

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

B.A.

The Romantic Period

COURSE CODE : ENGLN08

DATE : 04–MAY–06

TIME : 14.30

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

Answer three questions, including at least one from each section.

Answers to questions in Section A may, unless otherwise indicated, refer to one or more authors. Answers to questions in Section B should refer to two or more authors, unless otherwise indicated.

Candidates must not present substantially the same material in any two answers, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

SECTION A

1. A solemn creed is thine, and high,
Yet simple as a child.

(Letitia Landon, 'On Wordsworth's Cottage')

Do you agree with this assessment of Wordsworth's poetry?

2. It is all too easy to overlook just what a chameleon of a creator he is. The aim, in the long run, is to keep faith with Blake's fundamental unreadability. He does not respond well to targeted searches for meaning – or he responds too well. The journey is more important than the destination.

(Morris Eaves)

Use all or part of this quotation as the starting point for an essay on Blake.

3. When, therefore, I call women slaves, I mean in a political and civil sense, for indirectly they obtain too much power, and are debased by their exertions to obtain illicit sway.

(Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*)

Explore the treatment of power in Wollstonecraft's writing.

4. All men love justice. All men are conscious that man is a being of one common nature, and feel the propriety of the treatment they receive from one another being measured by a common standard.

(Godwin, *Political Justice*)

Write about the feeling for justice in Godwin's work.

TURN OVER

5. Jane Austen did not introduce the war [with France] and still less industry as public issues, but at a subtler and profounder level she was engaged in the controversies of her class and generation.

(Marilyn Butler)

Discuss.

6. Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own?

(Shelley, 'Ode to the West Wind')

Explore the role of music in Shelley's poetry

7. "An assassin!" exclaimed one of the Englishmen; "an assassin and at liberty!" (*The Italian*). Examine fear of the foreign in Ann Radcliffe's fiction.

8. Man of genius places things in *a new light* – this trivial phrase better expresses the appropriate efforts of Genius than Pope's celebrated Distich – What oft was thought but ne'er so well express.

(Coleridge)

Discuss Coleridge's work in relation to this statement.

9. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle or amaze it with itself but with its subject. How beautiful are the retired flowers! How would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway crying out, 'Admire me, I am a violet!'

(Keats)

Discuss Keats's poetry in the light of this quotation.

10. What is expressed here, above all, is a renunciation of Romanticism, a conquest of Romanticism, a higher development of the realist literary traditions of the Enlightenment in keeping with the new times.

(Georg Lukács)

Discuss Scott's work in the light of this comment on his novels.

CONTINUED

11. As I write this, the *Letter-Bell* passes: it has a lively, pleasant sound with it, and not only fills the street with its importunate clamour, but rings clear through the length of many half-forgotten years.

(Hazlitt, 'The Letter-Bell')

Write an essay on Hazlitt and temporality.

12. *Frankenstein* is a 'minor' novel, radically flawed by its sensationalism, by the inflexibly public and oratorical nature of even its most intimate passages.

(George Levine)

Do you agree?

13. But let me to my story: I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression;
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression.

(Byron, *Don Juan*)

Write an essay on faults or fallibility in *Don Juan*.

14. 'The most eminent English writers do not write their mother tongue without continual violations of propriety' (De Quincey). How does De Quincey's own writing violate propriety?

SECTION B

15. Romanticism represents a critique of modernity, that is, of modern capitalist civilization, in the name of values and ideals drawn from the past.

(Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre)

Is this a productive definition of Romanticism?

16. Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers.

(Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*)

Examine some treatments of the notion of national character in the Romantic period.

TURN OVER

17. For the Gothic effect to be attained, a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration.

(Chris Baldick)

Discuss the role of time, or space, or both, in the gothic fiction of at least two authors of the period.

18. 'The fields his study, nature was his book' (Robert Bloomfield, 'The Farmer's Boy'). Explore the theme of education in two or more works of Romantic literature.
19. '*A perfect man is a woman formed after a coarser mould*' (Catherine Macaulay). Compare the representation of men and women in any two authors of the period.
20. In one of her poems, Felicia Hemans addresses sickness in these terms:

Thou gatherest round
The things that are unseen, though close they lie,
And with a truth, clear, startling, and profound,
Giv'st their dread presence to our mortal eye.
Thou art like starry, spiritual night!
High and immortal thoughts attend thy way.

Write an essay on the role of sickness in two or more works of the period.

21. What patterns, stylistic or thematic, do you find in two or more works of Romantic autobiography?
22. Oh spirit of the days gone bye
Sweet childhoods fearful extacy
The witching spells of winter nights
Where are they fled with their delights
When listening on the corner seat
The winter evenings length to cheat
I heard my mothers memory tell
Tales superstition loves so well.

(John Clare, *The Shepherd's Calendar*)

Write an essay on childhood, or superstition, or both, with reference to two or more works of the period.

CONTINUED

23. His Endymion is not a Greek shepherd loved by a Grecian goddess; he is merely a young Cockney rhymester dreaming a fantastic dream at the full of the moon.

(J.G. Lockhart, of Keats's *Endymion* in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1818)

Show how contemporary (i.e. Romantic period) criticism can shed light on an author or work of the period.

24. Is the satirical tradition dead in the Romantic period?
25. Write an essay on the literary influence of one of the following writers on any Romantic author or authors: Dante, Goethe, Milton, Montaigne, Pope, Richardson, Rousseau, Schiller, Shakespeare, Spenser, Voltaire.
26. To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look upon the fair
And open face of heaven ...

(Keats, 'To one who has been long in city pent')

Explore the idea of escape or escapism in at least two authors of the period.

27. How important is politics to an understanding of Romantic literature? Consider this question with reference to two or more writers of the period.
28. 'The heart is the key to the world and life' (Novalis). Discuss the importance of the self in two or more works of the period.
29. Examine the use two or more Romantic poets made of one of the following genres: the ode, the sonnet, the epistle, the conversation poem, the ballad, the romance, the verse drama, the epic.
30. Do representations of the body in this period complicate critical commonplaces about the importance of the transcendent to the Romantics?

END OF PAPER