

**ΕΞΕΤΑΣΕΙΣ ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟΥ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ ..... ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ .....ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ  
Α) ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ –ΝΕΟΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ Β) ΚΛΑΣΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ**

**ΓΡΑΠΤΗ ΕΞΕΤΑΣΗ ΣΤΟ ΜΑΘΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ  
ΔΙΑΡΚΕΙΑ ΕΞΕΤΑΣΗΣ: 3 ΩΡΕΣ**

**ΥΠΕΥΘΥΝΗ**

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**ΚΑΛΗ ΕΠΙΤΥΧΙΑ.**

## I. ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟ ΓΙΑ ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ

During a decade in which the British publishing industry was finally obliged to make watchful friends with business, biography has line-managed the cultural transition beautifully. The best biographies still brim with scholarships but they also sell in their thousands. Readers-ordinary ones with birthday presents to get, book vouchers to spend and rainy holidays to fill- love buying books about the life and times of their favourite people. Every year before Christmas, a lorry load of brick-thick biographies appears on the suggestion table in bookshops.

That the biography has done so well is thanks to fiction's vacation of middle-ground, that place where authorial and readerly desire just about match. Novels in the last ten years, unable to claim the attention of the common reader, have dispersed across several registers, with the high ground still occupied by those literary novels which continue to play the post-modern concerns about the narrator's fibs and the hero's failure to actually exist.

Biography, by contrast, has until recently shown no such unsettling humility. At its heart lies the biological plot, the birth-to-death arc with triumphs and children, perhaps a middle-age slump or late-flowering dotted along the way. Pages of footnotes peg this central story, this actual life, into a solid, teeming context. Here was a man or woman who wrote letters, had friends, ate breakfast and smelt a certain way. The process of being written about rematerialises the subject on the page. Writing a life becomes a way of reaffirming that life itself endures.

Until now, that is. Recently biography has started to display all the quivering self-scrutiny which changed the face of fiction twenty years ago. Exhaustion now characterizes the genre. All the great lives have been done. But there are ways of proceeding. Ian Hamilton was the pioneer who failed to find J.D. Salinger. Five years later, Janet Malcolm's study of Sylvia Plath, *The Silent Woman*, brilliantly exposed the way in which academic and biographers stalk and hunt one another around the globe in a bid to possess and devour their subject.

The latest in this transition of books about writing-or not writing- biography is Geoff's Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage*, in which he plots his failure to get started on a study of D. H. Lawrence. Dyer describes every delaying trick familiar to biographers: lugging heavy editions of letters on holiday and then not bothering to unpack; having a motorcycle accident (an extreme prevarication, but preferable to staring at a blank screen); and finally forcing himself to re-read the subject's novels without any pleasure. 'Footstepping' is the new word to describe this approach; 'lifewriting' has become the favoured term on university courses. In the wrong hands, it can become 'so-whatish'. Writers less accomplished than Dyer, Hamilton or Malcolm could be accused of annexing some of their subjects' clout to get mediocre work into print.

The second approach is to write a partial biography, to take a moment or a strand in the subject's life and follow it through without any claims for completeness. This year Ian Hamilton entered the biographical arena again with a slim, sharp examination of why Matthew Arnold stopped writing good poetry once he took up his job as school inspector. Earlier, Lyndall Gordon's *A Private Life of Henry James* tracked the great man through his odd relationship with two of his female muses. Far from claiming to displace Leon Edel's 'definitive' biography of James, Gordon's book hovered over it, reconfiguring the material into a new and crisper pattern.

The final tack is to move away from a single life altogether, and look at the places where it encounters other events. Dava Sobel's *best-selling Longitude* puts a cultural puzzle at the heart of her story and reads human lives against it. Sebastian Jünger's *The Perfect Storm*, meanwhile, makes the weather its subject, placing the seamen who encounter it into second place. No longer to demonstrate a human life shaping its destiny, biographers have been obliged to subordinate their subjects to an increasingly detailed context.

Biography will survive its jitters, but it will emerge looking and sounding different. Instead of the huge door-stops of the early 1990s, which claimed to be 'definitive' while actually being indiscriminating, we will see a series of pared-down, sharpened up 'studies'. Instead of speaking in a booming, pedagogic voice, the new biography will ask the reader to decide. Consuming this new biography may not be such a cosy experience, but it will bring us closer than ever to the real feeling of being alive.

## II. ΕΡΩΤΗΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΤΑΝΟΗΣΗΣ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΥ ΠΟΛΛΑΠΛΗΣ ΕΠΙΛΟΓΗΣ.

ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΩ, ΚΥΚΛΩΣΤΕ ΤΗ ΣΩΣΤΗ ΑΠΑΝΤΗΣΗ

1. What is the 'cultural transition' referred to in line 2?
  - A. the scholarship exemplified in the best biographies?
  - B. The change in taste among ordinary readers?

- C. The rising importance of sales figures in publishing?
- D. The range of books available for purchase?

**2. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, what explanation is given for the current interest in biography?**

- A. the range of subject matter in novels
- B. the failure of fiction to appeal to the average reader
- C. the choice of unsuitable main characters in novels
- D. the lack of skill of certain novelists

**3. What contrast does the writer draw between literary novels and biography?**

- A. Biography has dealt with more straightforward issues.
- B. Literary novels have presented a different type of truth.
- C. Biography has described a longer period in a person's life.
- D. Literary novels have been written in a more universal style.

**4. In describing the work of Dyer, the writer**

- A. underestimates his difficulties
- B. makes fun of his efforts.
- C. Acknowledges his experience.
- D. Is inspired by his achievements.

**5. What is the writer's opinion of 'partial biography'?**

- A. It can provide new insights.
- B. It tends to remain inconclusive.
- C. It works when the subject is sufficiently interesting.
- D. It can detract from fuller studies.

**6. What trend is exemplified by *Longitude* and *The Perfect Storm*?**

- A. the fact that readers like complex puzzles
- B. the lack of interest generated by single lives
- C. the continuing sympathy towards human struggle
- D. the need to take account of the wider environment

**7. Considering the future of biography, the writer anticipates**

- A. a decline in the standard of biographical investigation.
- B. a greater challenge to the reading public.
- C. an improvement in the tone adopted by biographers
- D. the growth of a new readership for biography.