



Final Examination  
English 205  
Jan 1998

Time: 2 hours

Choose one of the following questions and answer it in depth:

1. All through this course we have had occasion to witness different literary attempts to define "sin"; every age has its own view and definition. Focus your essay on three authors who have tackled this theme. Compare and contrast your three authors with respect to this issue and discuss whether or not they offer remedies or prescriptions. Including *Paradise Lost*, select your texts from different periods.
2. Analyze the following poem, then address the second half of the question.

From "A Satire Against Mankind", By John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester.

Were I (who to my cost already am  
One of those strange, prodigious creatures, man)  
A spirit free to choose, for my own share,  
What case of flesh and blood I pleased to wear,  
I'd be a dog, a monkey, or a bear,  
Or anything but that vain animal  
Who is so proud of being rational.

The senses are too gross, and he'll contrive  
A sixth to contradict the other five,  
And before certain instinct will prefer  
Reason, which fifty times for one does err;  
Reason, an *ignis fattus* [deceptive light] in the mind;  
Which leaving light of nature, sense, behind,  
Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes  
Through error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes [thickets].

Discuss at length the view of reason proposed in the above lines, then compare it to Milton's, More's Utopians and Dr Faustus'.

