

English Literature

DIRECTIONS: Answer five questions only. Choose two questions from Section I and three questions from Section II.

Section I: Answer any two of the following questions. (Each worth 20%)

1. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is generally considered one of the best medieval English romances. Explain why it is a masterpiece of the chivalric writing.
2. In Paradise Lost, Satan is often fascinating to modern readers because they find him similar to a Promethean man, that is a rebel who heroically resists authority. Comment on the validity of this view.
3. Both Tennyson and Browning are Victorian poets usually credited with the development of the dramatic monologue, although they experience the situation differently. Browning's characters engage themselves in a mad projection of the will to manipulate the world. Tennyson's characters typically fear that any attempt to engage the world will meet with blank unrecognition, absolute otherness. Justify and elaborate on these remarks.
4. Define Hardy's vision of tragedy based on his Tess of the D'Urbervilles or The Return of the Native.
5. The tradition of utopian fiction is very old, at least for the Western world. It embodies both nostalgia for a legendary Golden Age and hope for the way man might live in some distant future. In English literature in addition to Sir Thomas More's Utopia (1516), Francis Bacon's The New Atlantis (1626), Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726), Samuel Butler's Erewhon (1872), and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (1932) are further examples of utopian novels. On the appearance of 1984 (1949), a good deal of critical discussion arose over George Orwell's purpose in this novel. Can 1984 be defined as an anti-Utopian fiction?

Section II: Answer any three of the following questions. (Each worth 20%)

1. Although Beowulf dates back to pre-Christian Europe, many have remarked on the apparently Christian themes and plot elements that seem to hint at a post-Christian revision of the epic. Discuss the elements in Beowulf that suggest Christian parallels.
2. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales was greatly influenced by the well-known Italian collection of tales, the Decameron by Boccaccio. Both works employ a frame story. What is the frame story for the Canterbury Tales?
3. The Revenge Tragedies of Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, and William Shakespeare all show a great indebtedness to the Roman tragedies of Seneca. What are the dramatic elements of the Senecan Tragedy as illustrated in the plays of William Shakespeare (eg. Hamlet or Macbeth) ?
4. Discuss the major critical theories put forth in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads."
5. Lord Byron was at heart a neo-classical poet, and yet he did make one lasting contribution to Romanticism--his Byronic Hero. Describe the "Byronic hero" as illustrated in such works of his as Manfred, Cain, and Don Juan.
6. Matthew Arnold believed that English society was torn between two competing philosophies of life: Hellenism and Hebraism. Define briefly these two competing ideologies.