

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

The Victorian Period

COURSE CODE : ENGLN10

DATE : 16-MAY-03

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

Answer three questions, one from Section A and two from Section B. You may write in Section B on set works not used in answering Section A. Questions in Section B must be answered with reference to at least two works.

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. All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

(Tennyson, 'The Lotos-Eaters')

Discuss dreams, or weariness, or both, in Tennyson's poetry.

2. His keen glance pierces into all the secrets of human character; he reveals those secrets, not by a process of dissection, but by dramatic painting.

(George Eliot on Browning)

Discuss the process of revelation in Browning's poetry.

3. Does Thackeray's self-image as a puppet-master do justice to his achievement in *Vanity Fair*?
4. A highly popular murder had been committed, and Mr Wopsle was imbrued in blood to the eyebrows. He gloated over every abhorrent adjective in the description.

(*Great Expectations*, chapter 18)

Discuss the significance of violence, or crime, in *Great Expectations*.

5. I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web.

(George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, chapter 15)

Write an essay on George Eliot's weaving and interweaving of human lots in *Middlemarch*.

TURN OVER

6. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is an aggressively manipulated narrative governed not by the criterion of plausibility but by that of coherence of feeling.

(George Levine)

Do you agree?

SECTION B

7. Justin McCarthy wrote in 1880 that Robert Browning 'has an almost morbid taste for the grotesque'. Comment on morbidity, or grotesqueness, in the work of Browning or any other Victorian poet.
8. Write on sensuousness, or sacrifice, or both, in the poetry of Christina Rossetti.
9. How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

Write an essay on varieties of love in the poetry of any one or two Victorian poets.

10. Consider the relationship between gloom and pleasure in the work of any one or more Victorian poets.
11. Discuss anxiety about the past and the present in the work of any one or two Victorian poets.
12. Isobel Armstrong claims that Victorian poetry asks demanding and radical questions of its culture. Do you agree?
13. For instance, if I wished, Sir,
Of mutton pies to tell,
Should I say 'dreams of fleecy flocks
Pent in a wheaten cell'?
'Why yes,' the old man said: 'that phrase
Would answer very well.'

(Lewis Carroll)

Write about the inventiveness of language in the work of one or more Victorian poets.

CONTINUED

14. In what ways does one or more Victorian novelist reveal what Dickens calls 'the romantic side of familiar things'?
15. Consider the exploration of what it means to be a gentleman in the work of Dickens, or Thackeray, or both.
16. Write on the importance of place in at least two novels by any of the Brontës.
17. Compare the work of any two novelists who take provincial life as their setting.
18. The novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as a clergyman, and must have his own system of ethics.

(Trollope)

Discuss with reference to the work of any Victorian novelist or novelists.

19. Which novelist, in your opinion, best gives what F. R. Leavis called 'felt life' to the social conditions of the period?
20. According to Philip Larkin, Hardy 'associated sensitivity to suffering and awareness of the causes of pain with superior spiritual character'. How useful is Larkin's remark for our appreciation of the novels of Hardy or any other Victorian novelist?
21. Write an essay on the idea of home in the work of one or more Victorian novelists.
22. Henry James wrote of the endings of Victorian novels that they typically consisted of 'a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs and cheerful remarks'. How true is this of the novels you have read? You may confine your answer to the work of a single writer, but should comment on at least two novels.
23. One of the effects of civilization is, that the spectacle, and even the idea, of pain, is kept more and more out of the sight of those classes who enjoy in their fulness the benefits of civilization.

(John Stuart Mill)

Discuss with reference to the work of one or more Victorian novelists.

TURN OVER

24. George Eliot wrote in 1855: 'There is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings.' What qualities in Carlyle's writings seem to you to explain his influence?
25. Jean Ferguson Carr claims that Dickens is empathetic with oppressed women, yet reinforces the constraints and stereotypes that restrict them. Discuss this tension in the work of any one or more Victorian writers.
26. Pater wrote that 'art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass'. Write on the relationship between art (visual or literary) and ethics in the work of one or more Victorian writers.
27. Write on the representation of life in London in the work of one or more Victorian writers.
28. Consider the imaginative use made of historical setting in the work of one or more Victorian writers.
29. According to J. A. Froude, the progress of science and the loss of literal belief in the Bible caused many of his generation to find 'the lights all drifting, the compasses all awry, and nothing left to steer by except the stars'. Discuss the response of one or more Victorian writers to the problem stated by Froude.
30. For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs.

(Hopkins, 'As kingfishers catch fire')

Write on the expression of religious feeling in one or more Victorian writers.

31. Consider how one or more Victorian writers innovate within the conventions of a genre.
32. Discuss the work of any one or more Victorian writers in relation to foreign literature, foreign history, or foreign culture.
33. Write on the treatment in some Victorian literature of one or two of the following: secrets, doubles, growing up, industriousness, idleness.

END OF PAPER