

# 國立中央大學九十一年度碩士班研究生入學試題卷

所別: 英美語文學系 不分组 科目: 英美文學與理論 共二頁 第1頁

Directions: Choose **ONE** of the following three questions and answer it in essay form. Be sure to include a thesis statement and use concrete textual examples, with sufficient explanation and analysis, to support your point. Note that questions 1 and 3 ask you to summarize as well as analyze. When you summarize, use your own words; do not copy from the wording in the passages.

1. The following passage explains how a special kind of "performative" statement (which brings into existence the new thing that it names) is different from a constative statement (which describes something that existed already before the statement). Summarize and explain the passage, and then offer another example of performative language. This example can be from daily life or from culture. For example, you could choose a novel or film about female characters and explain how and why it could have a "performative" effect on readers (thus bringing into being, in the readers, the values and behavior of the characters).

From this viewpoint, the utterance 'It's a girl!' or 'It's a boy!' by which a baby is, traditionally, welcomed into the world, is less a constative utterance (true or false, according to the situation) than the first in a long series of performatives that create the subject whose arrival they announce. The naming of the girl initiates a continuous process of 'girling', the making of a girl, through an 'assignment' of compulsory repetition of gender norms, 'the forcible citation of a norm'. To be a subject at all is to be given this assignment of repetition, but—and this is important for Butler—an assignment which we never quite carry out according to expectation, so that we never quite inhabit the gender norms or ideals we are compelled to approximate. In that gap, in the different ways of carrying out the gender's 'assignment', lie possibilities for resistance and change.

2. Read the following poem by a Victorian woman poet. According to the Victorian value systems around gender identity (the "cult of domesticity"), a woman's task in life was to be a good wife and mother ("the angel of the home") and support, from within the home, her husband's public life (career choices, intellectual activities, political participation). She should not have the independence that would allow her to have her own opinions and desires, whether politically, intellectually or sexually. How does this poem respond to the cult of domesticity, both in the straightforward points it makes, and also in its irony and figurative language?

## MARGERY

What shall we do with Margery?  
She lies and cries upon her bed,  
All lily-pale from foot to head,  
Her heart is sore as sore can be;  
Poor gulleless shamefaced Margery.

A foolish girl, to love a man  
And let him know she loved him so!  
She should have tried a different plan;  
Have loved, but not have let him know:  
Then he perhaps had loved her so.

What can we do with Margery  
Who has no relish for her food?  
We'd take her with us to the sea—  
Across the sea—but where's the good?  
She'd fret alike on land and sea.

Yes, what the neighbours say is true:  
Girls should not make themselves so cheap.  
But now it's done what can we do?  
I hear her moaning in her sleep,  
Moaning and sobbing in her sleep.

I think—and I'm of flesh and blood—  
Were I that man for whom she cares  
I would not coat her tears and prayers  
To leave her just alone like mud,  
Fretting her simple heart with cares.

A year ago she was a child,  
Now she's a woman in her grief;  
The year's now at the falling leaf;  
At budding of the leaves she smiled;  
Poor foolish harmless foolish child.

It was her own fault? so it was.  
If every own fault found us out  
Dogged us and snared us round about,  
What comfort should we take because  
Not half our due we thus wrung out?

At any rate the question stands:  
What now to do with Margery,  
A weak poor creature on our hands?  
Something we must do: I'll not see  
Her blossom fade, sweet Margery.

Perhaps a change may after all  
Prove best for her: to leave behind  
Those home-sights soon time out of mind;  
To get beyond the narrow wall  
Of home, and learn home is not all.

Perhaps this way she may forget,  
Not all at once, but in a while;  
May come to wonder how she set  
Her heart on this slight thing, and smile  
At her own folly, in a while.

Yet this I say and I maintain:  
Were I the man she's fretting for  
I should my very self abhor  
If I could leave her to her pain,  
Uncomforted to tears and pain.

注意：背面有試題

# 國立中央大學九十一年度碩士班研究生入學試題卷

所別: 英美語文學系 不分組 科目: 英美文學與理論 共 2 頁 第 2 頁

3. Read the following passage from the introduction to a memoir of a gay (passing for straight), black (passing for white) science fiction writer who came of age in New York City in the early 1960s (before the sexual revolution and the Civil Rights Movement). A memoir is an account of one's life based on memory, and is not as accountable to accuracy as an autobiography. In your own words, summarize the passage. What do you think the passage suggests about memory, identity and the best way to write a memoir?

Looking over this bare and untextured chronology, it's easy to read a fairly clear emotional story. My father's death, my subsequent dropping out of school, and my hasty marriage speak of a young man interested in writing and music, but still under fair emotional strain. With the facts that I was black and Marilyn was white, that I was gay and both of us knew it, the implication of strain—for both of us—only strengthens.

The story is so clear, I wouldn't even think, at this date, to deny it.

Still, it is not the story I remember from that time. While all the incidents listed are, in my own mind, associated with vivid moments, rich details, complexes of sensation, deep feelings, and the texture of the real (so indistinguishable from that of dream), their places on the list are wholly a product of research. And my inaccurate statement, "My father died when I was seventeen in 1958..." is an emblem of the displacements and elisions committed upon that more objective narrative, if not a result of that strain.

I have clear memories of my father's death.

I have clear memories of my first weeks of classes at City College, of my new teachers, of the new friends I made there, of surprises and disappointments and great excitement, of lunches with new and old acquaintances in the cafeteria, of trips between classes through crowded halls, of extracurricular activities, including a small choral group I sang with during the afternoons, under the direction of Allan Sklar (a former music counselor of mine at Camp Rising Sun), where we prepared for a recording of an a cappella version of the Orlande de Lassus's *Two-Part Motets*.

But there's no connection between those memories and those of my father's death in my mind. I retain no sense that one came along to interrupt the other. My entrance into college and my father's death, instead of incidents separated by weeks, seem rather years apart. To the extent I retain any context around my father's dying at all, it is some vague and uncertain time during my last two years of high school—possibly because I saw a friend or two I connected with that period right before or right after he died. Or because that was when he first became ill. Or because....

But I don't know why memory separates it so completely from the time in which, objectively, it occurred.

\* \* \*

But bear in mind two sentences:

"My father died of lung cancer in 1958 when I was seventeen."

"My father died of lung cancer in 1960 when I was eighteen."

The first is incorrect, the second correct.

I am as concerned with truth as anyone—otherwise I would not be going so far to split such hairs. In no way do I feel the incorrect sentence is privileged over the correct one. Yet, even with what I know now, a decade after the letter from Pennsylvania, the wrong sentence still *feels* to me righter than the right one.

Now a biography or a memoir that contained only the first sentence would *be* incorrect. But one that omitted it, or did not at least suggest its relation to the second on several informal levels, would be incomplete.

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