

MODERN AND MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES TRIPOS Part II

---

Wednesday 4 June 2008 9 to 12

---

Paper Ge. 10

GERMAN LITERATURE, THOUGHT, AND HISTORY, SINCE 1910

Answer THREE questions, AT LEAST ONE question to be taken from EACH section.

Use SEPARATE booklets for EACH section and hand them in SEPARATELY.

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.

The term 'German', as used in this paper, should, where the context permits, be understood to include reference to the German-speaking territories in general.

*STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS*

*8 Page Answer Book x 3*  
*Rough work pad*

*SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS*

*None*

**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

1 'In German modernist fiction, the opening up of fantasy space in the social world also transforms the narrative dimension of time.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE texts by ONE OR MORE authors.

2 'Thomas Mann's singular achievement was to take the traditional model of narrative realism and invest it with symbolic resonances.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE works.

3 'The distinctive quality of Kafka's texts is that of parable: they allude to hidden spiritual or moral truths by telling stories in terms of that which is familiar.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE texts, of which AT LEAST ONE must be a novel.

4 'For German culture in the 1920s and 1930s, film is a privileged medium for exploring the boundaries between documentation and dream.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE films.

5 Discuss the significance of ANY TWO of the following in the poetry of ONE OR MORE German authors writing since 1910:

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| (i) nature;     | (iii) death;           |
| (ii) artefacts; | (iv) self-recognition. |

6 EITHER (a) 'Whether in the ebullience of his early poetry or in the often austere verses he composed after 1933, Brecht consistently sought to subvert or challenge traditional notions of lyricism.' Discuss with reference to THREE OR MORE examples of Brecht's poetry.

OR (b) 'Brecht's theatre is grounded in the dialectics of contradiction – contradiction between ideological camps, but also within each camp, and indeed inside each major figure.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE plays, AT LEAST ONE of which should be taken from those performed before 1933 and AT LEAST ONE from those first performed thereafter.

7 'Both thematically and stylistically, the work of post-1945 German dramatists reveals an increasing scepticism about the capacity of audiences to grasp the lessons of the past.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE works.

8 EITHER (a) 'The post-1945 German novel has constantly reinvented itself in formal terms, but at the centre of its concerns there has invariably remained a sense of loss, of displacement, of uprootedness.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE works by ONE OR MORE writers.

OR (b) 'For German writers and film-makers since 1945, dealing with issues of memory – whether personal, historical or cultural – has called for particular attention to matters of perspective.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE works.

9 EITHER (a) 'A woman writer must necessarily be a hysteric.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE works written in German since 1910.

OR (b) 'In women's writing the domestic is always also the political.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE works written in German since 1910.

## SECTION B

10 Answer ONE of the following:

(a) 'Despite the apparent enthusiasm of much of German society for the outbreak of war in 1914, it was on the home front that Germany ultimately lost the First World War.' Discuss.

(b) 'The failure of the Weimar Republic cannot be explained in purely economic terms.' Discuss.

(c) 'Nazism succeeded in government because it promised, and indeed began to deliver, national regeneration.' Discuss.

(d) 'No Hitler, no Holocaust.' Discuss.

(e) 'The members of the so-called "Conservative Revolution" were cultural pessimists, but they did not have any distinctively political ideas.' Discuss.

11 Answer ONE of the following:

(a) 'The division of Germany between 1945 and 1989 was more a consequence of international politics than of any issues concerning Germany as such.' Discuss.

(b) 'The *Wirtschaftswunder* is more important than any other factor in explaining the establishment of a well-functioning and stable democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949.' Discuss.

(TURN OVER for continuation of Question 11

(c) 'To describe the GDR as nothing but a dictatorship is to distort many aspects of its history.' Discuss.

(d) 'The reunification of Germany in 1989-90 is rightly described as a "German revolution".' Discuss.

(e) 'In the years since the reunification of Germany the Germans have developed a more balanced attitude to the Nazi past.' Discuss.

12 Answer ONE of the following:

(a) 'Freud's insights into particular functions of the mind are more productive than his attempts to systematize them.' Discuss.

(b) 'Freud's reflections on culture and society provide at best an elaborate mythology of what makes human beings behave the way they do.' Discuss with reference to TWO OR MORE texts by Freud.

(c) 'Gadamer's title, *Wahrheit und Methode*, should not mislead us: he does not aim to provide us with a method for reaching the truth about anything, but to help us recognise how our minds construct a sense of what is true.' Discuss.

(d) 'Gadamer's view of how we form an understanding of texts appears to lack a historical dimension because it assumes that each individual consciousness is encompassed by its own "horizon" of meaning.' Discuss.

13 Answer ONE of the following:

(a) 'To speak of a "culture industry" locks the discussion of culture into that of economic history. That is both an advantage and a limitation when it comes to understanding cultural developments in the twentieth century.' Discuss with reference to ONE OR TWO German thinkers of the period.

(b) 'For Adorno, as for Benjamin, the aesthetic appreciation of art is inseparable from a consideration of its historical condition.' In the light of this statement, discuss the thinking about art of EITHER Benjamin OR Adorno OR BOTH.

(c) 'For Hartmut Böhme, the irrational features that we like to think of as characteristic of other, unenlightened cultures are inescapably apparent in our own.' Discuss.

(d) 'Modernity, nowadays, implies a multiplicity of perspectives rather than a unitary conception of reason.' Discuss with reference to Böhme OR Habermas OR BOTH.

END OF PAPER