in *The Reason of Church Government* and the *Second Defence* are "self-fashionings" suited to Milton's specific polemical ends?
7. How does Milton engage with question of human freedom? You may select the text or texts that you wish to discuss.
8. Critically comment on Milton's presentation of the figure of Eve in *Paradise Lost*.
9. Write an essay on any one:
 - a. Milton's angels
 - b. The management of the Fall in Book 9