

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

The Victorian Period

COURSE CODE : ENGLN10

DATE : 09-MAY-05

TIME : 14.30

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

Answer three questions, one from Section A and two from Section B. Unless otherwise stated, each question in Section B must be answered with reference to at least two works.

You may include in your answers in Section B discussion of set works not used in answering Section A. For example, if you have not answered on *Great Expectations* in Section A, and choose to answer on Dickens in Section B, you may include *Great Expectations* in your discussion.

If you have written your Section A answer on *Great Expectations*, you may refer to Dickens's works in answering a question in Section B, providing you do not base your answer primarily on Dickens.

In the case of Tennyson and Browning, where 'set works' refers to a volume of selected poems, you may base an answer in Section B on the work of either poet without restriction, provided you have not answered on that poet in Section A.

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. There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

(Tennyson, *In Memoriam*)

Write about the relationship between stillness and change in Tennyson's poetry.

2. Either: (a) How do Thackeray's original illustrations to *Vanity Fair* influence our reading of the text?

Or: (b) What are Thackeray's strengths and limitations as a social commentator?

TURN OVER

3. Only in the corner where the combat had taken place, could I detect any evidence of the young gentleman's existence. There were traces of his gore in that spot, and I covered them with garden-mould from the eye of man.

(Pip in *Great Expectations*)

Explore Dickens's handling of guilt and shame.

4. 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*)

Discuss George Eliot's strategies of weaving and interweaving human lots in *Middlemarch*.

5. At the end of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Hardy refers to 'a sorry world' and the sense that 'happiness was but an occasional episode in a general drama of pain'. Is this description adequate to your sense of the novel as a whole?

6. Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

(Browning, 'Andrea del Sarto')

How does Browning present the relationship between reach and grasp in his poetry?

SECTION B

7. Write an essay on the concept of home, or of exile from home, or both, in some literature of the period.
8. He that works, whatsoever be his work, he bodies forth the form of Things Unseen; a small Poet every Worker is.

(Carlyle, *Past and Present*)

Write about attitudes to labour in any two or more works of the period.

CONTINUED

9. Family likeness has often a deep sadness in it. Nature, that great tragic dramatist, knits us together by bone and muscle, and divides us by the subtler web of our brains; blends yearning and repulsion; and ties us by our heartstrings to the beings that jar us at every movement.

(George Eliot, *Adam Bede*)

Discuss some representations of families, happy or unhappy, in Victorian literature.

10. Write on the sense of the theatrical in the work of any author of the period.
11. Harriet Martineau wrote: 'Charlotte Brontë and her sisters seem to be quite unlike other women in their notions of love.' Discuss with reference to at least two novels by the sisters.
12. Man for the field, and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion.

(Tennyson, *The Princess*)

Where in Victorian literature do you find this sentiment endorsed, and where questioned?

13. Write about the importance of particular places in some writing of the period.
14. With unabated bounty the land of England blooms and grows; waving with yellow harvests; thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest and the willingest our Earth ever had ... Of these successful skilful workers some two millions, it is now counted, sit in Workhouses.

(Carlyle, *Past and Present*)

How do two or more writers of the period attempt to comprehend the contradictions in their society?

15. Examine the Victorian interaction with the Middle Ages, or the Renaissance, or both, with reference to two or more works of the period.

TURN OVER

16. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word 'boredom' was first used in 1852. Write an essay on boredom in some Victorian literature.
17. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of life.

(John Stuart Mill)

Is this a helpful way of thinking about either the fiction of the period, or its poetry, or both?

18. What are the characteristic preoccupations of Victorian criticism?
19. Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

(A.H. Clough)

Write an essay on the ways in which some literature of the period expresses the struggle to keep religious faith.

20. I killed him because I AM MAD! Because my intellect is a little way upon the wrong side of that narrow boundary-line between sanity and insanity.

(Lady Audley in Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*)

What are the uses of madness in two or more works of the period?

21. Consider the combination or juxtaposition in some Victorian poetry of any two of the following: sexual love, love of God, love of nature.
22. The fairy tale begins with the hero at the mercy of those who think little of him and his abilities, who mistreat him and even threaten his life.

(Bruno Bettelheim)

Is this a helpful description when thinking about Victorian novels?

CONTINUED

23. Write an essay on class feeling as it is expressed in any two or more works of the period.

24. And moving through a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot.

(Tennyson, 'The Lady of Shalott')

Explore Victorian notions of the relationship between art and life.

25. Which Victorian works of comic fiction or comic verse do you find most rewarding, and why?

26. 'It's ill to loose the bands that God decreed to bind' (R.L. Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*). Write about transgression in some Victorian literature.

27. Write an essay showing how publishing conditions influenced the form or content of two or more works of Victorian literature.

28. Which Victorian writer or writers seem to you to have explored form or genre in particularly interesting or innovative ways?

29. Consider some of the ways in which one or more Victorian writers evoke the period of childhood in their work.

30. Illustrate the historical development of some aspect of British literature or society by comparing an early Victorian work with a late one.

31. Write an essay on one of the following themes in Victorian literature: everyday life, moving to the city, foreign travel, emigration, religious mission, colonial adventure.

END OF PAPER