

**Take home examination on John Milton's early poetry**

LITT 3106

Due Tuesday, February 19th, 2008

*Please answer all three questions.*

1. It can be argued that as a young man, John Milton was preoccupied, or at least fascinated, by death. He wrote about it often. At times, as in "On the Death of a Fair Infant," death provided occasion for a meditation on the relationship between humanity and creation. At other times, such as in his poems on Thomas Hobson, Milton explores human responses to the inevitability of death. In "On Shakespeare" Milton suggests relationships between death, fame, and immortality. With special focus on Milton's imagery and logical development in each of these poems, explain your understanding of his views on or attitudes toward death; provide examples from the texts that develop and support your views. Present your thinking in a well-written essay, approximately 1000 words in length.

2. The three earliest poems we have read are "On the Death of a Fair Infant" (between 1625-27), "Song: On May Morning" (dated between 1629-31) and "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (1629). While each poem conveys a different overall meaning, each has details in common with the others, including imagery, tone, and even specific wording. Using examples from each poem, detail the similarities between these poems. Explain whether these similarities arise from poetic inexperience, repetitive poetic strategies (despite dissimilar poetic affects), or something else altogether. Present your thinking in a well-written essay, approximately 600 words in length.

3. As it is found in poetry, imagery is usually defined as descriptive language that deals with any of the five senses. Imagery may further be used to develop similes, metaphors, or personification, and it may derive from the use of assonance or consonance. Compare and contrast the use of imagery pertaining to one sense in both "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." Present your thinking in a well-written essay, approximately 500 words in length.

*The number of words in the previous questions totals 296. Please answer these questions in three well-written, double-spaced essays. Proper citation format is necessary. The suggested word lengths are approximate; feel free to provide longer answers. Don't forget to provide an overall title to your examination.*