MODERN AND MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES TRIPOS Part II

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Monday 30 May 2016 1.30 to 4.30

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Paper Sp. 13

CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE

*Answer* ***three*** *questions,* ***at least one*** *from each section.* ***One or more*** *answers* ***must*** *contain substantial discussion of literature.*

*Candidates for this paper may* ***not*** *draw substantially on material from their dissertations or material which they have used or intend to use in another scheduled paper. Candidates may* ***not*** *draw substantially on the same material in more than one question on the same paper.*

**STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

*20 Page Answer Book x 1 None*

*Rough work pad*

*Tags*

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| **You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator** |

SECTION A

**Topics in Contemporary Latin American Culture**

1 ‘Whether approached through dense poetic prose, vastly sophisticated

dialogical and metahistorical texts, delirious satire, or muted accounts of personal experience, the devastation of dictatorial power is at once multifarious and the same.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors.

2 ‘There is no longer any subversive or utopian potential in the city. All that is left under the conditions of contemporary capitalism is a fragmented landscape, an anguished subjectivity and a loss of destiny.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** urban narratives **or** films **or both**.

3 ‘The most salient feature of postmodernist historical fiction – its overt falsification of history – may be regarded as a strategy for unmasking the fictional construction of the past and thereby challenging the very premise of historical writing.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors.

4 ‘Films of the post-dictatorship period in Argentina often move beyond the act of truth-telling, essential to the pursuit of justice for the regime's victims, although they do so in very different ways.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** films by different directors.

5 ‘While Latin American women writers often engage with European themes

such as the trace of the body in writing, and the weave of desire in

language, their writing either rejects essentialism or uses it strategically

to question fundamental socio-political inequalities.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors.

6 ‘Literary works about popular culture are, at bottom, works about literary concerns, solipsistic explorations of the impossibility of originality, the masquerade at the heart of all self-expression, and the obsession with social distinction.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors.

7 ‘As a bending, twisting and turning, queerness – as deployed in many Latin American works – troubles the binary logic of male and female, heterosexual and homosexual, that continues to undergird not only “conservative” but also many “progressive” understandings of society.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors that you have studied for the ‘Queer Textualities’ topic.

8 ‘What is unique about the *testimonio*’s departure from lettered cultural paradigms is its precarious balancing of documentary truth-claims and performative speech-acts.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors.

9 ‘The story of the decline and fall of the *ciudad letrada* is also the story of the triumph of the media and the manipulation of the multitude.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by different authors.

10 ‘Ecological thinking in contemporary Latin American culture is about the end of nature and, with it, of all that was once perceived to be natural.’

Discuss with reference to works by **two or more** authors **or** artists.

11 ‘Contemporary Latin American crime narratives reveal the impossibility of telling stories and an incapacity to synthesize experience.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** works by different authors **or** directors.

12 ‘Hay historias hechas de resonancias ilegítimas: metáforas que encuentran su secuela por vías silenciosas. Muestran lo precario del material humano memorable. Tales obras convocan una difícil toma de conciencia colectiva y una archivación insólita.’

Discuss with reference to the work of **two or more** artists or writers.

SECTION B

**Writers and Artists**

13 ‘Lo que sí tiene trascendencia, y es esencial y específicamente humano, es el ámbito de lo afectivo. Pero el sexo no. Lo malo es que, en algún momento aciago de la humanidad, se cometió el trágico error de adjudicar a lo sexual un significado moral.’

Discuss this statement by Manuel Puig with reference to **two or more** of his texts.

14 ‘Peri Rossi's work explores the radical possibilities of exile, ex-centricity and extravagance in ways that undercut dominant moral and political narratives of order, tradition and stability.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts.

15 ‘En la novela el complot ha sustituido la noción trágica de destino: ciertas fuerzas ocultas definen el mundo social y el sujeto es un instrumento de esas fuerzas que no comprende. [...] Ya no son los dioses los que deciden la suerte, son fuerzas oscuras que construyen maquinaciones que definen el funcionamiento secreto de lo real’.

Discuss this statement by Ricardo Piglia with reference to **two or more** of his texts.

16 ‘La obra de Valenzuela subvierte los mitos que sostienen la sociedad

patriarcal, pero a la vez cuestiona la posibilidad misma de tal subversión.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts.

(TURN OVER)

17 ‘Eltit’s works often court senses of claustrophobia, surveillance and the repressive force of the home, “queering” dominant understandings of the family and the nation in so doing.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts.

18 ‘Bolaño’s novels point to the opacity of history and the clouding of political sense-making in their relentless digressions, and in their endless accumulation of stories within stories.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts.

19 ‘Hoy el mundo estaba colmado de todo tipo de historias que se entrelazaban, se quedaban suspendidas en el aire, acumulándose en tan prodigiosa cantidad que ya no valían ni significaban nada, y eran un puro campo de distracción.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts by César Aira.

20 ‘Los textos de Laura Restrepo se escinden entre el jubiloso intento de comunicarse con el “otro” y el renegado duelo por la imposibilidad de esa tarea.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts.

21 ‘Solanas's filmmaking career testifies to an unwavering belief in the power of popular action to challenge and overthrow oppressive regimes and the neocolonial order.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** films.

22 ‘La obra de Salcedo presenta lo excluido y cuestiona lo impresentable de la representación al alejarse de las imágenes del terror y la violencia de la mirada.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** worksby Doris Salcedo.

23 ‘Vallejo’s novels strive to get away with saying the unsayable, and, in so doing, to expose what is weak, fallible and lacking in all higher authorities.’

Discuss with reference to **two or more** texts.

**END OF PAPER**