

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

B.A.

The Victorian Period

COURSE CODE : ENGLN10

DATE : 22-MAY-06

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. But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

(Tennyson, *In Memoriam*)

Write an essay on Tennyson's use of 'measured language'.

2. Justice, forsooth! Does human life exhibit justice ... ? Is it the good always who ride in gold coaches, and the wicked who go to the workhouse?

(Thackeray, *Barry Lyndon*)

Write about justice or wealth in *Vanity Fair*.

TURN OVER

3. Yes, Browning was great. And as what will he be remembered? As a poet? Ah, not as a poet! He will be remembered as a writer of fiction, as the most supreme writer of fiction, it may be, that we have ever had.

(Oscar Wilde).

Discuss.

4. As I never saw my father or my mother, ... my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones.

(Pip in *Great Expectations*)

Write an essay on the significance of the family in *Great Expectations*.

5. Many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother.

(George Eliot, *Middlemarch*)

What attitudes does *Middlemarch* show towards marriage?

6. George Eliot claimed that tragedy 'consists in the terrible difficulty' of 'adjustment of our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot, partly as to our natural constitution, partly as sharers of life with our fellow-beings'. Examine *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in the light of this definition of tragedy.

SECTION B

7. 'As with the Commander of an Army, or the leader of any enterprise, so it is with the mistress of a house' (Florence Nightingale). Discuss the dynamics of domestic life in at least two works of the period.
8. New organisations of knowledge are particularly vexatious when they shift men from the centre of meaning or set him in a universe not designed to serve his needs. In the mid-nineteenth century Darwinian theory issued just such a double challenge.

(Gillian Beer)

Discuss how one or more writers meet the challenge posed by Darwinian theory or any other new 'organisation of knowledge' in the Victorian period.

CONTINUED

16. 'And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!' (Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*). Is sentimentality an inevitable consequence of the Victorian preoccupation with sentiment?

17. Self-control became an integral part of the Victorian woman's life: she was expected to control her behavior, her speech, and her appetite as signs of her dominion over her desires. The slender body became a sign not simply of the pure body, but of the *regulated* body.

(Anna Krugovoy Silver)

The fair pure sword smites out in subtle ways,
Sounds and long lights are shed between the rows

Of beautiful mailed men; the edged light slips,
Most like a snake that takes short breath and dips
Sharp from the beautifully bending head,
With all its gracious body lithe as lips

That curl in touching you.

(Swinburne, 'Laus Veneris')

Write an essay on representations of the body in at least two works of the period.

18. 'London; a nation, not a city' (Benjamin Disraeli). Discuss the relation of city and nation in at least two works of the period.

19. Remember, for the last twenty years, England, and all foreign nations . . . have blasphemed the name of God deliberately and openly; and have done iniquity by proclamation, every man doing as much injustice to his brother as it is in his power to do. Of states in such moral gloom every seer of old predicted the physical gloom.

(John Ruskin, 'The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century')

Write about Victorian social criticism with reference to at least two works.

20. Matthew Arnold wrote that 'to have the sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive, and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge' ('The Function of Criticism at the Present Time'). Use his remarks as a starting-point for an essay on the critical writing of Arnold, or of any other Victorian author.

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21. That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive.

(Browning, 'My Last Duchess')

Write an essay on the use of painting and portraiture in the work of any Victorian writer or critic.

22. The critic Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth has claimed that the question of class is 'a submerged issue in nineteenth-century novels'. Examine the representation of class in the literature of any genre in this period.

23. The arts of the stage are not really in the temperament and the manners of the English. These people are too highly moral to be histrionic.

(Henry James)

Write an essay on either the Victorian theatre or the role of the dramatic in the literature of the period more generally.

24. At this time I think my mind first lost its balance, and for the first time I crossed that invisible line which separates reason from madness.

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

Write on the relationship between reason and madness in the work of one or more authors of the period.

25. 'Nonsense provided a healthy antidote for Victorian earnestness' (Clifton Snider). Discuss the relationship between Victorian nonsense writing and earnestness in at least works of the period.

26. The finest poetry of Christina and Dante Rossetti, of Morris and Swinburne, is essentially elegiac: melancholy poetry of intense unsatisfied longing, of unrealized potential, and of loss.

(Anthony H. Harrison).

Use this remark as a starting-point for an essay on at least two poets of the period.

CONTINUED

27. Poetry is of the nature of soliloquy ... Poetry is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation; eloquence, of intercourse with the world.

(John Stuart Mill, 'What is Poetry?').

Discuss with reference to at least one Victorian poet.

28. 'Perhaps the most fundamental value that the Novel, as a cultural institution, may be said to uphold is privacy, the determination of an integral, autonomous, "secret" self' (D. A. Miller). Discuss with reference to any two novelists.
29. Explore the use of descriptive language by at least two Victorian writers.
30. Write on the treatment in some Victorian literature of one or two of the following: the fantastic, the grotesque, travel, imperialism, crowds, anarchy, childbirth, growing up.

END OF PAPER