

MASTER OF ARTS EXAMINATION 2023  
First Year Second Semester  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
Literary Theory 1: Classical to Enlightenment

Time: Two hours

Full marks: 30

Group A

Locate and annotate **any three** of the following passages

(5 x 3=15)

1. “Neither does it appear sufficiently, why he makes verses: whether he has defiled his father’s ashes, or sacrilegiously removed the sad enclosure of the vindictive thunder: it is evident that he is mad, and like a bear that has burst through the gates closing his den, this unmerciful rehearser chases the learned and unlearned. And whomsoever he seizes, he fastens on and assassinates with recitation: a leech that will not quit the skin, till satiated with blood.”
2. “There is another art which imitates by means of language alone, and that either in prose or verse—which verse, again, may either combine different meters or consist of but one kind- but this has hitherto been without a name. For there is no common term we could apply to the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus and the Socratic dialogues on the one hand; and, on the other, to poetic imitations in iambic, elegiac, or any similar meter. People do, indeed, add the word 'maker' or 'poet' to the name of the meter, and speak of elegiac poets, or epic (that is, hexameter) poets, as if it were not the imitation that makes the poet, but the verse that entitles them all to the name.”
3. “For although we found our own limitation when we considered the immensity of nature and the inadequacy of our ability to adopt a standard proportionate to estimating aesthetically the magnitude of nature's domain. yet we also found, in our power of reason, a different and nonsensible standard that has this infinity itself under it as a unit; and since in contrast to this standard everything in nature is small, we found in our mind a superiority over nature itself in its immensity.”
4. “Now because poetry has been discovered, as I say, to delight and recreate the common people, it should have as its subject things that can be understood by the common people and when understood can make them happy. These are things that happen everyday and that are spoken of among the people, and that resemble historical accounts and the latest reports about the world.”
5. “Virgil’s Laocoon shrieks aloud, but this shrieking Laocoon we already know and love as the wisest of patriots and most affectionate of fathers. We refer his cries not to his character but purely to his unendurable suffering... Who shall blame him then, and not much rather confess that, if the artist does well not to permit Laocoon to cry aloud, the poet does equally well in permitting him.”
6. “They are what we were; they are what we ought to become once more. We were nature as they, and our culture should lead us back to nature, upon the path of reason and freedom. They are therefore at the same time a representation of our lost childhood, which remains eternally most dear to us; hence, they fill us with a certain melancholy. At the same time, they are

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representations of our highest perfection in the ideal, hence, they transpose us into a sublime emotion.”

7. “Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely; her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.”

Group B

Answer any one (15 x 1=15)

8. 'Plato writes about poetry like no other philosopher, before or since; for he is deeply involved with poetry, deeply attracted to it, yet determined to resist its spell'. Discuss, with reference to the sections from *Ion* and *The Republic* you have read.
9. Why, according to Lisedius, is French drama superior to English, and how does Neander refute him? Compare Dryden's treatment of the theme with Sidney's evaluation of Elizabethan drama.
10. With reference to Lessing and Schiller, examine the ways in which German aesthetic theory evaluates the continuing significance of Classical art (visual, plastic, literary).
11. On the basis of your understanding of Longinus' concept of the literary sublime, do you think Longinus is still relevant to post-humanist, post-structuralist literary criticism?